

Militant

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Militant Fighting Fund

£250,000

250,000

240,000

230,000

220,000

210,000

200,000

190,000

180,000

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Thatcher's Christmas message

GET RICH rob the old and poor

AT CHRISTMAS we are all urged think of the old and do what we can to see that they are not left in need. This letter, sent by a Kent pensioner to a local union official, shows how little the Tories care for the old, at Christmas or any other time.

ON SUPPLEMENTARY Benefit a person is entitled to £29.80 a week to live on—they get their rates paid, and water, and £1.20 a week for heating—about £40.00 per week in all usually.

If you are unable to cope on such a small amount and wish to go into an Old People's Home, then the DHSS will pay between £120 and £125 per week (each person) to these grabbing, outrageous proprietor 'thieves' running Old Age Homes. Some of these homes, in fact most of these homes, have one, two and three or sometimes four people in *one room*. Many can accommodate between 25 and 30 people. If you work out what they take in one year, you will know what these overpaid thieves, and exploiters of the aged and infirm are making. *All profit!*

I was getting only £44 from the DHSS (£29.80 plus a small pension of approximately £14.71—a total of £43.51 to run a flat of my own. I also had to pay a home help £2 a week for two hours to do my shopping and dust around—which left me with only £42 a week for *everything*—food—clothes—heating—water—telephone—gas bills etc, and the cost of generally running a home—expected to be run on £42 a week for everything. Yet, the DHSS offer these robbers of Old Age Homes, for a small single room, £125 per week.

I couldn't manage on £42 and I was home-bound. I decided to try an Old Age Home. I was always told about the outrageous scandal that goes on in these homes, and after staying one month I got the truth first hand. At these hefty prices, I found that every morning there were cornflakes set out for breakfast in a bowl—well, I waited for the next course—and everybody left the table—so I followed and said "where is the breakfast?" and they all said—that is it—cornflakes, a slice or two of bread, and a cup of tea.

They all then went to sit in the lounge until 12 o'clock which was lunchtime. Sometimes the lunch

was fair, sometimes *lousy*—then they traipsed back into the lounge or up to their rooms, to either watch television or have a sleep, until 4.30 which was the last meal of the day, like a boiled egg, or cheese on toast, or sandwiches or something very very light and tea and a small cake. Then after this they all went back to the lounge to watch television. None of them were any trouble at all.

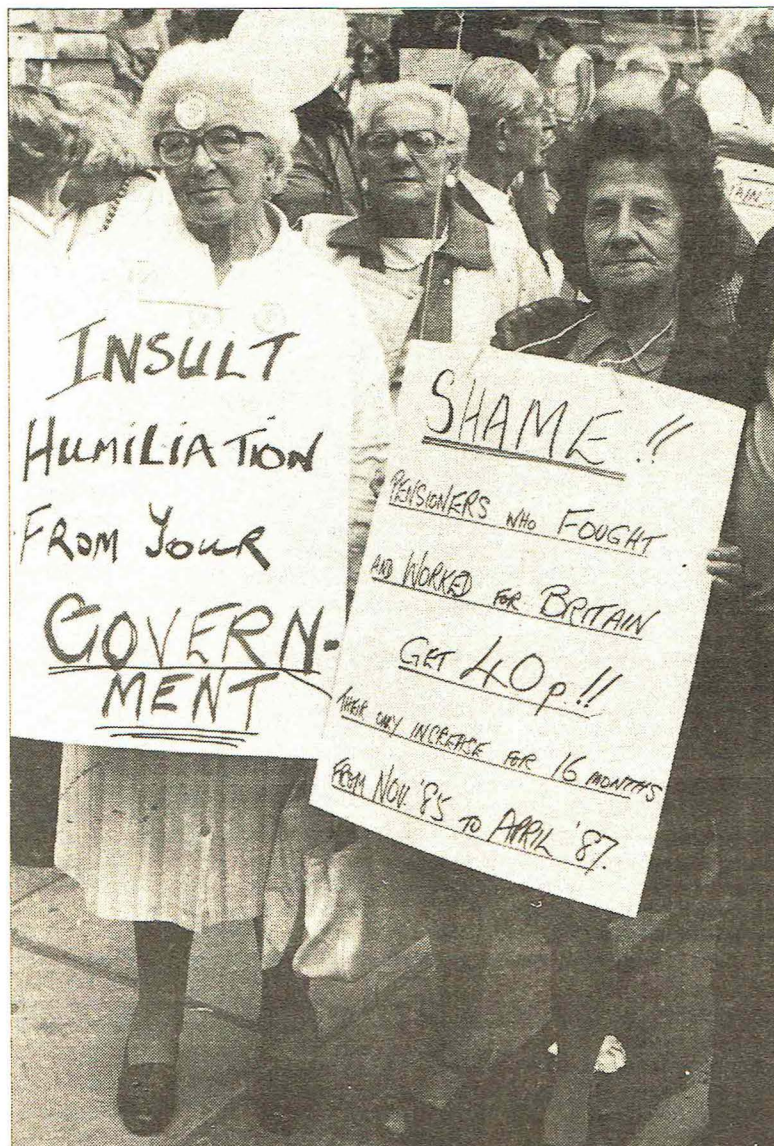
At about 7 o'clock they got a cup of tea and a biscuit and that was it until the next morning breakfast of *cornflakes*.

I am told by some of the residents that all the homes 'skimped on food' and this one also skimped on the heating, as it was freezing in the bedrooms and the lounge mostly during the day, and the gloomy lights in the lounge were pathetic, especially when it got dark at 4-4.30pm

I then sat down and wondered why they were paid by the DHSS all this amount for people who hardly ate anything at all, plus were no trouble, because if they got ill a doctor was called. It is true that a few of them had to be bathed but most did everything for themselves. Also many of them brought their own furniture pieces and of course the proprietors were pleased at this as it saved them using their furniture. Also most of them brought their own bedding like duvets so that they saved on sheets and blankets too.

I then sat and wondered what in the hell they were getting paid all this money for! The girls that were working there on shifts were paid

(Continued on page 2)



Pensioners lobbying parliament for the right to a decent life.

DONATIONS TO our Fighting Fund have continued to pour in. With £11,164 in this week our total now stands at £176,355. Every area reports more money still to come, so we are keeping our books open. We can raise £200,000 by the New Year and go for the full £250,000 by 31 January. Send *Militant* a Christmas donation!

Militant

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

1986—Labour's lost opportunities

1986 SHOULD have been the year which sealed Thatcher's fate. Scandals, economic stagnation and attacks on workers' living standards have provided enough ammunition for Labour to have made election victory in 1987 or 1988 a certainty.

The Westland battle, the MI5 court case, Reagan's use of British bases for his Libyan raid, insider trading in the City and now the Nimrod/Awacs argument have revealed the splits opening up within the ruling class. Contrary to Lawson's rosy optimism, British capitalism is still in terminal decline. Production is still lower than in 1979, investment in manufacturing less than in 1970. Britain has a non-oil trade deficit of £11.4 billion. The life-saving surplus from North Sea oil is shrinking, as a result of the price fall.

Only in the 'service' economy is Britain booming. It makes a surplus of £5.7 bn, and monster profits for the gamblers in the deregulated City of London, at least 200 of whom are now 'earning' over a million a year. Meanwhile four million unemployed scrape along on the dole, YTS or supplementary benefit. Millions more survive on poverty wages.

Workers have faced a year of attacks—on union rights at Wapping, on pay and conditions through privatisation in the hospitals and councils, on democratic rights through the prosecution of Liverpool and Lambeth councillors and on vital services as a result of bus deregulation and public spending cuts.

No Labour opposition could ask for a more favourable climate in which to go on the offensive. As the year began, Labour was 5-7 per cent ahead of the Tories in the polls. In the Fulham by-election in April and the council elections in May, Labour scored crushing victories. The Tories were on the ropes.

Yet now Labour has fallen behind in the polls. In the more recent by-elections at Newcastle-under-Lyme and Knowsley North its majority has been slashed. Victory in the general election no longer looks so sure. The Tories have won back lost support from the Alliance. It has been a year of missed opportunities.

One reason above all explains the Labour leaders' failure to capitalise on such a favourable opportunity and win new voters. In a year when all guns should have been blazing at the government, valuable time has been lost in a suicidal witch-hunt. At enormous cost, nine party members from Liverpool who have played a leading part in the City Council's success in creating jobs, building new houses and improving services, have been expelled.

The Tory press, at whose bidding Neil Kinnock has acted could not have wished for more. They have devoted pages of newsprint to the Labour Party's internal battles. Party leaders have supplied a stream of abuse, distortions and lies about Liverpool City Council for the press to use to undermine elected party representatives carrying out party policy.

This tactic has played into the hands of the Tories. Tebbit and Ridley have launched an onslaught against 'loony left' Labour councils and 'extremist infiltration' into the Labour Party. By expelling council leaders in Liverpool, suspending the District Labour Party and disowning their policies, the Labour leadership are seen to be endorsing the Tories' argument.

The witch-hunt has never been just about individual party members. These attacks are inseparable from the shift to the right in policy, dictated by the ruling class. On renationalisation, restoration of spending cuts, rescinding penalties on surcharged councillors and repeal of anti-trade union laws, firm pledges have been dodged. Party policy has been reduced to a public relations exercise where the image takes priority over the content.

Both the vagueness on policy and the purge of *Militant* supporters have been justified as necessary for electoral success. Neil Kinnock dreams that his expulsion of Marxists and his 'realism' over policy will give him a favourable image in the media, earn the respect of the ruling class and bring him victory. The reverse has happened. The Tories and the press are just as hostile. They have now turned to defence to force Kinnock to reverse his policy. They will not rest until he abandons every commitment to reform. Then they will contemptuously dismiss him as 'weak' and back the Tories as strongly as ever.

1987 must now be used for a campaign for a Labour victory, launched from within the ranks of the movement, armed with the socialist policies of *Militant*. The programme must be explained and argued for in the workplaces and on the doorsteps to convince millions to vote Labour and drive the Tories from office.

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French students turn to political struggle

BENEDICTE ROLAND, a student strike leader at Nanterre university who played a key role in the adoption by the students of France of the historic call for a one-day strike of all workers, talks to *Militant*.

¶ There was a tremendous feeling of exhilaration when that resolution was accepted. We had expected it to be passed, but not with a unanimous vote! At Nanterre and at national level!

This movement had started spontaneously, spread very rapidly and indicated that it was not just a question of the Devaquet proposals but something much more deep rooted. Everyone had been against the proposals individually but hadn't had much confidence in a collective movement. Once it got going we very quickly became conscious of our power. There was a determination to go to the end that had not existed before. Students were not just skipping classes and doing a bit of agitation. We were very serious and working harder than ever to win this strike.

I saw for myself the enormous sympathy that existed amongst the whole population. When we had a national mobilisation for a demonstration in Paris, the students piled onto the trains and buses without any money and nothing happened to them. To get money to help with the strike some students took over the toll booths on the motorway and asked the drivers to give their money for the students, which they did willingly and the police did not interfere.

Whenever we had a demonstration workers lined the road and cheered us on. So I proposed that we bring out leaflets inviting workers to come and discuss with us. When we first went to Renault Billancourt we were very well received by the workers. The next time we went there the workers wanted to join with us with their own demands—on wages, redundancies etc. Unfortunately, when we took this idea back to our committee the Socialist Party and other 'leaders' said: 'No, that would make our struggle political'.

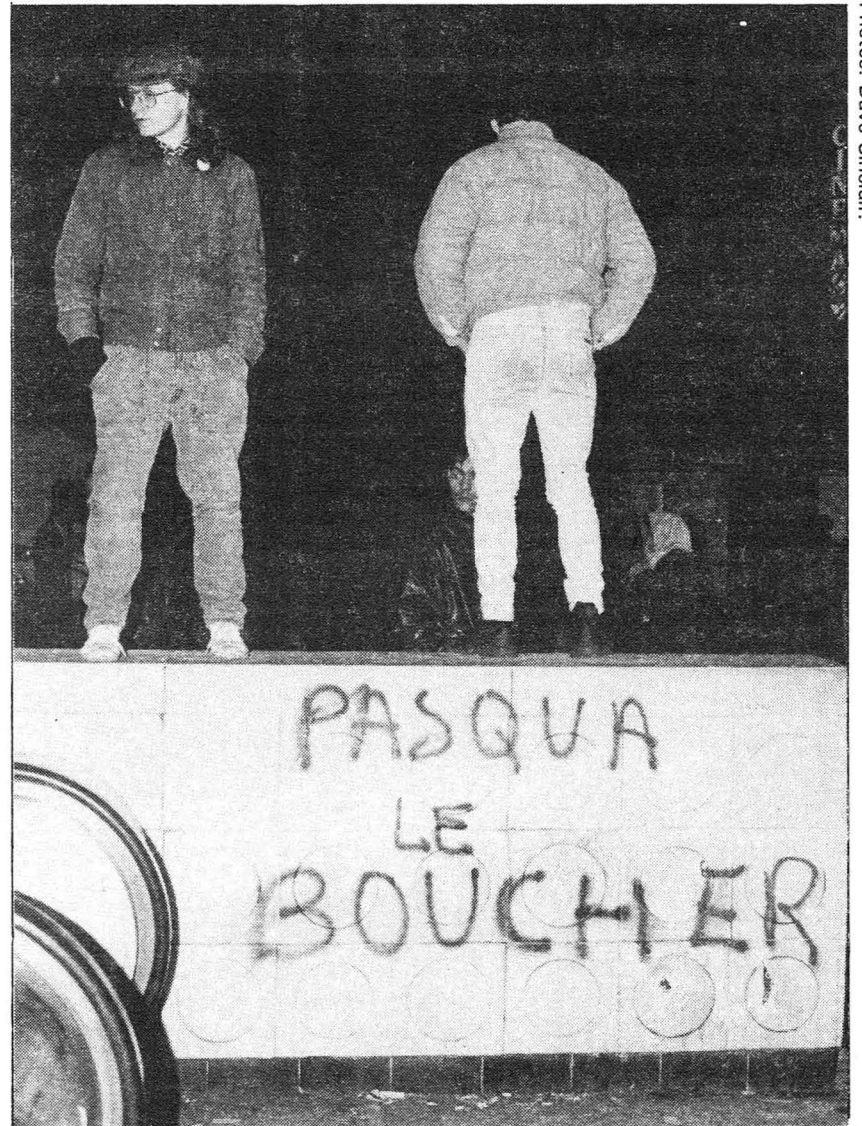
One day strike

Even when the national committee had passed our resolution, these 'leaders' insisted that we should ask workers to participate on the demonstration planned for the day of the one-day strike, without their own demands and even without any banners. Nevertheless the support of the workers and the trade unions for the proposal of a one-day strike terrified the government.

The students, accustomed to a relatively peaceful existence and wishing to keep all the demonstrations peaceful, were shaken to the core when the riot police were sent in against them.

We experienced at first hand what a government of the right could be—water canon, baton charges, tear gas. Students shouted out: "We are not in Chile". But also their first instinct was to appeal to the riot police: "CRS be with us, your children are involved".

On one of the demonstrations we saw policemen coming to the windows of their flats waving their police hats in support and shouting "We have understood you". One of the police trade union leaders exposed the role of



(Above): 'Pasqua the butcher'. Right wing minister blamed for the murder of Algerian student Malik Ousseki, by riot police. (Left): Armed police patrolling the Latin Quarter in Paris.

the provocateurs, telling the media he had recognised one of them that had been featured on the television as a policeman. His police trade union passed a resolution condemning these actions and supporting the students.

At the height of the events Pasqua (Interior Minister) called on the Gaullists to "prepare for the counter-revolution".

From these moments the students lost their naivety and became very political. They are aware that they have gained a first victory in a long battle. They are reluctant to let go of the democratic way of organising that they have evolved. Their mistrust of 'leaders' was deeply enforced in the recent weeks.

The international aspects of the student movement played a big role in encouraging the French students. Fraternal delegates from Britain, Belgium etc, were received with rapturous applause after every phrase of their speeches. When they had finished chants of "Belgium is with us" etc went on for some minutes accompanied by whistles and cheers.

Now we have to draw up a clear programme and perspective to take the movement forward. We have to struggle along with all those who are being crushed by this government—workers, immigrants, the unemployed, the old and the 'TUC' (YTS) and the youth etc.



Continued from p1

Rob the old

£1.60 an hour—ie £64.00 a week (and one young girl told me that when she paid her tax she was left with about £52.00. Not even a living wage was this home prepared to pay the girls.

They had two homes—one in Westgate-on-Sea and one in Birchington—where they had about 25-30 people in each. These proprietors

must be millionaires. Don't you think this is an absolute scandal? Anyone can run a house and the poor exploited old age person has to keep their mouth shut!

I stayed for 34 days only—and the proprietor got £629.00 from the DHSS (which included some of my own pension) and I was left with only £1.55 for my weekly spending money. This proprietor grabbed everything—also I was away for two days in the first week and two days in the third

week but she still got paid—yet when I returned to my flat (I couldn't stand the gross injustice of it all) I was going to get my £44.00 (less £2.00 for home help) ie £42 to run my own place again.

A meal out for two would cost more than £38.70 with wine, yet pensioners have to live on that for a whole week—while also these Old Age Pension homes are raking the money in and there are no rights for the residents at all. Nobody ever comes to

see what is going on and if they do, the owners give them a sweet smile and say, "Oh yes, everything is fine—thank you." But they never hear about what really goes on.

The old people, being over 70-80, of course wouldn't complain. They are afraid they would be chucked out and they would, so they do not have a hope in hell of every exposing these 'thugs' and exploiters of the very old and sick. It is a disgrace, a national scandal!

Hundreds in anti-apartheid protest

HUNDREDS OF Labour Party Young Socialists members took to the streets on Saturday 13 December in support of the 25 LPYS members arrested for occupying Benetton's shop in Glasgow in an anti-apartheid protest.

The LPYS staged pickets outside 30 Benetton shops, protesting at Benetton's trading in South Africa and exposing the links between big business and apartheid.

On the same day the North West region of the Labour Party agreed to circulate all affiliates with the "Benetton 25" appeal sheets.

Many branches are following this up with a showing of the Goldfields video exposing the degrading and poverty stricken conditions of South Africa's black goldminers. Below is a round up of a very successful day.

Glasgow: picketed two shops—complete with the Moses Mayekiso choir singing South African freedom songs, 400 signed the petition, 51 joined up for the LPYS and £50 for the "Benetton 25" campaign. The picket turned away large numbers of potential customers.

Stoke: Picket lasted 10 minutes, before the police were called, although 50 people signed the petition. One comrade was arrested and held for seven hours, although LPYS members jammed the police switchboard all afternoon deman-

ding his release including Labour MPs Dave Nellist and Clare Short.

Bradford: 8 comrades picketed collecting £10 and attracted the interest of the local paper who came down and took photographs.

Brighton: Good response. 25 people signed up for the LPYS, but police wouldn't allow paper selling or a collection.

Edinburgh: 30 LPYS members picketed 3 shops. Passers-by were queuing up to sign the petition. However there was a sour note to the day. Edinburgh Central CLP for a "number of reasons" (not one was given) sent a letter to the LPYS demanding they call off the picket, with a copy going to the Scottish Executive.

Police limit

Birmingham: The Benetton shop was already prepared with a huge notice stating "We deplore apartheid." Nevertheless 30 LPYS members staged a picket, the police cut it to three, but they managed to keep it to around 10. 12 young people signed up for the LPYS. £41 was collected for the campaign.

Liverpool: Despite being hit by a bus strike, 25 LPYS members turned up to expose Benetton's links with apartheid. Beforehand the LPYS showed the Goldfields video of the horrific conditions for South African miners.

Streatham: LPYS members created a lot of interest in the High Row, stopping passers by young and old asking for support. This prevented a large number of people from buying at Benetton's.

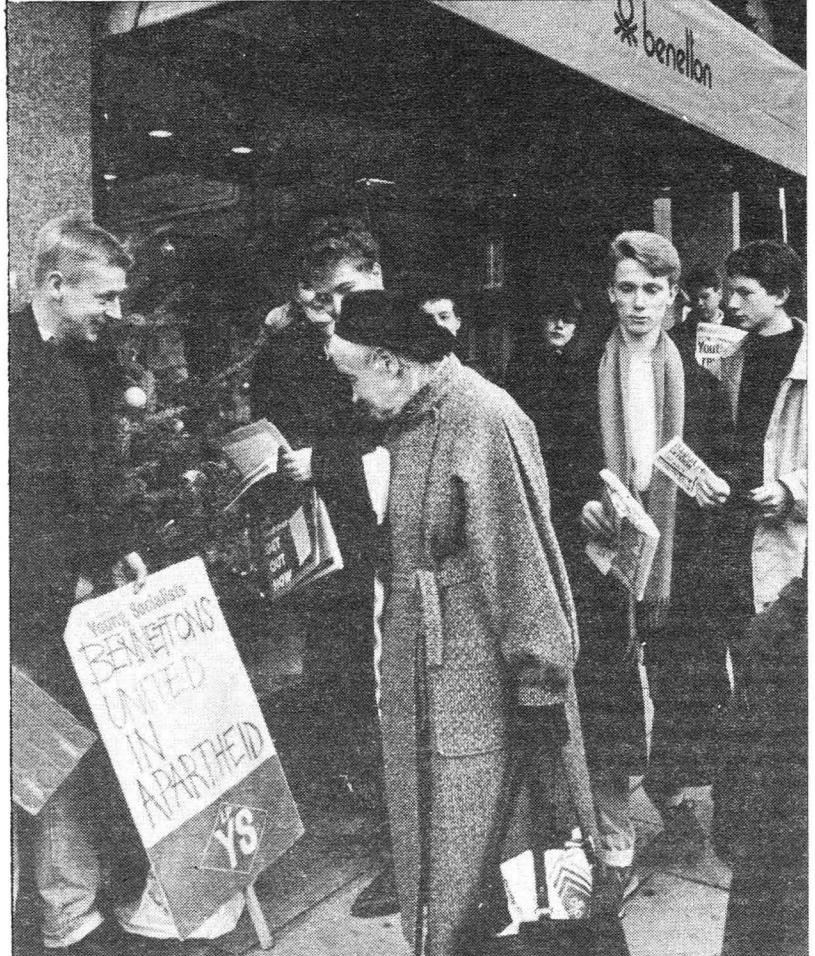
Bedford: 100 people signed the petition. Helen Watson, LPYS secretary, was sandwiched between LPYS posters proclaiming Benetton's links with apartheid. While doing such a good job they were moved on by the police three times.

Manchester: Despite the torrential rain 18 comrades turned up to picket, winning support from a local stall-holder who put money in the tin and took up the chants. 16 *Socialist Youth's* were sold and 4 new members for the LPYS.

Cardiff: The 15 LPYS members used the picket to advertise a public meeting on South Africa, from the response on the streets they are expecting a good crowd. 10 people signed up there and then to join the LPYS. The local paper ran a story on the picket and £10 collected will aid the campaign against apartheid.

Newport: Held a meeting after the picket showing the video of Goldfields and the poverty of the South African gold miners, two dockers turned up to give support and £20 was collected for the campaign.

By Francis Curran



The Benetton picket in Streatham.

Photo: Mick Carroll.

Press gagged as Botha lashes out at revolution

THE BOTHA regime has, for the first time, imposed pre-publication press censorship in South Africa.

The claim that the measures are intended to prevent a Christmas bombing campaign by the ANC is a transparent lie. How can press censorship prevent bombing?

Even the capitalist press have admitted that the censorship is aimed at the revolutionary mass movement that has built up in the black working-class townships over the last two years. Reporting on strikes, consumer boycotts and other forms of mass action is now effectively banned.

Solidarity

This is intended to cripple the organisation of country-wide solidarity campaigns with workers and youth in struggle, which has become an important weapon of the movement, by muzzling the few radical journals which have publicised them.

Significantly, the owners of the 'liberal' English-language press monopolies at first agreed with the government that tighter discipline on the press was needed, but were restrained by their editors from again accepting 'self-censorship', as in the past.

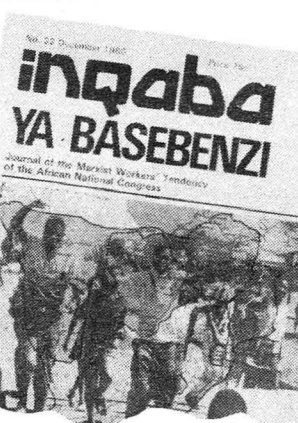
Through savage police action, and methods of divide and rule, the regime has lashed out against the mass movement since the state of emergency was imposed. It has put 'reform' on the shelf for the moment, hoping to rally the whites and impose its own 'settlement', probably with a view to calling white elections next year.

In passing, it is showing its contempt of 'world opinion' and the half-hearted threat of sanctions from the West.

But repression can no longer destroy the elemental movement of the black working-class masses against centuries of exploitation and repression that has begun to boil up. The regime will again, in the future, be forced towards gestures of reform in the hope of splitting off conservative sections of the black leadership and smoothing relations with western governments.

The movement may possibly be held back for a time, but later it will surge forward with renewed strength making the overthrow of apartheid and capitalism possible.

By George Collins



Latest issue of Inqaba Journal of Marxist Workers Tendency of the ANC. Price 75p. From Inqaba ya Basebenzi, BM Box 1719, London WC1N 3XX.

GEC will not protect jobs

THE GOVERNMENT now seem likely to give the contract for Britain's new early warning radar to the American Boeing Awacs system.

Some backbench Tory MPs, are angry that the British Nimrod system built by GEC is likely to be turned down. Ex cabinet minister Jim Prior, now GEC chairman, is not surprisingly, heading the group.

GEC claim this decision will lose 2500 jobs in Britain. The dispute has grown to one between the American

bosses and what remains of British industrial capitalism. Labour MPs have jumped in to support the British "goodies". But will that help GEC employees?

Workers can't trust GEC. They have never needed the excuse of a lost contract to sack workers. GEC boss Weinstock was a trailblazer in "rationalisation" and mass redundancies. More investment would just fill shareholder's pockets. They have taken £930 million taxpayer's money for ten years development but still ap-

parently not brought Nimrod up to scratch.

The labour movement must campaign to save the 2500 jobs whoever wins the contract. GEC made £1 billion profits past year. Labour MPs should not campaign for another windfall for Prior and his friends. They should campaign for nationalisation of GEC under workers' control and management. A socialist plan of production would ensure that workers' skills can be used to provide for the needs of society.

In Brief Blyth

RONNIE CAMPBELL'S election as Labour's Parliamentary candidate in Blyth Valley is a victory for Labour's left.

Ronnie Campbell was the NUM nominee for the seat, and he is a committed socialist who was active throughout the last three miners' strikes.

But the Tory press have mounted a massive propaganda campaign to persuade Labour's leadership to take seriously the allegations of the present Labour MP, John Ryman, about "Militant conspiracies and plots to take over the constituency."

John Ryman has been making these unsubstantiated claims to accompany his threats to resign and force a by-election. He was successfully re-elected earlier this year by the constituency, beating Ronnie Campbell by 14 votes.

Ryman then decided to resign at the next election. At the reconvened selection conference, with the same membership as before, Ronnie Campbell was elected as the prospective candidate on 7 December.

Labour Party regional organiser, Bert Twigg, was satisfied that the meeting was constitutionally run.

According to the reports in the national press, Ryman is currently under investigation by the Director of Public Prosecutions over allegations

Witch hunt news

relating to the finances of the chambers where until recently he was the senior barrister.

By resigning and fighting a by-election it is possible that Ryman could whittle away Labour's slim majority of just over 3,000 sufficiently to allow an Alliance candidate to be elected.

Ryman has used the slur about Militant to try to extend the witch hunt in the Labour Party and as a smokescreen to try to hide the fact that he is putting his own interests before those of the Labour Party.

Kilfoyle

REACHING A new all-time low, Peter Kilfoyle, the Labour right wing's place man on Merseyside has written to the *Liverpool Echo* accusing Militant supporters of using "fascist methods" in Liverpool.

He conveniently fails to mention the Militant supporters who have been hospitalised as a result of confrontation with fascist groups in Liverpool city centre.

But then how could Peter Kilfoyle know about this as he has never once, in his capacity as Labour Party official, organised any anti-racist activity in Liverpool.

His warped view of his own role is revealed when he asks "who ever elected the Militant tendency?" This is cheek in-

deed from someone who was appointed as a Labour Party officer with no consultation with Labour Party members in Liverpool.

Stevenage

STEVENAGE LABOUR Party failed to refer ten Militant supporters to the National Constitutional Committee at its meeting last Friday, when the meeting ran out of time because standing orders hadn't been suspended for an extension.

A lobby outside the meeting chanted 'victory' as the threatened members left. The right wing majority in the Stevenage party are trying to resurrect charges against the ten under the new constitutional procedure hoping to prepare new charges that will stick.

Knowsley

THE NEC will be considering the position of Knowsley North Labour Party at its January meeting, and not at this month's meeting.

This follows objections by Knowsley North Party officers about the unfairness of the procedure being followed in the inquiry.

Please continue to send resolutions opposing disciplinary action and defending party democracy to the NEC.

Sell Militant

Seasonal sales success

EARLY REPORTS from the weekend of action show the potential which exists for sales. Christmas shoppers all over the country have been given the chance to find out what *Militant* really stands for and thousands have taken the opportunity. Don't waste the chance of a last big push of 1986 with this, the last copy of the year.

Best sales reported so far include Stevenage where the witch hunt has created a lot of local interest. 40 *Militants* and 10 *Socialist Youth* were sold in the town centre.

Sellers from Surrey were a little surprised by the response they got at a Smiths concert for Artists against Apartheid. Every comrade sold out of papers within five minutes.

Sellers in Northwich succumbed to the Christmas spirit and appeared on the streets with balloons etc. Unfortunately the expected visit of Father Christmas did not happen but 15 papers were sold.

The circulation department thanks all our sellers for their efforts over the past year and hopes all enjoy a well deserved rest. But next year will be more strenuous still and all sellers should spare a thought over Christmas for plans to make sure our paper continues to go from strength to strength in 1987.

By Dave Fryatt

Commitment builds our funds

IN 1965 the first all-London *Militant* readers' meeting raised £4 12s 6d for the Fighting Fund. By October 1965, after one year of the *Militant*, £150 had been collected. We have come a long way since those early days. But our struggle remains the same—to develop our paper and our ability to intervene in the labour and trade union movement.

Our fund raising achievements have always been the envy of the rest of the movement and an inapplicable phenomenon to our opponents and the Tory press. But our success is really quite easy to explain. Our supporters are prepared to sacrifice and work hard to raise the money we need. Our funds come from the pockets of ordinary working class people who want to see a socialist society. This is the only way that a workers' paper can be built.

At our Rally at the Albert Hall in November, 1986 was summed up as the "Year of *Militant*". In financial terms it has been a resounding success. At the Rally itself we collected a massive £34,630 in only forty minutes. One supporter donated £5,000 from the sale of a house and six others donated £1,000 each. No other tendency in the Labour movement could possibly match that.

We started off the year in style, collecting £25,947 in January alone. At the LPYS Conference at Easter we raised £5,633 despite being prevented by the Labour Party bureaucracy from holding the traditional *Militant* meeting. £1,271 was raised at the LPYS Summer Camp in July. £560 was also raised at the Labour Party Women's Conference.

Despite attacks on *Militant* by their leaders, delegates to union conferences gave generously—CPSA over £2,000, NCU £1,400, USDAW £413, SOGAT £370 and the NUT £287. From CPSA members, £176 was collected in a single day at just four workplaces.

By May over 30,000 people had attended regional rallies against the witch-hunt, contributing over £27,000 to our funds.

Week's income

But without doubt the last four months have been the most successful. Since 10 August we have raised £176,355 towards the target of £250,000 set just after Labour Party Conference in October.

Many of our readers have been prepared to give a week's income or more to help *Militant* to go twice-weekly in time for a general election. Week after week we have been sent donations from the unemployed, the low paid, workers who have

given as much as a month's income.

Since the beginning of the year we have raised a total of £284,099 for the Fighting Fund.

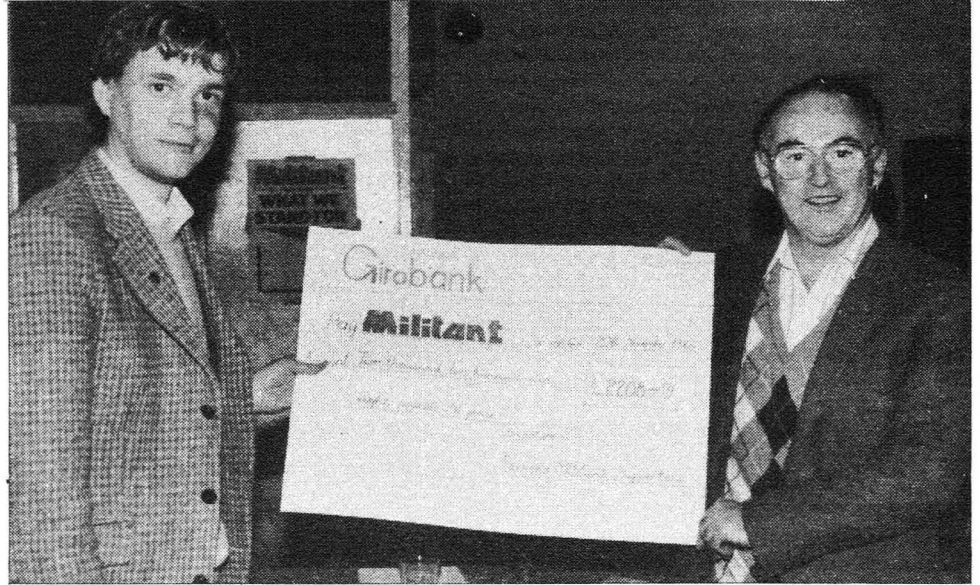
Our achievement is in marked contrast to the declining fortunes of the once influential *Morning Star*. In the last financial year, it lost £340,000 and a similar loss is forecast for 1987. It has announced a cut of a quarter of its staff. Our successes have been mirrored by the *Morning Star's* demise.

Yet we cannot afford to sit back and relax. Our opponents, the Tories and the bosses, have access to billions of pounds and control of the media for their propaganda. Our resources are still tiny in comparison. We have always to set ourselves new targets.

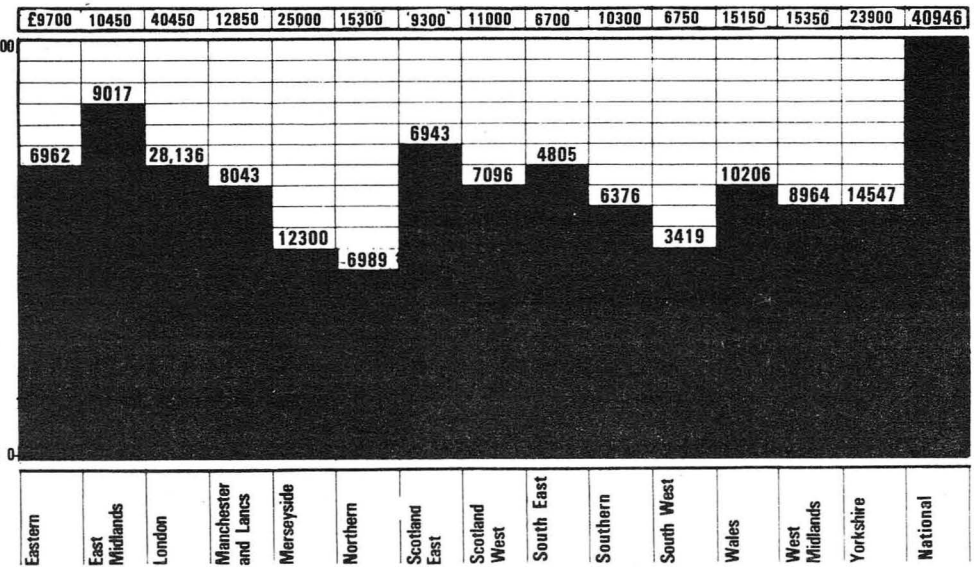
We now intend to reach £200,000 by the New Year. That would mean a total of over £300,000 raised in 1986. Then in January we could complete the job and reach the full £250,000.

So, over the Christmas holidays don't forget to raise Fighting Fund wherever you go. Use Christmas socials, the Winter Raffle, special Christmas donations to help the only genuine workers' paper in Britain. Finish 1986 in style. Forward to a twice-weekly *Militant* in 1987!

By Nick Wrack



Brighton supporters handing over money raised from the week's income campaign to *Militant's* editor, Peter Taaffe.



Threatened with expulsion after 41 years

MURIEL BROWNING, like dozens of other socialists, is being lined up for expulsion by Llanelli Labour Party's general management committee (GMC) because of her Marxist viewpoint. This 'parachute infiltrator' has apparently been bringing the Party into disrepute with her Marxist ideas for the last forty years!

During this period of Party membership Muriel has held most positions in the Labour Party, including CLP president when rising star Denzil Davies MP was selected as candidate to replace Jim Griffiths MP.

As well as being active in Llanelli Labour Party, secretary of Llanelli Women's Council, member of the Welsh women's regional committee and member of the Welsh Regional Executive, Muriel was also an active trade unionist. As a TGWU shop steward in Morris Motors (BL) she had been elected delegate to the first national conference for equal pay, delegate to the Biennial Delegate Conference delegate on the National Automotive Committee and delegate to Llanelli trades council for twenty years.

During the miners' strike Muriel helped to establish the Cynheidre miners' support group and was its chairwoman for the duration of the strike, raising thousands of pounds and always prominent on the picket lines.

Born a socialist

"This witch-hunt will never succeed in grinding me down nor get rid of Marxism from the Labour Party," says Muriel: "I didn't join the Labour Party—I was born into it. Both my parents were active in the labour movement ever since I can remember. My father was NUR branch chairman and a Labour councillor for fifteen years.

He became Mayor of Llanelli, a position he didn't particularly relish, but he wanted to give my mother something after years of struggling to bring up six of us.

"My mother was also active in the Labour Party, forming the first women's section in the town which led to every ward eventually having a women's section.

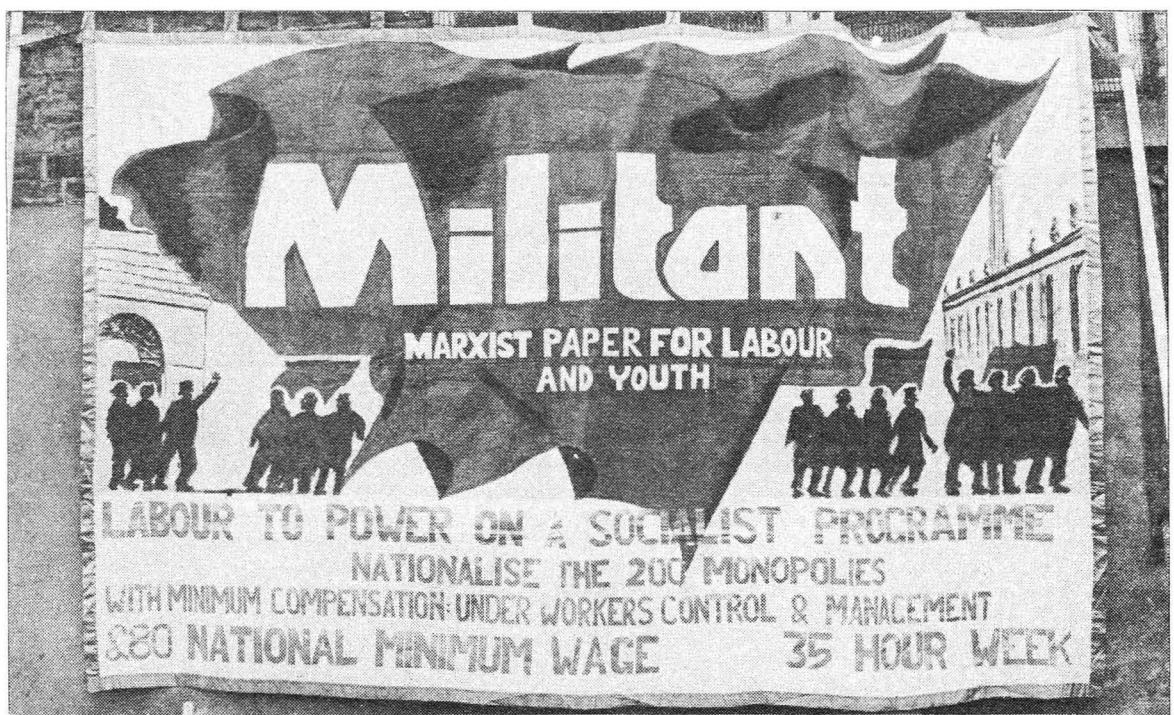
"It was after the war that I got involved, in the Labour League of Youth. There was a thirst for education and a good cross fertilization of ideas existed. The National Council of Labour Colleges used to organise week-end schools and day schools and it was through these schools that I first came across the ideas of Marxism. Our women's section affiliated to the NCLC and we used to have a lecturer down to Llanelli once a month.

"The boom of the fifties and sixties passed us by, and with Harry, my husband, earning £4 a week it became more and more of a struggle to bring up a family. I went to work to buy a three piece suite and ended up working for over twenty years to try and make ends meet.

It was in Morris Motors where I first became involved in the trade union movement. Six months after starting I led some of our T&G members out on strike in support of the men in the maintenance section. The strike quickly spread amongst T&G members and a victory was won. From that moment on I was marked by both management and the T&G bureaucracy.

"Because I was prepared to speak up I became known throughout the factory and despite the efforts of the T&G leadership I was elected shop steward. The votes had to be counted in the ladies' toilet because management refused us facility time for the election. The struggle for equal pay resulted in a huge step forward for women in the car industry.

"My contribution to the labour movement in Llanelli cannot be



removed by these right-wing witch-hunters. During the miners' strike it was *Militant* supporters who were to the fore in raising cash and standing shoulder to shoulder with the miners on the picket lines. These so-called "socialists" who talk about "our party" and "our movement" were tucked up in bed at 5 o'clock on those freezing winter mornings. (No doubt with the rule book under their pillow).

"When Llanelli GMC voted by 23-17 earlier this year to expel "members" of *Militant*, it was precisely those workers who had witnessed the support myself and other *Militant* supporters had given them over the years who protested most strongly. The miners' delegation, NUR delegates and others voiced their opposition to expulsions. The most vociferous attacks were made by the fly-by-night delegates who had just joined the party looking for a cosy career.

"The executive committee of

Llanelli CLP decided on 7 November to send letters to each ward asking them to supply names of *Militant* supporters. I expect a witch-hunt to take place in the new year.

"It saddens me after all these years to see the actions of some of our leaders both locally and nationally, particularly as the Tories are on the run and the economic situation is deteriorating. I am frightened that the actions of the right-wing will allow the Tories a third term in office. I don't want my kids and grandchildren to struggle like me. Neil Kinnock and the other Labour leaders will never be forgiven if the Tories get back in.

"If I do get expelled it will not change my belief in socialism. I will still regard myself as a party member, still recruit for the party, still campaign to get workers, especially women, to join and change the party into a real fighting

organisation. The only future for people in Britain is with a socialist Labour government.

"I'm certainly not demoralised. It makes me want to fight all the more. This witch-hunt has strengthened my belief in Marxist ideas but nevertheless it is a tragic waste of energy when we should be fighting the Tories.

"I've fought for 40 years to try and change things and I'm not ready to give up now. That's a warning to Labour's witch-hunters, not just from me but from every comrade who is threatened with expulsion. I'll be in the Labour Party fighting for socialism when these witch-hunters are long forgotten. Forward to a Labour victory. Forward to socialism."

Muriel Browning is a personification of what *Militant* stands for—that is why we will win.

By Alec Thraves

The avoidable tragedy

Deportation threat

YOU CAN never get used to the sight, on news bulletins, of children in the third world dying of hunger.

But it seems even more obscene, that in some areas where there is sufficient food, children should die in thousands of a simple complaint like diarrhoea.

Global Report on BBC2 recently concentrated on one Andean village, in Columbia rather ironically entitled "The Valley of Hope", where a quarter of the babies had died in the previous six months, of diarrhoea.

The "Hope" lay in a health worker's scheme in a neighbouring village which had eliminated infant deaths. The problem for the "Valley of Hope" was they had no health worker and no money to train one.

The people of the region are mainly subsistence farmers, so food is available, but when the children catch diarrhoea, they stop absorbing food and lose their appetites. This makes them weak and vulnerable to further illness and so the vicious circle continues.

Although not all the children die of diarrhoea, the development of the majority is stunted by this "hidden malnutrition". One victim looked a little drawn and had a couple of sores, but apart from that, OK until we were told that this "toddler" was nine years old.

Repeated bouts of sickness and diarrhoea had stunted his growth. He was also severely mentally retarded. What hope for him and millions like him?

Since the neighbouring village had been allocated a health worker eight years ago, not one single child had died of these easily treated



By Maggie McGinley

ailments. They have adopted a health plan based on breast feeding, vaccination (500,000 children are still crippled by polio each year in the world), regular weighing and swift treatment for diarrhoea. A solution of salts and sugar allows them to absorb thirty times more liquid and stops them from dying from dehydration. Cost of the treatment? Cost of a child's life? Ten cents a sachet.

The villages of the "valley of hope" had had enough. They had a candidate for health worker, but didn't have the four hundred dollars to train him.

Twice they had sent a petition to the state government but had heard nothing. They decided to send a deputation on foot carrying their babies, on the day's journey to the state capital.

They managed to get to the health chief's secretary. The chief was at a meeting, but they could wait if they wanted.

There was no guarantee he was returning that day. What about coming back on Monday? The villagers had no money for bus fares. To return would have meant another two days on foot.

Whether or not it was to create a good impression with the cameras, the health chief returned. He was full of sympathetic noises but told them there was no money in this year's budget to fund a health worker for their village or thousands of



A street in Colombo, Sri Lanka with only one source of water. "Minor" diseases can be major killers in third world countries. Photo: Militant.

others like them.

Out on the square the cameras filmed soldiers doing drill. The government spends three times more on defence than on health. The President of Columbia called it "A world gone mad", where one million dollars are spent every minute on arms.

Unfortunately this "President of the poor" as he described himself, felt he could only go so far in

reforms because of fear of the army and the right wing. I don't think his good intentions would cut much ice in the "Valley of Hope".

The reporter told us that this year in the third world a million children will die from measles, half a million from whooping cough and five million from diarrhoea. That's 40,000 children under five years every day.

His conclusion? "We need

a bit more commitment from the governments of the rich world". I don't think "a bit more" anything is sufficient.

Over Christmas there will be appeals for the people (working class) of the west to share their "plenty". Fair enough, but charity just skims the surface of the problem. The only answer is a socialist plan of production and we, and they, need it now.

WALTER YAO, a Ghanaian who has lived in Britain since 1972 has been threatened with deportation by the Home Office. Graham Smillie, from Liverpool sent this letter to *Militant*.

"On Friday 5 December Walter Yao received a phone call from an immigration officer. He was told he must leave the country by 12 December. Walter first came to Britain from Ghana in 1972. Since then he has always worked except for three years at Liverpool Polytechnic. He has been active in the local community in Toxteth and married to a British resident. He has lived here for all the 14 years except for 10 months in Ghana after the death of his father.

Protests

"A campaign has been launched to stop this disgraceful action. Letters, phone calls, and telegrams have been sent and resolutions passed at Labour Party wards. Pressure has been brought to bear from Liverpool council race relations advisor Sam Bond, the white collar union ASTMS and local MP Bob Parry, and as a result the home office has given a suspension of the order until 5 January.

"This isn't enough. Walter must be allowed to stay in Britain where he has made his home and has many good friends.

"There must be a campaign to scrap the racist immigration laws before any more harm is inflicted on innocent people."

Letters of protest to: David Waddington, Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT.

Letters of support to: Robert Parry MP, House of Commons, London SW1 0AA.

Left and Right

They're getting there by road

BRITISH RAIL bosses have awarded a one year contract for delivery of spares from BR's new central stores in Doncaster to a private road haulage firm.

Rail unions are furious at the decision. The Red Star service would be quite capable of carrying out the rapid flexible service needed.

Obviously that was irrelevant to the managerial "experts" and capitalists at the top of BR. Could this sabotage of rail and encouragement of private road haulage be linked to the "flexible" ie scabbing role private lorry firms played in the miners' strike?

Room at the inn

THE PERENNIAL problem of Christmas is what to give the man or woman who has everything. Well, nothing would seem the obvious answer. But if you really in-

sist... How about a night of absolute luxury in a hotel penthouse overlooking San Francisco? The Fairmont will put you up in their best suite for £14,000 a night.

The suite has eight rooms luxuriously fitted out, with a few million dollars worth of original art on the walls (burglar proofed in case you try to nick them to cover the bill). For the £14,000 the hotel will accommodate up to 20, so you could cut the costs down to £700 a head.

You can get even more value for money by ordering the biggest meal (worth up to £240 a head). The rest will go for the gold fitted bathrooms, the two chefs, one French, one Chinese, the round the clock butler with his Dom Perignon champagne flowing like meths, and the priceless first editions in the library.

If you haven't got £14,000 you could try asking your local DHSS office if this counts as board and lodging, but don't hold out much hope.

Of Trots and Liptrotts

ACCORDING TO our wonderful press, the strike breaking Union of Democratic Miners is the most marvellous institution workers have ever produced. It is the greatest thing since Bingo.

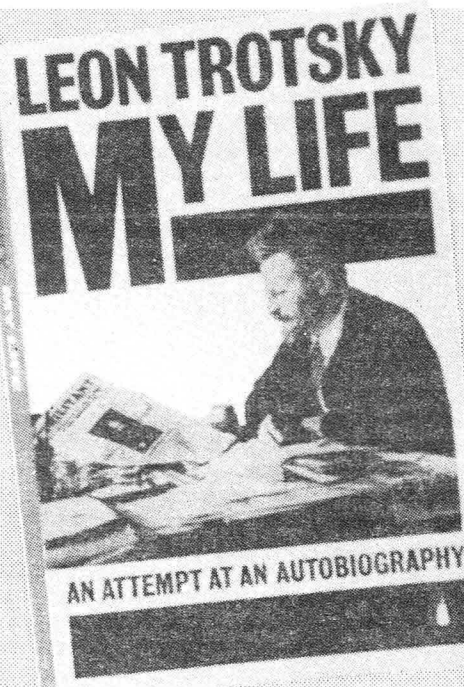
So it's a bit odd to see the attention paid to its recent general secretary elections, or rather the

lack of it. Funny, considering the coverage given to the CPSA elections.

John Liptrott became the general secretary, but the voting figures are not being released. So nobody will know the majority he got or the turn out. You can imagine the fuss there'd have been if it had been

a 'Trot' not a Liptrott who had tried to pull a stroke like that. Could it possibly be that the real voting figures would show that the UDM has not got the 35,000 members they claim. We don't know, the "Democratic" miners aren't telling and the freedom loving Tory press aren't asking.

World Socialist Books

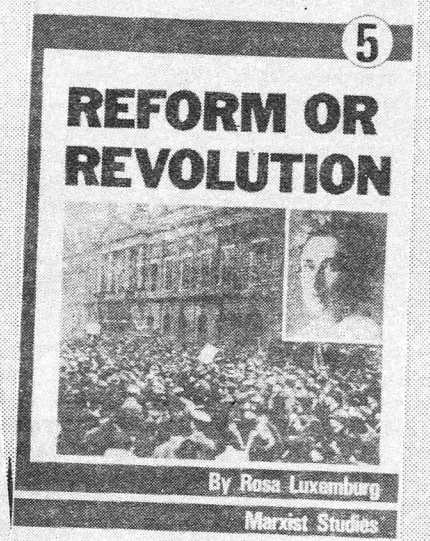


John Reed: Ten Days that shook the world £3.95.

Trotsky: The History of the Russian Revolution £9.50.

Two essential and vividly written books on the greatest event in world history, the 1917 Russian Revolution. Celebrate the seventieth anniversary by reading these eye witness accounts. Also available is Trotsky's autobiography "My Life" £5.95.

From World Socialist Books 3/13 Hepscoth Rd. London E9 5HB. Orders over £10 post free. Under £10 add 10 per cent.



Rosa Luxemburg: *Reform or Revolution* £1 including p&p from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB.

Write to World Socialist Books for more information about books available.

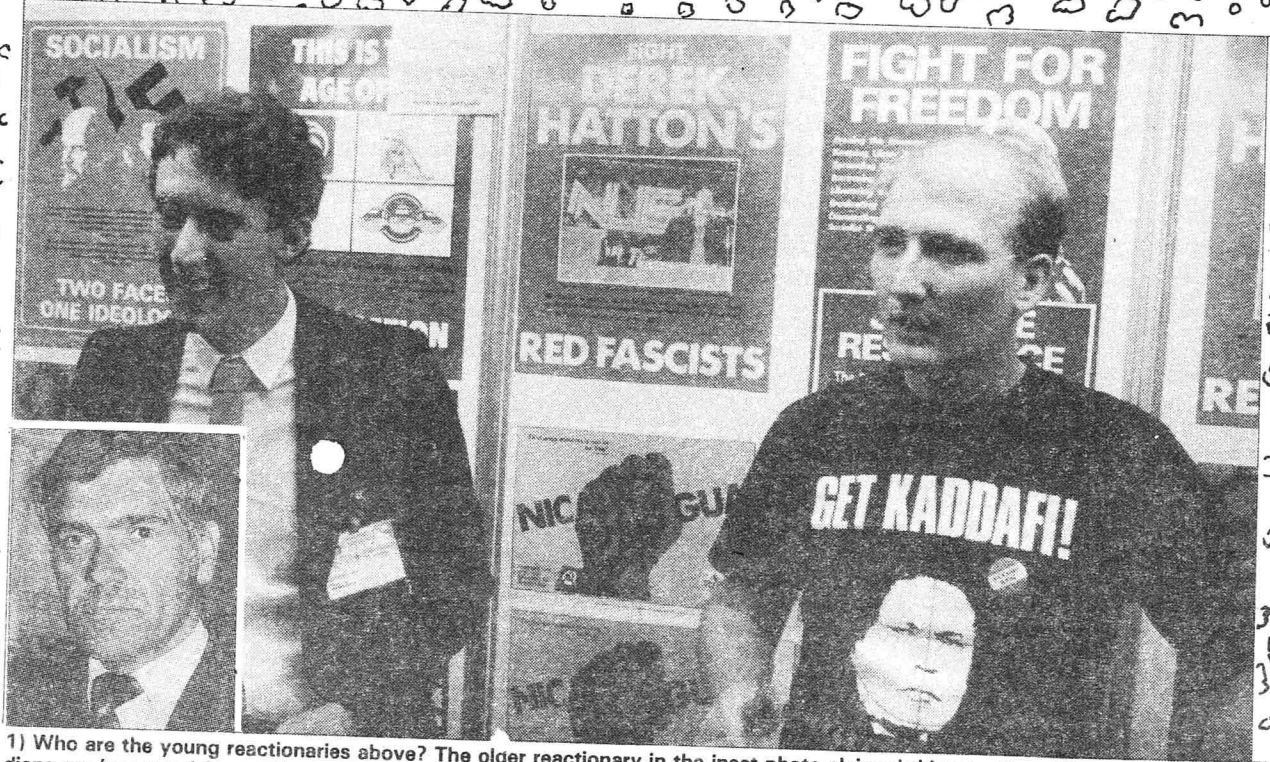
Christmas Quiz

Right wing

- 1) What is the budget and manpower of the British security services?
- 2) What defender of moral standards claimed "Page 3 brightens up every man's day. I'm sure wives don't mind."?
- 3) Who claimed that high rates of poor health in the north were due to "ignorance"?
- 4) Who claimed he was light years to the right of Tory wet Matthew Parris?

Militant

- 1) Who said "I defy anyone to tell me how you can go to Liverpool and defeat Militant by argument"?
- 2) In January who, in what journal, wished Kinnock the best of luck in purging extremists from the Labour Party?
- 3) Who said "natural justice is not something which affects you at the moment"?
- 4) Who felt strangely compelled to "turn out my pockets"?
- 5) Who said of the Liverpool Militants "We know there has been political corruption, we know there has been literal corruption"?



1) Who are the young reactionaries above? The older reactionary in the inset photo claimed this year that: "Most West Indians are lazy good for nothings who come here to sponge." Who is he?



2) We don't want to know what's got up Cyril Smith's nose. All we want is the name of the candidate he is putting his weight behind and which election it was?



3) Where is the protest?

Do you know?

- 1) Who, at their recent conference gave Orange Walk videos as raffle prizes, sung songs glorifying the Yorkshire Ripper and called for an end to the laws against incest?
- 2) What party in this year's local council elections hoped to attract support by explaining electors' star signs to them?
- 3) How many elderly people died from hypothermia last year (to nearest thousand)?
- 4) Apart from Turkey which country in Europe has the biggest prison population?
- 5) What cost £26,400 at Sotheby's and would have made Karl Marx turn in his grave?

Sport

- 1) Which horse owner and trainer had a much publicised split last year after a £14 million investment?
- 2) Graham Souness is now player manager of Rangers and has captained Scotland. Name three other clubs he has played for.
- 3) What are the names of the national rugby teams of these countries—New Zealand, Australia, Argentina?
- 4) Who are the top three golfers in the world, according to the new R&A ranking system?

International

- 1) Who said "we could have taken power if we believed in the politics of agitation. We could have taken control but the cost would have been too high"?
- 2) Who defended ex Nazi Kurt Waldheim president of Austria by saying "Washington and Zionist circles have mounted an unseemly campaign against him"?
- 3) Who said "the straightforward honest approach of both the state and

private companies make Chile one of the easiest of the Latin American countries with which to do business... The Chilean government is anxious to encourage foreign investment; since 1975 it has operated a very liberal investment regime. Together with the high quality and low cost of Chilean labour this makes investment in Chile a particularly good proposition".

- 4) Who took a redundancy payment of \$10 billion (took being the operative word)?
- 5) Which dynasty was

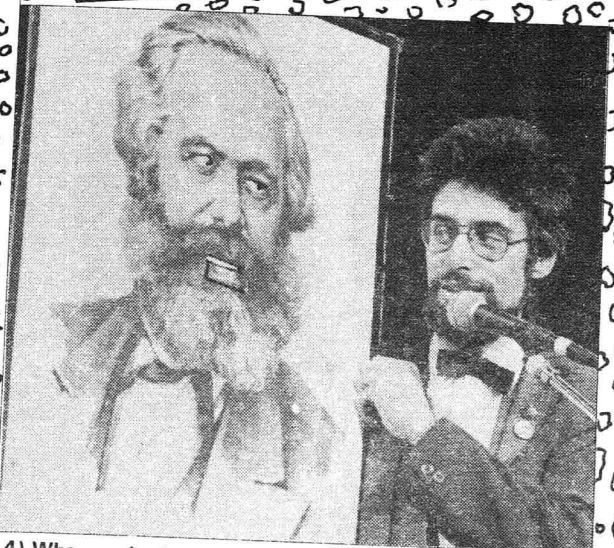
removed this year after 23 years in power?

Our leaders

- 1) Who claimed "We are the elite the chosen people, who will lead the protestant people to victory"?
- 2) Who was so confident during his campaign that: "I took a short holiday because I thought it was the last chance I would get for a holiday for some time. I thought I would be general secretary"?
- 3) Who received an award

from the right wing Tory backing "Aims of Industry" group with the citation "for his influence in promoting democracy and efficiency in the trade union movement"?

- 4) How much does Roy Hattersley reportedly earn as a journalist?
- 5) What did Roy Hattersley look forward to most at Labour Party National Executive meetings?
- 6) Who said "civil nuclear power has a legitimate role in any national energy programme"?



4) Who—and where?

1) Federation of Conservative Students. Inset Terry Dicks. Tory MP for Hayes and Harlington. 2) Rosemary Cooper. Liberal candidate in Knowsley North. 3) Soweto, South Africa. 4) Ian Southall, Marxist magician at Militant's rally. The gentleman on the left needs no introduction.

Photo quiz

1) Robert Sangster and Michael Dickinson. 2) Midlandsborough, Liverpool and Sampdoria (Italy). 3) Kiwis (or All Blacks), Wallabies and Pumas. 4) Greg Norman, Sevy Ballesteros and Bernard Langer.

Sport

District Council at an Orange march in Edinburgh—Labour nonetheless won the seat. Hattersley, as quoted in a Liberal election leaflet—employees. 2) Peter Bruinvels MP speaking against Clare Short's anti-porn bill. 3) Edwina Currie, new health minister. 4) Peter's predecessor as presenter of Weekend World, Brian Walden (ex Labour MP).

1) Tom Sawyer Labour NEC member. 2) Norman Tebbit Business. 3) In Conservative Newsline. 4) Charles Turnock to a witness during the Liverpool inquiry. 4) The correspondent from the "Communist" Party's organ Seven Days at the Militant Rally. 5) Roy Hattersley, as quoted in a Liberal election leaflet—employees. 2) Peter Bruinvels MP speaking against Clare Short's anti-porn bill. 3) Edwina Currie, new health minister. 4) Peter's predecessor as presenter of Weekend World, Brian Walden (ex Labour MP).

Our leaders

1) Sam Campbell then Labour leader of Midlothian during the Liverpool inquiry. 4) The correspondent from the "Communist" Party's organ Seven Days at the Militant Rally. 5) Roy Hattersley, as quoted in a Liberal election leaflet—employees. 2) Peter Bruinvels MP speaking against Clare Short's anti-porn bill. 3) Edwina Currie, new health minister. 4) Peter's predecessor as presenter of Weekend World, Brian Walden (ex Labour MP).

Did you know?

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FRANCE 1968

THE FRENCH government has been forced to beat a humiliating retreat in the face of a mass movement of students, workers and youth. These events recall the revolutionary explosions of 1968, when a protest which began among the students sparked off a general strike of 10 million workers and brought De Gaulle's government to the brink of collapse. We are reprinting an edited version of an article by CLARE DOYLE written in 1974 which looks back at the events of May 1968 and draws the political lessons.

On May 13th, one million workers demonstrated on the streets of Paris during an official 24 hour strike. By the following Tuesday 10 million workers were on strike (out of a total of 15 million, of whom only 2¼ million had been organised). Car and aircraft factories, theatres, farms, banks, mines, stations, schools, universities, shipyards, hotels, department stores, government departments, nuclear power stations, ships and even the Folies Bergere had been taken over and occupied.

Committees of workers, of peasants, of students, had sprung up everywhere. All broadcasting was under the control of the radio and television workers. The Army, navy and the police were reported to be "unreliable"; The forces of capital were paralysed and the head of state was nowhere to be seen!

As in 1936 - during the tremendous wave of sit-in strikes, when sailors marched on workers' demonstrations singing the *Internationale* - in this situation, the working class could have proceeded to take power peacefully.

The speed and force of the explosion in May '68, which left not one corner of French society untouched, can only be explained by the social tensions and contradictions that had accumulated during the ten years of "democratic" Bonapartist rule of De Gaulle.

Conditions inside many French factories - especially the huge car plants - belonged to the dark ages. Citroen had the reputation of running a penitentiary, not a factory. One third of its workers were immigrants, herded together in company hostels. At work, men of different nationalities were deliberately placed side by side to cut out talking.

Like Fords of America before the war, Citroen policed the production line with gangs of armed thugs who literally killed and maimed workers in the course of their duties.

Where they were organised in the trade unions "more and more workers - particularly the under-thirties who in May were the motor force of the working class - were bitterly dissatisfied with what their unions had done for them". That is how two eye-witnesses explained the direct action of the occupations and "the straw-filled dummies labelled 'capitalism' dangling from makeshift gallows in the factory yard". (McConville and Seale in *The French Revolution* 1968).

The students' battles only lifted the lid, put the spark to the tinder. They had their own very real grievances arising from the crisis in education - working class students forming only 10% of the total; grants being almost non-existent; a 20% failure rate; 50% of students being squeezed out before the end of their courses; widespread graduate unemployment; chronic overcrowding and squalid conditions in lecture halls and campus housing schemes; a rigid and outmoded educational and social regime. Their protests found

an immediate response in the ranks of the working class as well as in the middle class.

When universities were closed and police set in to smash up peaceful student demonstrations, the tide had turned. The illusion of calm and affluent development in France and of a quiescent working class was shattered.

From the very first days of barricades and street fighting, the students had the support of over 80% of the population of Paris. When a demonstration on May 6th was viciously attacked by riot police (CRS) and barricades were set up for the first time since 1944, Parisians opened their doors to the wounded and sheltered the fugitives from the CRS truncheons and the rifle butts of the mobile police.

They poured water from their windows to relieve the worst effects of the tear gas and other gases used against the demonstrators. Even many of the "professional" middle class and a number of Gaullist deputies, supported the demands for reform and protested at the over-reaction of the Government.

The brutality of the CRS, especially after the ORTF workers had insisted that film of it be shown on TV, roused the anger and indignation of the working class. Young workers in particular, straining at the leash to do battle with the Government on their own demands, identified with the students and took heart from the cracks that their actions appeared to be opening up in the Gaullist monolith.

Schools on strike

By the end of the first week of May, universities were being occupied and lecturers were on strike, against the student arrests and for drastic reforms in education. Secondary schools were closed as teachers and pupils walked out and joined the demonstrations in their thousands. 13 year old school pupils were actually locked in their classrooms by less sympathetic teachers, to keep them away from the demonstrations!

But, most significantly, young workers were joining the student protests and themselves taking strike action - at Sud Aviation, against redundancies; in the Post Office, for higher wages.

The Communist leadership of the largest trade union federation in France - the CGT - had initially condemned the movement in the universities. The CP paper, *Humanite* denounced the student leaders as "adventurists", "false revolutionaries" and even "tools of the bourgeoisie".

But under the pressure of events the students were forced to turn (belatedly) to the factories for support and, for fear of being outflanked, the CGT leaders were forced to change course and call official demonstrations in an attempt to regain control of the movement.

Together with the ex-Catholic TU federation - the CFDT - the Left Parties and the Teachers' Federation, they called a 24 hour general strike for Monday 13th May. Intended as a safety valve to let off the steam accumulated in the depths of the working class, as in 1934, it had the opposite effect. The massive turnouts - 50,000 in Marseilles,

40,000 in Toulouse, 1 million in Paris - only emboldened the workers.

The next day, the men of Sud Aviation returned to their factory at Nantes only to take it over, lock up the director and appeal to all workers to support them and follow their example.

With no official backing, occupations spread like wildfire, culminating in the total paralysis at the end of the third week. Against the wishes of the leaders of the CP (the mass party in France), action committees were set up in various localities, complementing the committees of occupation in the work-places - of workers in the factories; doctors, nurses, students and patients in the hospitals; peasants in the farms and depots; students in the schools, colleges and universities. A students' workers' and peasants' council literally governed the whole area of Loire-Atlantique, around the town of Nantes - controlling traffic and supplies and retailing food. Peasant unions agreed to feed the strikers; workers and students helped with the production of food.

Prices were slashed. Teachers set up nurseries for strikers' children. Local police and government officials had to stand aside and witness the development of a potentially far more democratic and effective way of doing things than that to which they were accustomed.

By May 22nd, even undertakers and weather-forecasters had joined in. Artists worked round the clock to produce posters and analyse the role of art in society; the Law faculty "rejected" society; the police trade union reported a "dangerous situation" as members were in sympathy with the workers' demands and threatened strike action themselves; peasant organisations called a demonstration for the 24th; film makers went on strike and closed down the Cannes film festival; writers and architects drew up plans for the new society; footballers revolted and magistrates organised!

In De Gaulle's absence, Pompidou had desperately attempted to make concessions to the students and announced a referendum to be held on participation.

Reactionary Committees for the Defence of the Republic were set up, but a demonstration organised by fascists - Occident - could muster no more than 2,000.

The small Unified Socialist Party now spoke in terms of "workers' power", the CFDT in terms of "democracy", but the CP insisted that the struggle was strictly limited to wages and conditions - the "immediate demands" of the 40 hour week, a higher minimum wage and better social security.

Just like the trade union "leaders" in Britain in 1926, when the representatives of the ruling class were talking in terms of "Civil War" and "revolution", they put the telescope to their blind eye and denied that the struggle was even political!

In the first flush of the May events, the Communist Party had published a full programme of nationalisation of the banks and monopolies under democratic workers' control in a situation where "the problem of power remains more than ever posed" (*Humanite*, Special Edition)

But it was rapidly dropped and, as the Observer pointed out, the CP appeared on the same side of the barricades as the ruling class, attempting to rein back the movement onto a "safe course".



1968 - (above) students confront the police on the streets of Paris

Just at the peak of the revolutionary strike movement, the CGT and CFDT leaders declared their desire to negotiate with the Government - with a Government that didn't exist, that had no power in society, that had almost gone into hiding!

Power was within the grasp of the working class. It needed only the linking up of the committees locally, regionally and nationally, to provide the structure for a workers' government, with all representatives elected and subject to recall, from being instruments of struggle, these committees would become the organs for control and management by the masses.

On the basis of the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy, the wheels of industry could have been set in motion, now freed from the fetters of the profit motive and geared to the needs of the mass of workers, expressed through their committees - linked with those of the housewives, students, peasants, soldiers and small businessmen - and carried out on the basis of a thoroughly co-ordinated plan of production.

Barricade battles

The failure of the mass working class party in France to base itself on this perspective led to severe divisions in its organisations. Andre Barjonet, one of its leaders in the CGT actually resigned in disgust and joined the PSU

"In every cell and in every factory men asked whether the Party was not missing the chance of a life-time". (McConville and Seale).

In spite of the CP leadership's attempts to keep them apart, workers joined students on the barricades as battles became increasingly

bitter and violent. At last on the 24th de Gaulle made a public statement, but only for a few minutes, staking his future on the referendum - a future which he mentioned to the American Ambassador the next day, "depends not on us but on God"!

It was clear even to the ruling class that the referendum was a non-starter and it was declared "unconstitutional". It could not have been carried out anyway as Belgian printers refused to scab by printing the forms! De Gaulle appeared to be finished.

Even civil servants were earnestly debating how power was to be transferred and yet Seguy, General Secretary of the CGT, emerged from 3 days of talks with the employers and the Government at the Rue de Grenelle, on 27 May, unashamedly pleased with an economic settlement to sell to the workers - increases in basic wages from 35% to 72% and the biggest benefits achieved for the working class since the Liberation.

But even this appeared to be a non-starter. Mass meetings of workers rejected it out of hand. One young worker reminded a reporter that they had been making demands for "a change in Government", too. The agreement was not political. Workers waited to see what the next step would be.

Waldeck Rochet had announced the CP's determination to be included in the Government. But repeating the words of Thorez in 1936 when he evacuated the occupied factories under the slogan of "republican legality", the CP leader was insisting "We must know how to end a strike."

And this, just at a time when the "strong state" himself was packing his bags muttering "The game's up!" He handed to his aide the key to the

'Power was within the grasp of the working class'



1986—students take to the streets again and (top) a wreath in memory of Malik Ousseki, killed by the police.

safe in which he kept his political testament and fled out of Paris. Radio reporters were announcing that General de Gaulle was "lost".

The following day — 30th May — an apparently miraculously transformed de Gaulle reappeared in Paris. A rapid and highly organised trip to Baden Baden to see General Massu, had assured him the support of 70,000 French troops in Germany (probably on the basis of a "gentleman's agreement" including an amnesty for the ultra-right OAS leaders still in jail). The Army Minister, Messmer, had previously warned de Gaulle that it would be "unwise" to ask the ordinary troops to fire on civilians.

On his return, De Gaulle immediately announced the dissolution of the National Assembly and new elections. He launched a vicious smear campaign against the "reds", "the threat of a totalitarian dictatorship", etc.

Tanks and troops were already forming up around Paris and a right wing demonstration attracted 1 million demonstrators

Negotiations along the lines of the Greville agreement started up everywhere. Secret ballots and a gradual return to work, encouraged by the Communist Party, were the order of the day.

In the days that followed violence and even deaths occurred as police moved in to clear factories where workers still held out. Victimisations and witchhunts were carried through. Several of the left grouplets were banned and their leaders arrested. All demonstrations were also banned.

How could this complete reversal in the balance of forces come about? As explained by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, the scales can stay poised for the taking of power by the working class for only a brief

space of time — sometimes months, sometimes weeks, sometimes for only a day. If the correct leadership, at the head of a mass revolutionary party is lacking, the precious opportunity can be missed for a whole period, and reaction can gain the upper hand.

Even the Economist pointed out that all the other conditions for a successful revolution existed in those few days of May 1968.

No leadership

First, the ruling class was in crisis. Its state was suspended in mid-air and panicking, De Gaulle had fled the country. Secondly, the middle class was in turmoil, looking for escape and allying itself with the working class. The third condition, the readiness of the workers to fight to the finish, was in no doubt whatsoever.

The whole great movement for a change of society had surged up from below. The capitalists of the world trembled in their shoes. But the workers of France still looked to the leaders of the Communist Party and the trade unions. And they refused to lead. The CGT had not once even declared its support for the mass strike and the occupations.

The old arguments about the "situation not being revolutionary" and the army being too strong were trotted out to cover up the treachery of the Communist Party.

They just don't hold water. At the height of the movement, soldiers would not have fired on students and workers. "I think their methods may be a bit rough" said one "But I am a worker's son myself". 120,000 out of 168,000 were conscripts. A

revolutionary leadership could have cut through any "ring of steel" as it did in Russia, on the basis of an appeal to the troops.

But, that fourth condition, the revolutionary leadership, was missing. The Communist Party greeted the calling of Assembly elections — an irrelevance at the time — as "an opportunity for the people to speak". It let them off the hook, as far as leading the revolution was concerned. On the other hand, once the movement had subsided and no mass alternative to the ballot box existed, a boycott of the elections, as advocated by the JCR, was also meaningless.

A real campaign for a Socialist-Communist Government, pledged to a programme of nationalising the monopolies under workers' control and management should have been waged. When the vicious propaganda about anarchy and disruption was thrown at the CP, they should have counterposed the order of the planned economy against the anarchy of capitalism.

Instead they vied with the capitalist parties for "respectability." To sections of a disappointed working class as well as the middle class, the traditional representatives of law and order seemed a better bet.

The election, with a high turnout of 80% showed a considerable polarisation. The Gaullists gained 1 million votes and the CP and Left Federation each lost about 600,000. The Centre Democrats also lost 600,000 votes. But the PSU, to the left of the CP, and with a considerably bolder policy during the May events, nearly doubled its vote. For similar reasons, the CFDT increased its membership far faster than the CGT during and after the strike movement.

The awakening of millions of workers to political struggle actually meant an increase in membership of

the Communist Party, in spite of its betrayals.

The May events of 1968 ended in both victory and defeat for the French working class. The massive increases in wages were to be eaten away by inflation within a year. Few, if any, guarantees had been secured on hours of work, security of employment, social services and other benefits.

In terms of power, the working class had, for the moment, been defeated and Gaullism had been granted a temporary lease of life, politically and economically. But paradoxically the workers organisations which were responsible for this defeat, emerged strengthened and reinforced.

The experience of the May revolution is never far beneath the surface. In the events that lie ahead, hundreds of thousands of workers will see that the only solution to their problems is a democratic Socialist France in a democratic Socialist Europe.

The great struggles of May 1968 were not for nothing. The cadres for French socialism will be built on a study of this experience, as the cadres of Russian Bolshevism were built on the study of the defeated revolution of 1905. Through this, Lenin prepared the victory of 1917. Similarly Marxists must prepare for France's "October" on the basis of a thorough analysis of the social and political defeat of the most promising revolutionary movement in the history of the working class.

Unless the advanced workers have assimilated these lessons, the working class will suffer graver and more serious defeats in the great storms that impend in France, Britain and throughout the world.



that: "Most West In-

know?

at their recent Orange Walk videos prizes, sung songs glorify the Yorkshire Ripper and for an end to the laws nearest? party in this year's local elections hoped to attract by explaining electors' to them? may elderly people died of thrombosis last year (to thousand)? from Turkey which Europe has the biggest population? cost £26,400 at and would have made turn in his grave?

horse owner and trainer who publicised split last year a £14 million? Souness is now manager of Rangers and in Scotland. Name clubs he has played

the names of the national teams of these - New Zealand, Argentina? the top three golfers, according to the ranking system?

the Millant Rally. (5) Roy the Party's organ *Seven Days* at from the "Communist" query. (4) The correspondent during the Liverpool in- Charles Turnock to a witness Labour NEC member in *Conservative Newsline*. (3) member. (2) Norman Tebbit (1) Tom Sawyer Labour NEC

Militant Walden (ex Labour MP). of Weekend World, Brian's predecessor as presenter new health minister. (4) Far-porn bill. (3) Edwina Currie, against Clare Short's anti-Brunel's MP speaking employees. (2) Peter (1) £1 billion and 10,000 Right wing



Canada, India

Canadian labor's opportunity

CANADIAN LABOR is on the offensive. In 1985 wages rose above the cost of living for the first time in five years, and 100,000 new members were recruited into the unions. Strikes have been raging from British Columbia (BC) in the west to Newfoundland in the east.

Workers have not been intimidated by anti-union laws. Over a thousand have been jailed this year for pursuing their right to picket.

Canadian labor has a great record of struggle. In 1983, a partial general strike in BC stopped the right-wing government in its tracks. In 1985, anger against Conservative Prime Minister Mulroney's call for de-indexation of pensions forced him to retreat.

The inability of the Conservatives to defeat the working class is the main reason for the crisis of the Mulroney government. The power and militancy of the working class is also what lies behind the rising support for the Canadian labor party—the New Democratic Party (NDP).

Current opinion polls give the NDP around 25 per cent of decided voters. It leads the polls in every western province except Alberta, where it is the official opposition and its vote in the last election increased by 11 per cent.

In the Maritimes the party now commands a healthy 20 per cent. In Quebec, where it has never won a seat, polls place the NDP ahead of the Conservatives, who have 60 MPs in the province.

Pact with Liberals

The partial exception is Ontario, where the NDP has signed a two-year "agenda for reform" with the big-business Liberals. Here its support has stagnated.

The general rise in support for the NDP shows that growing numbers of workers and youth, and sections of the middle class, are looking to the NDP for an alternative to the Tories and the Liberals.

However, if this process is not to be delayed, the leaders of the NDP and organized labor must clearly put forward the demand for a majority NDP government. If this is not done, there is a danger that the Liberals could be swept to power at the next election.

This is partly what happened at the last election. The NDP did not put itself forward as an alternative government. The desire to get rid of the Liberals, who had presided over the 1980-82 recession, was so great that the Conservatives were swept in.

For an NDP government to be able to solve the problems caused by capitalism, however, it must

By a member of NDP
Youth—Hamilton
Reprinted from the US
socialist paper, Labor
Militant

have socialist policies.

Right now there are about 113 corporations controlling nearly 85 per cent of Canada's business, trade etc. An NDP government would have to act decisively against these forces, through an enabling Act to nationalise the top monopolies under workers' control and management.

Failing this, it would be forced to retreat from its program under pressure from the corporations, and end up imposing austerity measures on the working class.

Since 1961 the NDP has formed governments in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, BC and the Yukon. In most cases, important steps forward were taken. However, the reforms were only possible on the basis of economic growth in Canada and internationally during the post-war boom period. This period has now ended.

Today, capitalism can no longer afford similar policies of reform, and gains achieved in the past are being taken back as the economic crisis develops.

In 1972, as the boom period drew to a close, the NDP won the election in BC. Under the impact of recession, it was forced by big business to confront labor, to the point of anti-union legislation.

This is an indication of what would happen if the NDP is elected on a Federal basis, and allows big business to remain in control of the economy.

The labor leaders are unwilling to put forward the demand for a majority NDP government because they have no confidence in the ability of the working class to end capitalism and build an alternative socialist society. Instead, they see politics as being confined to the debating chambers of the provincial and federal parliaments.

It is this approach that has led the Ontario NDP into the pact with the big business party, the Liberals.

The Liberals will rest on the NDP, steal a few of their more popular policies, seize the best time for an election and go for a majority of their own. If they gain this, they will reverse any reforms that were made and attack the living



Above and below: On the picket lines at Gainers.

A THOUSAND workers at Gainers Swift meats in Edmonton, Alberta, have been on strike for seven months after the bosses threatened to get "replacement labour" in for half the wage. Scabs have been bussed in, many of them paroled prisoners. Riot police have physically attacked pickets, with hundreds of arrests and convictions, and through the courts with injunctions naming hundreds of individuals.

The strikers are facing the most draconian anti-labor laws in Canada. They need your support. Send messages and donations to: UFCW, c/o Vicky Beauchamp, 12116-61st St, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

standards of the working class.

Supporters of the pact in Ontario say it was the only way out of the impasse in Ontario politics. *In fact it has maintained the impasse in Ontario politics—the impasse being two large capitalist parties which masquerade at being different, and so keep the NDP out of power.*

Independent program

Coalitions and alliances with capitalist parties do not strengthen labor parties, they weaken them. The NDP's own history shows that its greatest success comes when it stands on an independent program.

The CCF in Ontario in 1943 went from no seats to 34 when it stood on a radical, independent program. Many of its demands were implemented by the Conservatives and Liberals in government for fear of the potential of the CCF.

In 1979-80 the NDP stood on its own and it was NDP MP Bob Rae who moved the vote of no-confidence that brought down the Progressive Conservative government.

The party won 32 seats the most in its history.

Both in terms of winning more votes, and in the interests of the working class, the only policy for

THE NDP is the traditional party of the Canadian working class. Its origins go back to the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, founded in 1932-33 and recognised by 1943 as labor's political arm.

In the late 1950s the newly-formed Canadian

Labor Congress used its power to strengthen labor's political voice. Under the auspices of the CLC, the CCF was brought together with delegates from union locals and left-wing groups throughout Canada. The NDP was formed in 1961.

the NDP is to stand alone on a socialist programme. The pact with the Liberals in Ontario should immediately be broken.

When the workers move into struggle, they move to their traditional organisations. This is a law which has been demonstrated again and again in history. In the developing economic crisis, workers and youth will be radicalised. This will translate into growing support for the NDP.

In the coming period the NDP could form a majority government. While campaigning for this, the rank and file must also fight for

elect a majority NDP government which can solve the problems of Canadian society by ending capitalism.

In the course of this struggle, the NDP must appeal to American workers to break from the big business Democratic Party and build a labor party on socialist policies. In this way a united struggle of Canadian and US workers can be built against the common enemy, the US and Canadian corporations, and a socialist federation of North America can be created as a step towards a socialist world.

Support Indian workers

"THERE IS a police van parked outside the gate. The entrance is covered with posters and red flags. The office staff start their day with slogans and go about their duties with badges of workers' solidarity pinned to their lapels."

The scene, described by a journalist, is the Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore. Workers, organised in the IIM Employees' Association, have been campaigning for seven months for the following demands:

- Workers' participation in management;
- No ad hoc or arbitrary appointments;
- Scientific manpower planning;
- No re-employment of pensioners;
- Proper implementation of arbitration awards.

Management has resorted to blatant intimidation tactics against the

union, including wage cuts, false criminal charges and suspension of activists. On 5 July management got a court injunction barring union activity in and around the Institute.

But the workers remain determined. They have taken their campaign into the broader labour movement. An activist reports:

"Hundreds of trade unions from far and near have sent solidarity messages, and several trade union and peasant leaders have come up to enthuse the workers. A Solidarity Committee with representatives from over 40 trade unions has been formed."

This achievement is an indication of the enormous response that can be gained, through determined campaigning, among workers across the length and breadth of India.

Please send protests to: Mr J. Philip, Director, Indian Institute of Management, Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore 560 076, India.

Copies and messages of support to: Secretary, IIMEA, Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore 560 076, India.

From correspondents in Bangalore



'Now to throw out the right!'

WEDNESDAY 10 December. Another massive demonstration on the streets of Paris. 600,000 or more are packed solid in the boulevards and squares, hanging from statues and chanting slogans in spite of calls for silence by some organisers.

Passengers in passing trains rush to the windows to wave to the demonstrators. The movement has enormous public sympathy.

Political ideas are snapped up. 7,000 copies of a special broadsheet produced by the Marxist paper, *L'Avance Socialiste*, are sold, above all because of the headline: "Now to throw out the right!"

Yet again, hundreds of thousands more marched in other towns and cities. This time, in Paris and elsewhere, there are as many workers in the ranks as there are "veteran" demonstrators from the schools and colleges.

Union support for the movement was forced on the leaders by their own members. One of the favourite slogans is now "Students, workers' solidarity".

The right-wing Chirac government has been routed. It has not only withdrawn the Devaquet plan, proposing attacks on education, but it has also cancelled an entire special session of Parliament that planned to introduce a packet of reactionary laws, including attacks on immigrant workers, privatisation of prisons, etc.

Chirac's hopes for the Presidency now look done for.

A "bitter victory" is how the youth and workers see it. The march was partly a victory parade—and it's a long time since there has been one of them—but partly an angry protest at the human cost.

One student dead, one in a coma, a number maimed and beaten. "Never again" is the slogan in Paris; and linked with the name of CRS (riot police) victim Malik Ousseine appears the name Abdel—the victim of a racist attack last week.

From a correspondent in Paris

"We're not in Chile!" shout the marchers in Montpellier. The crowd's confidence is shown by the slogan addressed to the hated Interior Minister: "Pasqua, it's the street that makes the law, not you!"

Students and school students are conscious of the need to maintain the strength they have found. During the movement they improvised the most democratic of organisations. The national coordinating committee is made up of representatives from all the strike committees, which renew their mandate at least once a week.

The French workers, who will undoubtedly move into action, possibly within months, may well emulate these organs of struggle.

Union support

It must not be forgotten that it was the threat of general strike action by the working class that made the government capitulate. As soon as the CGT (trade union federation) declared its support, Chirac drew back.

The French bosses saw the prospect of the revolutionary events of May 1968 being repeated. And so have some trade union leaders! Edmond Maire, General Secretary of the Socialist-led CFDT, nervously declared: "We musn't repeat the mistake of May 1968."

In response to pressure from below, Maire supported the demonstration at first—but only as long as it was over by 4.30! Then, while his national committee was meeting to give the union's support, he told the press that, since the Deva-



Above and below: 10 December demonstration

quet law was withdrawn, there was no point in demonstrating!

But this didn't stop CFDT members turning out, and at 4.30 they shouted: "We're still here, Edmond! Where are you?"

"We've won... but the problems still remain", says

Christophe, a member of Jussieu university strike committee. The government has only postponed its legislation until the Assembly reconvenes in April. They have more attacks up their sleeve—for example, a new round of cuts in social services.

With the confidence this victory has given, not only to students but also to workers, the response to such measures will surely be explosive.

This movement has had an echo all over Europe. A new '68 would be even more contagious. The strike

movements of this year show that a Europe-wide general strike would be entirely possible in today's conditions.

As someone has written on the walls of Jussieu: "Nothing is as it was before."

"Students remain vigilant"

"FOLLOWING GENERAL meetings of UNEF-ID (students' union) on 22 November we decided on a general strike at the university of Clermont Ferrand.

In less than two hours we saw a strike supported by more than 80 per cent of the (faculties of) Letters and Human Sciences. It spread to almost 100 per cent in all the university, except the faculties of Law and Economics.

It was on a scale never seen before at Clermont Ferrand, and even those who experienced May 1968 had never seen so many on the streets.

Following the confrontations in Paris with the CRS, the student movement—which up to then had been "apolitical"—became radicalised and demanded: "Pasqua resign!"

The movement will live on in the history of the university. Inside the university today, even if we have won the withdrawal of Devaquet's laws, the students remain vigilant. We've organised commissions to study the government's different plans."

Karine, a strike committee member at Clermont Ferrand university, speaks to a *Militant* reporter.



Zambia

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund has more blood on its hands. In Zambia's copperbelt, at least a dozen have died in furious mass protests against a 120 per cent rise in the price of maize meal, a staple food, resulting from cuts imposed by President Kaunda at the IMF's command. A general strike shut down the main towns for at least two days.

Faced with what threatened to develop into a revolutionary situation, Kaunda backed down within hours of the unrest spreading to the capital, Lusaka.

The demonstrators, mainly youth, came from the impoverished shantytowns on the outskirts of prosperous mining towns. Troops patrolled the streets but it is not clear how much of the surrounding area remained under their control.

The Defence Minister found it necessary to reaf-

firm the armed forces' loyalty to Kaunda and his ruling UNIP party.

But on the Copperbelt, demonstrators singled out the homes of top UNIP officials for attack. Food shops were ransacked, as well as luxury restaurants, car showrooms and other symbols of the wealth of the ruling elite.

Zambia's crisis is rooted in the crisis of capitalism internationally. The price of copper—90 per cent of Zambia's exports—fell by 60 per cent between 1974 and 1984. Kaunda's government went to the IMF for loans in order to stay solvent, and built up a foreign debt of \$4.8 billion.

Debt repayments will swallow up an estimated 70 per cent of export earnings for the rest of the decade. It is to pay the bankers that the "humanist" Kaunda, self styled champion of the South African freedom struggle, is forced to take more and more from Zambia's workers and peasants.

"Greece and France together"

IN AN unprecedented development, Greek school teachers of all grades went on strike together with their students on 11 December. Thousands demonstrated as schools were closed down across the country.

105,000 teachers were involved. The strike was provoked by education cuts by the PASOK (Socialist) government. Spontaneous opposition developed, with strike committees formed in schools and several occupations.

The call for a national school students' committee has been raised by supporters of the Greek Marxist paper, *Xekinima*.

In the universities, students compelled their union to call a rally in support of the French students. Despite poor preparation by the CP-controlled leadership, and their failure to link

the demo to the Greek students' own movement, 10,000 turned out. The majority supported PASOK, and combined support for the French movement with demands for change in Greece.

The mood was summed up in the slogan: "Greece and France together!"

Just a few months ago the youth appeared indifferent to politics, and the workers' movement was at a low ebb. Now Greece is moving towards a new explosion of workers' struggle, and the students have clearly been affected by the rising strike wave.

The students' union has been forced to call the 16 December demonstration to link students' and workers' demands together. The national trade union leadership has called a general strike on 15 January.

Maltreatment of mentally ill

Dear Comrades,
After seeing a recent TV programme on psychiatric hospitals, I was appalled at the way people who suffer some form of mental illness are treated.
One former patient of a psychiatric hospital commented on the hypocrisy of those people who criticise Russia for giving 'normal' people drugs against their will and other treatment. He said that the situation is the same in Britain, with the majority wanting to discuss

their problems. While the doctors' only solution was to prescribe drugs to "cure" people.
Recent surveys indicate that nearly one in four of the adult population will at some time in their lives experience some form of mental illness. The Tories' only solution is to make things even worse by closing down psychiatric hospitals with patients often ending up unemployed, in sub-standard housing, frustrated and alienated from the community in

which they live.
Over 190,000 adults are admitted each year to psychiatric hospitals it is vital Labour takes up this issue and implements socialist policies to alleviate the immense suffering which the majority of psychiatric patients suffer through no fault of their own.
Yours fraternally
Dylan Murphy
Secretary Holme Valley
Labour Party
Young Socialists

Left unity in Cohse

Dear Comrades,
In issue 826 I was dismayed to hear Kevin Mullins was standing down as Cohse BL elected candidate for Cohse assistant general secretary, to safeguard left unity.
This came as a shock after Kevin had done so well in the general secretary election, coming third, beating two national officers.
Left unity is essential in Cohse which is right wing controlled and the left is

small, any split will only aid the right wing. The need for a fighting leadership in Cohse is great to support and defend thousands of Cohse members under attack from Tory cuts through privatisation.
Kevin's decision was the right one and it shows where his commitment lies.
Yours fraternally
S. Pitman
Cohse 1073 Branch
(Personal Capacity)

Jaruzelski Marxist?

Dear Comrades,
In your editorial of 21 November (Issue 824) headed "Triumph for Marxism" you wrote: "As events in Poland showed the workers will overcome all obstacles and take up the struggle and when they do it is on the programme of Lenin and Trotsky, for workers' democracy not a return to capitalism."
When I visited Poland during the epic struggle of Solidarity versus "Stalinism" I saw no signs of a Marxist-Leninist programme: The national flag accompanied by the blue and white flag of the Catholic church flew from the rooftops of enterprises, factories and shipyards. The Gdansk shipyard gate was garlanded with flowers and adorned with pictures of the Pope, the Virgin Mary and Pilsudski. A statue of Lenin had been defaced by the workers.

Lech Walesa said that he wanted to see a Japanese type capitalist economy in Poland. Other sections of Solidarity called for a West European capitalist economy. The major demands of Solidarity were 1) that the Catholic church gain access to the media and 2) that the Catholic religion be taught in state schools. Was all this the programme of Lenin and Trotsky?

In this country at the time the British "left-wing" newspapers were lining up with the capitalist press in support of Solidarity. Solidarity was not a trade union, Solidarity was a counter-revolutionary organisation used by Western Imperialism to try to destabilise the Polish Peoples' Republic and to destroy socialism and prise Poland out of the Warsaw Pact.

The smashing of Solidarity by General Jaruzelski was a REAL triumph for Marxism.
Yours fraternally
James Duray
Peterborough

Letters

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

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

Tory plans to sell-off council estates

Dear Comrades,
Regarding the article in *Militant* 822 "A place to live" by Jen Pickard. Although the article was good it did not mention the Housing and Planning bill that is law as from 7

November 1986. This bill has been practically unopposed, with the exception of Dave Nellist and a handful of others.
This bill's objective is to privatise all council estates. What is the point in com-

plaining about repairs, when the Tories get their way there will be no council houses to repair.
Yours fraternally
J Gately
Manchester

The great gas swindle

Dear Comrades,
The recent British Gas sell-off has been presented by the Tories and their newspapers as a flood of ordinary people "buying a stake in Britain." But people can see how it works in practice.
Where I work in a Liverpool hospital, most of the ancillary and junior staff are too busy getting their Christmas money together to even think of tying up several weeks' wages in British Gas.
The worst example I've heard of is a stockbroker in

London who applied for £10,000 worth of British Gas shares, using 11 people's addresses. Some of these people are unemployed; the stockbroker 'earns' £2,000 a week so he is very generously giving them 15 per cent of his profits.
The Economist was quite right when they said that the Tories' privatisation has been 'theft disguised as robbery'.
Yours fraternally
Andy Ford
Liverpool

Dear Comrades,
I'm sure you must have been waiting with bated breath for the TV appearance of British Gas' elusive 'Sid' last week! However what the government didn't tell Sid was that the Island of Skye, where most of the adverts for the 'great gas swindle' were filmed, has never been supplied with gas!
Romantic pictures of Scottish islands in order to sell off our nationalised industries are acceptable to the Tories—but the supply of a much-needed fuel to the islands is not.
Yours fraternally
Tommy Watt
Catton Labour Party

Private health rip-off

Dear Comrades,
Re. Jeremy Birch's letter in *Militant* 826. How can the Labour leaders go on ignoring what the Tories are doing to education, housing, health—indeed all basic services as he says.
It is a different story of course if one is "covered" by BUPA! A regular buyer of *Militant* was astounded to receive a bill stating "£130 a day for his wife's bed along with a menu enclosed—Lunch £3.50, Tea £2.50, Pot of Tea 50p. The company he works for have managed to get his wife into a London hospital for an operation. As he says, without indulging in a cuppa when he goes to visit, the total cost is £2000!
Still this government says "The Health Service is safe in their hands!"
Yours fraternally
Anne Ursell
Sittingbourne LP

No retreat on youth demands



Part of the Paris student demonstration. Banner reads: "These men represent social injustice, we condemn the violence of this state which terrorises immigrants, unemployed, workers and youth".
Photo: Dave Sinclair

Dear Comrades,
The mass youth demonstration in Paris 27 November against the cuts in education imposed by the present right wing government in France, is an example of the role young people will play in the struggle for socialism.
This demo was organised by a wide political leadership who will be tested when future action has to be taken against cuts as they are being implemented. If they retreat they will lose faith from a large layer of working class students who will be most affected by the cuts.
The Socialist Party of France, especially the youth section, must organise all sections of working class youth into political struggle to strengthen the party. Kinno, Mitterand and the right wing should take note of Lenin and their youth sections. Socialism will not be won without them.
Yours fraternally
Mike John
Gwent

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.
- Bumper *Militant* Children's Party. Saturday 3 January 2-6pm John Marshall Hall, Blackfriars Rd. Games, shows, 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.

- 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) Siritunge Jayasuriya (NSSP politburo) K Sivapalan (Trincomalee Citizens Committee) Friends House Room 7 and 8, Euston Rd, London NW1.



Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin, Trotsky, Marx and Engels posters. 80p each, from *Militant* 3/13 Hepscoot Rd. London E9 5HB.



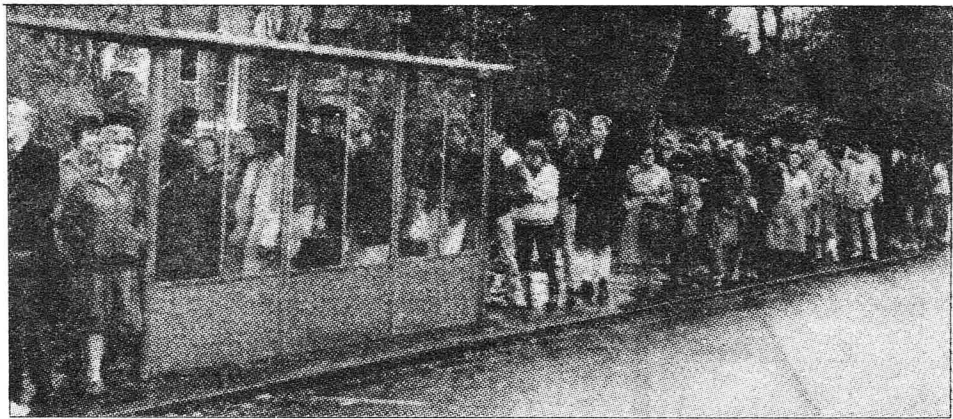
GREETINGS

The *Militant* Editorial Board sends the compliments of the season to all readers, and looks forward to getting the Tories out in '87. The next issue of *Militant* will appear on 9 January.



Unwanted gifts

Dear Comrades,
If you are stuck for an idea for Christmas presents then look no further!
For a mere £17.75 buy your friends or relatives a teddy bear wearing an 'I love Labour' T-shirt! "Ted's also packed another three T-shirts" says the blurb, "to give a change of clothes to suit the political climate!"...and would you believe it one of these 'bears' the slogan 'Join the cuddly left'.
Also available due to 'popular demand' is a 'specially commissioned' photograph of Neil Kinnock 'suitable for display in the home, office, Labour club' and probably countless other places much more appropriate for our 'cuddly leader'! In two sizes, this will set you back a tidy £13.95 or £8.35!
Other gifts include a hip flask with party motif—for some MPs and Trade Union leaders perhaps?!
Personally I'd much prefer a copy of the *Militant* 1987 calendar or a portrait of one of the working class!
Yours fraternally
Emma Phillips
Springburn LPYS



North west bus revolt

Liverpool

ON SATURDAY 1,400 Liverpool bus drivers employed by Merseybus, held a one-day strike. One busdriver said the mood in the six Liverpool garages was "like a tinderbox."

T&G bus official Ken Peeney, said: "This strike is over the conditions imposed on the men by de-regulation. It's against the cuts in reporting in and paying in time and in particular at the extension of maximum working time from seven hours forty-eight minutes to eight hours. Basically it also means more buses on the road for the travelling public."

More lightning strikes will be called if the situation is not resolved. Many busdrivers also expressed concern that Crossville and Ribble buses work the Liverpool route during the strike.

Unless united action is achieved bus workers can be divided against each other by the bosses. Many T&G stewards are calling for national action to organise against de-regulation. Calls are being made for a special one-day conference of bus stewards to organise a one-day national strike as the beginning of a revived campaign against the Tory bus cuts.

90 per cent fare increase?

The hot breath of Tory 'competition' has brought chaos to the lives of bus-users as buses failed to turn up. In the first month 12,000 complaints have been received, so-called 'hot-lines' have been jammed by irate callers.

A deliberate political act of sabotage has smashed a cheap, useful public service. Liverpool's bus service has been smashed on the altar of monetarism. Further cuts in services will come in when all routes are re-registered on 26 January. Many routes will disappear.

More to go on 26 January

The fares are in chaos. The subsidised services mean that on some routes you can pay anything from 60p to £1.30. Yet already the anticipated fares are not being raised. This could mean more garage closures.

On 26 January with re-regulation some areas will lose their buses.

Huge cuts will take place as a result of Tory plans for funding of the Merseyside Transport System (buses, ferries and the airport) which are £71m this year, £67m next year and £50m the year after. Experts believe this would mean a 90 per cent fare increase, a 10 per cent cut in services and the abolition of pensioner's passes, replaced by £50 in tokens.

A mass campaign must be launched now by the Labour Party, a pledge must be given to restore all cuts.

Private companies can put in a 42 day note to run services. Already they're monitoring bus queues to see where they can clean up.

When you consider that people pay 44 pence in the £ in their rates for transport they're being doubly penalised with the massive fare increases.

PETER GUY, Walton TGWU bus shop steward in Liverpool, talked to Richard Knights about the effect of deregulation on Liverpool's bus service.

The first day was chaos, drivers didn't know what was going on. They'd lost ten minutes reporting in time and paying in time, with a 20 per cent reduction in running times. No fare books were made out. There was a block of fare tables with letters along side them but no key to what the letters meant.

It was virtually charge what you like on the first day. On the road we were virtually information desks with passengers not knowing what the fare was, where the bus was going or what number bus they wanted.

The 20 per cent reduction in running time was plain bad management. We're meant to leave and arrive at the terminus within five minutes of the target time. On the first day there were

more out of service buses running than in service.

Timetables were hard to find. The distribution was deplorable, there was a complete lack of publicity. Now the problems are really emerging. One route, the 101, goes from Vauxhall to Toxteth. It's timed for 50 minutes, which is impossible. You'd have to drive like a maniac. There's no terminus for the route, so there's no canteen and no toilet facilities.

Some of the timings are way out. There's four buses servicing a route when there should be six. Frustration boils over, particularly when people are waiting to go to somewhere like a hospital. On the third day one driver suffered a heart attack. Cuts have been made in the maintenance fleet, one driver was left for over seven hours when his bus broke down.

By Richard Knights



Peter Guy and Ken Peeney, quoted below and above left, at Walton bus garage.

Bus Stop News

One 14 year-old has been earning 50p a trip directing lost bus drivers around Wythenshawe. The local Northenden garage may have to be reopened after three months because the other garages cannot take the extra buses which will be needed to end the chaos in South Manchester.

While Manchester is being re-haunted by the horrific tales of child kidnap, torture and murders by 'Moors Murderers' Hindley and Brady, the bus chaos means children are being left to hang around in the dark for hours after school.

The following story was told by one angry mother in Newton Heath after she'd contacted the police to find her 11 year-old daughter Michelle who hadn't arrived home four hours after school:

"Michelle arrived home after 7pm. By that time the police arrived and were already taking details and a picture of Michelle. We'd heard that some girls are cutting across Moston Cemetery when they can't get a bus home from school. There have been a number of attacks and we were worried sick."

Michelle had to walk most of the way home. The school specials had been taken off on deregulation day. The torrent of complaints finally forced the authorities to up on a bus.

LPYS branches in the Manchester area have taken up the campaign against deregulation and Thatcher's visit. Virginia Varley of Stratford YS reports.

I visited a bus depot in Princess Road depot in Moss Side to appeal for a financial donation to help with the campaign. I spoke to the T&G shop steward who was grateful to the LPYS for adopting the campaign.

He promised to raise the question of a donation to the campaign at their next branch meeting but he was so eager to get our campaign on a good footing that he donated £5 there and then.

The bus drivers had bought a wax candle of Margaret Thatcher which was going to be ceremonially burned when Thatcher leaves number 10—the sooner the better!

Manchester

Up to a thousand people marched in Manchester last Thursday against the effects of bus deregulation on a demo called by the city council.

Interview with Terry Parker, TGWU Queen's Rd, depot. "Deregulation is a disaster a big flop, a complete and utter shambles. It's caused nothing but headaches. Buses are having to be taken out of service after one journey because by the time they reach the terminus they're running too far behind their next schedule.

"People are left standing in the cold for hours. Drivers get lost because they don't know the new routes. I got lost once—I'm not ashamed of it.

"Last week I left our depot at 7.24am to go on to Trafford Park industrial estate. I thought I'd never get there alive. Passengers were getting on and effing and blinding at me 'Where the hell have you been?'. I

could feel the bitterness—see it in their faces.

"Some had been waiting 30 minutes. They were going to be late for work. If I had been nasty back I reckon they would have thrown me off the bus. But what could

More pressure

I do? The two buses before mine had not turned up and my bus was so full that I was eight minutes behind after six stops. And after two journeys I was 24 minutes late for my meal break.

"It all means much more work for us. The number of drivers on the sick has gone up and up in the last four weeks since D-day. I find myself snapping back at passengers. A couple of drivers in the Wigan area

collapsed with pains in the chest because of the pressure.

"One driver got out of his bus in Old Trafford and threw his ticket machine through the bus window. Another was fined £28 and got an endorsement for driving through a red light while trying to keep to the impossible new schedules.

"Our shop stewards are trying to sort the services and our duties out. The union told management when they started they had their sums wrong and were making too many redundant. Now they are taking drivers back. Like it said in the local papers, management are now having to ask drivers what to do. After all we are the ones who run the service."



Manchester demo last Thursday.

Photo: John Smith.

Industrial Reports

Tory attack on teachers' trade union rights

THE TEACHERS' Pay and Conditions Bill, currently being rushed through parliament, represents a fundamental assault on not only teachers' trade unions, but all unions in the public sector.

Kenneth Baker, the secretary of state for education has launched a basic attack on the teacher trade unions' right to free collective bargaining. If passed, the Bill would abolish the 1965 Remuneration of Teachers Act and thereby remove the right of teachers to negotiate their pay and conditions of service.

In its place the new Bill would set up an advisory body to advise the secretary of state on pay and conditions of service. However, the secretary of state would be given power to alter or ignore the advisory body's recommendations as he felt fit.

It would also facilitate the introduction of regional or even school based salary scales. In many respects this Bill represents as serious a challenge to the trade unions as the abolition of trade union rights at GCHQ. It is imperative that all trade unions and particularly the teacher unions respond to the challenge laid down by Baker.

At present, as at GCHQ, NUT (the main teacher union) has resorted to paid advertisements in newspapers, lobbying parliament and threats of legal action. Although all of these have their part to play, it is not enough.

NUT must take up the call made by the

inner-London division of the union in calling for a one day strike on 13 January as a prelude to wider industrial action. It appears from newspaper reports that far from being prepared to take this course of action, the NUT is attempting to appease Baker by yet more concessions on the recently negotiated pay and conditions deal at ACAS.

Far from appeasing the Tories, this only strengthens their hands. Indeed, the ACAS deal currently being balloted on represents a fundamental concession to Baker in respect to conditions of service.

Stand and fight

If further concessions are made, not only would teachers' willingness to follow union calls to action be severely limited through demoralisation, but it would make the current ballot invalid given the nature of the deal would itself change. Whatever happens over the coming days and weeks it is imperative that the NUT changes course and recognises the nature of the attacks emanating from Baker.

The clear message that must come forward from the NUT leaders is 'stand and fight' to mobilise its own forces and those of the wider trade union movement in the defense of basic trade union rights.

By Bob Sulatycki

West London NUT, Inner London Divisional Council (personal capacity).

Lewisham Nalگو march



HUNDREDS OF Lewisham Nalگو members were joined by supporters from other unions including strikers from Hangers in a two mile protest march from Lewisham to Catford on 11 December.

Nalگو are now in the fifth week of their strike, over safety screens for staff at a housing centre.

The strike escalated after the Labour council's Murdoch-type lock out. Among the messages of support the rain-drenched strikers heard was one from imprisoned printworker Mike Hicks.

Another mass meeting on Friday voted by 800 to 7 to carry on striking. Around a hundred members then occupied the Town Hall for half an hour. They tried to see the Chief Executive but found their way blocked by security locked doors. No health and safety worries for top management.

Pickets have stopped goods coming into Lewisham depots. The councillors are relying on Christmas and the Tory law to try to weaken the dispute. The union is relying on solidarity from other workers.

By Gordon Hull
(Lewisham NALGO)



Messages of support and donations to Lewisham NALGO Hardship Fund, Shop 5, Eros House, Brownhill Road, London SE6 2EG.

Liverpool trade unions



Important questions for Nalگو left

THE ANNUAL General Meeting of Liverpool council Nalگو branch showed the effect of a year spent by its leadership sniping and sabotaging the Labour council's campaign to win more resources from the Tory government. The branch AGM was inqurate.

Despite being considered one of the 'liveliest' branches in the union no more than sixty out of 6,500 members, half the number on the branch executive, turned up.

This is a severe embarrassment to branch leaders Peter Cresswell and Graham Burgess. It shows the low morale their methods and tactics have created amongst the members.

They have even had the cheek just recently to attack democratically elected council leader Tony Byrne, alleging he is "undemocratic". Yet at their own inqurate AGM they said the next branch executive would decide all the AGM's business. Surely a recall AGM should be called to let the members have a say.

In a parallel development last week's meeting of the NALGO North West District 'Broad Left' resulted in a set-back for those attempting to build an open, democratic Broad Left.

A proposal to exclude all but District Council delegates from voting at Broad Left meetings was carried. This effectively disenfranchises a layer of newly active members from involvement.

Supporters of the move, proposed by Graham Burgess and slightly amended by Peter Crosswell—both from Liverpool Nalگو—said it was designed to prevent "packing" of meetings.

It follows similar moves in the Liverpool Branch to prevent Militant supporters attending the branch Broad Left. The decision—taken by a meeting restricted to District Council delegates—is a slap in the face for left wing activists working in small or right wing branches, because many are unable to gain election to District Council.

Effectively restricting Broad Left meetings to established union activists from the main left wing branches will undoubtedly stifle its development.

Indeed the recent ballot for strike action in support of the Local Government pay claim showed that, despite the "left's" relative strength in the North West, this is not reflected in rank and file support for left

policies.

A further proposal carried by the meeting, which has potentially disastrous consequences, was to withdraw from the national Broad Left. Again, in a sham of democracy this overturned the decision taken a year earlier by an open meeting of all Broad Left supporters.

From the start Communist Party members and Labour Party co-thinkers in Nalگو have remained aloof from the national Broad Left, preferring to rely instead upon their network of "informal contacts" in other districts.

In reality they have been afraid that an open, democratic Broad Left would demand accountability from the many so-called "lefts" elected with Broad Left support, and also challenge the Communist Party's largely hidden influence within the union—especially its dominance of International policy.

Nalگو Militant supporters in the North-West will be urging all left activists to attend the national Broad Left Conference early in the new year, and to give individual support until this decision can be reversed.

By Ray McHale
Chester NALGO

GMB branch 5 under fire

LIVERPOOL COUNCIL branch 5 of the General and Municipal and Boilermakers Union has fought many battles in its history. It has taken on right wing Labour councils, Trevor Jones' Liberal/Tory administration and was at the forefront of Liverpool's recent battles against the Tory government.

Ironically, the branch's latest and potentially most dangerous struggle is against the bureaucracy of its own union.

The branch has a history of democracy second to none. All decisions affecting the members are taken at mass meetings of the branch or section concerned, or at the regular monthly branch meetings.

All lay officials are regularly elected, each foreman's area being serviced by a steward and deputy. Local agreements on pay and conditions are the envy of other branches and unions.

However, despite this exemplary record, the branch is under "investigation". The pretext for the inquiry is that the branch has "failed to represent its members" and "possible breaches of rule".

The full time official, Harry Johnson, carrying out the in-

vestigation into the branch's alleged failure to represent its members was previously removed from responsibility for local authority branches after all of them passed motions of no confidence in him.

This is the same Brother Johnson who negotiated 50p per hour for a hundred hour week, single time Saturdays and Sundays for the then nightwatchmen. Today's Static Security force receive £160 for a 35 hr week, negotiated by the existing branch leadership—who are accused of failing to represent the members!

Strange choice

Brother Johnson, with a zeal not reminiscent of his days with responsibility for local authority branches in Liverpool, has left no stone unturned in his search for misdeeds. Barely a week has gone by without a request for "information" from the branch officials.

The requests have concerned attendance lists of stewards meetings as far back as 1981, and minutes of branch meetings going back 3 years (which he has been given).

True to the democratic traditions of the witch-hunt, only those people with a complaint to make are allowed to give

evidence to the enquiry. Such is Johnson's desire to see that these people are represented that he has posted letters to likely complainants, scabs and others he considers might have a grievance against the branch, containing writing paper and a stamped addressed envelope for the reply.

The inquisition has at least been consistent, having refused to attend a meeting of the branch to explain itself on each occasion it has been invited.

As a result of this refusal, the 80 members at the November branch meeting voted unanimously that the branch officers should furnish no further information until the officers responsible address the branch.

Local and national media representatives have asked for the branch's opinion of the report and its recommendation for disciplinary action. But the inquiry has not bothered to even inform the branch of the report it has produced.

The members of Branch 5 will not tolerate witch-hunts or show trials. Members of the GMB throughout the country must demand the abandonment of this divisive and wasteful charade immediately.

By a GMB Branch 5 member

Industrial Reports

Leading branch official says: Stop Fleet street on 24 January

THE CLIMATE of the News International dispute has been significantly heightened by three extremely important developments.

Firstly, the role of the TUC General Council voting 24-21 to ignore the decision of Congress in September 1986 on Motion 11. It censured them for their earlier position, and in the light of the damning new evidence proved beyond question, the treacherous role of the EET-PU leadership, in collaborating with Murdoch, to not only steal print workers' jobs, but to destroy the very core of trade unionism.

Secondly, we again see Murdoch intimidating the print union leaders with new threats of sequestration in the full knowledge that both unions (NGA and Sogat) are committed to policies of not putting their assets at risk, under any circumstances.

They thus ensure that no real effective action can be

taken beyond mass demonstrations, rallies marches—not forgetting the boycott campaign. These actions of course do have some success, more however in the way of being a constant irritation.

Thirdly, the imprisonment of the NEC member and leading supporter of the striker Mike Hicks, is a blatant political move to break the spirit and will of the Wednesday and Saturday demonstrations.

Judge Alwyn Davies' verdict should be recognised clearly for what it is, a political judgement, proving, if it had to be proved, Murdoch, the judiciary, the government, ie the state, are fighting together to bring down the print unions.

In addition to that we see increased police brutality around the Wapping picket line.

It must now be stressed to all class conscious trade

unionists, to all socialists, that this struggle is not only for jobs, not compensation, not only about trade union recognition, it goes straight to the heart of the trade union movement.

The democratic procedures may not be all they should be, but nevertheless, we see a new corrupt form emerging more akin to the Teamsters brand of the Jimmy Hoffa era.

Action call

Hammond and Co must be defeated, so we must fight for a re-call of the TUC congress urgently and if the General Council refuse to be moved, then Dean and Dubbins must understand their responsibility and make a call over the inertia inside the TUC leadership.

They must call on the movement to come to our aid. The way to do that, the way to convince, is to close

down Fleet Street for a 24 hour period, to take the message back to the provinces and demand their support.

For hand in hand with a shut down in Fleet Street, there must be full solidarity action throughout the printing industry.

Let's call clearly for a day of action. With the anniversary approaching on 24 January 1987, we should make this the beginning of a new, more hostile, more vibrant campaign to bring victory.

This, our labour movement, needs one thing now, above all else, a win, not just against Murdoch, but against the 'New Realists', the fainthearts of the TUC. A victory borne out of struggle can be achieved down at Wapping. Let's do it.

By George Hall
(FOC, News of the World/Sun clerical chapel)



Hackney schools

THREE COACH-LOADS of angry parents, their children and teachers demonstrated at County Hall, headquarters of the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) on 12 December, in protest at the serious teacher shortage in Hackney.

We brought with us a petition, signed by over a thousand, demanding:

- ★ A permanent teacher for every class.
- ★ Free supply provision.
- ★ No increase in class size.
- ★ Five full days education.

Hardly unreasonable demands. To meet them would mean ILEA fulfilling its legal obligation, but under the present circumstances it cannot. As one parent pointed out: "In the old days the man from the school board would come knocking at your door, if you didn't send your child to school. Now some children are sent home permanently, others are on a two-day week!"

Everyone collected in a conference room, settled the children down to occupy themselves with paper, pencils, logo etc, and then began the task of getting ILEA members to come and speak to us. After all sorts of delaying tactics, parents were allowed in the staffing sub-committee meeting, where one after another parents stood up to tell of the situation at their child's school. Some told of children having three and four teachers in a year; children sent home at a day's notice when a teacher is ill and parents never knowing if they are going to be

able to go to work themselves the next day.

Their only answer was to tell us that a delegation had been despatched to Scotland to recruit unemployed teachers there. But there was no mention of any cash incentives to come. You could hardly imagine Scottish teachers dying to come to Hackney to spend £40,000 on buying a flat here—at four times the cost of one in Glasgow. Even the Social Priority Area payments, which give an extra allowance to teachers in many schools in inner city areas like Hackney is being wiped out under the new pay deal.

But Frances Morrell, leader of ILEA, implied that somehow the teaching unions themselves were partly responsible, by preventing teachers from being redeployed (ie from "overstaffed" secondary schools to primary). Such shameful remarks were met with incredulity from both teacher and parents, who pointed out that they and the teaching unions were always four square behind ILEA in its previous battles on ratecapping and abolition, and it was disgraceful that ILEA should be attacking the unions in this way.

The meeting broke up without any real satisfactory answers being given. But the parents and teachers will not allow this issue to die down. We will not stop campaigning until the children in Hackney all get the education they are entitled to.

By Linda Taaffe
Hackney NUT

Doing time for defending trade unionism

STEVE SAVAGE a Sogat casual was arrested after picketing a depot near Southend as part of the Wapping dispute. He has just been released after three months in prison. Here he talks to Militant.

"I think the arrests and imprisonments during the Wapping dispute, now with the jailing of Mike Hicks, are a deliberate attack on trade unionism.

When I was arrested we were kept in the police cells at Southend for three days. During that period they kept coming back and forth asking questions not about the incident, but asking all about my political views, which had nothing to do with my arrest.

We could tell as soon as we walked in the court, as far as the magistrates were concerned—we were Sogat men so we were guilty. Their attitude was they don't want people like us on the streets, as if I was a violent criminal.

Inside Pentonville and Eastchurch, the prison officers knew why I was there, and some were quite sympathetic. A couple of officers mentioned to me

that they thought the police were very heavy handed indeed in the strike. As for the other prisoners, some tried to wind me up over the Sun and the Times, which were in the prison library. But a lot of prisoners were sympathetic, and I converted a few to change their paper. At Eastchurch I was very surprised, they had a copy of Militant in the prison.

Victimisation

I was in Pentonville for three weeks, then they moved me to Eastchurch in Kent. But this was politically motivated. For my family and my parents who are quite old it was a struggle to go all the way to Kent for visiting. I went to see the governor and I petitioned the Home Office, but they just blacked it. I was told due to the police in Central London having to deal with the Wapping dispute already, they could not put extra units on to guard Her Majesty's Prisons against any disturbance outside.

They moved all three of the jailed printers out of Pentonville, myself two days after one of the demonstrations

held outside to support us. The prison officers told me they were quite satisfied with me. They were saying to me "it is not us, but it has come from very high authority, from the Home Office."

It was a big boost to know there were demonstrations outside the prison, I got a telling off for standing up at the window trying to look out.

The conditions were grim in Pentonville. You are locked up 23 hours a day. They open up for breakfast and slopping out, then you go back to your cell and you are locked up till dinner time, and then the same again. At tea time the same. You are out for an hour a day in the yard for exercise.

The behaviour of the TUC leaders is beyond belief. What news I was catching inside, when they had the lobby of the TUC, I cannot believe this man Norman Willis. We put these people in a position to support the trade unions, but they are not doing their job. The electricians' union should have been expelled. The feelings among the Casuals is to stop the lot on Fleet Street.

National Miners' Broad Left

"Stop privatisation—
Stop pit closures"

Saturday 17 January 1987

Lecture Theatre, New Library, Chesterfield
10.30am prompt.

Credentials from: Broad Left
secretary

(£2 each) 41 Neath Road
Maesteg, Mid
Glamorgan

Second National Conference

Lithorex

ON TUESDAY 9 December seven sacked Lithorex printers from Swindon, members of Sogat '82, went to Bedford to lobby the executive of print union, NGA.

NGA members are now actively involved in scabbing. They are doing Sogat members work and co-operating with the managers who are also doing Sogat work.

This is a serious breach of the NGA rule book which members must only work with union labour, ie Sogat. In spite of this the local NGA official is instructing his members to carry on working as usual.

At Bedford sacked Lithorex printworkers managed to talk to NGA general secretary Tony Dubbins. They pointed out that Sogat members at

Lithorex had been actively involved in the Wapping dispute, fighting to get NGA members their jobs back and even putting up sacked NGA members in their homes when they had come to Swindon to raise support and finance.

But so far Tony Dubbins has done nothing. He made it clear he will not give instructions to NGA at Lithorex to honour picket lines.

Disputes like this highlight the need for one print union for the whole industry. Indeed talks on this basis have been going on. A united NGA/Sogat is vital to defend all print workers from the attacks of the state and the capitalist system it protects.

By Roger Hearn
(SOGAT, personal capacity)

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

Gwent health

A LOBBY will be held this Friday, 19 December, at the AHA HQ Mamahilad, Pontypool at 10am to protest at Gwent Area Health Authority's decision to put domestic and other hospital services out to tender.

At Nevill Hall hospital in Abergavenny the unions agreed to workforce cuts. A £1.6m cut in the Authority's budget last year was accepted. But despite all the compromises in the hope of avoiding privatisation the Authority has gone ahead.

Since 1984 339 full-time equivalent jobs have been lost in the Gwent AHA. If they get their way a further 211 will be lost by April 1987.

The unions must organise a programme of joint industrial action to warn the Authority that we will not lie down under

these attacks. In one Newport hospital all temporary domestics have been finished resulting in a greater workload for permanent staff.

The union's have a responsibility to defend jobs and the quality of the service we provide. Greater pressure on domestics inevitably leads to lower standards of hygiene. Would Mrs Thatcher have had her hand done in a hospital dirty as a result of her cuts?

The unions should link up with other local authority unions in order to campaign with joint national industrial action against the cuts alongside the Labour Party and the TUC. This is not a regional problem, as shown by the attacks on other health workers throughout the country.

By a Gwent Cohse
member

Militant

France
 1968 revolution—pages 8,9
 1986 struggle—pages 2,11

Spanish youth rebellion grows

Madrid
16 December:

THE EXPLOSIVE movement of school students in Spain is continuing. Over 400,000 struck on 4 December but since then students have been striking spontaneously all over Spain. The atmosphere in the schools is electric.

Even in formerly backward areas like Soria, Cuenca, Murcia and Valladolid and Burgos there have been strikes, demonstrations and even occupations of schools. Those areas that did not strike on the 4th have come out since with even greater force than at that time.

Now the call for a still bigger national strike on 17 December is getting wide acceptance. At a meeting in Valencia, for example, where the majority of the schools sent delegates, the call of the new School Students' Union (SE) for a strike and demonstration on the 17th was overwhelmingly endorsed. But with the example of the victory by students and workers combining in France, the School Students' Union has produced a leaflet calling for labour movement support for the strike on the 17th. It has been distributed massively by youth throughout the country.

At the head of all these struggles has been the Marxist tendency of *Nuevo Claridad*. Even in areas where the Marxists in Spain had little following previously they have begun to build support.

Last Friday morning school students' leader and



Student demonstrators fill the streets of Madrid on 4 December.

supporter of *Nuevo Claridad*, Juan Ignacio Ramos, appeared on breakfast TV and reported the breakdown of negotiations with the education minister. Placing the responsibility squarely on the authorities, he explained that insufficient money had been provided and called on all students to support the struggle.

Asturias strike

For the first time the Asturias has come out with big movements in Gijón and Aviles. The spreading of the struggle into the mining area is a very significant development. Representatives of the School Students' Union were invited to the area to set up a union there, which has

now got off to a good start.

The leadership of the Socialist Party and the official Young Socialists have been completely caught off guard by this mass mobilisation of Spanish youth. An internal circular was issued by the right wing leaders of the tamed Young Socialists prior to the 4th, ordering Young Socialists not to support the strike or the union. This has led to serious internal upheavals in the areas where the Young Socialists still exist, such as in Zaragoza where there has been a split in the Young Socialists, and in the Basque Country where the majority in the Young Socialists have decided to support the union.

There have been attempts in some schools by the fascists to attack and intimidate the youth, but they have been repelled by the vigorous intervention of the union. In one school, for example, a phone call brought an SE "flying squad" to the scene, and the fascists took to their heels.

The SE has put out the slogan "self-defence against the fascists," and organised pickets to protect youth who are threatened with attack.

But after the first week of the movement the tactics of

the ruling class and the government has changed. From initially trying to maintain silence about it, they have now decided to pass over on to the offensive. A key role in this has been played by the supposedly liberal paper *El Pais*, which has launched a vicious campaign of disinformation in relation to the strike in general, and the students' union in particular.

They have been helped by an unholy alliance of so-called left wing groups, from the Communist Party, both Eurocommunist and pro-Soviet wings, down to the smallest sects. They have played a completely counter-revolutionary role, attempting to oppose the creation of the union in favour of a "co-ordinating committee" of completely unrepresentative elements who have not been elected, who are not from the schools and who represent nobody but themselves.

Basque country

In the Basque Country a particularly vicious role has been played by the self-styled "left-wing" nationalists around Herri Batasuna. They have done everything in their power to sabotage

the movement, even saying that they would arrange solidarity actions with any country in the world except Spain. In an attempt to split the movement they called their own general strike over the question of extraditions last Friday. The SE made clear its position—it did not oppose a campaign on extradition, but felt that students should concentrate on all coming out in one mighty show of force on the 17th.

This strike called by Herri Batasuna was a complete and utter failure, whereas normally they could have expected a lot of support. Their reaction was to hysterically turn round and accuse the SE of being in league with the civil governor of the Basque provinces. But despite their divisive tactics there is no doubt the school student movement has cut the ground from under their feet. For the first time a unified campaign is being built, drawing together the progressive and left-wing youth of the Basque Country, with the rest of the youth of Spain.

In spite of these attempts to undermine it, the authority of the School Students' Union is still immense with the young people

who are moving for the first time into political struggle. It has solid support particularly in the industrial working-class belt, the 'red-belt' around Madrid. A similar position prevails in Barcelona and in many other areas up and down the country.

Assembly

In Madrid last Saturday in spite of terrible weather conditions, and at the weekend when it is difficult for students to attend, an assembly of upwards of 800 youth representing over 70 schools in the city, was convened. It was an enormous success and elected a special strike committee of 50 to organise for the 17th. The strike organisers were confident of a massive turnout—a general strike with the involvement of more than a million students and an even greater attendance in the demonstrations which have been called for all over Spain. Along with protesting youth in other countries of Europe, this mass movement of young people in Spain is giving notice to capitalism, and the right wing Socialist government, meet our needs or step aside.

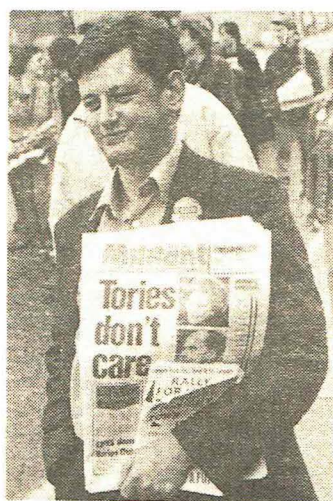
Stop Press

IN AN impressive 71.2 per cent turnout workers in the National Communications Union have voted by an overwhelming four to one majority for "industrial action up to and including a strike," against British Telecoms' wage offer. It is not just for the money but the strings attached which are unacceptable. NCU members must ensure their leaders use this decisive vote for determined action.

Become a
Militant
 supporter

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 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB



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