

Militant

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth 30p

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Militant Fighting Fund

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250,000

240,000

230,000

220,000

210,000

200,000

190,000

180,000

170,000

160,000

150,000

140,000

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100,000

90,000

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60,000

50,000

40,000

30,000

20,000

10,000

Total so far
£185,196

OUR £250,000 appeal is continuing until 31 January. Just three weeks more to get your New Year donations in. Help make this a great year for *Militant* and a disaster for the Tories.

Drive her out in 87

1987—ELECTION year—gives workers the chance to finish off the Thatcher government. The Tories and their friends in the press are trying frantically to paint the gloss back on the Thatcher government.

They hope for a third term of office, five more years to stick the knife into the unions and attack jobs, wages, and services. The labour movement has the responsibility to stop them, by offering a real socialist alternative.

This government is the most hated in living memory. The 240 hospitals closed since 1979, the housing crisis caused by a government-inspired 60 per cent cut in public sector housing are the crumbling monuments to seven years of Thatcherism.

But the Tory vandalism which has caused most anger has been the demolition job on industry. The Tories are trying to magic hundreds of thousands of names off the unemployed register, but not into jobs. They hope that YTS, the Job Training Scheme and other low paid drudgery will help to fiddle the figures to below 3 million before the election.

The government tried to hide the shocking facts in the Department of Employment jobs census for a year, but they are now being revealed.



Jobs in manufacturing have gone down from 7 million in 1979 to just over 5 million now. They are likely to go below 5 million shortly, for the first time since 1933.

No less than 94 per cent of the job losses have been in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England's north and midlands. The West Midlands has lost 300,000 jobs in seven years. The Tories have made Britain's north a wasteland.

But even the south east where service industries and the new "sunrise" industries have their base has lost 73,000 jobs. In fact the sunrise industries have been rapidly eclipsed in Britain.

The electronics industry has lost 215,000 jobs, a quarter, since 1979.

Labour must go on to the attack. The opinion polls show Tories and Labour still neck and neck. The new "softer" image has not convinced the electorate to vote Labour, only added to the political confusion. The jobs crisis needs crisis action, a socialist plan of production which would mean the building of new houses, hospitals and schools and provide new jobs for millions on the dole.

If Labour showed the determination in fighting to save and create jobs that the Tories have shown in destroying them, Labour would make 1987 the last year of the Tories.

By Roger Shrivess

...and make it
Militant's year

THE YEAR of building *Militant's* sales, that is the new year message from the *Militant* Editorial Board.

This is an election year with the chance to finish off Thatcherism. There cannot be a more important time to build the circulation of a workers' paper that outlines the real socialist alternative to the Tories.

Militant must reach still more workers and youth to provide them with arguments to convince their workmates and friends to drive out Thatcher in '87, and to step up the struggle for full-blooded socialism from Labour.

What other paper is the ally of all workers in struggle, stating their case in their own words, building support by making the rest of the labour movement aware of the issues? What other paper offered British workers full coverage of the mighty events in France, Spain and Greece? And drove home the message: If the French students can defeat a Tory government, with a determined lead the organised workers can force back Thatcher and the employers.

Workers who have been involved in action have learnt to place no trust in the capitalist media. To read the truth about workers' struggles the labour movement has only ever been able to rely on papers organised and financed

(Continued on back page)

EUROPE IN

THE MASS struggles of students, youth and workers in France, Spain, Greece and other countries, represent a dramatic new turn in the class war in Western Europe.

Coming apparently out of a clear blue sky, the sudden mobilisation of hundreds of thousands of French students rocked the continent. The hard nosed right wing government of Chirac was forced to capitulate to them, which has already emboldened the industrial working class to take strike action for their own demands.

Rail strike becomes a major trial of strength

THE FRENCH railway strike promises to become a struggle of major proportions. The government has claimed that weaknesses in the strike are appearing with some workers voting to return to work. But only four out of 96 areas have so far voted for to return, and this still has not been confirmed.

The action was started by rank and file drivers in the Northern Region on 18 December and quickly spread to the whole railway network, involving other rail workers. The union leaders were forced to back the strike.

All freight has come to a standstill and thousands of passengers have been stranded. More public sector strikes have occurred this week starting with a national demonstration and one day strike by civil servants on Tuesday. The protests called by the communist led CGT union federation include health and Metro workers, military arsenals and dockers.

The government was banking on the strike being unpopular over the Christmas period disrupting family visits and trips to the ski resorts.

Many of the stranded passengers are also public sector workers themselves, disenchanted with the government's policy of wage restraint—and looking for someone to take the lead. 75 to 100 per cent of trains have stopped running, depending on the region. Last week some of those that were running were free, since the ticket collectors and booking clerks were also on strike.

Union membership

Only about 15 per cent of rail workers are in a union. Several unions organise on the railways, of which the CGT, the socialist led CFDT and the right wing Force Ouvrière (FO) are the largest. The strike is therefore overwhelmingly supported by non-unionised workers.

New forms of organisation have been set up to overcome the divisions between the official unions at rank and file level. These are based on general assemblies of workers which elect local strike committees, and in turn arrange liaison on a regional and national scale. This is the first time in French history that such an organisation has been established on a national scale. But some of the local committees are chaotic and disorganised and the national assembly still only represents half the stations. Some ultra-left groups and the media have played up the importance of the committees, attempting to belittle the strength of the official unions.

In some areas "intersyndicals" have been formed to link the three main trade unions, existing side by side with the strike committees. These could in future form the basis for unification of the trade union movement if the pressure of the rank and file is sufficient to overcome resistance from the leadership.

Undoubtedly, to begin with, the government was in a state of panic. Prime minister Chirac had cancelled his holidays and said there would be no negotiations before 6 January. Negotiations broke down on the 23 December and Chirac said there will be

Students in other countries, on hearing the reports followed the French example.

While the French workers had been seemingly quiescent, it was the university students—the tops of the trees—who moved first, along with the working class youth who joined with them.

But the students' victory brought bubbling to the surface all the accumulated anger of the French masses, at the capitalists and their government.

In Spain too, the enormous strikes of working class school and technical college students, is an indicator of the mood of resentment of the Spanish workers towards the counter reforms of the Socialist Party government. The students' determination will set the tone for mighty industrial battles.

If 1986 closed with these magnificent movements amongst European youth, 1987 could see still larger explosions of workers and youth as well. A 24 hour general strike has already been called in Greece for ear-

ly January.

When Leon Trotsky was writing of the revolutionary struggles in Europe in the thirties, he spoke of first Germany, then France and then Spain as holding the key to the victory of the working class. But these recent events show that now several countries simultaneously are the key to the situation in Europe. Far more than in the past, the triumph of socialism in any one country could rapidly mean the end of capitalism throughout the continent.



French students take to the streets on 10 December.

Photo: Dave Sinclair

no more than a 2.8 per cent increase.

But it is clear that the government has now decided to go all out in an attempt to crush the rail workers and isolate them from the rest of the public sector workers. Chirac was forced to make concessions dropping the contentious new wages structure which awarded pay on the basis of merit—but these concessions were also designed to weaken the strike. So far this has failed. The government has also made concessions to the metro workers and merchant seamen in an attempt to isolate and weaken the railworkers.

As the government's line has hardened the CRS riot police have started to use strong arm tactics. Pickets have been broken up and strikers removed from the tracks in Dieppe, Boulogne, Marseille and Paris. Some trains worked by lower management and scabs have been driven at picket lines without stopping forcing the strikers to jump clear.

All is set for a long and bitter strike. The mood of the activists has now changed—from heady optimism when they thought the government could be beaten in days, to one of serious determination.

But the government is also determined not to give in. Chirac has announced that if there is to be a long and difficult strike then so be it. The government's credibility is at stake. It is not just a question of how much money it is losing, but its whole economic strategy would be in ruins if the rail workers were victorious. The pace would be set for all workers to follow suit. What is needed now is an extension of the strike to the electricity, gas, post office and other public sector workers threatened with privatisation or redundancies, to unite opposition to the government's economic policy and to demand a reversal of all the cuts.

So far none of the union federations, including the CGT, have put forward a programme of demands or a strategy for winning the strike. A 24 hour general strike should be called for all workers, both public and private, to match the government's determination. This could bring a massive defeat for the right.

French students ignite

THE CALL for united action by French workers and students was received with euphoric applause and chanting of 'workers, students—solidarity, at Nanterre University on 5 December at a meeting of six thousand students.

The call was made in a resolution drafted by supporters of the marxist paper *L'Avance Socialiste*. It read:

"WE PROPOSE...

1) A call to continue the general strike of students and school students to stop the Devaquet/Monory plan..."

"2) a call to the unions and the population as a whole for a national united demonstration... with a strike for

a) the withdrawal of the Devaquet/Monory plan

b) the satisfaction of the workers' demands..."

"This meeting also proposes that at local level we contact union organisations in the Paris area, and especially at Renault-Billancourt, so as to examine the potential for joint action."

The next day it was passed unanimously by the National Co-ordination Committee of the French Students and school students' strike.

The student's appeal to the working class, which arose simultaneously in a number of schools and universities, led to the massive joint demonstration and strike the following Wednesday. It was the reason for the government's withdrawal of its attacks on education and the cancellation of an entire parliamentary session, postponing indefinitely the planned programme of counter-reforms.

The previously confident representatives of French capital knew France was teetering on the brink of a repeat of the revolutionary explosions of 1968.

1985 saw the lowest number of strikes since 1947. This generation of youth was commonly held to be "self-absorbed" and "apolitical". Those who got the chance studied hard to escape the morass of unemployment and part-time jobs into which a quarter of a million young people have been forced. But the government itself proposed to close the escape route with the Devaquet plan.

The main reason for the apparent inertia had been the demoralising experience of the Socialist Party government which, rather than transform France along socialist lines, moved from reforms to counter-reforms and led to the right's election victory.

Jean-Pierre Chevènement, an ex-left who now believes "Socialism is no longer the answer", drew up similar plans to Devaquet's while he was Mitterrand's education minister. So the students suspected all "leaders" of wanting to hijack their movement for careerist ends. Socialist paper sellers and even a CGT union banner were booed and hissed on the earliest demonstrations.

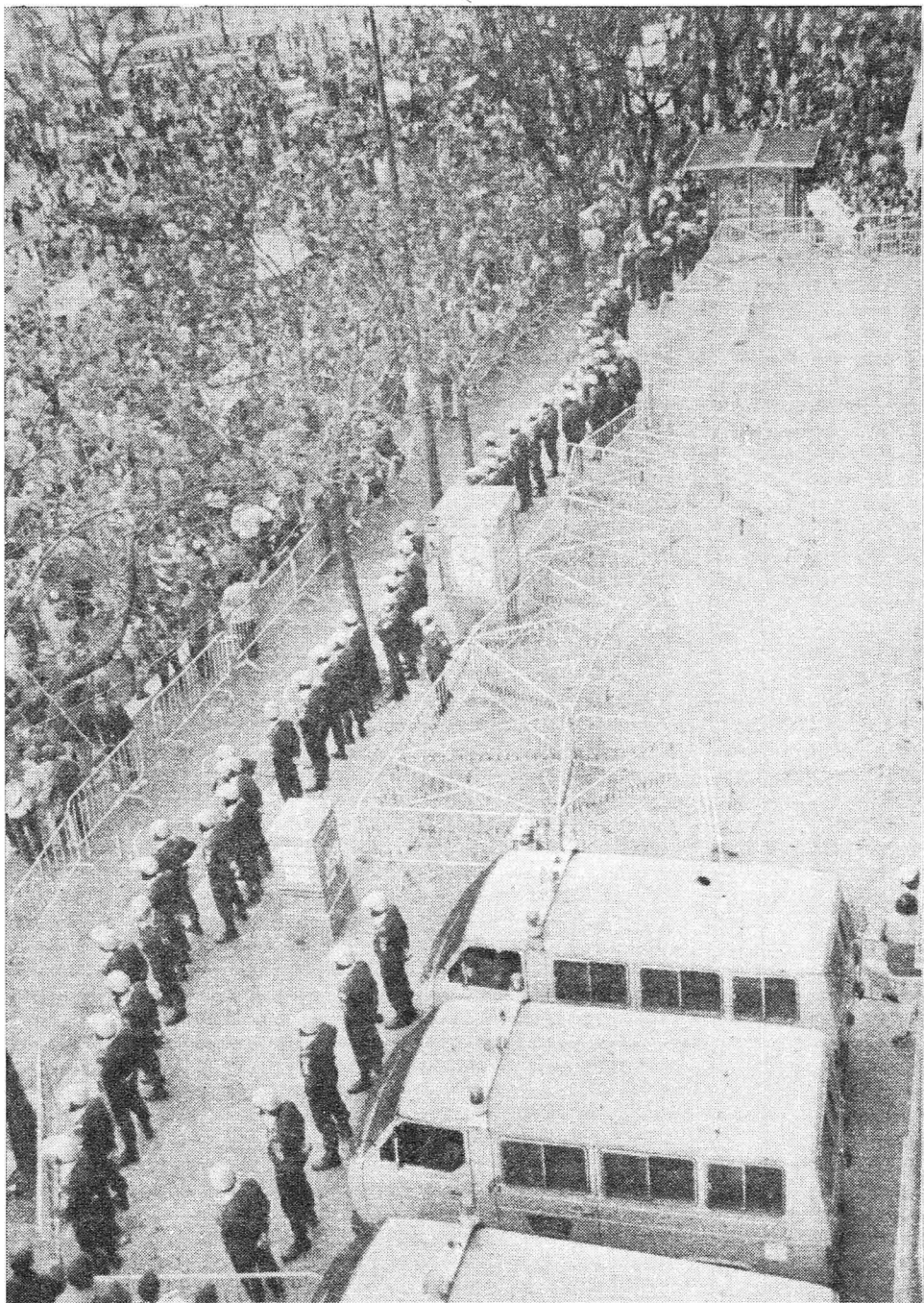
What dramatically took them from pacifism to political slogans, and even the barricades, was the brutal intervention of the CRS riot police.

The students formed a "Service d'Ordre" to defend demonstrations and root out provocateurs. The police trade union condemned the riot police's attacks and provided the students with evidence of agents provocateurs.

The students' initial hostility to politics vanished in the course of a weekend. Travelling on the Metro to the demonstration of protest at Malik's death on Monday, we found the whole carriage demanding our leaflets calling for a 24 hour general strike. At this stage, had the student or union leaders called for joint committees of action

REVOLT

By correspondents
in France, Greece
and Belgium



Madrid 18 December: School students rally outside the heavily guarded Education Ministry.

Greek workers call 24 hour general strike

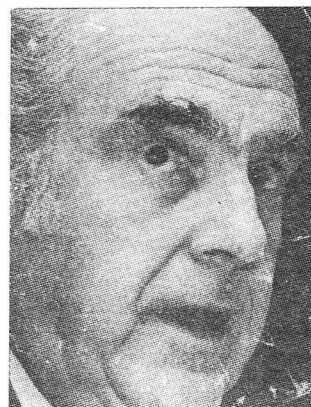
UNDER THE pressure of growing opposition movement among Greek workers and students against the PASOK (Socialist Party) government's austerity measures, all the trade union federations have been compelled to call a twenty four hour general strike for 16 January. Even the right wing federation, appointed last year, has been forced to support the strike.

With student demonstrations erupting throughout Europe, Greek youth have been inspired into action, occupying the technical colleges in protest at government attacks. Committees linking up the colleges at national level, were being constructed for the first time.

Strike wave

At several of the colleges striking students decided to continue the occupations over Christmas. At time of going to press 10 of the 32 colleges are still under occupation.

Side by side with this major mobilisation of youth has gone a strike wave involving teachers, local authority workers and some sections of private industry. 22,000



Prime minister Papandreou

refuse workers struck over wages and pensions. They were ordered back to work by the government. When they refused troops were instructed to break the strike. In Athens six or seven truck loads of soldiers drove out and, in a magnificent display of class solidarity, refused to be used against the strikers and returned.

The police were asked to break the strike, and they said the riot police should do it. The open sympathy of the troops for the workers is an indication of the revolutionary mood developing in Greek society, and it is also a grave warning to the capitalists that in a showdown with the labour movement the state forces would break up.

Already under the impact of the industrial struggles a wave of opposition is building up with PASOK. Literally thousands of rank and file activists are looking towards the alternative programme of *Xekinema*, the Greek Marxist tendency.

Xekinema supporters have been expelled by the PASOK leadership, but now several MPs have come out for their reinstatement. Party leader Papandreou's own son-in-law supports the reinstatement of the Marxists. The Minister for Social Insurance, Katsanevas, has stated: "the young comrades of *Xekinema* not only talk left, but act left. They should be back in the party."

Reinstatement

The PASOK area committees in Salonika and Philadelphia are also demanding reinstatement, and the PASOK Central Committee has been forced to at least open up the party branches to old PASOK members and party sympathisers. The ordinary party members want the Marxists back in the party, to give them the lead in fighting back against Papandreou's counter reforms, and turning the party back to socialism.

fires of discontent

of students and workers to be formed, they could have launched a struggle which would have swept the right-wing government from power.

This was clear from the turnout on the demonstration on Wednesday 10 December. Even though Chirac had withdrawn the Devaquet plan, this march was bigger than the previous week's. Half the marchers were trade unionists, including members of the Force Ouvriere union federation whose leaders opposed participation.

The slogans demanded the resignation of the government. But far from embracing this mood, the leaders of the unions and the workers' parties had backed up the student leaders' call for a silent march. They were horrified of what might develop and did all in their power to dampen down the movement. The Communist Party actually put out a leaflet whose only demand was that every one on the demonstration should abide by the wishes of the student organisers.

Even the previously ultra-left grouplets who had some influence on the Co-ordination Committee opposed raising the workers' demands along with those of the students'. These leaders, who went along with the movement's first superficial apolitical mood, soon found themselves way behind the general level of consciousness. Only *L'Avance Socialiste* indicated they way forward. The slogan "Now throw out the right" was enthusiastically received by workers and youth on the streets.

Lack of leadership at the height of the movement and the onset of Christmas led to a certain winding down in the schools and colleges just before the holiday.

The students' victory has revived the morale of the French working class and any group that the right attack will take to the streets as the youth did. African and Arab

workers, who have been subjected to a racist campaign for the past year or more, are likely to mobilise against the government's proposed immigration legislation.

The movement has already had an affect on the trade unions. The unfortunate Edmond Maire, General Secretary of the Socialist-aligned CFDT, was revealed to have been closeted with Chirac while his national executive met and unanimously agreed to support the demonstration on the 10th. This behaviour and his declaration to the press that there was "no point" in demonstrating, has managed to unite CFDT activists in demands for his resignation.

The Socialist Party was forced to put youth at the top of the agenda at its recent conference. Most of its leaders were attempting to ease the party towards a coalition with the so-called Centre—the French Wets. The revival of class struggle makes this a much more difficult task now.

At the moment many of the youth look to the Socialist Party and an influx into the Socialist Youth is quite likely. If the leadership moves decisively to the right, it will lose much of its support to the Communist Party, whose fortunes are now reviving.

The co-habitation experiment of a Socialist President with a right wing parliament has been shown to satisfy no-one. The workers feel cheated. The capitalists are working for their revenge and their system is running into severe crisis. The French franc is extremely weak, partly as a result of the recent events, and the government has little room for manoeuvre.

As the rail and public sector workers are showing, the government will be forced into collision with the working class. The potential for a general strike, even a new 1968 exists, and a new period of intense class battles is likely.

Belgium's year of struggle

THERE IS a saying in Belgium that "when it storms in Paris, it rains in Brussels". Within days of the beginning of the student movement in France, Belgian students at both the Flemish and French speaking universities began strikes and demonstrations in support of the French students and against government cuts in Belgian education.

It was the first real movement of students in Belgium for ten years and came after a year of strikes and struggles by Belgian workers and school students.

At the beginning of the year supporters of the Marxist papers *Vonk* and *L'Unité Socialiste* led a school students strike against education cuts which brought out 25,000 school students in the main Flemish towns and spread to the Walloon (French-speaking) areas.

These school strikes were a harbinger and catalyst of massive workers' struggles. The miners struck against redundancies in April, then the big public sector trade unions were forced into action by the pressure of the rank and file against a cuts package.

The strike movement of May-June surpassed the partial general strikes of 1983 in

the scale and solidarity of the workers. It was the biggest expression of workers' power since the general strike of 1960-61. There were two 24 hour general strikes and one 48 hour general strike in the public sector supported by big sections of the private sector also.

On 31 May the socialist trade union called a demonstration. 200,000 workers poured out on what was called a 'March on Brussels'. In proportion to the size of the population this represented a demonstration of over a million workers in Paris or London.

Police

The only police to be seen were those participating in the demonstration. The hated paramilitary National Guard did not dare to show their faces. At one point during the strikes shop stewards in the Walloon area overpowered armed sentries and occupied the National Guard barracks in protest at government policies.

In many areas police joined the strikes and defended pickets against the National Guard. The government was powerless. A determined lead from Catholic and socialist trade union leaders

could have forced the reversal of the cuts and brought the Catholic-Liberal coalition down. A call for an all-out General Strike would have found an immediate response.

At the end of May, shop stewards from all sections of the public sector formed 'Inter Sectoral Committees' in the main towns. Those were mass organs of class struggle.

But the failure of the trade union leaders of both the socialist and Catholic trade unions to give a clear lead after the monster demo of 31 May, disappointed broad layers of workers. With the approach of the holidays in June, the strikes petered out, and the cuts package remained intact. The shop stewards and activists were infuriated.

Since June, battles have continued against the cuts in the postal service, metro etc. Long bitter disputes are going on in many of the private sector plants against redundancies and victimisation of activists, and there is now the threat of a strike in the chemical industry.

The lesson of the struggle is to build on the unity of the strikes and organise the shop stewards to fight for a transformation of the leadership of the trade unions and socialist parties.

EUROPE IN REVOLT

REPORTS OF the massive school students' demonstrations in Spain have been deliberately silenced in the British press and media. Yet the Spanish press were forced to give full coverage, such was the extent of the protests. All the main papers carried extensive reports and photographs, sometimes

covering two or three pages. The British Press could not have been unaware of the situation in Spain, but they fear giving any coverage because of the conscious Marxist leadership with the same ideas as *Militant* in Britain, which is behind the Spanish movement.

SPAIN

2million students in mass protests

THE GENERAL strike in the schools which took place in Spain on 17 December was an historic success.

By our Spanish correspondent

More than two million students, mainly in the secondary schools and technical colleges, responded to the call of the School Students' Union, led by the Marxist tendency around Nuevo Claridad.

Mass demonstrations took place all over Spain. The general response was a hundred per cent, not just in the big cities, but even in the smallest villages with no history of struggle.

In Barcelona there was a hundred per cent support for the stoppage, involving 260,000 students. Also part of the university came out. More important still, there were big movements in the surrounding industrial towns known as the Red Belt in places such as Bajo Llobregat. Elsewhere in Catalonia the response was also total—in Sabadell, Gerona and Lerida, and in the Tarragona province, in Reus and many other villages.

In Andalusia, according to Spanish television, between 80 and 85 per cent came out—according to the Students' Union the support was a hundred per cent. The same was the case in Alicante, Murcia and Galicia provinces, where there was hundred per cent support in Ferrol, Corunna and Vigo. Even in backward areas such as Leon and parts of Castilla there were strikes. Strikes also took place in formerly reactionary places such as Toledo, Cuenca and Soria.

Many areas, such as the Basque country and Asturias, which did not come out in the previous strike on 4 December did so this time. In Madrid, an estimated 200,000 students marched on the streets.

The last demonstration on 4 December in Madrid was attacked by fascists armed with iron bars and bicycle chains, and a number of school students were hospitalised.

This time the Students' Union took the necessary steps to organise the defence of the demonstration. The

previous night a meeting of 200 delegates from the schools was held to organise defence pickets. Up to 1,000 students were organised as pickets, armed initially with wooden staves with a banner on the top to make it look legal. They formed a human chain around the demonstration which nobody was allowed to enter or leave. The outskirts of the demonstration were patrolled by stewards of the union with arm bands and walkie-talkies, to draw attention to any danger of attack at the front or the rear.

It was an impressive sight to see these young students, from anything between 14 and 18 years old, organised in an extremely disciplined fashion. Veteran workers of the underground period commented that it was probably the best organised demonstration they had seen.

This time not a single member of the union fell victim to fascist gangs. These gangs were present on the outskirts of the demonstration, but wherever they reared their heads they were attacked by groups of anything up to two hundred youths who dashed at them with staves uplifted and all sorts of other weapons. The fascists, therefore, decided that discretion was the better part of valour.

There were incidents, but in all of them the fascists came of the worst. In one incident a fascist was found with a home-made nail bomb, which he intended to throw at the demonstrators. He was detected in time and attacked by the stewards who gave him such a beating that he ended the day in hospital.

Provocation

The demonstration was only marred by one incident, caused by the provocative behaviour of different sectarian groups and the so-called Spanish Communist Party. The night before the demonstration they attempted to organise in the universities—for they have no base in the schools—a meeting of the so-called Coordinating Committee for the students of Madrid. It is a body which represents nobody and nothing. Nevertheless these groups impos-

ed themselves, five minutes before the start, at the head of the demonstration. They turned up with lumpen youth recruited off the streets armed with iron bars in order to provoke a bloody incident at the outset of the demonstration.



Juan Ignacio Ramos, students' union leader.

This caused severe problems for the organisers. If this provocation had led to blows at the beginning of the demonstration, it would have encouraged the police to wade in and cause a bloody encounter smashing the demonstration at its inception. These hooligans and provocateurs have been roundly condemned by the mass of students and representatives of the labour movement.

Their provocative intentions were further demonstrated at the end of the march when, against the instructions of the organisers, they stayed on in front of the Ministry of Education throwing bricks and bottles at the police. Had it been supported by the students, it would have led to bloody retaliation and casualties. Fortunately the mass of students followed the instruction of the union and dispersed, although the actions of these provocateurs were widely reported in the press.

But the enemies of the movement are under no illusions about the enormous significance of the events. The Minister of Education appeared on television the next day and, among other concessions, declared that as from 1 January 1987 all student grants in Spain would be increased by 25 per cent. This indicates the enormous success of the movement, and has once again demonstrated the power and strength of the students, if they are organised in a disciplined and conscious



Demonstration in Seville, with students' union banner in foreground

movement, with a Marxist leadership and orientated towards the labour movement.

The links with the working class were shown by the presence on the demonstration of the leader of the Workers' Commissions, Marcelino Camacho, and two members of the national committee of the socialist-led UGT union federation.

The demonstrators appealed for support from these organisations and the working class in general and received messages of support, not just from the Workers' Commissions but also, in an unparalleled gesture of opposition to the socialist government, a telegram of support from the National Committee of the socialist UGT.

This movement comes at a very significant moment for the socialist government. There is growing discontent at the policies of austerity and the attacks on living standards which have now been challenged by these young school students—not university students as in France—but working class youth.

They have enormous support and sympathy from the workers, parents, teachers and the unions. The students can therefore act as a catalyst to lead the way for the rest of the movement.

As *Militant* has pointed out before, an explosion was inevitable in any event and it is not surprising that the youth gave a lead in that development beginning with the students.

Millions of Spanish workers watching these events on television will be drawing the conclusion that this is the way to do it. Nicolas Redondo, the general secretary of the socialist UGT made a statement, reported in the Spanish press after the events in France, that the French students got their way by demonstrating on the streets, and that it was something that the Spanish workers had to take on board.

The movement in the schools is the beginning of the groundswell of opposition, not only amongst the youth and students, but also in the working class, the trade unions, and ultimately in the Socialist Party itself.



Front page of *Ya*, right wing Catholic paper, with pictures of the demonstration in Madrid. Headline reads: "Two million students against Maravall," (Education Minister).



Students' Union bulletin: "To all workers!—The students' fight is your fight—support us. Unity of workers and students" (cartoon).

How super was Mac?

THE DEATH of former Tory prime minister Harold Macmillan (Lord Stockton) has brought forth glowing tributes from most of Fleet Street. He was even described as "the great Harold" by a right wing Labour successor, Harold Wilson.

According to Wilson they "would often be seen having a quiet drink and smoke together in the Smoke Room". Clearly for Wilson and others on Labour's right, once inside the rarified club atmosphere of Parliament, any ideas of fighting for workers' interests or challenging the ruling class and its Tory political representatives, just evaporate.

Macmillan, Eton-educated, heir to the family publishing firm, was every inch the representative of

capitalism. But he certainly presented a different image of the Tory party than Thatcher, Tebbit and Lawson.

Apparently his conscience was pricked by the unemployment he witnessed in the thirties as MP for Stockton. But thanks to capitalist crisis and Thatcherite Toryism, unemployment as he admitted, is higher in Stockton now than it was fifty years ago.

Paternalistic

His old-world, paternalistic style contrasts with the abrasiveness of the current Tory leadership.

From the Lords Macmillan proposed the swindle of privatisation, likening it to "selling off the family silver". He also complained about some of the effects of monetarism, on jobs especially.

Macmillan was a shrewd, think-

ing Tory leader, but in an era when British capitalism had a little more room to manoeuvre.

He understood better than many Tories that British imperialism no longer possessed the power to exploit the colonial world in the old, direct way. When he talked in South Africa about "the wind of change" blowing throughout Africa, he showed more foresight than Thatcher, who had to be rescued by Lord Carrington, from hopelessly continuing to back Ian Smith in Rhodesia.

However, Macmillan was no liberal in the third world. As the just released 1956 Cabinet papers show, over Suez he wanted to go in all guns blazing to topple President Nasser of Egypt. He only supported withdrawal more quickly than the rest of the Cabinet because the Americans refused support.

But that famous phrase "You

have never had it so good", best sums up the Macmillan era. In fact there was still much poverty in the late fifties and early sixties. But there was relative full employment and living standards were rising. All this was based upon the exceptional capitalist prosperity of the post war decades, which has now come to a very definite close.

Bygone age

If capitalism can no longer afford what working people began to take for granted in those years, it can no longer afford Tory leaders with the laid back manner of Macmillan. This is the era of Thatcher Reagan and Chirac. And up against them the Macmillan years really do seem like a bygone age.

By Jeremy Birch



Harold Macmillan.

Four left-wingers elected to NCC

THE LABOUR Party's new National Constitutional Committee has been elected. The opposition of the CLPs to further witch-hunts has been demonstrated by the Campaign Group of Labour MPs slate taking all three CLP places.

Alan Quinn (TGWU) is the only left winger amongst the five trade union representatives and his victory is a considerable blow to

the right wing.

Despite the overall right-wing majority of 7-4, the election of four hard lefts will not be able to continue its purge of left-wing party members behind closed doors.

The division on the committee between the hard lefts and those who support witch-hunts will interfere with any plans of the right-wing for further expulsions.

Trade unions:	
Binks (UCW)	5,045,000
Hadden (GMBATU)	5,005,000
Quinn (TGWU)	3,376,000
Wheatley (AEU)	3,076,000
Brookman (ISTC)	2,062,000

Socialist societies:	
W Dooley	27,000

CLPs	
Mandy Moore	135,000
Ken Slater	108,000
John Burrows	101,000

Women:	
Dianne Hayter	3,500,000
Rose De Giorgio	4,560,000

Sparks pull the plug on BBC



EETPU members picketing the BBC TV centre.

INDUSTRIAL ACTION threatening to hit the British Broadcasting Corporation and take programmes off the air comes as a result of the national ballot on 19 December 1986 among the 550 members of the EETPU working for the BBC. They voted in favour of all out industrial action by a three to one majority.

The dispute goes back to the re-organisation of the Scenic Services in 1984. Agreement was reached on a

consolidated pay increase of 17.5 per cent or 20 per cent depending on the section in the department.

At no time was the EETPU involved in the discussions. To change the grade structure needs the agreement of all parties.

The electricians now receive less pay than the semi-skilled and the unskilled sections in the scenic services. They are not seeking the electricians' rate that their colleagues in the in-

dustry receive; they are only seeking a restoration of the common basic pay for skilled staff in the weekly pay structure at the BBC, thus restoring fair treatment for pensions etc.

Live TV and news services will be the first to be hit; series like Eastenders will take about six weeks before being affected. The pickets are confident of winning.

By Andy Viner

Union backs witch-hunters

Several branches of the National Communications Union have questioned the NCU's financial involvement in the Newcastle-under-Lyme by-election, where Golding's wife, Llin, narrowly held onto the seat for Labour, and about the number of NCU HQ staff in Newcastle during the campaign.

Furthermore, the Political Fund Management Committee (of the Engineering Group) have recently decided to recommend to the full executive that £500 be donated to Ipswich Labour Party, which has recently expelled *Militant* supporters Theresa and Roger Mackay. There is little doubt that the Executive will simply rubber stamp the recommendation. Questions will no doubt be asked about such a retrospective donation, which several leading right-wingers are already boasting is a congratulatory award for "dealing with *Militant*" in Ipswich.

Militant

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Chinese students revolt

FOR FOUR weeks, tens of thousands of Chinese students have been demonstrating on city streets, singing the Internationale, demanding 'freedom', 'human rights' and 'democracy' and battling with the police.

In a society where any form of political protest is strictly curbed, such demonstrations have a significance well beyond the students' immediate grievances. The students act as a barometer, sensing and expressing the undercurrents of opposition, which extend well beyond the universities. In October there were widespread protests against price rises and on 18 and 19 December 20,000 workers at a tractor factory went on strike against low wages and cuts in bonuses.

Unlike the Soviet Union between 1917 and 1923, China has never been a democratic workers' state. Since the 1949 revolution, it has been ruled by an elite caste modelled on that of Stalin. Any potential opposition from workers has been stamped on. Nevertheless, given the superiority of even a bureaucratically distorted form of planned economy, faster progress has been achieved than in comparable capitalist countries like India. Millions of workers

and peasants have seen their lives transformed.

The bureaucracy has therefore never needed to resort to a reign of terror on the scale of Stalin's, in order to suppress dissent. It has even been possible for sections of the bureaucracy with differing views to allow a limited amount of controlled public involvement in political protests. In the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s, Mao Zedong, leader of the revolution and top bureaucrat, exploited student discontent to form the Red Guards as a weapon to crush another section of the ruling elite which wanted to oust him. But his attempt at breakneck economic advance by decree failed. The Red Guards threatened to get out of control and had to be suppressed.

It is the victims of the Cultural Revolution led by Deng Xiaoping, who now dominate the bureaucracy. He has been trying to bring in 'liberalisation' of the economy, to encourage limited private enterprise and loosen the dead hand of the party, state and industrial apparatus.

Contrary to the hopes of capitalist commentators, these 'reforms' do not mean a return to capitalism. Economic and political power remains firmly in the hands of the state, through its ownership of land and the major industries. As always when Stalinist regimes attempt such loosening of bureaucratic controls, there is a temporary improvement in production and efficiency, but an accompanying rise in corruption and profiteering. It has led to huge price rises and too blatant inequality. This has prompted a move within the bureaucracy to restrict Deng's measures. In response Deng's supporters appear to have encouraged students to take to the streets to bring pressure to bear on the more cautious bureaucrats. Many of the slogans called for support for Deng's 'four modernisations'. An education minister said that most of the student demonstrators were "patriotically showing their enthusiasm for reform."

At first much of the comment from the press and government spokesmen was restrained—"God allows young people to make mistakes" said one government spokesman. But as the students rejected demands to stop their marches and began to make more general demands for greater democracy, the bureaucracy's tone changed. It closed ranks when they were forced to free arrested students in response to threats of further marches. They were losing control of the streets. The state radio and press now allege that "a few anti-socialist elements" have instigated the protests.

What really alarmed the government leaders was that the students were *not* calling for the restoration of capitalism. Some were groping towards a programme for a political revolution to overthrow the bureaucracy and establish workers' democracy.

In contrast to their Chinese counterparts, no section of the Russian bureaucracy would tolerate such public protest, let alone discreetly support it. They fear that any expression of dissent will cause all the underlying hatred of the workers to explode. They have seen the revolutionary movements in Hungary and Poland.

China is now heading in the same direction. The bureaucracy will be able to contain the student movement for the moment, but they have no way out of the basic dilemma of such regimes. If they press ahead with Deng's 'liberalisation', the problems of graft, black markets and inequalities will get worse and provoke more movements. If they zigzag back to tight control from the centre and a purge of dissidents, the economy will still stagnate and living standards fail to rise to satisfy the workers' expectations. Either way the students will be joined by the workers and the peasants in a mass movement for workers' democracy and democratic control and management of the economy, industry and the state.

Good work pays less at Sainsbury's

NEXT TIME you shop at Sainsbury's and think how nice and clean it is, think about the graft that's put in to make it that way.

Women on evening shift where I work were astounded recently to hear management wanted them to replenish shelves at a rate of 50 cases an hour, regardless of the size of the case!

After a three week dispute in which the women refused to put on more than ten an hour, their boss, who looked a typical oversized capitalist, decided to prove that 50 cases an hour was easily attainable by working for an hour with the women.

After working at full pelt, running with the trolley and chucking baked beans onto the shelves at an incredible rate, a red-faced, puffing manager asked for his total. The result? 24 cases!

I am a shop steward at our shop where we have about 50 union members out of about 300 staff. Most workers are

part-time and difficult to organise. Although they too are part-time, the women on the evening/night shift, whose husbands are on the dole or on inadequate incomes, are the backbone of the union.

Anti-union

Sainsbury's have no regard for them as people. Some finish work at midnight and have to walk across a vast, unlit expanse of car park where one has been sexually assaulted. But Sainsbury's say: "Once you're out of the door, you're none of our business."

We took this question up. Negotiation on it was taken to national level but it was just passed over there with a "recommendation" that the manager stand at the door as the women leave. Even this still isn't done.

There's a very anti-union attitude. The other shop steward got a written warning for speaking to his cousin

on the shop-floor. Anybody else would just be told to get on with their work and it would be left at that.

One success we've had is getting £1,000 compensation for one man who cracked his head open on the transformer which recharges the fork-lift trucks. The bosses were forced to move the transformer right up the wall and pad it. So, when management tell workers the union doesn't do anything for them, we can always point to that.

There's a great need for the unions to concentrate on what they seem to regard as "little companies". For example in Burton they just concentrate on the breweries, the biggest employers. But at Sainsbury's women workers are being exploited by the big capitalists and they must not be ignored.

By Mark Raven
(Burton LPYS and TGWU)



Shopworkers need a strong fighting union.

Women workers face new attacks on rights and conditions

A MAJOR GAIN of the 19th century, now enshrined in the 1961 Factories Act, was protection of women workers. It meant no working before 7 am or after 8pm, a half hour break after four and a half hours' work and no Sunday working.

Even where an exemptions order was possible, a secret ballot had to show a majority in favour. Today two million women are covered with only one in eight under exemption orders.

The Tories threaten (in the name of equality, a well known Tory objective!) to remove this protection against the health risk of shift work.

Most women already

work a double shift, one at work, one at home. Shifts increase the burden on women and make them more vulnerable to attacks going to and from work.

The Tories claim that lifting of these "restrictions" will give women more freedom to choose. How can they keep a straight face when the secret ballot (a sacred Tory principle in trade union matters) is thrown aside. New hours could now be imposed with no right to unfair dismissal if the hours don't suit. Democracy only suits the Tories when it suits their pockets.

A new legal framework is needed so all workers, men

and women, are protected. Where night working is essential, then shorter hours, longer holidays, and rest days must be compulsory. The recent negotiations on the so-called "shorter working week" between engineering unions and the employers (EEF) shows the worsening of conditions.

Flexible hours are no good to women workers with families. And you can be sure the repeal of protection for women will be the thin end of a Tory wedge to increase exploitation of all workers.

By Jane Hartley

THE TORIES plan to slash part time workers' rights to unfair dismissal protection, maternity and redundancy benefits. To qualify, an employee will have to have worked at least two years' service for at least 20 hours a week (previously 16 hours) or at least five years at 12 hours (previously 8 hours).

The Tories also intend to exempt firms with fewer than 10 workers from having to reinstate a woman worker after childbirth. These proposals together will end the right to reinstatement

established ten years ago for most women.

A recent survey showed that 82 per cent of small firms did not find the present law burdensome. They say they only rarely face problems but the government blame them for their move.

The Tories' real reason is to force married women with young children back into the home and to make savings of social security benefits by disqualifying part timers from maternity pay. The maternity allowance changes will save £23 million in

1988-89, (the same paltry sum the Tories' attack on unemployed mortgage relief saved.) But the total savings from this and ending universal maternity grant will be 20 per cent of current spending.

Maternity leave should be extended to all women workers irrespective of their hours of work or size of their firm. What is more, paternity leave and good quality childcare should be part of the labour movement's aims to make it practically possible for women to make real use of their legal rights.

Adolphe Joffe—a dedicated revolutionary

1986 was the 50th anniversary of the Moscow trials. Yet, the growth of Stalinism had claimed its first victims ten years before.

One of the first to suffer was Adolphe Joffe. A close friend of Trotsky's, he had been a member of the movement since 1900, and was a leading Bolshevik diplomat, a member of the Bolshevik Central Committee and member of the delegation to the peace talks at Brest Litovsk. However, the growth of the bureaucracy, and an illness that made it impossible to fight alongside

the Opposition, forced him into involuntary isolation from the struggle. Trotsky's expulsion from the Party was the last straw; he felt the only way he could fight back and bring the Party to its senses was by one last major act. In 1927, he shot himself.

Before he did so, he wrote a letter to Trotsky. This letter was stolen by the agents of Stalin, distorted, and abused by them. Unavailable in full for decades, the letter has now been reproduced by *Militant* supporters on Merseyside. It is a letter of great hope, a restatement of

the ideas of materialism, of confidence in the ability of the working class to change society. With an introduction outlining the life and ideas of Joffe, it is an excellent pamphlet, a letter of real inspiration, a testimony of a life dedicated to the revolutionary struggle.

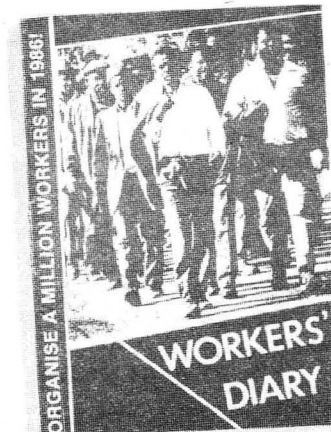
Merseyside *Militant* supporters have rescued an historic document from the annals of history.

Copies available from World Socialist Books, 3-13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB. Price 50p (70p with postage).

Solidarity with South African workers

Latest issue of *Inqaba Journal of Marxist Workers Tendency of the ANC*. Price 75p.

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COSATU 1987 Workers' Diary

Available in Britain soon. £4 including postage from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

Left and Right

Publish and be ridiculed

GOVERNMENT pamphlets on how to survive a nuclear war have been kept on the shelf. Home Secretary Douglas Hurd has learnt from experience with 'Protect and Survive' that people would "make fun of it and throw it in the rubbish."

Will the ministry of unemployment show the same sensitivity the next time they doctor the unemployment figures?

Botha's blankety-blank

"No person shall publish any publication in which any blank space or any obliteration or deletion of part of the text of a report or of a photograph appears if that blank space, obliteration or deletion, as may appear from an express statement or a sign or symbol in that publication or from the particular context in which that blank space, obliteration or deletion appears is intended to be understood as a reference to the effect of a provision of these regulations."

That gobbledegook is the South African government's warning to the press. Not only must they not print the subversive truth. They should also refrain from leaving obvious blank spaces. There are going to be some skinny looking papers around in apartheid land.

The biggest bang

AMSTRAD, the British consumer electronics group entered the capitalists' own hit parade in 1986. It went straight in at number 211 in the *Financial Times* European top 500 with a 272 per cent increase in profits. Their trademark is adaptability flitting into and out of products, hi-fi giving way to computers and word processors.

"What next?" you may ask. Alan Sugar the firm's head may have given a clue in a recent issue of *International Management*. "If there was a market in mass produced portable nuclear weapons, we'd market them."



Dave Nellist.

THE NEW Year brings nearer the end of the Tory government. After their record up to 1986, defeat cannot come too soon. Thousand of workers' lives have been ruined by their policies to help the rich minority who own and run British industry and finance at the expense of the poor and unemployed.

On 19 November 1986, Dave Nellist, Labour MP for Coventry South East spoke in the debate on the Queen's speech. We are reprinting extended extracts from this speech which summed up all the arguments for getting the Tories out and fighting for a Labour victory in 1987.

MILLIONS OF people, men and women, youth and unemployed, are looking forward to a Labour government to deal with the enormous social consequences and problems, which the Government have exacerbated, of 4.5 million people unemployed, low wages, cuts in social services and pensions, and deteriorating housing and health services. Nothing in the Government's programme in the Queen's speech will fundamentally alter the record of the past seven years of despair and insecurity that they have created.

Perhaps that despair is most graphically illustrated in a short item in *Today* in its coverage of the Knowsley by-election: "schoolkids aged ten wearily speaking of the pointlessness of taking exams just to increase the intellectual level of dole-queue chat." That 10-year-olds can be driven to such despair is an indictment of the Government's seven years of office. Perhaps that point is made even more sharply by subway graffiti in my constituency which says: "Vote Tory—retire at 16." That is the image that many young people have of the Government's effectiveness.

It is interesting that we have heard little today and yesterday from Tory Members with the possible exception of the more astute representatives of the bourgeoisie, such as Sir Ian Gilmour and Michael Heseltine, who at least recognise the organic crisis within the capitalist economic system. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister have shown a ludicrous economic optimism. They have stated that we are in the sixth successive year of successful economic growth and have spoken about the underlying strength of the British economy.

In reality, Britain is now a third-rate power, economically, politically and diplomatically. British manufacturing output was overtaken by Italy in the late 1970s and today it is on a par with Brazil. That analysis was made, not by some fanciful socialist newspaper, but by the Midland Bank, which can hardly be accused of Left wing leanings.

The Government have about as much feeling for manufacturing industry as Lucrezia Borgia had for catering. This Tory economy is heading for deep trouble. Next year both the balance of payments and the balance of trade will be in huge deficit. I hear talk that that will put severe pressure on sterling. Certainly, if there is any further fall in the value of the pound, prices will increase and pressure will be exerted for higher interest rates. It seems that next year we shall return to "stagflation"—a word invented by

the financial newspapers in the 1970s—which means stagnant production, rising unemployment and rising inflation. Yet all we get from the Chancellor are fairyland economics and talk about the underlying strength of the British economy.

In the five years since the last world recession in 1981 British capitalism has not recovered the levels of manufacturing output of 1979. They are now 10 per cent below the levels of 1973. There is probably less being produced in 1986 than during the three-day week in 1973-74. Unemployment is three times as high as in 1979 and employment in manufacturing industry has been cut by the loss of 2 million jobs.

Higher profits

Only the £41,000 million of oil revenue together with the huge trade and budget deficits of the United States of America have partially masked the condition of our national accounts during the past five years.

Those bubbles are bursting. The first one, the oil bubble, has already started to burst and the American economy, the second bubble, has not many months to go, as Edward Heath recognised. At least he retains some elementary economic understanding, even if nowadays he tries to move away from his record of 1970-74 and to cloak his iron fist of those days with the velvet glove of his words today.

The only good news in the economy we are offered is that the rate of profits has risen and is the highest for the past 10 years. Setting aside the human misery caused by the mass unemployment that has largely made that possible, what is the function of profits in a capitalist economy? Profits are to be reinvested and used to modernise and re-quip factories and industry so that more goods can be produced more quickly and more cheaply.

A recent National Economic Development Office report was suppressed by the Chancellor, who has obviously been having words with the Tory party chairman on gagging. That report shows that manufacturing investment in 1985 was 17 per cent lower than in 1979. It was even lower than in 1970.

According to the National Westminster bank—I cannot be accused of using partisan sources for my statistics—there is now a gap of the order of £200,000 million in the level of investment that British factories would need to catch up with Japan, Germany, France and America, yet this year only £5,000

1987

million will go towards manufacturing investment. Even on a simply quid pro quo basis, that means a 40-year gap between the level of investment that is required and what is actually taking place.

According to the NEDO report, net investment to replace worn-out machinery has been negative since 1980, which roughly means that for every pound's worth of worn-out machinery, only 80p is put back. The only good news from the report is that last year net investment almost rose to zero, but even then was not quite sufficient to replace worn-out machinery.

That is the real reason why the Chancellor came forward last week with his autumn statement, with its apparent £10,000 million increase in public expenditure. *Given the Government's record over the last seven years of cutting expenditure, giving back £10,000 million is akin to a mugger who steals an old lady's pension book and offers to give her the bus fare home.* Yet we are expected to feel a sense of charity for that £10,000 million increase.

That pre-election spending, like this pre-election Queen's Speech, is totally inadequate to meet the social needs of the working people. Over the past seven to 10 years, the 'raving Right' of the Tory party has said that manufacturing does not matter, that we have a surplus in invisible earnings and that City will save us. I happen to believe that the pimps and sharks of the City's square mile are not interested in anything but a fast buck—of 15,000 fast bucks in the case of Mr Collier of Morgan Grenfell. The casino economy in the City will not be the saviour of British capitalism. It will be one of its pall bearers and one of the contributors to the heightening of the internal contradictions within the capitalist system.

Every day about \$150,000 million change hands across the world exchanges. As actual daily world trade is worth only \$7,000 million, that means that for every \$1 that pays for goods, \$20 exchange hands in currency deals and speculation that bear no relation to reality. These totally fictitious deals are conducted by brokers and jobbers who are the highest paid bookies' runners in the country. Some of them earn as much as £1 million a year—£500 an hour—for not producing anything that is useful. They are literally 20th century parasites living off the blood and sweat of the working people who are the real wealth creators within the economy.

Some Members say that the Stock Exchange raises money for investment, yet only 6 per cent of its turnover has anything to do with industrial and commercial investment in this country. Earlier the Chancellor had the gall to say that workers overpay themselves, and called for the reductions in unit wage costs. That is rich coming from him. He is on £1,000 a week and does not have to worry about whether he can afford to feed and clothe his family.

In fact, wages have been reduced. The West Midlands Engineering Employers Association reports



Symbol of British industry under the Tories—Llanwern steel works behind ti

that in the last 12 months, 46 per cent of all wage deals in engineering were under 4 per cent and that 80 per cent were below 5 per cent. That has not stemmed the rising tide of industrial unemployment in that area. In Coventry alone, 4,500 engineering and manufacturing jobs have been lost during the same 12-month period.

Zero increase

The CBI says that there should be a zero increase in wages, but it does not apply the same rules and regulations to its own members. The 40 members of the president's council of the CBI awarded themselves an average 19 per cent wage rise last year, and one of them had the gall to give himself a 207 per cent wage rise. Yet they still ask workers to shoulder the burden of the crisis in the economic system. When I put that point to the Chancellor several hours ago, he did not even have the courtesy to attempt to answer it.

Why do Conservative Members continue to call for lower wages? Late last night one Conservative Member talked about consumers buying goods, but how can they if they have less and less money in their pockets? Wage cuts and mass unemployment may well help particular firms to undercut competition in a particular industrial sector, but when applied across the economy as a whole such action merely reduces the market. That is one reason why overcapacity has accelerated in recent years.

Another reason is that British capitalism cannot sell the goods that it makes because overseas competitors can produce the same goods more quickly and more

cheaply. Factories in this country on average operate at 70 per cent to 80 per cent capacity, and in some sectors it is 50 per cent or lower. Employers and industrialists openly ask why they should bother to invest when they cannot even sell the goods they make at present. Instead they pour their money overseas to the cheap labour economies of South Africa, Korea, Argentina and Brazil. Since the Government lifted exchange controls six or seven years ago, £100,000 million has left this country.

This Government do not care about manufacturing industry. They do not understand that it is the bedrock of wealth creation. Their only aim is profit, and they do not care whether or not it is fictitious, as it certainly is in relation to the casino economics of the stock exchange. This Cabinet represents finance capital. It has won the battle within the Tory party over members such as Edward Heath who represents manufacturing industry.

Before the Government came to power and throughout the period of their office—rapidly hastening since 1979—we have seen the withering of Britain's industrial base. Britain, which was once known as the "workshop of the world" is now laughingly called "the warehouse of world", given that we are now experiencing rising import penetrations in many major industrial and manufacturing sectors. The Government are responsible for turning a £3 billion surplus in manufactured trade in 1980 into a £6 billion deficit in 1985. For the first time since the days of Queen Elizabeth I, more factory goods are imported than

Tories must go

Economic disaster means misery for millions



graveyard.

Photos: Dave Sinclair.



Young Socialists on October's LPYS march to Get the Tories Out.

are exported.

All we get from the Government is yet another fiddle in the dole statistics. The official Department of Employment dole figure for Coventry, South-East in September this year was 7,154 or 21.7 per cent of the working population, but an analysis carried out by the Unemployment Unit, which included those who were not counted by the Government, showed the unemployment level to be 8,345 or 25.3 per cent. More than one in four people who wish to work are denied the right to do so.

Privatisation

Throughout the country there are some six million people who are living in damp houses and 400,000 building workers who are unemployed. London Brick is storing enough bricks behind its Bedford factory to build a town the size of Derby. Capitalism under the Tory Government says "Keep those things separate". Socialism and planning say "Bring them together so that the needs of working people can be met by people who have skills and the materials". There is, however, no hope of that happening under the present Government.

What hope do we get in the Queen's Speech? One of the things on offer is privatisation of state assets which, we are told, will "improve economic efficiency." *Privatisation is so much of a dogma for the Government and the Prime Minister that if General Galtieri had offered to buy the Falklands the Prime Minister would undoubtedly have sold them.*

The Chancellor spoke earlier of

extending democracy by share issues. I have a little equation for him to work out when he gets home tonight. In a general election, some 40 million people are on the electoral register and roughly 75 per cent vote, so 30 million people cast a vote. If you, Mr Deputy Speaker, or I want to go out and vote in a general election, our votes are worth one in 30 million. If we want to cast our vote regarding how nationalised industries are run, our vote is worth one in 30 million. If you or I—bought the 100 minimum shares in British Gas, bearing in mind the fact that the Government will sell 4,025,000,000 of those shares, casting our vote in a general meeting of British Gas shareholders would be one vote in more than 40 million. In other words, we would have one third less influence in British Gas after privatisation than in a general election.

Privatisation should be renamed what it really is—piratisation. It is legalised theft. It is stealing assets that are owned by people as a whole. They are being sold below their real value so that, in the main, the Government's rich friends can make a killing. Last week, I took part in a lobby of the House on conductive education, when £500,000 of Government money was being asked for to set up an assessment in Britain of a Hungarian system for teaching brain damaged children to walk.

In Hungary, the system enables 70 per cent of kids with Parkinson's disease, spina bifida or other forms of spinal or brain damage to walk and receive a normal state education. We were asking for £500,000 last week, but we have had stone-walling from the Department of Education Science for the

past year of asking. During that same year, the Departments responsible have spent £32 million on television, radio and press advertisements for British Gas alone. If the Financial Secretary to the Treasury sees Sid, he can tell him something from me. I have kids in Coventry who are more deserving of £500,000 of Government largesse than is Sid of the £32 million that has been spent so far on advertising his future.

Persistent decline

I sat through most of yesterday's debate and I have sat through all of today's. Among the Conservative Members who impressed me most was Micheal Heseltine. He was the only one who recognised that: "the decline of Britain's industrial base is not measured in the lifetime of this Government or of the previous one. Britain's industrial base has been declining relatively for most of this century. If one considers the statistics that matter—the share of the world's manufactured trade which which Britain enjoys—they show that relentlessly, regardless of which Government are in power and regardless of policies and economic regimes, there has been a persistent decline in our share of world trade in manufactures." (*Official report, 18 November 1986.*) That is most certainly true.

In 1913, Britain had 30 per cent of world trade. In 1950, it had 25 per cent of world trade. In the 14 years of so-called economic boom from 1950 to 1964, it had 14.2 per cent of world trade. In the next 20 years to 1984, it had 7.6 per cent of world trade. That was the result of a lack of competitiveness due

mainly to lack of investment in manufacturing. There was a failure to modernise and re-equip.

What has been done with the money instead? In 1979, £43 billion was invested overseas. Some £122 billion is now invested overseas. So what is the truth? Lord Kearnton, in the Lords report on manufacturing industry said:

"It is rather like hearing the broadcast on the death of King George V: 'British industry is moving peacefully towards its close'. There are flickers of life now and again, but by and large the slow relentless decline is going on".

What are the implications of comments such as that? Sir Ian Gilmour gave them last night when he said:

"The decline in oil production and the trends in trade in manufactures will ensure, by one route or another, that we enter a new era of economic decline possibly combined with renewed inflation... There will be a nasty crisis in the next Parliament and the opposition parties can count themselves lucky that not they but my right hon friends will be dealing with it. It will be a difficult and unpleasant task."—(*Official Report, 18 November 1986.*)

I have read one or two of his books, which have some funny passages in them, but I do not know what he thinks has been pleasant in the past seven years. He may think that the tasks facing whoever takes over will be unpleasant. I happen to have a bit of an idea of what the next five or ten years will bring. This is why the Queen's Speech and the debate have been so unrealistic and so irrelevant to the real situation facing the British economy, and increas-

ing trade wars as each state tries to export the surplus that it cannot sell on its domestic market, with everybody trying to protect their own domestic markets from invasion.

Anti-union laws

In Britain, having abandoned investment, abandoned re-investment in factories of the profits that have been made by working people, the employers and industrialists will be left with only further and further cuts in wages and conditions if they are to enhance their profit levels. To do that, they require, in the words of the chairman of the Tory party, the neutering of the trade union movement—the emasculation of the rights of working people to defend themselves against such attacks. That is why the Government have passed three anti-trade union laws in the past six years. That is why firms such as BTR have sacked 300 workers in Hangers as has Tom Clarke the boss of Silentnight. It also accounts for the actions taken against the workers at Wapping and in the pits.

I do not believe that massive unemployment and poverty can be resolved by the Chancellor's elastoplast policies for manufacturing industry, particularly given the enormous economic chasm that will open in the next 12 or 18 months. That will require a genuine and through transformation of society on socialist lines. Central to that transformation will be putting control of the economy into the hands of working people, not rich speculators, and for that, we shall need a socialist Labour Government.

Sri Lanka

Oust Jayawardena to end Tamil war

"PEOPLE ARE getting killed. What do we do now to stop the killing?"

The tension of the national conflict in Sri Lanka could be felt in the meeting at Friends House, London, called by the Nava Sama Samaja (New Socialist) Party and *Militant* on 18 December.

Over 60 people, many of them Sri Lankans, Sinhalese as well as Tamil, came to discuss the crisis in the country and the programme of the NSSP.

K. Sivapalan, of the Trincomalee Citizens Committee in the Tamil area, described the horrors inflicted on working people by the regime of right-wing President JR Jayawardena. People who saw their children murdered, men who saw their womenfolk raped, could not abandon their struggle against national oppression.

The speaker paid generous tribute to the NSSP for its solidarity and unflinching support for the Tamil struggle. Activists from the majority Sinhalese community, he stressed, were being locked up under the same regulations as activists from the Tamil community.

On behalf of the Political Bureau of the NSSP, Siritunge Jayasuriya explained the background to the bloody flare-up of national conflict over the past two years.

Jayawardena's 'open' economic policy—that is, opening Sri Lanka to unlimited plunder by international big business—has come apart. With 20 per cent of the budget being drained by the war effort, there is a 17 per cent deficit for 1987. The result has been factory closures, destruction of services, and abject poverty for workers. Fifty per cent of children are badly undernourished.

Yet there has been deep apathy towards the left par-

Report by George Collins

ties as a result of the disastrous record of the coalition government of 'socialist' and capitalist leaders during the 1970s.

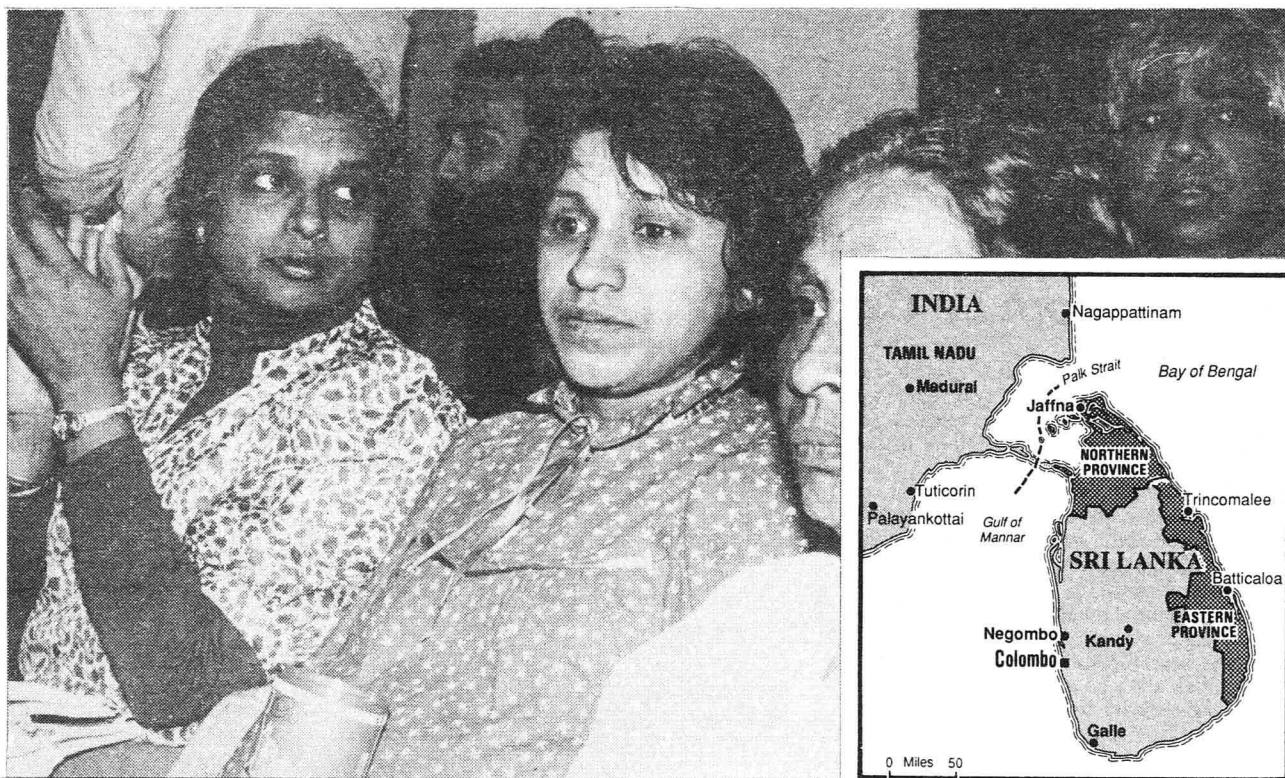
Now the working class is beginning to move back into struggle. A vital part has been played by the NSSP. Last March the joint trade union committee, which includes unions supporting the NSSP, organised a national congress of 6,000 delegates from every workplace and every region of the country. Different trade unions and parties were represented, but all agreed on the need to struggle against the government on a programme of workers' demands.

There can be no solution to Sri Lanka's problems other than the road of socialism, Comrade Siri stressed, but at the same time the basis for socialism cannot be laid in a small island like Sri Lanka. The socialist transformation of Sri Lanka was inextricably linked to the workers' revolution in the remainder of the Indian sub-continent and internationally.

National question

Vasudeva Nanayakkara, organising secretary of the NSSP, dealt with the programme of the NSSP in relation to the national question.

As in all the third-world countries, the only basis for unifying national groups lies in the development of the economy in order to overcome poverty and offer a



At the 18 December meeting.

secure future for all the people.

National unification, however, can only take place if it is *voluntary*. In other words, it is essential for socialists to recognise the right of national minorities to self-determination if they so wish—while continuing to explain the need for national and international unity as the basis for socialist development.

The NSSP has been the only party in Sri Lanka to campaign consistently in the Sinhalese south for the national rights of the Tamil people. It has fully supported the Tamil struggle, while differing with the Tamil guerilla groups as to the methods that can bring success.

It is not just a question of "negotiating for peace", of acting as a pipeline between

the oppressor and the oppressed. The task for socialists is to build the struggle of the oppressed into a flood that will overwhelm the regime, and sweep away capitalism itself.

Comrade Vasu warned against illusions in Indian intervention to solve the Tamil question. The Indian government of Rajiv Gandhi does not admit the right of nations to self-determination in India itself, let alone in Sri Lanka; its main concern is to preserve India's influence in the region.

For socialists the conclusion is clear: "We must build our own forces!"

National unity of the Sinhalese masses with the Tamil people will only be built when the Tamil struggle is fought on a programme that can inspire the masses in the South—a

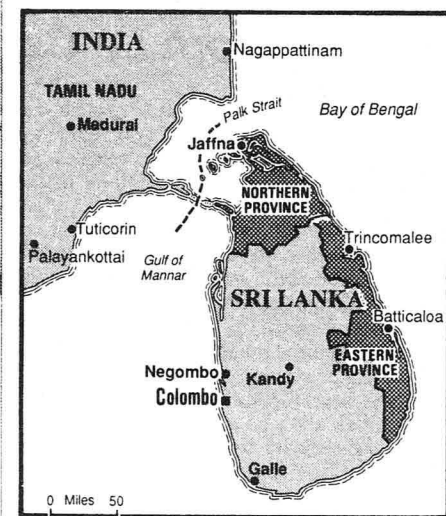
socialist programme, for the abolition of all exploitation and oppression.

During the discussion the position of the NSSP was queried by supporters of the Tamil nationalist groups. The answer, according to one speaker, lies in recognising the LTTE (main Tamil guerilla group) and its policy of declaring "independence" in the area under its control. (How this would solve the social problems, he did not explain).

Jayawardena's settlement proposals

Jayawardena is offering to devolve limited powers to the Provincial Councils (education, land, local police powers). But a power of veto will remain with the Provincial governor, nominated by the President.

It is also proposed to split the Eastern province into Tamil, Sinhala and Muslim regions. But the Tamil region will not be linked to the main Tamil area in the north.



It was this speaker who exclaimed: "What do we do now to stop the killing?"

Vasu replied: "What we do now is to overthrow Jayawardena and bring to power a left government committed to socialist policies, that will recognise the national rights of the Tamil people."

The collection for the building of the NSSP in Sri Lanka raised an outstanding £376.

JR's "settlement" will fail

Vasudeva Nanayakkara, Organising Secretary of the NSSP, speaks to *Militant*.

THE TERMS offered by the government for a settlement (see box) are now being discussed among the Tamil section. There is a clear division of opinion among the Tamil guerilla groups and the Tamil masses themselves.

The demand for a homeland for the Tamil people would be very difficult for the vast majority of Tamils to retract. They have sacrificed too much during the past two years.

Unacceptable

It is very unlikely that the Tamil groups will accept the government's offer of a settlement or, if they did, that they could persuade their rank and file to accept it.

Resistance will also develop in some of the opposition parties against the concessions being given. This will result in tying the government's hands.

The government hoped that by offering this deal they could present a respectable picture to the world. At the same time, they hope and

believe that the Tamil groups will not accept it, and thereby justify the continued military operations which are being planned.

It is possible that some Tamil sections may accept what is being offered, with certain amendments, such as a corridor linking the Tamil areas in the east and the north. Then, if Jayawardena's government is unable to implement it, they believe they could appeal to the Indian government for more support to carry on their struggle.

Quite apart from what is going on in the minds of Tamil leaders who want to accept the settlement, however, the government of India is firmly decided on one matter: they will not agree to a separate Tamil state in Sri Lanka.

The Indian government is concerned above all about the social processes that would be set in motion in the Tamil area if it broke free of the regime in Colombo, and the effect it would have upon the Indian masses.

Therefore the conflict in the north is likely to continue, and events in the south are likely to prove decisive. The movement of the

workers and peasants in the south can provide an effective force to challenge the government of Jayawardena.

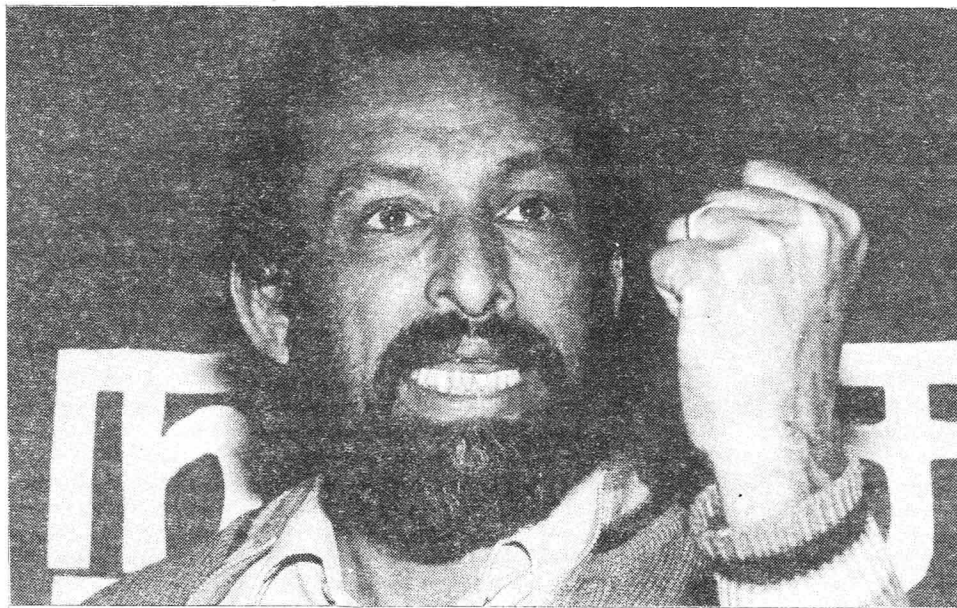
The polarisation which is taking place in the north between those who oppose the settlement, and those who would like to enter into it, with or without amendments, will very likely lead to civil war between the different groups.

Polarisation

But in the south there is polarisation too, between those who are opposing the settlement on a chauvinistic basis, and the left opposition, which is for concessions, for a settlement.

So there is likely to be a protracted struggle, and conflict between the right wing and the left wing, in the south as well as the north. The left-wing forces in the south and in the north will reach out to each other, to generalise the struggle against the government, against chauvinism, that could pave the way for a struggle to transform society—for socialist revolution.

The NSSP has over a long period been campaigning to



Vasu: "Guerilla methods are not going to produce results."

link the struggle in the north and in the south. We have been very close to the Tamil movement. We have explained that guerilla methods are not going to produce results and that there has to be a generalised mass movement to bring down the government.

With the present government in power, nothing can be done.

We have been campaigning among the Tamil people, among the Sinhalese people, with Tamil and Sinhalese papers. We have had a very good response, with more and more members and

branches in the north. In the south we are getting bigger crowds at our meetings, and there is more interest in us among the masses.

Socialist solution

We are explaining to the United Left Front (an alliance of left parties) the need to work for a socialist solution. The ULF is getting under pressure from our ideas, and the ULF leaders from the south went up to the north recently to meet with workers' leaders.

There are continuous industrial disputes and

workers are being sacked. There is a committee of trade unions in the south, and a trade union coordinating committee in the north. We are supporting the call for a national day of action, north and south, to oppose the government, to oppose the war, to demand a wage increase, so that we can generalise the movement.

The leaders of the trade union committee are trying to put off a day of action. Our position is to pressurise the leaders, to decide on a date and work out a plan of action.

Labour's defence policy

Dear Comrades,
In an otherwise excellent issue of the paper (*Militant* 827), my political senses jarred against the headline on page 11: "Labour—stand firm on non-nuclear defence". This headline is misleading as it implies acceptance of Labour's right wing policy of transferring resources from nuclear, to non-nuclear defence.

paragraph correctly points out that such an 'alternative' is pro-capitalist, I feel the 'damage' had been done by the headline.

We have to consistently argue that a Labour government transfers work from arms production to areas of socially useful production.

Yours fraternally
Dave Carr
Oxford

THE HEADLINE was misleading, for which we apologise. As the article made clear, we are opposed to the Tories' nuclear defence policy, but do not want as an alternative the massive expansion of conventional defence spending advocated by the Labour leaders. A fuller article on the whole question is planned for a future issue.

Socialist aims of Solidarity

Dear Comrades,
Comrade James Duray (*Militant* 828) should not fear a genuine movement of the workers to take society into their own hands, as represented by Solidarity.

A list of the 'top ten' demands coming from the workers of Poland in 1980 proves that Solidarity was not a counter revolutionary movement.

They feature: pay rises, trade unions free from state interference, house building, powers for the interfactory strike committee, better working conditions, elimination of privileges, earlier retirement, etc. Not exactly the stuff counter-revolutions

are made of!

If Solidarity was a counter-revolutionary movement, why after 35 years of 'socialist construction' in a country of 37 million, did 10 million join up with this 'counter-revolutionary' movement in the space of a few weeks? The fastest growth of any trade union movement ever.

The idea that Solidarity was fundamentally a religious movement is superficial. Whilst the majority of Polish workers go to church, as a symbol of opposition to the regime, most of them ignore the teachings of the church on contraception, sex and other issues.

The fact that millions of Polish workers still even look towards the church is a dire indictment of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

It is equally superficial to judge the feelings of the mass of Polish workers by the statements of Walesa. The conference of Solidarity in September 1981 demonstrated how the rank and file workers were searching for a way, not of overthrowing the planned economy, but the bureaucracy, by a regime of workers' democracy.

Yours fraternally
Phil Hutchinson
London

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

On the right lines

Dear Comrades,
The other day, infuriated by cancellation of trains, I rang up the head office of British Rail. The manager I spoke to said:

"I am not talking politics, but there is nothing we can do to make the service better. The government is starving the railway of money. They have told us we have got to pay our own way. It is only when ordinary citizens like you and me try to do something to get a better government attitude towards the railways that we will be able to improve the service."

So there we have it straight from the top!
Eugene Baker
London

Liberal 'support'

Dear Comrades,
At the beginning of the Wapping dispute, the NUS at Leicester university passed a motion banning all Murdoch's titles from their bookshops. Recently, the Liberals at the college attempted to lift the ban.

They tried to argue that the ban was an attack on free speech. As if we ever had free access to the press!

At the same time, they were trying to convince us that they supported the sacked workers but wanted different tactics adopted.

When it came to the day of the union meeting, no Liberals turned up to move the motion, so the scab papers are still banned.

Yours fraternally
Steve Toms
NUS Leicester university

'Morality' and cancer

Dear Comrades,
I was disappointed to read the letter concerning cervical cancer (*Militant* 827). I agree that there is evidence to suggest a link between the occupation of a woman's husband and the likelihood of her contracting certain diseases, including

cervical cancer, and an investigation into this phenomenon is overdue. However, there is very little doubt that there is a demonstrable link between the incidence of cervical cancer and infection by certain types of virus transmitted by sexual contact. It is not helpful for us to introduce

distinctions on the basis of the method by which they are contracted. We should be mobilising to fight the cuts in the NHS, for the provision of resources, and for prevention based on vaccines rather than Victorian morality.

Yours fraternally
Marion Adkins and Trish Ellison
Sheffield

Convincing the electorate

Dear Comrades,
My FE college Labour club, held a meeting at which the local Labour Party prospective parliamentary candidate spoke.

After going into some detail about the Tory cuts, and less on Labour's plans to reverse them, one student asked why the Labour Party was

wasting time and money expelling Marxists.

The reply, the longest of the discussion, contained a string of innuendo and baseless accusations, topping it all with the claim that she herself supported many of *Militant's* demands "nationalisation of the 150 monopolies" (sic) "regulation of the

banks" (!) etc. After all this, when asked by another student "How will the Labour Party deal with rampant inflation?" she replied: "To be honest I've no idea, I'm not an economist". This, to a crowd of young people, all first time voters at the next election, some attending their first political meeting.

Yours fraternally
Andy Matthews, Lancashire

Students internationally on the march Harrods shoppers



Students demonstrate in Paris against the police shooting of Malik Ousseki during the protests of 6 December.

Dear Comrades,
As reported in *Militant* 827 students in Britain are facing an onslaught on grants, housing, educational and welfare facilities.

One only needs to look across the Channel to see that students world wide are

becoming increasingly militant.

At the same time as students in Paris faced heavily armed riot police, Arab students on the Israeli-occupied West Bank were battling with the militia after several Arab youths, in-

cluding at least one student, had been killed in a demonstration at an Arab university.

Students have also been to the fore in struggles in South Korea, the Sudan and South Africa.

Student leaders in Britain

must follow the French example and link up our struggle with the Labour and trade union movement.

Yours fraternally
Andrew Sinclair
Lancashire Polytechnic

Dear Comrades,
I was recently taken ill at work with a severe migraine, so my boss gave one of my workmates the cab fare to take me home. We work quite close to Harrods, so we thought that getting a cab would be easy—but we were wrong.

Outside the famous 'best people's store' there was a queue for taxis. While I sat on the edge of the pavement with my head between my knees, my friend asked these well-off shoppers if we could jump the queue so I could go home.

Not one of these people obliged, and we waited 45 minutes for a taxi.

In the end I was so bad I had to be taken to hospital. This really shows the selfish mentality of the rich in our society.

Yours fraternally
Anne Hollifield
Streatham Labour Party

Dave Mahoney

Dear Comrades,
Earlier this year a young Coventry *Militant* supporter Dave Mahoney, tragically died.

His parents read the *Militant* each week, and have read of the campaign to ask each supporter to donate one week's income.

In memory of their son Dave, they have asked me to pass on a donation of £50 for this appeal. This amount is on the way to you along with other donations from Coventry supporters.

Yours fraternally
Pete McNally
Coventry

Lethal injection

Dear Comrades,
What Andrew Sinclair (*Militant* 827) should perhaps appreciate in commenting on the death of George V, was that he was apparently given a lethal injection so that his

death could appear first in the better-class morning dailies. It would have been possible to ease the king's suffering without killing him outright.

I would not envy such a

death or anything else that 'the rich' are able to have, whether the possibility of disposing of my children by abortion, boarding school, or my parents by 'euthanasia'.

Yours fraternally
Ann Farmer
Labour Life Group
Essex

Symbols of capitalism

Dear Comrades,
I have just read Bob Harker's letter about 'Poppies and Remembrance Day' (*Militant* 827).

I have never worn a poppy nor do I ever intend to.

It is a symbol of imperialism and capitalism. The Poppy Appeal is a ruling class institution and 'their' way of remembering the war.

The labour movement certainly needs to remember

those who were thrown into two world wars by capitalism. But we do not stand beside our class enemies and the various butchers responsible.

Yours fraternally
An Irish socialist and internationalist

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.

○ *Militant* poster blanks (A2 size). Available from Box 5, 3/13 Hepscoot Rd, London E9 5HB.

○ *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.

Militant Meetings

□ Hull "Reinstate Alan Shadforth—For a socialist Labour council". Thursday 22 Jan 7.30pm, Trades and Labour Club, Beverley Rd, Hull. Speakers: Tony Mulhearn and Alan Shadforth (sacked sec. Hull City Council JSSC).

Photo: Dave Sinclair

Tory laws attack low paid

THE TORIES' Wages Act represented one of the most vicious legal attacks on the living standards of low paid workers since the beginning of this century. Part 1 came into effect last Thursday.

The Wages Act leaves those workers who are unorganised or poorly organised with the least legal protection from exploitation in Europe and leaves them with the least statutory protection known in this country since 1909.

Until July 1986 Wages Councils were responsible for setting the minimum rates of pay and a variety of conditions of work for some 500,000 workers.

These were legally enforceable through Council Orders and punishable by fines and imprisonment if an employer was caught paying below the limit and trying to falsify it.

The Wages Councils are composed of equal numbers of employers' and workers' representatives with three independents with no connection with either side of the industry holding the balance between them.

The wages and conditions set, although very poor compared with many sections of industry, did ensure a 'safety net' of some sort.

Young workers

The introduction of the Wages Act sweeps away many of the provisions which Wages Councils set and severely narrows the scope of their powers.

The most dramatic effect of the Act is on young workers. It removes all workers under the age of 21 from the scope of the Wages Councils. Previously Council Orders could set rates for all workers from the age of 16 upwards.

They could also set rates for different grades and make provisions for other working conditions such as unsocial hours and weekend pay; shift pay; different rates of overtime payments; skill differentials and holiday entitlements.

Now all this has been abolished. The Wages Councils can only set one hourly rate for the industry and a



By **George Williamson**
(Chair, Usdaw Eastern
Divisional Council,
personal capacity)

single overtime rate. From the employers' point of view this is a golden opportunity to cut wages.

Most Council Orders have set a series of graded wage rates in the past, so if they can only set one rate, the employers will try to ensure that the one rate set in future is based on the previous lowest rate in the Order.

The unions have only recently begun to realise the full extent of the dangers. The first major Wages Council to meet since the Act came into force was the Non-Residential Licensed Catering Wages Council which covers bar and club staff. The employers' side representing the brewers proposed that the one rate for the industry be the lowest rate.

They proposed that this lowest rate of £1.91 an hour be increased to £2.04 per hour. An increase of 13p! This meant that although some 400,000 workers outside London would see a 6.6 per cent increase (from £74 a week to £79.56 a week), over 50,000 would lose £2.50 per week and some would lose up to £24 from their weekly wages packets as the grade disappeared under the new laws!

The 'independents' voted with the employers and this disgusting proposal was adopted. Since then two of the biggest Wages Councils have met; the Retail Food



Demonstration against low pay held by the North West Labour Women's Organisation in May last year.

and the Retail Non-Food which cover hundreds of thousands of workers and 'set the going rate' for the whole retail distributive industry.

£2.20 an hour

In the Retail Non-Food Wages Council the most that the independents would accept was £2.20 per hour for

a thirty-nine hour week.

The workers' side succeeded in getting guidelines inserted into the Order which reported that it had been the practice for workers to receive premium payments for Saturday and Sunday working and managed to avoid any mention of the fact that workers under 21 were no longer covered by the Council Order.

In the Retail Food Wages Council the rate set was £2.19 per hour with the employers opposing. The Order will now be published and circulated to all sides to allow representations to be made from employees and employers. The employers will be campaigning amongst their supporters to have this rate quashed when the Council meets again this

month.

These are the major Wages Councils. The unions concerned have faced enormous problems defending workers' pay and conditions. What is going to happen to those workers covered by the smaller Councils when they meet?

The Tories aren't finished there either. From 1 January 1987 the Truck Acts will be abolished. No longer will manual workers enjoy the legal rights since 1831, to be paid in cash.

The change also means that their protection from unfair deductions by the employers will be considerably weakened. Employers will be entitled to deduct up to 10 per cent of the gross wage of their workers for cash, till, or stock shortages.

Cash payments

This means that employers will be able to stop paying wages in cash on a weekly basis and instead pay monthly by cheque, regardless of how convenient this may be to the employees.

The Tories are also attacking redundancy payments. From 1 August 1986 the Redundancy Rebate, which employers have been able to claim from the government to pay for redundancy payments, is abolished for all employees except those with less than ten employees.

This means that they will have to pay redundancy payments themselves. The effect this will have on employers' willingness to pay them in the future is obvious.

The Wages Act is a vile and vindictive assault on the low paid and those workers least able to protect themselves from employer exploitation. It is essential that the next Labour government repeal this Act—and quickly.

A Labour government would have to be as determined to restore and improve employment rights as the Tories have been in eroding them.

Tactics to fight privatisation

THE ARTICLE by Lynne Faulkes on fighting privatisation in issue 824 was a timely reminder of the urgent need to build effective opposition to the Tories' plans.

Through the method of compulsory competitive tendering the government aims to achieve all its objectives in one go—lower wages, weakening of the trade unions and destruction of the public sector.

I thought Lynne was unclear, however, on just what tactics do we employ to fight privatisation?

There must certainly be a massive campaign of explanation amongst the trade unions, tenants and the working class generally. But when convinced of the harm of privatisation what do people actually do.

For any campaign to be successful (or even to have an impact) it must not only convince people of the need to fight but lay out a strategy for victory.

In the public sector unions we have the tragic situation of literally tons of persuasive anti-privatisation material being pushed out from head offices while national policy is to beat privatisation by drawing up tender specifications

in such a clever way that the in-house tender ends up cheaper than those of the private sharks.

No one on the ground has yet worked out how to do this without cutting wages, jobs, the services or probably all three, as has happened in the NHS.

The only way to defeat privatisation is to launch a massive campaign for non-cooperation with the legislation in both Labour local councils and public sector unions. Refuse to do the Tories' dirty work.

Overcome set-backs

No activist will deny that with the debacle of the Labour councils' anti-ratecapping campaign last year and with parts of Nupe and Nalco conferences being whipped up to anti-Liverpool frenzies, such a policy of defiance will not be easy to win. However, we take our cues not from the leaders but from the members. The tactics we adopt must be clear and make sense to them.

It is in the context of the muddle-headed utterings coming from the labour movement leaders as they desperately scratch around for a policy that looks as though they are fighting privatisation, that some of

Lynne's comments are dangerous.

Of course we all know what she means—the delivery of services is sometimes appalling and it often wouldn't be easy to persuade a tenant to support the housing repair service for instance.

But the point is that the right wing are demanding reorganisation of DLOs so that they can be put into a position to compete with private firms.

Leeds City Council has just announced a restructuring exercise in the Cleansing Department (bins and street cleaning) which will destroy about 200 jobs, about 20 per cent of the workforce, for just this reason.

The fact is that if councils give the unions assurances on maintenance of jobs and services we will not be able to compete with private contractors anyway because it is precisely through lower wages and understaffing that they are able to cut costs.

By all means work with unions to improve services, a dose of radicalism is long overdue. But defeat of the Tories will not rest on this and we should not let the right wing run away from the fight with 'the need to make DLOs efficient'



Anti-privatisation rally in Manchester. There has been plenty of literature but nationally coordinated action is needed

as their excuse.

Time is short. The legislation is due to be on the statute book by July '87 and implemented by April '88. The campaign for non-cooperation should begin in earnest in the District Labour Parties and trade union branches now.

Joint action

Councillors and trade unions should consult on tactics in the individual authorities and national delegate meetings should be called

by groups of Labour councils and trade union branches willing to fight.

No preparatory cuts in jobs or services should be allowed and the campaign should be linked to the need for the workforce to campaign for a Labour government in '87. Also to join the Labour Party to ensure that the legislation is scrapped and local authority workers' interests protected.

By Chris Hill, Assistant Secretary, Leeds Nalco.

Right wing's hollow victory in CPSA

THE RIGHT wing's victory in the CPSA general secretary election will have been cheered loudest by Thatcher, the millionaire press barons and the Treasury mandarins. They wanted Ellis to win. They believed (correctly) he would be easier to deal with from their point of view and their class interest.

Their class interest has cut over 150,000 jobs from the Civil Service since 1979, reduced civil servants' living standards by 20 per cent and is hell bent on destroying the civil and public services.

A motion was actually put down in the House of Commons by Tory right winger Peter Bruinvels and two other Tory MP's, welcoming "the victory of John Ellis in the ballot." By your friends shall ye be known.

The last thing the capitalist class wanted was a General Secretary who would provide leadership and fight for his members. That is why we saw the state interfere in the election. In the full view of millions, the judiciary sanctioned the overthrow of the members' democratic decision. The capitalist press ran a systematic campaign of lies, smears and horror stories trying to portray John Macreadie as undemocratic and corrupt.

All of a sudden, years of attacks on trade union facilities in the Civil Service were laid aside as the Treasury exhorted Government departments to maximise the turnout and at the same time, "encourage" agents to prevent branch representatives from having contact with their members.

The Communist Party/Broad

thcoming Deputy General Secretary, President, Vice-President and NEC elections and generally to build a union which is capable of defending its members' interests.

Despite all this, John Macreadie's vote increased. This was also achieved despite the actions of the right wing President, Mrs Marion Chambers in breaking the union's rules and arbitrarily changing the ballot system.

Under the guise of giving members more opportunity to vote, they in effect encouraged desk-top balloting and attacked the principle of workers coming together at workplace meetings to debate the issues and vote. When the breakdown of the election results are available, we can expect to see the effect of the unconstitutional system of desk-top balloting in areas where the right-wing traditionally draws its support.

Mrs Chambers' unprecedented ruling that branches could not initiate any recommendations in the election was a further example of her bias.

From the Polish Catholic Club, next door to CPSA HQ in South London, the right-wing are alleged to have used the 140,000 name membership list to address in-



(Right) John Ellis and Christine Kirk plot their strategy during the '86 CPSA Pay Conference. (Left) John Macreadie speaks out against the Tories and unemployment at the Youth March for Jobs in October.

Photos: Dave Sinclair

The result in the re-run of the Civil and Public Servants Association general secretary election were as follows, with July result shown in brackets.

Ellis	42,228		(20,303)
George	5,919	(Indepen.)	(2,787)
Lewtas	13,100		(14,740)
Macreadie	31,791		(20,424)

The change in the union is illustrated by the 1981 election results for general secretary.

Alistair Graham	44,447
John Macreadie	28,009
Kevin Brandstatter	7,199

General Treasurer

Kirk	49,132	(BL84)	(19,904)
Raywood	43,765	(Right wing)	(19,888)

(Spence—Broad Left 19,180)

Total turnout was 93,038 (actually 70 per cent of CPSA members voted).

Left 84 grouping in the CPSA have handed a victory to the right-wing general secretary candidate John Ellis. They have helped steal the job from its rightful holder, John Macreadie. Ellis may now fill the seat, but to thousands in the CPSA and beyond, John Macreadie is the real leader of the union.

The total turnout was 93,038 (actually 70 per cent although the right-wing claim 65.1 per cent). The previous turnout, in July was 58,264 (43 per cent). This massive turnout explodes the myth that left candidates lose elections. Had the Broad Left 84 candidate not stood John Macreadie would have won.

A total left victory was possible. The results clearly show that had BL84 stood down their defeated candidate Lewtas and supported the original winner and only person who could have beaten the right-wing, John Macreadie, then CPSA today would have a totally new leadership.

The General Treasurer result, in which the previous right-wing Treasurer Raywood was seeking re-election, went to Christine Kirk, a BL84 supporter. Her success was solely due to the withdrawal of Eddie Spence and the principled socialist position of the Broad Left in working for her election to keep out the right-wing. Her result proves that a united "left" vote would have meant total victory.

The initial disappointment which greeted the result has now given way to anger and a determination to work even harder in the for-

dividual envelopes, with their red scare propaganda for sending to members at their place of work. In the case of DHSS Glasgow, 2,500 stamped, addressed envelopes were sent to post-opening rooms at government offices where, in many cases, the envelopes were delivered to members at their desks by enthusiastic management.

The Broad Left fought a fantastic campaign. During both elections, public meetings were held in every city in Britain. Leaflets were distributed at every government office. Successful rallies were held at the union's annual conference in May and at the pay conference in November.

Elections are about winning. They are also about building support for the policies of socialism and the Broad Left. In this, the election was a total success. The BL has emerged immeasurably strengthened. New layers of the membership have been won to the socialist policies and programme of the Broad Left. Roots have been laid in new areas of the union. The rank and file organisation has come out of the election stronger than ever before. The CPSA campaign is a clear example to the Broad Left groups in other unions.

The election also shows that there is tremendous support for socialism. The result is a clear encouragement to the trade union and Labour leadership to go on the offensive and fight for bold socialist policies. What enthused the active layers of CPSA was the

feeling of fundamental change offered by John Macreadie's election. It is that active layer who must be mobilised in the trade union and labour movement.

In the course of these elections we have seen the Communist Party and ex-lefts move decidedly to the right. They have played a disgraceful role throughout.

The first election was marked by the vicious and hysterical attacks on John Macreadie by BL84. The tone and content of their material was worse than the right-wing's, but was used by the right-wing as part of their campaign against John Macreadie.

Role of 'communists'

They stood idly by and allowed the right-wing to overturn the first election result. They actively worked against the campaign set up to defend the elections. When John Macreadie, the Broad Left and other principled trade unionists fought to defend the democracy of the union, BL84 adopted a neutral stance on the matter.

The BL84 leadership effectively helped create the climate which allowed the right wing to overturn the election result and then call a second ballot with new rules and procedures.

Their greatest crime however, was to stand their defeated candidate Geoff Lewtas in the re-run election. By standing Lewtas again, they gave credence to the right-wing ploy that a fresh election was necessary. BL84 gave the General Secretary job to the right-wing. We shall ensure that they never forget it.

Nobody should be in any doubt as to the real motives of BL84. During the election and since the result, numerous BL84 'leaders' have gleefully remarked that the objective was to overturn the result and stop Macreadie (the actual words used were less pleasant).

At CPSA HQ after the result, the majority of full-time officials who fund BL84 and who are the real influence on their "realistic policies" and anti-Militant paranoia, were satisfied with the result. As one of their leading full-time officer backers said "Geoff (Lewtas) has done his job. We have a controllable General Secretary (in

Ellis) and we have stopped the Trot (John Macreadie). Geoff will now stand down and make way for our (BL84) next candidate".

It is rumoured that Lewtas is now looking for a new job and that other Graham appointees and apprentices, Veronica Bayne or Frank Campbell, will be next in line to face defeat and help the right-wing in the DGS election.

The bureaucracy see the right-wing and BL84 as being their defenders. With the exception of John Macreadie and Terry Adams, these full-time officials, including Ellis, are currently preparing a campaign to get the APEX CPSA HQ Branch AGM in January to come out against its Branch Committee and CPSA Conference policy on the pay of senior full-time officials.

Ellis has already tried to get the APEX Branch to take disciplinary action against John Macreadie for his refusal to accept the General Secretary's salary when he was elected in July and for proposing to the NEC in a paper that CPSA conference policy must be implemented!

To those local activists who have in the past supported BL84, the experience of the recent elections, shows why they should now return to the Broad Left and help re-establish a single rank and file left organisation in the union.

All outstanding campaign debts must be quickly paid off and the decks cleared for the Deputy General Secretary, President, Vice President and NEC elections in 1987.

The Civil Service is changing. More and more civil servants are being forced to struggle to defend their jobs, living standards and conditions. Layers who have never been involved in struggle, will come into battle as the anger boiling up under the surface explodes. The typists' strike at MOD Bicester is an example of the processes taking place. Members such as these may not have voted for John Macreadie, but through their experiences in the period ahead, they will become supporters of the Broad Left.

In areas such as DHSS and the Department of Employment, there is already a state of change, anger and class consciousness. Fowler,

the attacks on the benefit paying service, availability testing of claimants, outstationing of DHSS work in London, YTS, ethnic monitoring, are challenging the old ideas of civil servants and their role as workers.

The perspective for the Civil Service in 1987 and beyond is one of struggle. Ellis will be tested very early on in 1987 on the jobs front and the pay campaign. The question already on the lips of the activist layer is, how long will he last? He has little or no support amongst the activist layer or amongst full-timers and staff at CPSA HQ.

New right-wing

The right-wing have nothing to offer members. Not even the Tory press and their lies and filth will save them from being called to account. The BL84 leadership are already becoming the new right wing of the union. Under the pressure of events they will increasingly be exposed despite their previous socialist credentials.

The Broad Left will go from strength to strength, provided it continues to take up the day-to-day problems of members, intervenes in helping members to fight and win and continues to attract to it, each new layer of activist.

Militant supporters will continue to be the power house of the Broad Left, making sure that its engines continue to steer a course of constructing a union capable of defending members' interests and providing a fighting leadership capable of drawing the correct conclusions, one which is accountable.

The choice facing the labour and trade union leadership is either to lead the struggle for a socialist society or play the role of policing the working class for the capitalist class. The underlying balance of class forces still remains in favour of the working class. The election of union leaders such as Ellis, Jordan and Co are only a temporary reprieve for the Tories and their system. The new alternative leadership such as John Macreadie has now entered the stage.

By Steve Dunk

Inland Revenue Section Chair, (personal capacity)

Industrial Reports

Miners Broad Left

THE NATIONAL Miners Broad left holds its second conference on 17 January 1987. The convening of this event marks a recognition throughout the industry of the disastrous and dangerous course the NCB and the Tory government has embarked on in relation to coal.

By Gary Ironmonger
(Kilnhurst NUM)

Anyone would have thought, in the wake of Chernobyl, that the government would alter direction, move away from nuclear power and begin a programme of investment in new coal mines and developments to secure our future energy needs. It seems that reality has no place in Thatcher's plans. Profit and the interests of the boss class are more important than the safety and security of millions. Why then, should the livelihood of mere tens of thousands of miners and their families be allowed to interfere with the financial projections of Thatcher's nuclear 'experts'?

Even the recent safety report into Sellafield which shows levels of radiation have 'not been so low as they should have been' at the plant, will not convince the Tories of the error of their ways. Besides, their 'perfectly safe' plant will undoubtedly become 'perfectly safer'

after a few nuts and bolts are tightened up here and there.

The fact is, even if the Tories are looking to the future developments of the coal industry it will not be until they have gone some way to achieving a weak and divided workforce on the basis of company or non-unionism. Their relentless butchery of the industry will continue.

Thatcher's henchmen in the NCB, not least Haslam and MacGregor, have achieved much since the Tory election victory of 1979. *No less than 100,000 jobs have gone.* A further 45,000 at least are earmarked to go in the near future if Albert Wheeler's proposals are implemented.

The 'Wheeler Report' advocates the 'Americanisation' of the British coal industry. Accident rates in the US are three times the level in this country. The attacks on health and safety, on working practices and techniques, on conditions, and, on wages, through the introduction of pit level incentive schemes, will reduce standards to the most disgusting levels. Conditions for the miners will be reminiscent of the Victorian era. And the horrific spectre of private coalowners looms before us.

Perhaps the successes of an 'increase' in output rates from 2.24 tonnes per manshift in 1979 to 3.5 tonnes today and the prospect of the NCB breaking even in 1987-88, have emboldened the Tories in their privatisation plans? Perhaps the

perspective of profitability in the near future has led to the capitalist class allowing the truth to slowly emerge as to the real dangers of nuclear power at the present time? Whatever the case, there has been an absolute explosion in the numbers of private contractors in the coal industry.

Tyson's, Cementation, Amco, and a host of others have been brought in to sink shafts, drive mines, develop headings, transport coal, take over catering, private security services and so on and so on. The 'Wheeler Report' advocates a reduction in the workforce at individual pits by up to 20 per cent underground and 25 per cent on the surface. At one pit in the Selby complex with a projected manpower level of 700, the Board are advocating 480 jobs to be undertaken by private contractors.

Redundancy pay

With over 59 pits closed since the end of the strike, and others merged, the attacks on our industry have been phenomenal. However, the ending of the Redundant Mineworkers Payments Scheme in March 1987 will see a new era dawn on our industry. With no carrot to dangle, the 'carrot and stick' philosophy of the Board will only be met by a determined response from the miners. It has been necessary to 'bite the bullet' for a time, to accept much of the vicious



The Miners' Broad Left will build on the fighting traditions and lessons of the strike against those who seek to escape the necessity of struggle.

treatment given out to us by management since the defeat of the 85/85. *But one thing the miners will never accept is a return to the dark days of the private coalowner. We will not have it.*

The tide is now beginning to turn in our favour. The prospect of a Labour government in the none too distant future has lifted morale. The threat of privatisation has stirred up a hornet's nest. Up and down the coalfields, a willingness to struggle has been displayed in the numerous stoppages, one-day

strikes and bans on overtime that have broken out in one pit after another. These isolated outbreaks must be coordinated nationally and on an issue that will maximise the unity of the miners. By their threats of privatisation the Tories have provided us with that issue.

It is the duty of the National Union of Mineworkers to campaign for and to organise the necessary fightback. The National Miners' Broad Left aims to see it does.

Silentnight union withdraws support

THE LEADERS of the Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades Union completely disgraced themselves when they delivered the worst Xmas present ever to the courageous Silentnight strikers. They have withdrawn official backing of the dispute after eighteen months of bitter struggle.

The news was broken to a delegation of strikers visiting FTAT headquarters on Wednesday 17 December. Two days later a letter from the new general secretary of FTAT, Colin Christopher, was circulated to all TUC and GFTU unions, trades councils and CLPs, explaining the decision to withdraw support from the Silentnight strikers after 19 months of struggle.

The main reason given was that 'it has been a long, difficult and expensive dispute which has had a serious effect on the resources of the union, regrettably, can no longer be sustained.'

Last August, however, the union stopped all strike pay, so the only expenses being incurred were legal costs, which amounted to no more than a few hundred pounds in recent months.

According to the *Financial Times*, 'Another reason for the union's decision... is likely to have been its inability to take a seat on the Economic Development Council for the furniture industry set up in 1985, because Mr Tom Clarke, Silentnight chairman, represents the Employers' Federation on that body.'

Dispute continues

Despite the withdrawal of official backing, however, the strikers have unanimously decided to continue their dispute with Silentnight Beds. They are appealing against the FTAT executive's decision, and will be campaigning within the union to get the decision reversed. In a letter circulated to all parts

of the labour and trade union movement, they announce that 'The 88 remaining strikers and their families are determined to fight on. We have been on strike since 10 June 1985. We are still on strike for the same principles, and the issues are unchanged.'

News of the FTAT leadership's abandonment of the Silentnight strikers has shocked and angered trade unionists and labour movement activists throughout the country. Strikers and their families have sacrificed 19 months of their lives in fighting for trade union rights. This sacrifice has now been rewarded with a stab in the back.

The FTAT leadership failed to call for action in the rest of the Silentnight Group, when this was demanded by strikers in the early stages of the dispute. Other demands made on the union leaders have similarly met with a negative response. Yet, despite the

lack of a clear and positive leadership from their union, the strikers themselves continued to fight effectively and to get the message across to other rank-and-file union members that there was no lack of courage and determination at the grassroots level.

The FTAT leaders have continually underestimated the strikers. But the rank and file within FTAT and other unions, disgusted now by what is universally seen as an act of treachery, will be drawing on the ideas and strength of the Silentnight strikers, and joining with them to build the trade union movement as a democratic fighting organisation for the whole of the working class.

Please send donations of support to the Strike Fund, c/o 9 Frank Street, Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancashire, BB8 5AE. (telephone 0282-816709). For a speaker, contact Terry Bennett on 0282-603055/863392.

By Linden Stafford
(Skipton Labour Party)

London Underground resistance growing

THE FIVE to one vote by NUR members on the London Underground will demonstrate the willingness of these workers to fight the Tory government's poodles in LRT management.

Since the Transport Act every section of the workforce has been attacked. Station de-staffing has crept in. Now privatisation is rearing its ugly head.

This is affecting every grade. The first targets are the catering staff, whose pay and conditions are being decimated as they are forced to compete for their own jobs.

The cleaning department has been set up for wholesale privatisation and have already lost work. In the face of these attacks and management's refusal to negotiate with the NUR on catering we have been forced to hold the ballot.

Now a vote in favour of in-pressure on the Tories to settle the union must name the day for an all-out strike and campaign amongst the membership to ensure it is solid. Those who voted against must be persuaded to join the struggle.

Concrete preparations must

be made. Strike centres, funds, picketing committees to draw together all the members and to spread the dispute must all be organised. Appeals must be made to drivers in Aslef, bus workers and all British Rail workers for solidarity. Links with the striking French rail workers must be made.

Rail workers have enormous potential power. London is the financial capital of Western Europe and we can shut it down. This would put enormous pressure on the Tories to settle.

★ No cuts in pay for any London Underground Limited employee.

★ No cowboy contractors on the combine, all work to LUL employees

★ No more competitive tendering under-cutting wages and conditions

★ Displaced guards to go to the depot of their choice

★ Defend the permanent way agreement

By Bob Law
(NUR, personal capacity)

Lewisham council strike is sabotaged

A THOUSAND Lewisham Nalco members returned to work on 22 December following five weeks on strike after Nalco's national executive withdrew their support.

The 10 original strikers, who walked out demanding safety screens in the housing advisory centre, are to stay out with the backing of the local branch. The council have only agreed there will be no victimisation and that the centre will closed pending a full investigation into security.

Threats

Despite threats from the Labour council the dispute had stayed firm. Four meetings showed a growing determination to stay out, not only for the

basic right of safety at work but against the council's Murdoch style 'industrial relations'. They used Tory laws to threaten strikers with suspension without pay.

This had also angered local Labour Party members, Wards, constituency parties and local government committee had backed the Nalco members. Labour's ranks saw it as an inevitable result of failing to fight the government attacks on local authorities that many councillors now seemingly want to destroy the unions.

In November, Nalco's NEC had ratified the strike but insisted on a ballot in accord with Tory legislation, despite the overwhelming votes at mass meetings. A postal ballot was

organised which allowed the council to play for time and delay negotiations.

On 8 December, Lewisham Nalco and management invited the joint secretaries of the Greater London Whitley Committee to act as conciliators.

Whitley

At a meeting a week later Nalco branch secretaries from Camden and Islington, whose branches supported the strike, came down on management's side and recommended a return to work pending an inquiry into security.

The NEC used this recommendation to withdraw backing from the strike. Their concern for union democracy was so

great they even refused to let the ballot be completed. Faced with the prospect of a long drawn out strike with no strike pay, Nalco members agreed to return to work the following week.

Five weeks of strike, four mass meetings, three lobbies, one demonstration and an occupation of the town hall transformed hundreds of workers into potential activists in the union and even in the Labour Party. The local branch will keep up its backing for the advice centre and make sure to build up a leadership in the union nationally which is worthy of its membership.

By Gordon Hull
(Lewisham Nalco)

London Machine Branch

SOGAT '82

THE FIGHT AGAINST MURDOCH CONTINUES

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March and Rally to Wapping on

SATURDAY JANUARY 24

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March via Fleet Street to Rally at Wapping

Speakers: From Trade Union and Labour Movements

C. CHERILL
Secretary

D. S. LLOYD
Chairman

A. H. ELDERTON
Deputy Secretary

Militant

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Austin and Pickersgill

Shipyards strike goes on

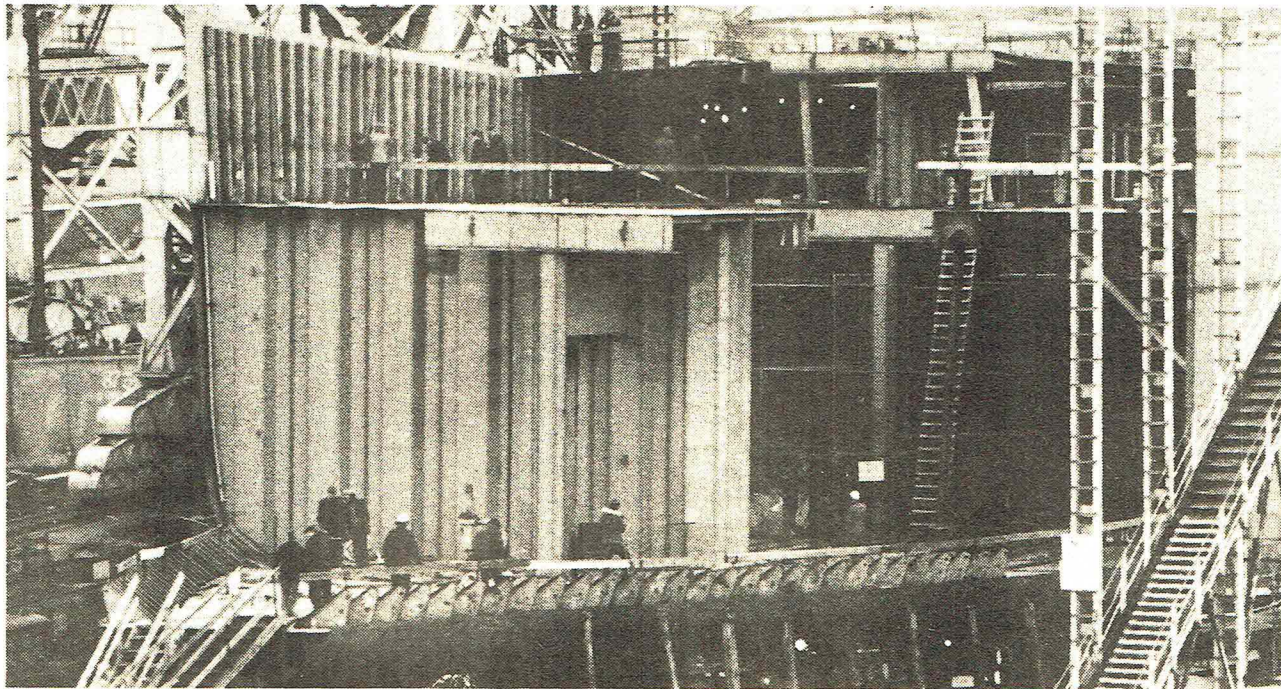
WORKERS AT Austin and Pickersgill shipyard in Sunderland have voted unanimously to continue their indefinite strike action in support of 50 workers locked out by management.

By Billy Richings
 (GMBATU, Austin Pickersgill, personal capacity)

The 830 workers walked out on December 4 when management laid off 50 men who refused to accept selective overtime being imposed contrary to long standing agreements. The workforce were also angered by management refusal to adhere to the nationally agreed "avoidance of disputes" procedure. The plans of A&P management were upset by the strength of feeling among the men reflected in the ballot votes for strike action. GMBATU members voted 653 to 33 in favour of action, EETPU members by 39 to 5, AEU members by 68 to 1, and UCCAT by 20 to 0.

Dirty tactics

Management have employed dirty tactics in the expectation of winning an easy victory. The timing of the dispute provoked just before the Christmas holidays, was obviously intended to put extra pressure on men, especially those with families to cave in quickly. The screws were then tightened by withholding backpay and holiday pay to which the men were entitled, in effect stealing the workers' own money. However, these underhand tactics have backfired. They have served only to harden and underline the mood of the strikers. Now it has become clear that control has been taken out of the hands of A&P management, and is being orchestrated by British Shipbuilders nationally. There is growing feeling, among the strikers, that both sides are digging in for a long, hard battle.



There are no illusions among the strikers that this battle is solely over flexibility of overtime. BS have been involved over the past few years in a campaign to strip down the industry, and erode working conditions. In May last year, they announced 3,500 more redundancies nationally, of which 925 were to come from yards on the Wear. However, the source of volunteers for redundancy has dried up, leaving BS with a target of 200 compulsory redundancies from A&P. The strength of union organisation, especially at A&P, presented major obstacles to BS's plans, and therefore they provoked this dispute, in an

attempt to break the union organisation. At the same time as seeking 200 compulsory redundancies, management at A&P have attempted to introduce sub-contracting of manufacture and labour. In other words they are looking for the return of the days of a casualised labour force, with weak or even no union organisation.

Workers response

BS had not, however, reckoned with the response of A&P workers. The joint shop stewards committee has organised a full picket rota, and established a strike cen-

tre where advisors have been available to help strikers with benefit claims. Regular bulletins have been produced to keep strikers and the public informed of latest developments. Pressure is being applied within the various unions concerned to have the dispute declared official. Approaches have also been made to other unions and workplaces in the area, for support, which has been readily forthcoming. Collections have been made at Wearmouth Colliery, where miners remembering the support they received among A&P workers, donated generously. Support has also been

received from the other shipyards of Sunderland Shipbuilding and Swan Hunters on the Tyne, as well as from workers at Rolls Royce and many other unions. Wearside has already been devastated by unemployment. Workers in the area clearly understand the impact of redundancies in the area. The time has now come for not only words but action from the trade union and labour leaders, to save the industry. Send donations to: Austin and Pickersgill strike appeal, Lynaf House, Frederick Street, Sunderland SR1 1NA.

Year of Militant

(Continued from front)

by the efforts of workers themselves, like *Militant*. In the general election and after *Militant* will be an essential weapon for the left. It will be the newspaper most committed to returning Labour to power. But building *Militant's* readership is the best means of maintaining a vigilant eye on the Labour leaders.

Militant must increase its circulation to inform more workers of the steps being taken by a new Labour government, give a Marxist explanation of their full significance and if necessary show the alternative path that should be taken.

Militant must reach more readers, more frequently. A weekly paper is completely inadequate. Winning extra sellers is the best assistance towards realising the more frequent *Militant*.

Over the next few months the Editorial Board is planning an improved appearance and format for *Militant*. New techniques and designs are in hand. Special sales initiatives will be launched to spur the paper on. But most of all *Militant* depends on its committed supporters to step up their selling activity.

Selling *Militant* is the most fundamental part of spreading more widely the programme of Marxism. At work, in the union branch, selling *Militant* is an essential step to grouping together the shop or office floor activists. In school or college it is a means to reach those determined to create a fighting union for students. In the streets, around the estates, outside the dole offices, every buyer is a potential regular reader. Selling *Militant* after Labour Party meetings is a mark of determination—while *Mirror* millionaire Maxwell remains a party member, *Militant* supporters will not be intimidated to stop pushing a socialist paper.

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