

Militant

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Keep Greenwich Labour

Tories don't care about YOU

THE THATCHER government has destroyed jobs and threatened vital services. But they can't destroy workers' willingness to fight for change and to kick them out of office.

Greenwich constituency is in many ways a microcosm of Britain after eight years of Tory rule. It used to be an industrial area; there were 10,000 well paid skilled jobs in factories along the Woolwich Road a decade ago. Now they have gone. The biggest local employers are the council and the national health service, which are both targets for Tory cuts.

The Greenwich by-election on 26 February gives local people a chance to fight back by voting Labour and joining the fight for socialist policies.

The upper crust minority in the constituency, in the roads with £250,000 houses have their candidates. The Tory, John Antcliffe is a £30,000 a year merchant banker with Morgan Grenfell. This firm is suspected of involvement in City of London scandals and they make much of their profits from the £14 billion export of capital which has helped deindustrialise Greenwich and cause the 14 per cent local unemployment.

Tory cuts

The Social Democrat candidate does market research on how to sell baked beans! The SDP are nothing but a second Tory party. They are polishing up their credit card and claret club image.

Labour must concentrate on the real issues affecting local people. More than half the constituency live in council housing, which has been hard hit by Tory cuts. 3,000 houses have been sold leaving mostly flats. Typical of

By **Eddie McParland**
(Greenwich Labour Party and Ferrier Ward councillor, in personal capacity)

these is the 6,000 inhabitant Ferrier estate where local people are fighting the effects of around 30 per cent unemployment, with large numbers of elderly people and single parents.

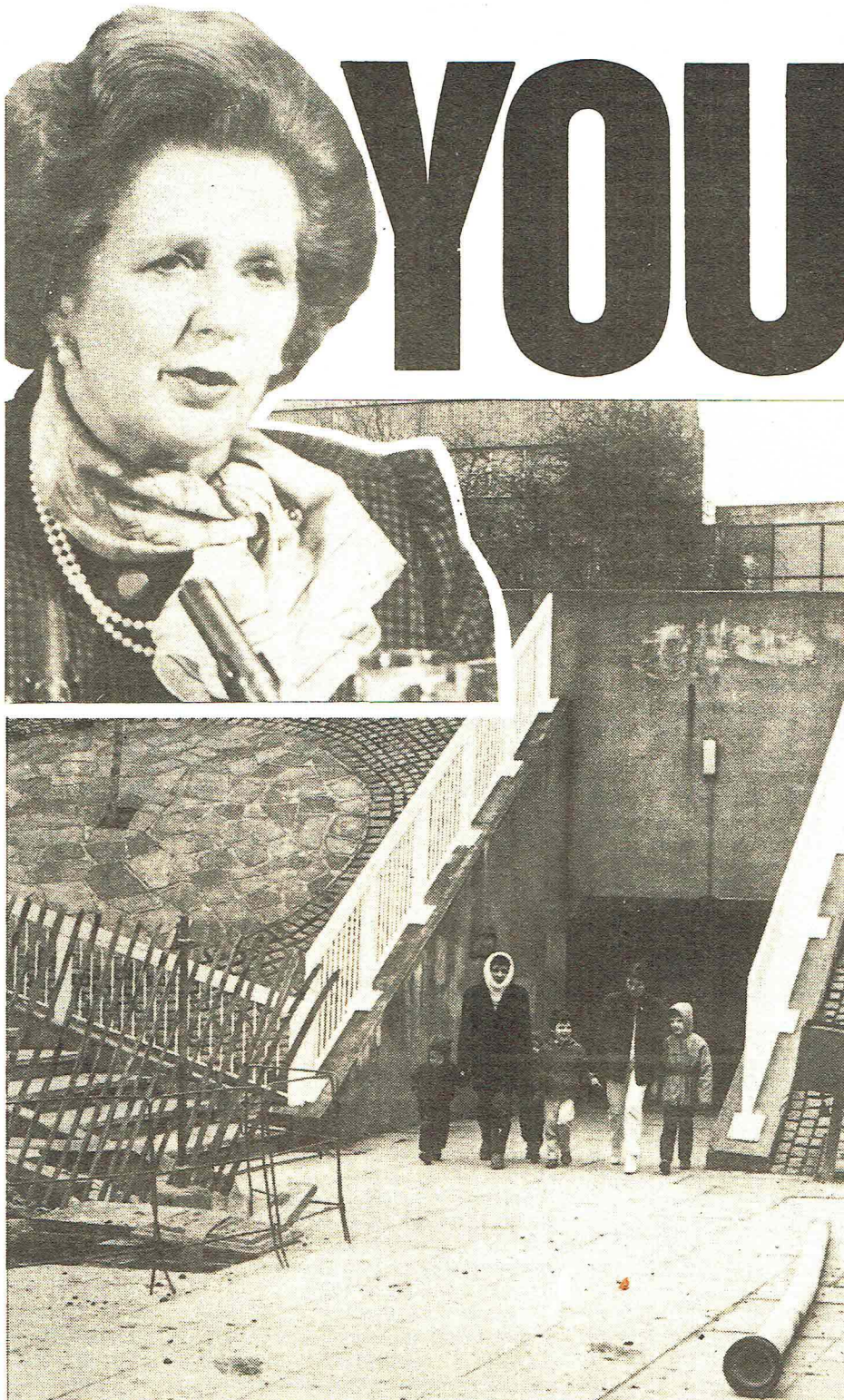
People on the estate don't often get a chance to tell the Tories what they think of them: "They never canvass round here" one mother of two children told me "they don't care about people like me and you."

Rate capping has lost Greenwich borough £120 million in the last five years. These Tory cuts mean the council is desperately fighting structural and safety problems with one arm tied behind its back.

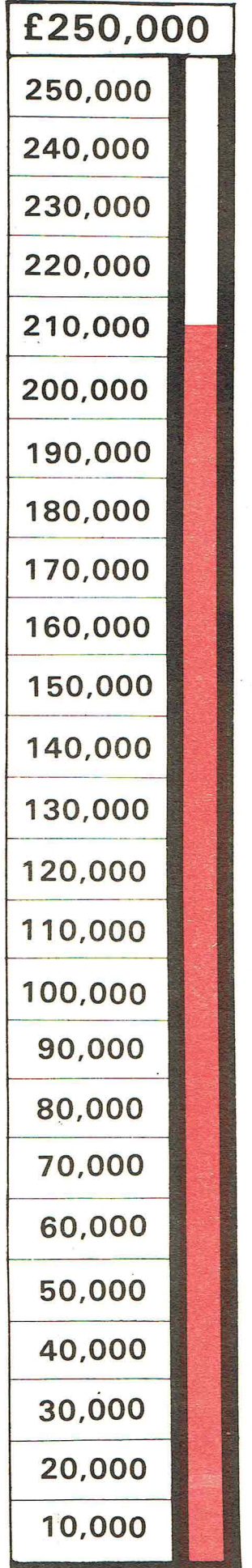
The people on the waiting list of 15,000 and the hundreds continually being made homeless need emergency action. They need a socialist Labour government, which will give back the cash stolen by the Tories and start to reverse the attacks which have hit Greenwich and other working class areas.

Vote Labour and fight for a socialist solution to our problems. Take power out of the hands of the Thatchers and Morgan Grenfells and put it in the hands of the working class.

★ **Canvassing from Co-operative Building, Old Dover Rd, SE3 (near Royal Standard)**



Militant Fighting Fund



JOHN CASEY, made redundant by BREL Glasgow due to Tory attacks on the rail industry has donated £320 to "build Marxist ideas." Willie Burns, a CPUSA member gave another £45 to make up his full week's wages while Annette Whyte sent £80. Follow these examples with your donation to help us reach £250,000 by the end of February.

Militant

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Programme for victory

THERE IS no mass support for the re-election of the Tories for a third term. Labour's private opinion polls record that 46 per cent of the population cannot think of anything good to come from another Tory government.

The number one issue, the poll says, for the majority of voters is unemployment, which now touches every family. And it is under Thatcher that unemployment has trebled.

Thatcher's delusion of riding back to office on the votes of the 'better paid', share buying workers has been blown apart by the strike of the telecom engineers, most of whom are shareholders. High mortgage rates and unemployment will mean that those workers who bought their council houses, will not provide the solid bedrock of support the Tories hoped for. Teachers, many of whom have voted Tory, have fought the government for two years on wages and conditions.

It is impossible for the Tories to win a popular mandate at the polls. But the right wing Labour leadership is capable of losing the election, and letting Thatcher back in by default.

Unprepared to break out of the framework of capitalism, they are perpetually trying to reassure the ruling class and its press that Labour's economic sums add up. A million jobs will be created, but it will not be inflationary; it will not lead to a run on the pound or a repeat of the 1976 scramble to the door of the IMF; it has all been finely costed, Kinnock confirmed on Panorama—but on a capitalist basis. Hence the unbelievable public relations incompetence of Labour's right, threatening, before an election, to raise taxes. Even the press now talks of Hattersley's 'Mondale factor'. Walter Mondale fought President Reagan on a programme of tax increases, and was humiliatingly defeated.

But who are they convincing? What must be the most alarming opinion poll of all calculates that only 24 per cent of the population believes Labour will implement its promises. And that is down 3 per cent since November. This is the legacy of 17 years of Labour government since the war that did not fundamentally improve conditions for the majority. But it also demonstrates the failure of the Kinnock/Hattersley leadership to present a credible alternative for the mass of working people. This is the major factor in Labour's inability to forge decisively ahead in the opinion polls.

It is true there is a lack of faith in all parties and a suspicion of professional politicians (only 21 per cent think the Tories will keep their promises). The key youth vote is overwhelmingly cynical about any party making a difference to their conditions of life. But fundamentally this is due to the failure of the Labour leaders to inspire young people.

The apparent 'demotion' of soft left employment spokesman, John Prescott, will do nothing to give the Labour leadership the appearance of more conviction. At the shadow cabinet/NEC meeting, Prescott wanted to be more specific about how and where the million jobs would be created. Instead Kinnockite Bryan Gould will now draw together the job creation plans.

It was agreed at the meeting that Labour speakers must display an air of confidence, to give voters faith that the party actually believes it can win. Yet straight afterwards Bryan Gould issued the most low key statement, implying that he expected Labour to still be 3 per cent behind the Tories right up to the calling of the election itself. Along with the demoralising comments of David Blunkett about Labour's prospects, it is clear that Labour's leadership is far from confident about winning the overall majority that Party and union activists are so desperate for.

But an outstanding Labour victory is there to be won. Vigorously campaigning on an end to unemployment and poverty, the rebuilding of the welfare state and the housing stock, Labour could cut through the cynicism and sense of hopelessness. Clearly explaining the programme of full socialism and the resources it could free for the benefit of the mass of working people, it could wipe away the scepticism and disbelief.

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Tory blacklists

A LIST of "122 Militant activists and 147 sympathisers" in the civil service is reported to have been given to the government and Scotland Yard by Tory MPs.

In a hysterical front-page article headed 'Menace of the Militant Moles' the *Sunday Express* quoted Sir Peter Blaker MP, a former Tory Foreign Office minister, saying: "The Militant Tendency is against democracy as we know it".

250,000 names of 'subversives in industry' is said by *World in Action* to be held by the Economic League, a right-wing group funded by big business.

These two revelations prove that in reality it is the Tories, the state and big business who threaten democratic rights. The government has banned trade union membership at GCHQ. MI5 has plotted to undermine the elected prime minister, Harold Wilson. Special Branch raided the BBC in Glasgow, the *New Statesman* office and Duncan Campbell's house. Now the Tories and their friends in the boardrooms are shown to be hounding political and union activists from their jobs.

Their true attitude to democracy was given away by Sir Ian Gilmour in his book, *Inside Right*. "Conservatives do not worship democracy" he said: "Democracy is a means to an end... If it is leading to an end that is undesirable or is inconsistent with itself there is a theoretical case for ending it."

In Parliament, Labour MP David Winnick called

By Bill Boyle

for the widest possible opposition to any McCarthyism. "If you are worried about extremism" he told the Tories, "you should be worried about your own cabinet."

According to the *Sunday Express*, the Tory MPs who have produced their list of 'Militant moles' have been backed by civil service union leaders, who "have verified the list and warned that it could be only the tip of the iceberg".

This will outrage civil service trade unionists, particularly those in the CPSA, whose president, Marion Chambers, is quoted as saying that the civil service is infiltrated "from top to bottom". She is not quoted as saying by whom or for what purpose. It is deeply offensive that any civil service trade union leader should have sympathy for Tory witch-hunting.

Faced with the forthcoming elections for president, national executive and deputy general secretary, the CPSA right wing are so desperate to counter the challenge from the Broad Left, that they are turning to the Tories for help.

For their part, the Tories are extremely concerned about the weakness of the CPSA right wing. All their major initiatives in the civil

service have foundered on the rocks of the trade unions. Despite 150,000 lost jobs and the wrecking of the welfare benefit system, the Broad Left still dominates the DHSS section in policy and leadership. The right wing is so weak that they have joined the breakaway BL84 in a joint slate of policies and candidates for the 1987 elections - what *Militant* supporters predicted would happen nationally.

The Tories have seen regional pay, long-term pay systems, merit pay and many more of their policies rejected by civil servants. Low pay, no promotion prospects and appalling working conditions have radicalised deeper layers of workers. This explains civil servants' adoption of radical socialist policies and the growth of the ideas of *Militant* and the programme of the Broad Left. Witness the rejection of YTS by the recent conference of the Inland Revenue Staff Federation and their adoption of a common pay claim with other unions, against their leader's advice.

The Tories and their right-wing friends have firmly opposed every democratic demand raised by socialists in the CPSA, from the publication of NEC minutes to the change to the five-yearly election of the general secretary and the election of all four senior officers. These Broad Left proposals were opposed outright by the right wing. They also opposed election addresses for the NEC elections and they masterminded the profound-

ly undemocratic CPSA/SCPS merger proposals.

At every juncture it has been the socialists in the CPSA who have pushed forward the frontiers of democracy and membership involvement. The right have made no secret of their irritation with the historically democratic nature of the union's structure. They have called for shorter, smaller and biennial conferences and have always shown contempt for the CPSA conference, reversing or ignoring its decisions.

Old enemy

It is socialists who have fought hard for the right to take decisions in an open and fully democratic way and who will defend democracy the hardest. The Tories are worried that after all the blood and scalps they have taken from workers, they still confront their old enemy, the trade unions. All members of all unions should be demanding to know:

1. Why have these 269 names been given to Scotland Yard?
2. Have secret files been opened?
3. Who gave them the list? They must demand:
 1. A repudiation of the Tories' acts by the civil service trade union leaders,
 2. That they condemn the attempted witch-hunt of their political opponents, and
 3. That the next Labour government lift all political restrictions on civil and other public servants.

Report slanders Liverpool council

A HOUSE of Commons committee report on racial discrimination in employment has made a disgusting attack on the record of Liverpool City Council.

This is not surprising, when one of the six members of this committee is Tory MP John Gorst, who made his mark by leading the attack on the Asian Grunwick strikers in 1977.

It is deplorable that Labour MPs such as Ron Leighton, who chaired the proceedings in Liverpool, can collaborate on such a serious report with open class enemies like Gorst.

The majority of the evidence taken by the committee was presented by

members and supporters of the Black Caucus, who have been in dispute with the City Council for the last two years. (See *Militants* 826 & 829).

Downright sabotage

The only group submitting evidence which is not affiliated to the Black Caucus, the Afro-Asian Standing Committee, representing more than 18 black organisations in Liverpool, has exposed the downright sabotage of the council's enemies in the field of black employment. Their submission stated: "The local authority's employment policy has been strangled by local trade

union policy, especially NALGO's... Every appointment is being blocked most unreasonably by NALGO."

Whenever the council has had a free hand, intake of blacks into the workforce has averaged 30 per cent of all applicants. The council has one of the best records for housing blacks and has made vast improvements in social services for the black community. All this is ignored by the 'report'.

To show the seriousness of these gentlemen in solving the problems of blacks, one of their recommendations is to include a black face in Mrs Thatcher's favourite TV series *Yes Prime Minister!*

Liverpool protects its services

LIVERPOOL CITY Council have once again managed to introduce a budget which will fundamentally protect jobs and services for the next year. The main question mark now is whether Labour will still be in office to preside over this budget—given that the House of Lords could remove the present Labour councillors within the next few weeks.

Windfalls

A number of 'windfalls', largely as a result of the Tories' cutting services in the transport,

fire service and police joint boards, will enable the city council to fix the budget with a rate increase in the region of nine per cent—and with no cuts in jobs and services.

For the labour movement of Liverpool this budget is good news. It demonstrates that the council leadership was right not to give in to those who insisted that cuts be made in November 1985—especially those who suggested that the 'Stonefrost' package of rent increases and additional rate increases was a way out.

The approach of Liverpool council's leadership, their tactics and resolve to stand firm have been vindicated. Many of those councils who are now in acute financial difficulties, such as Sheffield, Manchester and many London boroughs, are now paying the penalty for not remaining united with Liverpool.

Difficult

Since 1985 the council has had a difficult time defending the programme that it was elected upon—particularly as some trade

union leaders have used every opportunity to attack the council.

By fixing a budget at this stage, the city council will prevent the Liberals from claiming any credit if the House of Lords does disqualify the councillors. The budget also effectively refutes the idea that the 'Militant-led council' has tried to use the weapon of chaos to force a deliberate confrontation with the Tories. Nevertheless the financial crisis still remains acute. There is no room for growth—the expenditure limits set are well below what the city needs.

No further council houses will be built after next year, because all the capital resources have been used. The debt repayments will impose further burdens on the council in the next few years.

Only by successfully campaigning for additional resources—either from the Tories or under a Labour government—will the problems of Liverpool council be resolved.

By Dave Cotterill

Students move into action

Photos: Tina Carroll.

Universities

Warwick

STUDENTS AT Warwick University have won an almost complete victory against the attacks of the university authorities (see *Militant* 833).

Faced with a potential joint campaign between students and workers, including the threat of industrial action, the authorities restored the student union's block grant of £112,000, dropped penalties on students taking part in the rent strike, withdrew the injunction restraining the student union and 'discovered' an extra £220,000 from national government to meet the students' demands.

This piece of 'creative accounting' means that students will only have to pay half rent during the two short vacation periods, which will save those in halls of residence £115. The only string attached by the authorities was the reduction of heating in the halls by one degree.

While the students' rent strike and consumer boycott played a central role in the campaign, it was the potential for unity between students and workers which forced the authorities to back down. A meeting of NALGO, TGWU, ASTMS and AUT representatives agreed to propose to their members lightning action if the authorities did not back down. *Militant* students assisted in recruiting workers to the TGWU during the campaign. It also proved decisive that the students did not remain isolated, but took the campaign to the local labour movement and invited Dave Nellist MP to their demonstration.

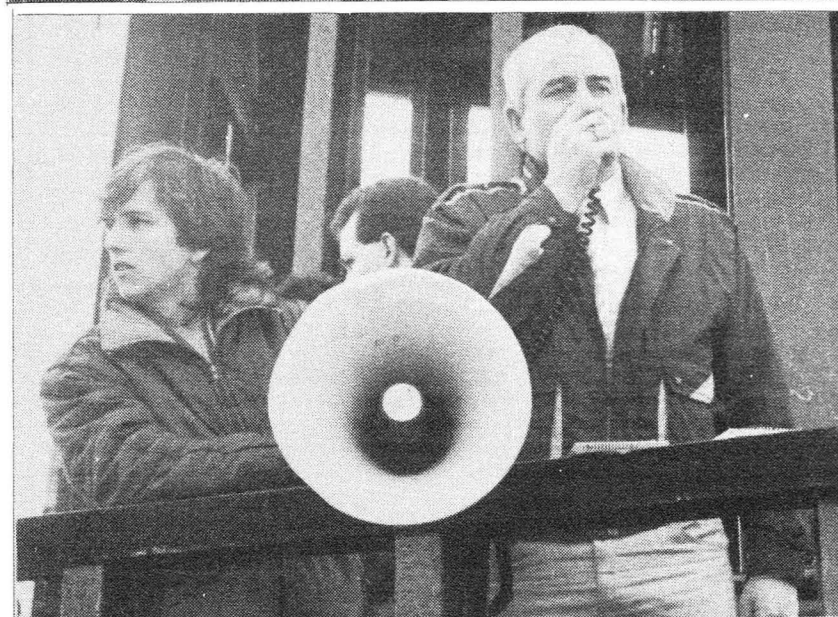
By Aled Frances

Sussex

THE AUTHORITIES at Sussex University have withheld £65,000 from the student union's block grant and initiated disciplinary proceedings against 48 members of the union.

They have bankrupted the union, in order to defeat the students' campaign against cuts which involve the loss of 90 jobs. The disciplinary proceedings are being used to victimise union activists and intimidate students as a whole. By reconstituting the union, the authorities hope to reduce it to a sports and social club, and crush its ability to defend the interests of the students.

If they succeed in breaking the student's union, then they will undoubtedly move on to attack the campus trade unions next. It would also be a green light to other university and polytechnic authorities to carry out similar measures. Unity between students and workers is now crucial. The National Union of Students must view this attack as of national significance and mobilise its full support in defence of Sussex students.



2500 students march through Liverpool on the day of action on 11 February (above). At the Pier Head, they were addressed by councillor Tony Mulhearn (below).

Cardiff

IN AN unprecedented move, the Tory government has intervened over the head of the University Grants Committee (UGC) to threaten to cut off the grant to Cardiff University College, unless it carries out cuts.

The Department of Education have told the university that the next instal-

ment of the UGC grant, amounting to £1.5 million, will not be paid in March unless they appoint "without delay a team of financial managers and accountants so that the college can secure budgetary control". An equipment grant of £100,000 is also being withheld.

The government has also announced massive cuts in funding for seven other universities for the next three years.

Salford

THOUSANDS OF Salford University students boycotted lecturers last Thursday as a protest against education cuts which threaten courses and jobs on the campus. This followed a recent lobby of Education Secretary Kenneth Baker. The university faces the prospect of a two per cent cut every year for the next three years.

Thousands of course places have already been lost and hundreds of redundancies have taken place.

Both the lobby and the boycott have been peaceful, with hundreds being addressed by speakers from the LPYS and Ancoats hospital strikers. Hundreds of leaflets from the Labour club have been given to workers, saying "we must unite to defend our courses, your jobs and the right to a decent education for ourselves and our children."

By Paul Morris

FE colleges

Chesterfield

THE STUDENTS Union at Chesterfield College of Technology and Arts organised a 24 hour shutdown on 11 February to highlight the cuts in education and the Tories' plan to introduce student loans.

It was an unequalled success, with around 60 pickets on the college gates at the height of activity. Only a minority of students crossed picket lines, most of them day-

release who would have lost a day's pay had they not gone in.

Students were joined on the picket lines by some members of staff and many members of other unions in the college refused to cross and went home. One group of NUPE office workers actually waited for a picket line to be set up so they could be turned away. Deliveries were stopped throughout the day including the Post Office van.

By Paul Crowson

Neath

AT NEATH college, an emergency general meeting voted overwhelmingly to take strike action, against the advice of the students' union executive. Over 70 per cent of the students joined the strike, with over 30 mounting a

constant picket on the gates.

At Ty Coch college some students stayed away but many were intimidated into attending by the threat of suspension. Yet about 35 joined the Neath students at a rally addressed by Collette Williams, FE Sabbatical officer at City College, Liverpool.

Cardiff

IN CARDIFF 300 students, the majority from further

education colleges, attended a demonstration, followed by an occupation of the local authority offices.

London

FELS MEMBERS in the City and East London College's Raines site achieved an effective shutdown. Members of the teachers' union NATFHE refused to cross any picket lines, the

staff closed the library and 40 students lobbied ILEA members at County Hall. The ILEA has to decide what to do about a £80 million shortfall in their budget. The students called on the councillors to commit themselves to a no-cuts budget.

Orpington

POLICE MOVED against students from a lobby of the local council by students at Orpington College, Kent. The college

principal prevented FELS members from giving out leaflets, organising a general meeting and even sticking up official NUS posters, even though this was an official NUS day of action.

Southgate

AT SOUTHGATE college, FELS members organised a lobby of the local education sub-committee to pro-

test against a £15 a week fee which they have imposed. The students walked out of the meeting when it became clear that the issue would not be discussed.

Glasgow

THE BIGGEST ever day of action was organised by FELS members at Cardonald College Glasgow. Hundreds of students refused to cross picket lines and bus loads went to lobby Strathclyde Regional Council, who are proposing drastic cuts in grant allowances. They propose

to give grants only to those with four O levels and limit the allowance from two to one year. When they returned to the college, almost 400 students took part in an occupation and public meeting with speakers from the LPYS and the Caterpillar strikers, for whom £275 was raised. 25 copies of *Militant* were sold.



'We could have won outright'

WOLVERHAMPTON strikers voted 70-30 to return to work, but there weren't many happy faces. "What a bloody sell out" was the verdict of a group of Walsall pickets, some of whom had voted for and some against.

"We'd beat the gaffers, but what could you do with someone like Golding representing you. It was obvious he wouldn't try for anything better. He should never have been elected, the other bloke wouldn't have fiddled", a picket said.

Another picket had a rolled up copy of Militant under his arm. "This is the only one that has been getting it right", he was saying to some of his workmates.

By Nigel Wheatley, Walsall.

A QUIET Wednesday afternoon in Burslem, Stoke on Trent was broken by the sound of NCU pickets singing 'Here we go, here we go' round their brazier. They had just heard the news that Stoke engineers had voted two to one to continue the strike, and for Crewe to stay out as well. Pickets were angry at the way the strike was conducted, and talked of being 'sold down the river'. They were uncertain whether the strike would continue, but felt confident that it could be won easily. There were never any illusions in Golding here.

The reason he was elected was because he was the big name—an MP. But people in Stoke know his record, they voted for Phil Holt, (Broad Left candidate for general secretary).

By Sue Wilkie, Stoke North LPYS.

IN READING 550 engineers voted by four to one to accept the offer, but the overwhelming majority were disgusted with the deal, and the way John Golding described it as the best there was.

They voted to accept because firstly, they thought, a vote against would be a vote of no confidence in the union leaders, and could damage the union, and also many were suffering financial problems - the cost of living in Reading being almost the same as in London. A strike fund was only set up in the second week and members were unprepared for a long strike. The mood of most members was "next time we'll be ready for them".

They were beginning to realise the need for a change of leadership—the Broad Left will be getting more votes from Reading in the future.

By Ben Rayner, Reading NCU.

TELECOMS STRIKE



A LITTLE SAUCE HERE A BIT OF STUFFING THERE AND WE WON'T GET THIS DISH SENT BACK AGAIN WILL WE GOLDING?

Battles still left to fight

BRITISH TELECOM engineers returned to work—undefeated but without winning their full claim for an unconditional ten per cent pay rise.

National Communications Union (NCU) members discovered a strength and spirit in their solidarity which welded the union as never before.

But there is widespread bitterness over the deal negotiated by the union's right wing leadership. Just when the strike was beginning to bite, and the mood of the pickets was buoyant, general secretary John Golding and the negotiating team recommended a deal which signed away many of the hard won conditions—most importantly the grading structure.

The members voted by two to one to accept the deal - not because they thought they couldn't win, but because they lost confidence in the unions' leadership to take the battle any further.

Even so nearly 30,000 voted against—a testimony to the rank and files willingness to struggle, despite all the pressures to accept the deal.

The attitude of many strikers was one of reluctant acceptance. A Glasgow picket said: "I voted yes.

There was no point in voting no with an NEC with no guts to do anything."

In Aberdeen strikers voted to return to work, but then passed a resolution of no confidence in the leadership by four to one.

The eager acceptance by the union's executive was jumped on by management. In nine districts local management were threatening to abolish the nine-day fortnight, under the pretext of getting the system back to normal as soon as possible. But the rank and file responded immediately, and in Liverpool, Manchester and the north west, and London City, amongst other areas, engineers voted not to return in protest at the terms.

The union's negotiating team, having thrown away the opportunity for outright victory, failed to even safeguard the hours and conditions when the members returned.

The result of the deal could mean extensive job losses. The *Financial Times* reported on 31 January that research carried out by brokers Wood-Mackenzie, indicated that BT would have to lose 70,000 jobs by 1992.

The union's moderate leadership never wanted a national strike, but were pushed into it by a rank and

file incensed by the new management regime since privatisation. BT wants a pliable and passive workforce, which will work how and when it suits them. This dispute has been a lesson, and a warning to workers in other privatised industries.

The biggest gains have been made by the members themselves—most important is the increased strength and unity of the union.

The NCU Broad Left is calling for mobilisation of this new found strength in defence of jobs.

There must be a full assessment of the impact of the dispute, which management will meticulously try to disguise. The NCU should orientate towards the lower management union STE, against attempts by management to drive a wedge between the two unions. Although there is extreme bitterness towards STE members who scabbed, the greatest impact was where STE members refused to do engineers' work.

The Broad Left will be campaigning for a leadership which is prepared to fight to defend the conditions and working practices won by engineers over the years.

By Yvonne Harrison
(NCU Broad Left executive)

Management tries it on

IN NINE districts Telecom engineers voted to stay on strike after the dispute was officially ended with the ballot last week.

Local management, in what was possibly a nationally coordinated strategy by BT, attempted to enforce unacceptable terms for the return to work.

SOUTHAMPTON cable ships remained solidly on strike until Monday of this week.

Management had attacked overtime rates, reducing them after a 12 hour shift from double time to 1.4 time.

They were pressing for their dispute to be made official, but

the NEC member told them they 'weren't on to a winner and should return to work'.

IN LIVERPOOL, where the deal was rejected by three to one, there was a near unanimous vote by a thousand engineers not to return to work at the same ballot meeting. Management wanted the scrapping of the nine day fortnight for an indefinite period with engineers working until 10 pm to clear the backlog of repairs.

This was a clear breach of the contract of employment and the union threatened to take legal action. Had the struggle been pursued to a successful conclusion then this would have been totally unnecessary. Initially the union negotiators accepted the changes, but were later forced to go back and renegotiate. Now Liverpool members will have to forego the nine-day fortnight for

six weeks, one of the worst deals in the country.

Possibly BT wanted to try and break the union in one of its strongest areas. The strike in Liverpool was 'brilliant' said Broad Left national secretary Phil Holt.

IN LONDON there was chaos and confusion in the city branch where management tried to cancel the nine-day fortnight and change shifts. Possibly this was an attempt to break the important and potentially very powerful city branches. Hundreds of members marched on BT headquarters. Two members were victimised and suspended for alleged picket line offences. One of those had his ten year old daughter with him at the time of the alleged incident, and a walking stick which he used because of a leg injury which management claimed was a weapon.

City was on verge of costly breakdown

THROUGHOUT THE dispute BT management, and the media claimed that the engineers' action was having no effect, and that the system was holding up.

But on the Monday before the settlement, a major exchange in the City of London went 'off the air' during a peak trading period. The 623 exchange covers all the major banks and finance houses in the EC3 and EC4 districts in the City, including Lloyds main switchboard and Midland Bank's international division. These are the people who now own British Telecom. They probably lost millions from that single isolation.

But major faults were developing all over the country especially in Manchester and the north east. Had the strike continued the pressure on BT bosses Vallance and Bett would have been intolerable.

Socialist programme for engineers

- ★ 32 hour, four day week, with no loss of pay.
- ★ No redundancies
- ★ No job losses through productivity deals or new technology.
- ★ Trade union control of new technology.
- ★ Opposition to anti-trade union laws.
- ★ Renationalisation of BT, and a fully nationalised communications industry under workers' control and management with one third of management elected from the trade unions in the industry, one third from the government and one third from the TUC.
- ★ Compensation paid out only to those in proven need—the small shareholders, and BT workers themselves.
- ★ One union for all communications workers.
- ★ Regular elections for all full time union officials.
- ★ All full time officials to receive the same wages as those they represent.

Left's record

THE NCU Broad Left was formed nine years ago as an alternative to 30 years of right wing control. The Broad Left rescued the union from the bankrupt policies of the right wing.

During those nine years it successfully campaigned for a fight on the shorter working week, led an unsuccessful but necessary fight against privatisation, formed alternative policies to selling jobs and successfully campaigned for democratic changes in the union constitution—including; publication of branch voting, publication of executive committee minutes, election of delegations to TUC and Labour Party conferences and the election of senior officers. All of these were rigidly opposed by the right wing.

Win the youth vote for Labour

Tories scheme to cut wages



The Tories' idea of a choice. Go on a slave labour scheme or a low paid job or have your benefit cut.

THE LETTER from the Manpower Services Commission told me "failure to attend could affect your benefit." I was one of eight who turned up at the local Skill Centre for a week on the Restart scheme.

The aim of the week was mainly confidence building helping us to find work. But we were long term unemployed because of a lack of jobs not lack of confidence.

The first day we sat in a circle discussing aspects of unemployment. The best part was the guided tour of the skill centre. But two of the courses were to be closed. "Instrumentation systems" (reading of dials and panels) had been halted after 12 people completed a year long course and still could not find work. Reopening the course would cause a

glut of skilled workers.

The car maintenance course was closing because garages took in YTS trainees rather than trained mechanics.

In a session on money saving we were handed a sheet with tips such as "make your own yoghurt, use a microwave oven, wear thermal underwear, and don't shop when you are hungry!"

Reactionary ideas

The group instructor spewed out endless reactionary comments in a loud voice such as: "Women don't have the mental stability to hold down a job". He denounced everyone, Japanese, blacks, women through to other members of the staff. It makes you wonder how such people get important jobs.

One session went through the work history of group members. Brian aged 42 had a factory job with too low a wage to keep his family so he became a self-employed hod carrier. Then, because of shortage of building work, he became a self-employed "tar spreader". He got into trouble with the tax man and was declared bankrupt. He nearly lost his house and car and has been unemployed for 6 years.

Chris is 28 with four young children and can't find a job which can support them. Thatcher has argued that people should take up jobs below DHSS level and have them topped up. But even after taking advice from the Welfare Rights Officer the top-up often doesn't reach dole level!

Peter aged 29 was made redundant by a concrete factory when the boss

sacked all the workers on £115 a week and re-opened a month later with specially selected staff at £90 a week.

All the others had similar experiences. Restart organisers would have us believe that long term unemployment is due to individual inadequacy. Nothing could be further from the truth. Members of the group certainly had problems, literacy, numeracy, and some had been in prison mainly for non payment of debts but all had held steady skilled jobs.

The Restart week proved our plight was due to lack of jobs. Some training schemes were good, some bad. But the only aim of all of them was to bring the figures down before a general election and force more workers into low paid jobs.

Boycott Tory Job Training Swindle

YOUNG VOTERS are the key to a Labour victory in the next election. Labour are miles ahead of the Tories and Alliance youth in support, but most young voters say they do not intend to vote. The Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) are out to turn anti-Tory feeling into votes.

All the Tories have given first time voters are the dole queue, poverty pay schemes like Job Training Scheme (JTS) which pays no more than the dole. The labour movement in Dundee are showing what can be done by starting a campaign against JTS and other schemes like Restart. (See *Militant* 13 February).

The white collar union NALGO is going to boycott JTS and is considering industrial action. Other unions are considering following suit. JTS is just a cheap labour scheme backed up by threats.

Labour must follow the lead of the Labour Party Young Socialists in fighting these schemes and helping to organise young workers.



The LPYS are unrivalled as campaigners against the Tories and for socialism.

Young Socialists hit the road

ON 31 JANUARY, 15 intrepid young marchers set off from South Bank, Middlesbrough to Newcastle, on an eight day, 75 mile, youth march for jobs.

The march was organised by the Northern Region Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign with the Labour Party Young Socialists. During the week we met thousands of young people and were featured in the local press and TV.

Our message was the need for a Labour government with socialist policies, which would highlight unemployment and put youth issues on the agenda at the next election.

Everywhere the march went it won enthusiastic acclaim. Trade unions, local Labour Parties and young people in general were particularly helpful.

Special thanks to SOGAT who

donated £300 and to Durham NUM who lent a mini-bus. The marchers were made especially welcome in the mining communities of Easington and Hetton. Each night a public meeting was held where a marcher and a trade unionist, MP or Labour candidate would speak.

Unfortunately the youth march was not backed by Labour's regional executive but this did not, however, stop us seeing the march as the first offensive in the battle to win the youth vote for Labour.

In Easington alone, after the meeting 15 people signed up to join the Labour Party on the spot. When the marchers went into a cafe in South Shields, Post Office workers immediately bought them all hot drinks. Two older members of Skelton ward Labour Party walked the first leg from Middlesbrough to Hartlepool.

Workers in Victor Products in Wallsend tried to lay on canteen facilities for the marchers. The management refused consent, which incensed the workforce who wrote to the local press to complain, and gave £150 to the campaign. We also got a tremendous reception on the NCU picket lines.

The finale of the march was a debate between the LPYS and Newcastle Central Tory MP, Piers Merchant, chaired by Doreen Purvis (vice-chair of CPSA). After the LPYS wiped the floor with Piers a letter of support for the march was read out with a donation of £5 from an 84 year old pensioner. The enthusiasm of youth affects everybody!

By Graham Kennedy,
Tynebridge LPYS

Kick out Thatcher & Co

OVER 200 young people and local trade unionists attended a joint rally in Brighton on 31 January. It was organised by the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) and South East region Trade Unionists for Labour and began the marshalling of the forces in the campaign to beat Thatcher and return a Labour government.

Steve Bassam, Labour's prospective candidate for Brighton Kemp-town pointed out that the Tories had a majority of 9,000 in that constituency but 12,000 new young voters had joined the register since 1983.

Chris Payne, British Telecom engineer, then in the middle of their dispute, told the conference of the hardening of management attitudes since privatisation, and the strings attached to their offers. He called on the next Labour government to restore to the youth and workers what Thatcher had taken away and to renationalise BT. A collection for the NCU strikers raised £85.

MPs back youth

Eric Heffer MP was the main speaker at the rally. He defended the record of the LPYS and attacked the witch-hunt mentality in

Labour's broad socialist church. He called for a Labour Party which represented the needs of the working class, and which could mobilise them in defence of liberty against the growing authoritarianism of the Tory government.

Dennis Skinner MP, speaking at the LPYS regional conference after the rally, carried on with the theme of winning the youth and workers to vote Labour. The party must go on the offensive against the Tories. "Their system is rotten and it's falling to pieces. The Guinness scandal is just the tip of the iceberg, corruption is rife in the City and big business.

"The EEC is bankrupt for the third time—but nobody in the media calls for Members of the European Parliament to be surcharged. No one calls them the Loony Common Market but there is creative accountancy. Thatcher says the Tories don't borrow but Britain is a nation of debt. There have been 150,000 bankruptcies under Thatcher, and 73 per cent of the average wage taken home was lost to paying off hire purchases, loans etc. We should forget witch-hunts and go on the attack, support our class on the picket line and elsewhere."

School's food for thought

LAST WEEK, a local school student asked *Militant* readers on the Pendeford estate in Wolverhampton to help in a fight she is leading for decent school meals in Aldersly school.

The girl said that she had always felt that "politics were nothing to do with me" but this didn't stop her from taking the initiative, producing leaflets and approaching teaching and catering staff and parents on the estate for support.

During the teachers' dispute, students entitled to free school meals are the only pupils in the Wolverhampton area to get their

hot meal and pudding served in two paper bags. The savoury and sweet bags are hard to tell apart, insulting to the students and only useful as spectacularly messy missiles. The students support the teachers' action but are demanding edible and practical meals.

The leader of the protest has decided to join the LPYS. You can't keep young people away from politics for long when Tory Britain gives them such 'food for thought'.

By Diane Simcox
Wolverhampton



The two Britains. The tax-free zone of the City of London...

No tax please, we're rich

YOU MAY have heard of the new breed of 'yuppie' known as Dinkies (Double income and no kids) but now we can reveal a more dangerous mutation.

In the City a new form of humanoid is emerging, governed by the most basic of desires. Clue—a three letter word ending in X. That's it. Tax (avoidance of). They are the Dintholtaks (Double income, two homes, living together and kids!)

A typical couple would be Jasper and Arabella. He is 'something in the City' and she is in advertising. By living together rather than marrying, each can use a full £30,000 mortgage relief so their £60,000 mortgage on their London flat is totally tax free (worth £70 a month off the mortgage payment.) The unemployed meanwhile have just lost 50 per cent off their mortgage interest allowance—as paid by the DHSS.

As 'singles' the Dintholtaks' escape the higher tax rates on their joint earnings of £40,000 and save £1,800 a year. Of course extremist

governments have put capital gains tax on their country cottage. But if they stay single each can name one house as their own main residence, so both can avoid capital gains tax!

Of course 'Dinkies' could do that if they stay single but having kids helps. Arabella has a four year old tax loss...I mean son, Tom...In the Inland Revenue's eyes Arabella is a single parent. Now the system makes this a disadvantage for a DHSS claimant but not for her. She is entitled to an additional personal allowance raising her 'personal tax free allowance' to the same level as a married man. But when the second child Harry, arrived, Jasper became the single parent and got the additional allowances.

Tug-of-tax kids

Now the fun begins. The junior 'Dintholtaks' have their own single person tax allowances of £2335 each. So Arabella takes Jasper to court for an affiliation order of £2335 a year

TOP 30 TAX SAVING IDEAS FOR FARMERS AND LANDOWNERS

- includes herd basis
- outgoers schemes
- partnerships
- handing down the family farm
- valuation of farming companies
- land held in trusts

maintenance towards Tom's upkeep but the money is paid directly to Tom and is tax free. Jasper, not surprisingly, is running a similar order against Arabella—on Harry's behalf, of course.

So Jasper and Arabella Dintholtak pay no tax on the first £11,980 of their earnings and avoid a further £1,800 tax a year, and get 29p in the £ tax relief subsidy on their £60,000 mortgage. And they can sell their country cottage for a good tax free profit whenever they feel short of ready cash.

As my old Grandma was saying just the other day 'now my state pension and your unemployment benefit are being taxed its nice to know everyone else pays a fair share.'

*House of Commons Research note No.181. Estimated £700 million was raised in 1984/1985 alone by taxing unemployment benefit.

By Nigel Wheatley (ASTMS unemployed Walsall)

Hattersley and the Tory con trick

LABOUR'S LEADERS are at last realising the electoral damage being done by their pledge, particularly from Roy Hattersley, to reverse Tory income tax cuts. Ordinary employed workers fear that Labour will increase their already heavy tax burden.

The joint shadow cabinet/Labour NEC meeting on 16 February was told that polls show tax increases as the major concern of undecided voters about voting Labour.

Labour workers would happily back heavy taxation of the really rich. After all it is only workers and the middle class who really pay any tax. And anyone on less than twice

average earnings pays *more* tax now than in 1979 through VAT rises etc. Hypocritically Thatcher is seizing on Hattersley's blunder, promising to cut everyone's tax, reducing the standard rate to 25p.

Hattersley made no attempt at the meeting to defend his statements, and there was general agreement that the thrust of the Party's campaigning from now must be on taxing the rich. Of course it was never just a 'mistake', but confirmation that Labour's right accepts the economic logic of capitalism—tax cuts or higher public spending. With socialist ownership and planning of the economy, both could be afford-

ed, and ordinary people inspired with a vision of real change.

Tony Benn reminded the meeting that the 1945 election was won because voters were given hope for a better future. The current Labour leadership is yet to engender such hope. He complained of "too much emphasis on trying to win over wobbly *Guardian* readers and not enough on traditional Labour voters."

Another Tory tax cutting budget, the meeting was told, will mean with Thatcher—"vote now, pay later." But uncommitted voters are asking how Labour's promises will be paid for. Labour can only reassure them by returning to its socialist roots.



... and the rest of us.

Sell Militant

MILITANT SELLERS are using the impetus of the Campaign '87 sales drive to establish a firmer base for sales at the workplace.

Last week we reported the success in Manchester of the special drive to the engineering factories. Bulk orders of the issue with the engineering feature were canvassed in advance. Since that was written we have been informed of 7 additional bulk orders. Well done Manchester.

Not to be outdone, sellers in Lanarkshire have gone out of their way to use *Militant's* coverage of the Caterpillar dispute. Not only have our articles been well received by the workers at the Scottish plant, but a fantastic 178 papers were sold door to door in Belshill near to the works.

As well as the big sales campaign the many small successes we hear of are as important. Sellers in Brighton sold 40 papers and 17 were sold in Southend on Saturday street sales. 30 papers were sold on a estate sale in Swindon last week.

In Mossley Hill, Liverpool, regular sales have been established at the Sefton General Hospital. At the Bromley-by-Bow tube station in London 12 papers were sold at Friday tea time. Sellers in Bermondsey now have dozens of regular readers on the Arnold estate.

However big or small, all increases in sales are genuine contributions to our campaign to bring about a more frequent paper in '87.

By Gerry Lerner

Left and Right

Boxer rebellion?

"IDEAL FOR girls and boys at work and play, in the gym, in the pool... in bed!" says the advert in the misnamed Communist Party journal *Marxism Today* for their designer boxer shorts with two truly radical motifs. The first one has the word "Proletariat" in Russian script while the second has the logo for the Soviet airline Aeroflot.

Of course, the words "middle class" in gothic lettering might suit *Muesli Today* readers better. But what next, Gorbachev shorts? Careful where you put the birth marks.

The Good Lord

MR ALEXANDER "Derry" Irvine QC, one of the newly created peers, undoubtedly deserves a life sentence. Appointed QC at only 37, Derry is a real lawyer. Whereas most barristers look funny in their wigs, he looks most peculiar without one.

Once Derry has hit on a good argument, he sticks to it, come what may. For instance, when he unsuccessfully defended Labour's right-wing National Executive against the Liverpool eight's action to stop their show trial, he pleaded that the NEC was absolutely bound to keep its evidence secret. He made all kinds of dark allusions to "intimidation", and certainly didn't let his implacable legal logic

inhibit him from appealing to good old-fashioned political prejudice.

Confidentiality, he reasoned could only be breached if there was an overwhelming public interest. In this case, of course, there was not. Brilliantly reinforcing this line, Derry produced a brand new consideration of public interest: the NEC's need to defend itself against *Militant*. Even the vice-chancellor, agonising over the apparent impossibility of not ruling in favour of the eight, could not swallow that one.

The media has assumed that Derry has now been rewarded for his legal advice to the NEC. With their inside knowledge, they are obviously aware that the amazing catalogue of legal blunders and absurdities which featured throughout the NEC's long-running expulsion farce were in spite of Derry's advice, and entirely the responsibility of the NEC.

Well, long may the NEC continue to rely on Derry's advice, and let's hope they take it more seriously in future.

Despite his youth, still only 46, Derry will not be out of place among the Lords' titled gerontocracy. The only question is this: Why, apart from being an old school chum of John Smith and Neil Kinnock's premature eagerness to bestow prime-ministerial patronage—why should Alexander Irvine QC be enobled in the name of the Labour Party?

Labour council condones sectarianism



Loyalist groups marching in London last year. Say no to the sectarians and their fascist hangers-on.

THERE HAVE been many media attacks on "loony left" Labour councils giving grants to minority groups. Labour's leaders have joined in this chorus. Perhaps they would prefer to hold up Exeter city council as a model. Labour controls Exeter with Liberal support.

This council is giving £60,000 to celebrate the tercentenary of the landing of William of Orange in Devon. The Orange Order of Northern Ireland has already announced plans to hold an international convention in

the county. The council say it will be a tourist attraction.

But what kind of tourists? The National Front claim they will bring supporters from all over the country to Devon in 1988. When these 'tourists' descended on Bridgwater in Somerset last year for an Orange parade the fascists attacked local Labour Party members.

The celebrations will not be an abstract historical pageant, they are likely to inflame community feeling. Sectarianism and fascism have no place in Exeter. A

Young Socialist resolution to Exeter Labour Party called on the Labour group to dissociate itself from the celebrations but the Labour group ignored it.

Exeter LPYS are now calling for the mobilisation of the labour and trade union movement to counter fascist activity. Make sure you support us with letters condemning the action of the council to Exeter Labour Party, 26 Clifton Hill, Exeter.

By David Oakley

Gold masters of apartheid

British gold bosses' century of repression

THE LABOUR Party Young Socialists have launched a campaign to build support for mineworkers employed by Gold Fields of South Africa. In this, Gold Fields' centenary year, April Ashley, secretary of Socialist Links with South African Youth, looks at the company's history and the present situation.

"There were hundreds of them... all over. They threatened to shoot us if we did not disperse. The more they said this, the more difficult it became to control the workers. When they moved closer we stopped singing. We sat still. Then they opened fire... live bullets, rubber bullets and teargas. Chaos broke out. Workers were running in all directions. There was smoke all over. It was like a war. Workers ran to the hostels but the majority went in the direction of the mountains and gathered stones... regrouping to fight back."

This is how Gold Fields of South Africa (GFSA), part of the British multinational Consolidated Gold Fields, conducts wage negotiations with black mineworkers in South Africa.

GFSA is the second largest of the six principal mining houses in the South African Chamber of Mines, employing 93,085 people. It has the most horrendous employment practices in the mining industry and the highest profit return per employee of any mining house.

Its parent company Consolidated Gold Fields is the biggest foreign investor in South Africa. It is one of the largest multinational mining and construction materials groups in the world and the second largest mining finance source in Britain. It has a 48 per cent stake in GFSA and around 75 per cent of Consolidated Gold Fields' earnings come from South Africa.

Slave wages

It has nearly 6,000 workers, its own company police force, 700 dogs, whips, teargas and even helicopters. The minimum wage of a black mineworker for a 102 hour fortnight is £48 (R172) a month. This is 58 per cent below the minimum living level.

GFSA refused to grant the additional four per cent wage rise demanded by the SA NUM in 1985 although it would have cost less than Consolidated Gold Fields' chairman, whose salary rose from £147,536 in 1984 to £217,817 in 1985!

Instead they bloodily repressed the strike, dismissing over 800 mineworkers and arresting 22, including 19 shaft stewards. Over 145 mineworkers suffered severe injuries.

On 9 February 1987 Gold Fields of South Africa celebrated 100 years of exploitation, repression

and murder of black mineworkers in South Africa. The company was registered on this day in London in 1887 by Cecil John Rhodes and Charles Rudd.

In 1894 Cecil John Rhodes, by then Prime Minister of the Cape colony, introduced the Glen Grey Bill, which included a labour tax of 10 shillings a head on "selected male natives."

The bill which became law forced the black workers to go and work in the town and the mines to raise the money to pay the taxes, and began the systematic destruction of African agriculture.

Two motions moved by Dave Nellist MP and supported by 13 other Labour MPs condemned the record of Consolidated Gold Fields' South African mines and congratulated the Labour Party Young Socialists' campaign to expose the British company's South African interests.

The intentions of the government and the mining industry were to secure a steady flow of black labour: "the native should only be allowed to enter the urban areas, which are essentially the white man's creation, when he is willing to enter and to minister the need of the white man, and should depart therefrom when he ceases so to minister."

These attitudes enshrined in law were the foundation of the migrant labour system which has ensured a continuous supply of cheap labour to South Africa's gold mines since gold was discovered a century ago.

The same appalling conditions that existed in Gold Fields' mines 100 years ago persist today. The black mineworkers live in single-sex compounds or hostels housing between 2,000-8,000 workers. The men sleep on hard bunk-beds which line the walls one on top of another with virtually no room to move or put personal belongings. The compounds are like prison conditions, the eating areas are equally disgraceful.

600 mineworkers die in South African gold mines each year. 46,000 miners have been killed since the turn of the century. GFSA's health and safety record is also frightening with thousands being maimed and injured and over 100 miners killed every year.

"You will remove them (the natives) from that life of sloth and laziness, you will teach them the dignity of labour and make them contribute to the prosperity of the state, and make them give some return for our wise and good government" — Cecil John Rhodes 1894.



While black miners work in the heat and dust for poverty wages, profits for the company have gone through the roof, with a massive £2.6 billion turnover for Consolidated Gold Fields and its associates.

Gold mining is the cornerstone of the South African economy. It is the country's most important export and the motor that drives the whole of the economy. The International Gold Corporation stress its importance:

"... it is as a provider of foreign exchange vital for the development of indigenous industry that gold mining is most important. Gold provided the country with nearly 46 per cent of total foreign exchange earned by South African exporters in 1984."

The apartheid state would be severely damaged by the loss of gold earnings—the tax paid by the gold companies almost equals the defence expenditure of the state.

The mining industry, capitalism itself, dictates the social and political institutions and structures of South Africa, dictates the apar-

theid policies of the state and survives only on the cheap black labour force which it has created. Capitalism and the cheap labour system is the basis of apartheid.

British links

Workers in Britain must highlight the links between British capitalism and apartheid. Gold Fields is grateful for the support of the Tory government in Britain for the company's operations in South Africa. In his 1985 AGM address, the chairman Rudolph Agnew said: "Her Majesty's government should be applauded for its courage so far in opposing extreme measures and seeking moderation... In particular I applaud the Prime Minister for her statement that she sees no point in creating unemployment in the UK to create unemployment in South Africa."

In Britain Consolidated Gold Fields operates extremely profitably through Amey Roadstone Corporation. ARC is a mining and construction materials company

which is heavily dependent on public sector contracts in Britain, especially local (even Labour) councils and the health service.

ARC now makes more profits for Consolidated Gold Fields than gold; £15.5 million in 1985. The LPYS is calling for a picket of Consolidated Gold Fields on 4 March preceded by a march from the Stock Exchange, and launching a campaign to:

- ★ Persuade local authorities especially Labour controlled, to stop taking contracts with ARC.
- ★ Build direct links with mineworkers in South Africa.
- ★ Twin mines in Britain with mines in South Africa.
- ★ Expose the Tory links and their capitalist system with apartheid.
- ★ Organise public meetings to expose the conditions SA mineworkers have to work under.
- ★ Take up the SA NUM's campaign to nationalise the mines under workers' control and management.

Demonstrate your commitment

OUR FIGHTING Fund is going from strength to strength. With £206,460 raised, we are on our way to smashing our £¼ million target. All because of the sacrifice and financial support of thousands of workers who agree with our ideas.

This week we received a marvellous donation of £10 from Duncan Roy a school student from Brighton, and £140 tax rebate from a young worker in Newham. Contrast this commitment with the views of the ruling class themselves. According to one City of London whiz kid on £5,800 a week take home before fiddles, "money is like a drug, each fix has to be bigger than the last. There

comes a point where the money is almost irrelevant. After all you can only own so many Porsches."

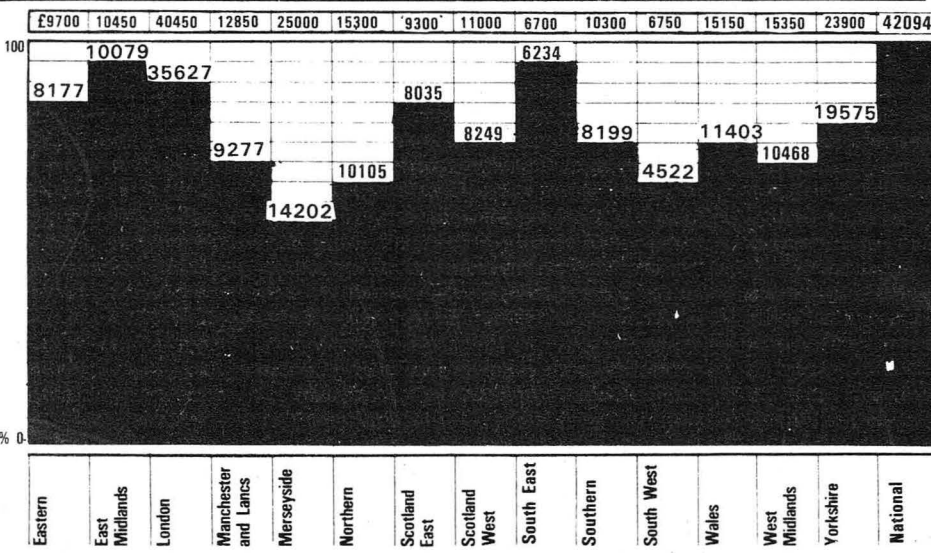
So if you happen to know any of these capitalist junkies do them a favour by asking for a few million (a weeks income?) for the fighting fund to help cure their addiction for good. However, since we can't expect any response from this source the only way to finance a workers paper is from workers themselves. Why don't you donate a week's income to our fund, and look to ways to raise £2-3 every week from your workmates and neighbours.

The opportunities are brilliant at the present time,

readers in Rotherham raised £69 and £87 was raised by sellers in Kent over the last week. £21 was collected at a London postal workers' (UCW) marxist discussion group, and £160 was raised at the Yorkshire LPYS conference.

Thanks to Nicola Lovell who sent in £40 pledged at the Albert Hall Rally, and to P Silcox and A Lambirth who both donated £100 at a London meeting. Collecting tins should be taken on every paper sale for the best response particularly at the new and regular work place sales. Don't forget to ask for the £1 solidarity price from every reader.

£250 000 Fighting Fund





The Tsar and Tsarina, with their daughters and a group of army officers just before the February revolution.

THE FEBRUARY revolution in Russia opened nine months of titanic class struggle which culminated in the coming to power of the working class, led by the Bolshevik Party headed by Lenin and Trotsky.

Revolution broke out first in Russia because the war placed the greatest burdens on what was industrially the most backward nation in Europe. In Lenin's words, "capitalism broke at its weakest link."

The outbreak of the war had initially cut across a revolutionary movement which was developing in Russia in July/August 1914. From having the support of 80 per cent of the active workers, the Bolsheviks, who opposed the imperialist war, were driven underground, as backward layers of the working class, mobilised by the war, embraced the ideas of patriotism.

The 'unity of the nation' produced at the beginning of an imperialist war is really only a mask. As war drags on, it exposes all that is rotten in a society, sharpening all the social contradictions. So it was in Tsarist Russia. The war only postponed the struggle, deepening the eventual revolutionary upheavals.

Fifteen million, overwhelmingly peasants, were drafted into the army, where they faced a uniformity of misery which made them open to the ideas of the working class. By 1917 over 800,000 workers were concentrated in the defence industries in Moscow, and 300,000 in Petrograd, mainly in huge factories employing thousands. In contrast with previous struggles in Russia, the cities and countryside were brought together in their determination to be done with the Tsarist autocracy.

Every great revolution begins at the top as the ruling class, with no clear way forward, split over what course of action to take. In January 1916 a strike wave developed against food shortages and speculators. Feeling the movement building up from below, a section of the capitalist class favoured making limited concessions.

During late 1916, the mystic monk Rasputin was murdered and plots were laid for a 'palace coup' to remove the Tsar and Tsarina. The signs of splits in the ruling class opened the floodgates of revolution. The tensions brought about by the war, of five million dead or wounded, of the army's bread ration being cut by a third between December 1916 and February 1917, of the shortages of food in the towns, burst to the surface.

The February Revolution began on the 23rd (dates are on the old Russian calendar. Add 13 days for modern calendar) with a strike by the women textile workers in Petrograd. On International Women's Day, 90,000 were on strike, including many soldiers' wives. They marched to the Duma (a truncated parliament) demanding bread, which as Trotsky commented was like demanding milk from a he-goat. On the following

day half of the industrial workers of Petrograd joined the strike.

As the strikes grew, the slogans rapidly changed to directly political challenges to the regime: "Down with the autocracy! Down with the war!"

Yet none of the workers' organisations had initially called for the strikes. Indeed, the most militant Bolshevik organisation, the committee in the industrial Vyborg area, feeling the tension, but not believing the time was right for an insurrection which they saw could develop out of the strikes, initially opposed the call for strikes on 23 February. Thus one of the most oppressed and least organised layers, perhaps not as burdened by consideration of where their strike could lead, but burning with the desire to take action, opened the floodgates of revolution.

The police tried to break up the crowds, aided by Cossacks (cavalry), some mounted police, and occasionally by infantry. The crowds fought the police, but tried to neutralise the Cossacks and win over the soldiers in action.

On the 25th, cadet officers fired on the demonstrating workers, killing 16. On the 27th there were further demonstrations and troops were called out to suppress them.

After clashes with the workers, the troops began to mutiny. In some places the workers had succeeded in uniting with the soldiers, penetrating the barracks and receiving rifles.

Already too late

The 1,000 year old monarchy fell under these hammer blows. As in the Spanish revolution in 1936, when unarmed workers stormed the barracks in Barcelona, Madrid and Valencia, and were joined by some soldiers, the real power, "armed bodies of men" was in the hands of the workers.

The response of the ruling clique, revolution staring them in the face, was akin to Nero 'fiddling while Rome burned.' Rodzianko, conservative president of the Duma, telegraphed to the Tsar on the 27th: "The situation is becoming worse; measures must be taken immediately, for tomorrow will be too late". In reality it already was too late. But when the Tsar received this telegram he commented: "Once again that fat-bellied Rodzianko has written me a lot of nonsense, which I won't even bother to answer".

The next day the Tsar telegraphed his wife before leaving for the capital by train: "In my thoughts I am always with you. Magnificent weather. I hope you are well and calm". But rail workers rerouted and blocked the Tsar's train, while in the Tauride Palace (the former house of the Duma) the Soviet of workers' deputies was already in

RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Kevin Ramage continues our series of articles which commemorate the 1917 Russian Revolution with an explanation of the events

The fall the Tsar

session.

Starting where the experience of the defeated 1905 revolution left off, the workers and soldiers had immediately organised Soviets—committees of delegates of workers, soldiers and sailors democratically elected directly from the workplace, barracks, or ship, with no privileges and with the right of recall over delegates. From the outset the soviets had a wider scope than in 1905, above all incorporating delegates from the soldiers' and sailors' organisations.

Reflecting the intense pressure of the movement of the masses, at one of its first sittings, on 1 March, the Soviet issued the famous 'Order No 1' which included the following:

"The Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' deputies has decreed:

1) Committees to be elected immediately in all companies, battalions... from the elected representatives of the rank and file of the above mentioned units.
3) In all political actions, troop units are subordinate to the Soviet... and to the committees thereof.

4) The orders of the military commission of the state Duma are to be obeyed, *with the exception of those instances in which they contradict the orders and decrees of the Soviet (KR's emphasis).*

5) All types of arms... must be placed at the disposal of company and battalion committees, and under their control, and are not, in any case, to be issued to officers, even upon demand..."

The Soviets had the overwhelm-

ing support of the workers, soldiers and sailors. All that was required was to link up the Soviets on an all Russia basis, a declaration by the workers' leadership that all power would henceforth be vested in the Soviets, the arrest of the old ministers, and workers' power could have been established peacefully without further struggle.

Provisional government

But as the Communist and Socialist parties, aided by the anarchists, were to do in Spain in 1936, the leaders of the Soviet, at the outset the reformist Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, handed power back to the capitalists. Without Marxist leadership, this led to bloody defeat in Spain.

In Russia, the Menshevik and SR leaders handed power to an unelected "Provisional government" dominated by the liberal capitalist Constitutional Democrats (Cadets). They rationalised their cowardice with high sounding phrases. They argued the workers cannot take power but must support the party of the liberal bourgeoisie. Pointing to Russia's backwardness they argued that, as in France in 1789, the immediate revolution was a bourgeois-democratic one, with the tasks of overcoming feudalism, distributing land to the peasants, establishing a democratic regime and preparing the way for a modern capitalist state.

No Marxist in Russia disagreed with this, but Lenin constantly

warned against any illusions in 'liberal' capitalists and for the independence of the working class, seeing the working class in alliance with the peasants as the force that would overthrow the remnants of feudalism. Trotsky in his brilliant theory of permanent revolution which was borne out in the course of 1917, went further, explaining that in the epoch of imperialism, the bourgeois democratic tasks could only be resolved under the leadership of the working class moving in the direction of socialism.

The Mensheviks claimed to be for socialism, but only in the distant future. The Russian capitalists were linked through the banks by

The Soviets had the over workers, soldiers and sailors was to link up the Soviet: a declaration by the workers' power would henceforth be the arrest of the old ministers could have been established their struggle.

a thousand links to the class of feudal landowners. This ruled out any thoroughgoing land reform which was the fundamental task of the bourgeois-democratic or capitalist revolution in Russia. On the other hand the Russian capitalists were tied hand and foot to foreign, mainly Anglo-French, capital from which they drew the lion's share of their investment.



1917
70th anniversary
of February.

of r

This is turned into a just and democratic peace in the war impossible as long as power remained in the hands of the landlords and capitalists.

While the Cadets had been opposed to the Tsarist regime, which placed obstacles in the way of the free development of capitalism, they were a million times more afraid of the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants. When finally confronted with the fact of a victorious revolution, they first tried to negotiate with the Tsar to set up a constitutional monarchy, and resisted at every stage attempts to actually tackle the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution.

Overwhelming support of the masses. All that was required was an all Russia basis, workers' leadership that all were vested in the Soviets, soldiers, and workers' power and peacefully without fur-

This paradox of February 1917, of the masses moving towards seizing power, not being fully conscious of the situation and the tasks, and the movement being sidetracked by reformist leaders, is not unique. It is present in every great revolutionary upheaval, as in Spain in 1936 and in Portugal 1974. So how did the Mensheviks and SRs become the leadership of the



A mass meeting of soldiers after the fall of the Tsar. The banners read 'Struggle and Conquer', 'Long Live the Democratic Republic' and 'Workers of the World Unite'.

Soviets? By its very nature revolution draws into activity not only the advanced layer, but also stirs up the mass. They learn very rapidly in the course of a revolution. But in the first instance the majority will seek the line of least resistance. In Russia they tended to support the Menshevik and SR leaders who said: "the revolution has overthrown the autocracy; now all that is needed is to wait for the Constituent Assembly (democratic parliament) to be convened to resolve the issues of the war, land etc."

Their patriotic position in the war, combined with mild opposition to the Tsarist regime, led to many of the intelligentsia, lower ranking officers etc, as well as politically less active layers of the working class, initially supporting the Mensheviks and SRs. Also during the war they had not faced the same hounding which the Bolsheviks suffered. They had the best known faces in the eyes of the masses. At the outbreak of the revolution, they had the speakers to address meetings, journalists to write papers etc, while the main Bolshevik leaders were in emigration, exile or prison.

In his classic *History of the Russian Revolution*, Trotsky asked the question: "Who led the February Revolution?" "The revolution fell like thunder out of the sky, says the president of the Social Revolutionary Party, Zenzinov." Trotsky then records an account of the Menshevik leader, Skobelev, who was to become a minister in the Provisional government within a month, declaring on 21 February that the "disorders had the character of plundering which it was necessary to put down." "How was it with the Bolsheviks?... Kayurov, one of the leaders of the Vyborg section, asserts categorically: 'absolutely no guiding initiative from the party centres was felt.'"

At this stage all the principal Bolshevik leaders were in exile or abroad. Trotsky concludes that while there were no clear leaders, the revolution was not 'spontaneous', but was a product of specific conditions that had developed, of the conditions in Russia, the experience the 1905 revolution, and the presence in the factories and among the soldiers of a scattering of "conscious and tempered workers educated for the most part by the party of Lenin... This leadership proved sufficient to guarantee the victory of the insurrection, but it was not adequate to transfer immediately into the hands of the proletariat vanguard the leadership of the revolution."

This was added to by the confusion which existed among those Bolshevik leaders who were in Petrograd. The resumption of the Bolshevik paper *Pravda* was warmly welcomed by the workers, its second issue selling 100,000 copies. But its attitude to the Provisional government was unclear. While some articles correctly attacked it

as a regime of capitalists and landlords, other were ambivalent.

The position of the Bolsheviks was further confused with the return from exile of Kamenev, Stalin and Muranov on 13 March, who immediately took over the editing of *Pravda* and turned its line sharply to the right. On 14 March Stalin made the cautious appeal to "maintain the rights that have been won in order to finally beat down the old powers and move the Russian revolution forward," a position which echoed that of the reformist leaders of the Soviet, to "support the Provisional government in so far as it struggles against reaction, defends democracy etc." This position earned Lenin's sharp rebuke that "it was like asking brothel keepers to give up sin!"

The next day Kamenev wrote an article which advocated national defence of the regime of the Provisional government: "we shall stoutly defend our own liberty." These policies amounted to seeing the Bolsheviks as the loyal 'left opposition' in a capitalist government, in a similar manner to the idea of 'Popular Front' blocs between workers' and 'radical' capitalist parties put forward by 'Communist' parties today.

When these issues of *Pravda* reached the factories they aroused a storm of indignation among the workers which forced Stalin and Kamenev to be more cautious, but they still refrained from any fundamental attack on the Provisional government or its war policy.

No support

In reality there were only two people who understood the situation, Lenin in Switzerland and Trotsky in New York. Writing on 4 March, with only scanty information, Lenin grasped the character of the Provisional government: "the new government that had seized power in Petrograd, or, more correctly wrested it from the proletariat, which has waged a victorious, heroic and fierce struggle, consists of liberal bourgeois and landlords... Only a workers' government... can give the people peace, bread and full freedom."

Two days later he sent a telegram: *Our tactics; no trust in and no support of the new government; Kerensky (the one SR in the government, KR) is especially suspect; arming of the proletariat in the only guarantee, immediate elections to the Petrograd City Council; no rapprochement with other parties.*

As early as 28 February, receiving only confused reports of 'disturbances' and 'bread riots', Trotsky wrote: "We are witnessing the beginning of the second Russian revolution." When the composition of the Provisional government and its appeals for 'order' became known he wrote: "The powerful avalanche of the revolution is in full swing, and no human force will stem it."

The Menshevik and SR leaders denounced Lenin's thesis as "sectarian, ultra-left and adventurist". Characterising the revolution as 'democratic and not socialist' they effectively postponed the struggle for socialism to a distant future. The policy of 'popular frontism' today is merely a resurrection under a different guise of the Menshevik idea of class collaborationism and the theory of 'stages'.

The fatal flaw of Menshevism (and of the Stalinists and their co-thinkers today) is that the only way of carrying through the bourgeois-democratic revolution today is by the transfer of power to the working class. That was precisely the position that Lenin put forward in the spring of 1917, summed up in the slogan "All power to the Soviets" and that Trotsky had worked out in his theory of permanent revolution based on the experience of the 1905 revolution.

The magnificent movement of the workers, soldiers and sailors in the February revolution had smashed the old Tsarist regime,

and placed power in the hands of the reformist leaders. Petrified they sought compromise with the bourgeoisie. This opened a period of dual power, that is of two opposing forces, the Provisional government of representatives of the capitalists attempting to restore 'order', and the soviets, which despite their leaders, represented the desire of the workers to overthrow capitalism.

This was to last until the 'July Days', when, given time by the reformist leaders of the Soviets, the capitalists inflicted a defeat on the workers. But it was only a temporary setback. An attempted reactionary coup by General Kornilov in August was defeated by the arming of the workers by the Bolsheviks. Very rapidly the Menshevik-SR leadership of the soviets was discredited, the Bolsheviks gained a majority in the soviets, and in October, only nine months after the fall of Tsarism, power was firmly in the hands of the working class.



Russian troops in the trenches in the first world war.

Spain

Victory to Spanish students

THE SPANISH government has climbed down completely in the face of the school students' movement. Free school education, and also at university for students from working-class homes, has been conceded for the first time in Spain's history.

This victory is due exclusively to the mass campaign led by the school students' union (ES) since last December, reaching a climax in the week of action from 9 to 13 February. At its height almost three million students were involved. Our correspondent in Madrid reports.

This result was achieved despite a conspiracy of silence in the press. On the other hand, the media consciously played up and exaggerated violent incidents which took place as a result of the actions of provocative elements on demonstrations, organised around the so-called Coordinating Committees.

The tactics of the school students' union have consistently differed from this kind of infantile adventurism. The main aim of the union was to achieve unity in action between the students and workers around the slogan of a 24-hour general strike.

The response of the workers' leaders to the repeated approaches of the union was at first lukewarm. However, as the movement continued, pressure began building up among the workers themselves for the calling of a general strike.

The leaders of the CCOO (Workers' Commissions: unions under Communist party influence) agreed, for the first time, to call joint demonstrations with the students' union all over Spain on 11 February. The biggest demonstration was in Madrid, where 150,000 workers and students marched behind the banners of the ES.

At the head marched the leaders of the students together with the leader of the ES, Marcelino Camacho. The press, however, played up the violent incidents organised by a handful of provocateurs—undoubtedly infiltrated by fascist elements—at the end of the demonstration.

It is impossible to underestimate the effect this movement is having throughout Spanish society. In effect, the elements of an all-out general strike were already present in the movements that took place last week.

As reported in *Militant* last week, there were strikes of the miners in Asturias and Rio Tinto, of the dockworkers, car workers and agricultural workers. In Barcelona, the school students and the Seat car workers combined in a joint demonstration of 50,000.

Articles appearing in the press each day reflect the growing panic in government circles. The government has been besieged on all sides. Spain is immersed in a severe crisis—on the one hand, the unprecedented movement of the students; on the other hand, the growing strike movement of the working class.

At the same time there is the crisis in the Basque country where, three months after the regional elections, the Basque parliament has been unable to elect a government.

Three million unemployed, inflation at twice the rate of the other countries of the Common Market—Spain is, in one word, in chaos.

The climax of the students' movement was the march on



Top: Violent clashes between police and small groups of provocateurs on the students' demonstrations were consistently played up by the media in order to disguise the mass socialist character of the movement. (Above): Youth on the march.

Madrid organised by the students' union on Friday, 13 February. Organised in a very short space of time, with very small resources, it succeeded in mobilising 200,000 young people on the streets of Madrid.

The demonstration was an impressive spectacle—a sea of colour, with the flags of different nationalities interspersed with the red banners of the unions from Seville and other areas.

Marxist tendency

There was no doubt whatsoever of who was behind all this. The main banners were those of the students' union but also, interspersed with these, were the banners of Youth for Socialism and *Nuevo Claridad*, Marxist tendency in the Spanish labour movement.

The radio gave a blow by blow account of this demonstration as if it was a football match. Indeed, the atmosphere was extremely similar to that of a football match.

The idea of this march undoubtedly caught the imagination of youth all over Spain. The demonstration was preceded, unexpectedly, by the arrival of 300 youths on motor bikes. These were

the "messenger boys", one of the most exploited layers of the youth, who turned up in a spontaneous gesture of solidarity, chanting: "The messenger boys are also workers".

Once again, the defence pickets organised by the ES behaved in an exemplary fashion. There was a record number of 3,000 youths armed with staves, arm in arm, tightly controlled by a specialised group organised by the Marxists around *Nuevo Claridad*.

While the demonstration marched through the streets, a special delegate conference of the CCOO was taking place. Juan Ignacio Ramos, leader of the ES and a supporter of the Marxist tendency, was specifically invited to speak.

Alarmed at the impact of the Marxists among the CCOO, certain pro-Moscow elements demanded that a representative of the so-called Coordinating Committees should also be allowed to speak. This was agreed.

This individual succeeded in boring the pants off everybody and received merely token applause. However, no sooner had the chairman announced the presence of Juan Ignacio Ramos than all 3,000 delegates stood up and gave a stan-

ding ovation to the representative of the ES.

Ramos's speech was interrupted no fewer than four times by enthusiastic applause by the delegates who, at the end, voted unanimously to leave the hall and go to participate in the demonstration.

The demonstration halted outside the building of the CCOO, chanting "Workers and students, unite and go forward", and "Not one step back! Against the cuts! General strike!"

Critical stage

After a few minutes all 3,000 delegates joined the march to enthusiastic applause from the students. At this point came the critical stage of the demonstration. As the march turned the corner to enter the Grand Via at the centre of Madrid, the usual groups of provocateurs, infiltrated by fascists, began their dirty work.

Once again, the demonstration was saved by the exemplary discipline and courage of the defence pickets. Despite attempts by the police to throw the demonstration into confusion, the vanguard stood its ground.

A group of provocateurs at this point emerged from a side-street, intending to stone the police and provoke an attack. With admirable courage, a group of stewards quickly placed themselves between the police and the provocateurs.

The organisers demanded of the police that they withdraw, which they did, and then tackled the provocateurs themselves, forcibly disarming some of them, and driving the rest back up the side streets, which were then sealed off by the stewards to allow the demonstration to proceed.

If it had not been for the swift and decisive action of the stewards, there could have been a bloody massacre.

The panic in the government is understandable. The mood of the masses, particularly the youth, is becoming violent. There is a hatred directed particularly towards the police.

Spanish society is becoming polarised. The mood of the working class is increasingly radicalised. The students' movement has acted as a catalyst.

At the moment of writing, the miners' union has once again convened a 48-hour general strike in

Asturias. The phantom of the revolutionary Commune of 1934 once more stalks the mining villages of Asturias.

The CCOO have already called a general strike all over Asturias on 12 March if the government does not drop its plans for mass sackings in the nationalised coal industry.

Under pressure of the rank and file, the Socialist-controlled UGT, for the first time in years, was forced to break off its negotiations with the employers for a wage deal. For the first time also, there are the beginnings of unity in action between the UGT and CCOO around the question of wage demands. This will undoubtedly give the workers fresh courage to press the movement forward.

The movement to the left of the workers is accompanied by the movement to the right of the leaders of PSOE. For weeks Felipe Gonzalez has disappeared from the face of the earth. The main spokesman for the government is Carlos Solchaga, the Industry minister, who directly represents the interests of the banks in the government.

"Hot Spring"

A split is opening up between the UGT and the government, with profound implications for the future. Camacho has already promised a "hot spring". The CCOO have publicly announced a programme of mobilisation for March, culminating in an all-Spain general strike. Members of the UGT will undoubtedly be drawn into this movement.

The leaders of the CCOO have already approached the school students' union, asking them for their support in this.

The students' union has called for an orderly return to classes and for the convening of assemblies to discuss and vote upon the ministry's offer, before deciding on future action.

A respite will undoubtedly be welcomed by many students who are showing signs of understandable tiredness after two and a half months of continuous struggle. However, if the new offer is not sufficient, new mobilisations are inevitable, and will coincide with an explosion of class struggle that will dwarf anything seen in this country since the 1930s.

Greece, Japan, South Africa, USSR, Australia

More protest strikes in Greece

LAST THURSDAY, for the second time this year, Greece was paralysed by a 24-hour general strike against the Pasok (Socialist) government's austerity programme. Protest strikes have continued this week.

The previous general strike, in January, secured minor concessions for the lowest-paid. Now the government is insisting that its wage freeze and spending cuts will be carried out in full.

In the latest cabinet reshuffle, the government has been shifted further to the right.

These have been the latest in a long series of protest strikes over the past year, which have dramatically shown the combativity and anger of the Greek working class. But it is becoming increasingly clear that the workers will not indefinitely support a strategy which shows no prospect of forcing the government to change course.

More and more workers are asking: "What is the alternative?" The right-wing parties are encouraged by the government's divisive policies which are costing it working-class support. They are calling for new elections in the hope of returning to power.

A clear socialist lead is now more vital than ever, to rally the working class, to defeat the misguided policies of the Pasok leadership and to beat off the menace from the right.



Workers greeted PASOK's election victory in 1981 with rapture. Now these is bitterness at the government's abandonment of its socialist promises and its sharp swing to the right.

Japanese miners face closures

JAPAN'S LIBERAL government has issued a five-year plan for the coal industry, designed to cut down the production of domestic coal from 16 million tons in 1985 to less than 10 million tons, and to depend more on imports.

This will result in the closure of half the country's collieries. This will be the first test case for the "change of Japan's industrial structure"—balancing the traditional drive for exports with more imports to reduce friction with Japan's trading partners over their chronic deficits with Japan.

Price of coal

However, another reason why the coal industry has come under attack is the high price of domestic coal. It is three times as expensive as imported coal because of the deep-mining methods necessary in Japan.

Many electricity companies are actually rushing to rely more on nuclear power, even after the Chernobyl disaster. The steel industry is also facing serious reductions.

At the end of November the Mitsubishi Takashima Coalmine, on an island just off Nagasaki, was closed down despite union protest.



Japanese trade unionists face major struggles to prevent the decimation of the coal, steel and electricity industries.

1,700 workers lost their jobs. As the whole island had depended on the mine, 800 people have so far left.

With very little oil in Japan, coal could be an important energy source in the future. Now the pits are being closed down just on the basis of profits.

Only the organised power of the workers can prevent the destruction of the industry from going ahead.

There is sympathy among workers for the victimised miners in Takashima, and anxiety for the thousands at risk in the coal, steel and shipbuilding industries.

Unions' responsibility

It is the responsibility of the unions and the workers' parties to build on this mood, to overcome the

isolation of workers in different industries from each other, and present a fighting alternative.

Nationalisation of the mines under workers' management is essential to provide safe working conditions, protect jobs, and lay the basis for a rational energy plan.

From a correspondent in Japan

SA workers fight for living wage

MORE THAN 7,000 black workers employed by the giant South African chain store, OK Bazaars, came out on strike on 18 December. The number of strikers has since grown to 10,000 from 137 stores.

The strike was called as a result of the company's failure to implement a wage agreement signed with Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union of SA (CCWUSA) in 1985. The union is demanding an immediate increase of 160 Rand (£40) per month—almost twice the company's offer.

OK Bazaars is determined to break the strike. Despite hypocritical 'opposition' to the government's Emergency powers, they have resorted to widespread police intimidation under these same powers.

More than 300 workers, detained by the police, have been dismissed. Clearly the struggle will need to be stepped up before this 'liberal' employer caves in.

thousands and begin to show the whole movement a way out of the stalemate that has arisen under the State of Emergency.

COSATU's founding conference, 15 months ago, adopted the demand for a national campaign on wages, and instructed the leadership to "establish as soon as possible what workers regard as a minimum living wage." It has now become urgent to carry this decision out.

Support

CCAWUSA's President and COSATU vice-president, Makhulu Ledwaba, is leading a union delegation to Britain and the USA, which has met with the TUC to discuss further support. USDAW has so far donated £500 to the strike, but with CCAWUSA having paid out £100,000 in bail for arrested workers, and unable to afford strike pay, there is obviously the need for much more support.

It is to be hoped that contact with the USDAW rank and file, and shop-workers internationally, will be strengthened as a result of this visit. There is no substitute for the combined struggle of rank-and-file workers internationally in developing policies and action for defeating the power of big business.

Messages to: CCAWUSA Strike Committee, c/o PO Box 1019, Johannesburg 2000.

By George Collins

Extend struggle

Discussions have taken place between CCAWSU and other unions affiliated to the Congress of South African Trade Unions to extend the struggle to the heart of the giant Anglo-American Corporation empire, which controls OK Bazaars.

Linked to the demand for a national minimum wage at a rate decided by the workers, this could mobilise hundreds of

Joint *Militant/Inqaba* meeting: "Support the South African workers' struggle" Speakers: Tyrone Simpson (*Inqaba*); Lynn Faulkes (Hackney Labour councillor); a youth speaker from Southern Africa. Thursday 26 February, 7.30pm. Hackney Town Hall, Assembly Room.

Gorbachev and Stalinism

"THERE SHOULD be no blank pages in our history", said Russian Communist Party leader Gorbachev last week. In the frankest statement made by any leader of the Russian bureaucracy, he spoke of the 'mistakes and contradictions' in Stalin's policies of forced collectivisation of agriculture and crash industrialisation in the 1930s. He even called for the hidden names of those who took part in the 1917 revolution to be 'restored to Soviet memory'.

Such statements, following the promises of 'reform' within the USSR of today, have raised vital questions in the minds of socialists throughout the world, about Gorbachev and the future of the bureaucracy he heads.

MILITANT IS publishing a new pamphlet, *Russia: Reform or Political Revolu-*



Gorbachev: real reforms?

tion, in which Ted Grant analyses Gorbachev's proposals. It also will contain extracts from Trotsky's *Revolution Betrayed*.

Copies of the pamphlet, can be obtained from World Socialist Books for 30p (plus 20p including postage) 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

Australian nurses' historic pay victory

THE HISTORIC 50-day strike by nurses in the Australian state of Victoria has ended in victory for the union.

We returned to work at Christmas as a gesture of goodwill while negotiations were still going on. Many expected that industrial action would have to be resumed.

However, the award eventually handed down by the government met

most of our demands. Student nurses get pay rises of over \$60 (£30) per week, and thousands of qualified nurses have been upgraded.

Also the government has committed itself to introducing a new career structure and professional rates of pay by 1988. The nurses have been the first union to break the 'Accord' (social contract) between the Labor government and the trade unions to

keep wage demands down.

Our success is a lesson to the faint-hearted in the union movement who claim that strike action is no longer 'relevant'.

By Anne Spillar (Royal Australian Nursing Federation, Melbourne, Victoria)

TUC leaders?

Dear comrades,
After Wapping, I'd like to ask Norman Willis this question; You sat on the sidelines in 84/85 and saw the miners beaten back by this Tory regime, and now you've sat on the sidelines in 86/87 and seen the printers unions, SOGAT and NGA beaten by the same regime. When will you be satisfied?

You've given in to Tory laws and the bosses' attacks on the unions. You'll only be satisfied when you're in the House of Lords. Get on the picket lines instead of wine and dining with the Tory bosses.

Yours fraternally
M Chaplin
NUM member, Warwickshire on strike for 12 months

Degrading to women

Dear Comrades,
Looking around in Stoke Job Centre recently I decided to look at the part-time section. The first job I came across was for a go-go dancing girl, no doubt to dance around a pub half naked.

My initial reaction of shock turned to anger. Is this the future facing working class youth, especially women, where your only chance of a job other than a low paid sweatshop is to degrade yourself?

I suppose the Tories will start job schemes for strippers next.

Yours fraternally
Muna Al-Baldawi
Stoke Central Labour Party Young Socialists

Dear Comrades,

Small businesses are springing up everywhere. Yes I'm talking about that essential industry, the Kissogram.

I am fed up of having to witness women stripping off or sitting on leering men's knees, even in my local! Also as a hospital worker I find it offensive to see nurses' uniforms being used.

These women and men are selling their

bodies, and for what? The kissogram costs about £25 to £30, usually involving two people. It is always good to play practical jokes on people or make someone's birthday special, but this is just one step away from prostitution.

Yours fraternally
Delia Hazrati
Fazakerley Hospital
Liverpool (NUPE)

Dear Comrades,

The hypocritical Tory outcry against sentences for rapists is again spurred on by the horrific rape of a young woman at an Ealing vicarage. Peter Bruinvels MP, who attacked Claire Short's anti-page 3 bill, has called for the sacking of judge Leonard. A *Sun* headline was 'Castrate rape devils'.

Rape is one of the most brutal crimes that exists. However, figures estimate that only one in 12 women report rape to the police and of those only a third get to court. If a woman is working-class, not a virgin or inarticulate, she is unlikely to report. Under conditions where the value of human life is secondary to property, where women are valued less than men, it is impossible to stop rape.

In our fight for socialism we must recognise it is more often the fear of attack, the victim mentality, which is most crippling to women's activities. The demands for better lighting, housing and cheap and efficient transport are central for socialists.

Yours fraternally
Hashida Dave

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

Teeth that cost an arm and a leg

Dear Comrades,
Today I visited the dentist for a six month check-up. I was pleased to hear there are no new fillings needed, only an old one which needs replacing.

As it's been some time since I needed any treatment I was horrified to learn that this replacement filling was going to set me back £17.50! The maximum charge under the NHS is £115! 'Pearly

whites' is an apt term—what price healthy teeth?—The price of a string of pearls?

Yours fraternally
Alexis Edwards
London

Looking for a lead

Dear Comrades,
We've all recently read the report by the Samaritans of one person under 25 committing suicide every day. In the last decade the rate of suicide in this age group has gone up a staggering 24 per cent.

This is the kind of Britain the Tories have created. There are around six million young voters eligible at the next General election, and the Labour leadership are doing nothing to win these voters.

It is up to us to win young

people over on a programme that will eradicate suicide, drugs, homelessness and the many other miseries of capitalism.

Changing to the 'Red Rose' image and putting out rubbish like the glossy Labour Party *News* magazine, will do nothing to win any of the six million to the ideas of socialism. It is up to the LPYS to prove to the leadership this can be done.

Yours fraternally
Stuart Russell
Gloucester Labour Party

Juggling with the dole figures

Dear Comrades,
Last year I was one of the long-term unemployed. This year I'm not so sure. I went for a one-week course on the Restart scheme. Only three people turned up, so they postponed it.

Apparently, this means I'm now newly unemployed again. Nothing has changed except the figures get juggled around. Does this mean I shouldn't feel so depressed about not having a job?

Yours fraternally
Mike Pullin
Leicester

Dear Comrades,
The Tories claim we have got over the worst of the unemployment, and that from now on the levels will decline steadily. Here is one of the jobs advertised in Bristol which will spearhead the revival of British industry:

'Cold catchers wanted: aged 18-50, £1.75 per day. Ten days free holiday. Help the research into the common cold/influenza in beautiful Wiltshire by catching a cold. River fishing, married/single accommodation. Catch a free cold and enjoy yourself'.

Yours fraternally
Domenico Hill
Bristol West Labour Party Young Socialists

Dear Comrades,
I don't know about YTS being cheap labour but when I leave school in April I may have to go on one. My social worker told me that if/when I get my own room, if I refuse to do a scheme and I don't get a 'proper' job, the DHSS will move me out of the county after four weeks.

When I have been to every county in the country, there will be nowhere left to go, so then I will have to take a scheme. Never mind, the Party that introduced youth schemes will soon be back in office, then I'll be alright, won't I?

Yours fraternally
Steve Revins
Stafford

Vying to impress

Dear Comrades,
Eric Hammond of the EET-PU is to speak at a meeting held by the Institute of Directors.

It must be a case of 'Anything you can do, I can do better' as Gavin Laird, head(!) of the engineering workers, was 'one up' on

Hammond when he spoke at another capitalist conference, the Confederation of British Industry. And these two are representatives of the working class?

Yours fraternally
Anne Ursell
Sittingbourne

Return of the paper rippers

Dear Comrades,
Approximately three months ago while selling the paper, we were approached by two men. They bought a copy of the paper and then proceeded to rip it in half and place it in a bin!

Just before Christmas the two paper 'rippers' returned and informed us that they had no money on them, but if they had they would buy another paper to rip up. I asked them if they had ever read it, 'No' was the reply.

We started talking about poverty, the Tories etc. It turned out that they were in the army catering corp and were on leave after a tour of duty in Central America.

One told us how discussion of political issues regularly took place in his regiment, but that even the mildest left-wing views were stamped on by senior officers. It was made plain to them all that it was their duty to support the Tories.

He and his mate had spent their previous leave in Mexico City and told of the appalling poverty there. Other issues we discussed included



Photo: Dave Sinclair

trade union representation for the services, which he agreed with, and the need for working class officers.

He took a paper and a *What We Stand For* pamphlet, promising not to rip

them up, and agreed to look us up next time he was on leave.

Yours fraternally
Dave Pollock
Scarborough

PC gets wrists slapped

Dear Comrades,
In Edinburgh on 5 February a policeman was found guilty of grabbing a youth by the hair and kicking him in the face whilst on horseback at a Celtic-Hibernian match.

Incredibly the policeman claimed that he had merely 'Lifted the youth's head up' to get a better look at him! He even had the cheek to say that he didn't report the incident because the youth didn't complain

to him!

This uniformed thug got away with a £200 fine and the possibility of disciplinary action. If the assault had been the other way around the youth could have expected a good beating in the cells, a prison sentence, loss of job and screaming headlines about 'Mindless football hooligans'.

Yours fraternally
Kevin Williamson
Edinburgh

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.

○ Hangers Benefit social/disco, Florence Nightingale pub, 199 Westminster Bridge Rd. Saturday 21 February, 8pm till late. Nearest tube: Waterloo, admission £2.

○ Chile Socialist Defence Campaign slide video: *Chile on the brink*. 20 minutes long. Analysis of recent struggles in Chile. Order from CSDC, PO Box 448, Emma St, London E2. £10 including postage. Cheques payable to "CSDC".

○ Banners 6'x 4', one colour lettering, £60 including poles. Extra colour, sizes, logos available. 25% discount for LPYS enquiries—Phil 051 260 3111.

□ Bradford *Militant* public meeting "Women and the Struggle for Socialism". Speakers include Margaret Creear (National Labour Women's Committee, personal capacity). Queen's Hall Morley St. Saturday 21 February 2pm. Crêche available.

□ Merseyside trade union conference against apartheid. Saturday 28 Feb. 9.30am. Transport House Liverpool. Speakers from: National trade unions, African National Congress, South West Africa Peoples Organisation, SACTU, COSATU. Guest speaker; Ben Uulenga, General Secretary Namibian Mineworkers Union. Organised by Steering Committee of AAM, TGWU, USDAW, NALGO, CPSA, NW TUC, TASS and others. All trade union members welcome. £3 registration fee to NALGO, Produce exchange Victoria St. L2.

Party purge for Cleethorpes?

Dear Comrades,
I attended the Annual General Meeting of Cleethorpes Labour Party. This General Committee has just closed down the LPYS branch. The chairman in his opening remarks let the cat out of the bag: "We quite simply are not prepared for

a general election, though I am quite sure that we will muddle through somehow. We have to unite the forces of Labour within the constituency to fight the real enemy. But we have to get our house in order, like Mr Gorbachev."

There you have it, the

methods being used in the witch-hunt are inherited from Stalin, as is Gorbachev himself. Watch your backs comrades.

Yours fraternally
Ian McEwan
South Humberside

The only permanent cure for pollution

Dear Comrades,

I was interested to see a letter in *Militant* 833 from Michael Supko regarding 'green' politics. Socialists should approach this question carefully by explaining that the only way to cure pollution and at the same time guaranteeing jobs, is for the factories to be taken out of the hands of irresponsible owners and put into the hands of the workers to be run in the best interests of the whole community. In other words, the struggle to eliminate pollution and find a cure for environmental problems is linked to the struggle for socialism.

Yours fraternally
J Hayes
Poole Labour Party (UCATT)

Life in the fast lane

I'VE WORKED in the car industry since 1969. At that time Standard Triumph was making 2,300 cars a week, and making money too.

Today the car companies have problems manufacturing half the figures they could in 1969. But they still squeeze it out of the car worker.

Now, at Longbridge, the Metro track has been speeded up to thirty four per hour, that's from twenty six twelve months ago. The effect is that blokes can't keep up, or they jump jobs.

For example, to fit a fascia, the man must lay on his back every two minutes across the threshold of the door, while having to avoid the door which has already been fitted.

At both Longbridge and Cowley, they've used this sort of work to get rid of workers. They'd get a fifty year old man and put him in the worst position. He'd give up because he couldn't take any more. Going on would literally kill him.

Some toolroom workers used to talk about themselves as if they were superhuman. Remember the strikes of the mid-seventies? By 1980, toolroom men were weeding the gardens and cleaning lavatories at Longbridge. The idea was to screw them up that much that they left. And they did!

British car factories must be the dirtiest in Europe! It shows the low esteem in

which the bosses, in Britain in particular, hold the working class people.

BL sacked all their cleaners and brought in outside contractors who re-employed a smaller workforce from among the same workers at two-thirds of their original pay-rate. Consequently the place is absolutely disgracefully dirty.

Investment

BL has had constant changes of management since Donald Stokes' time. They imagine that drafting in new management will solve the situation, regardless of the lack of investment in the 50s and 60s.

The top bosses of BMC were Lord Nuffield (Bill Morris) and a guy called Len Lord, who suffered from acute neurosis and hated everything associated with Morris Motors.

He got control of Cowley and went out of his way to destroy it... On his way to work, Lord would say "Right, I'm f...ing well going to sack some f...er today!" (His language was ab-

solutely foul.)

One day he called the manager of a certain department and said "I want you to tell me how many men you can dispense with." So the bloke said "Yes, sir" and went back at four o'clock with a list.

Lord looked at the list and said "Right, you can add your own f...ing name to that." So the manager said "Well...why, sir?" Lord said "If you've been carrying a department with six men surplus to requirement, you're no f...ing good. Now, get out!"

This was the rule of fear which was the only way people like that knew how to manage. It's a typical British tradition, especially in the car industry because it is fast moving and highly volatile.

Petty changes are always being made which are a waste of time and talent. At the company I work for now, which supplies to the industry, we often way we don't know what trade we're in; engineering or fashion.

One group of management moved from Liverpool to Solihull to Cowley and



Working on a car assembly line.

back up to Longbridge. They were a group of absolute thugs. The foremen were frightened to death of them.

Violent boss

One day one of them asked a foreman why something or other hadn't been moved from the side from the side of the track.

The foreman must have said he'd been too busy. So the manager shouted at him: "If you've not got f...ing time to do it, I'll f...ing make sure you f...ing well have!" and he got hold of him by his tie and dragged him between the cars—this is while the track's still running—and told him "f...ing get on with it, or you're out the f...ing door!"

The first time I heard them using this sort of

language, it shook me rigid. This system teaches you to think that someone in authority must be a sensible person, but these people threaten violence and use foul language.

During an efficiency drive, they introduced walky-talkies. Curiously, at both Cowley and Longbridge, there are convents just outside the gates. Apparently the nuns complained that they could hear these managers on their VHF radios, interrupting Radio Two with the obscenities with which they talked to each other!

On a couple of occasions there were strikes at Longbridge when the women in the trim shop decided that they weren't going to take any more of this, but they were let down by the union leadership.

There've been mini-riots

at Longbridge. In Michael Edwardes' early days, outraged workers ran through the factory. The press gleefully reported this as thugs running wild but they didn't report the frustrations the workers felt that exploded in this way.

At the moment, most people are frightened of getting the sack and keep their heads down, but this anger will come to the fore again. Management are apprehensive about the unions, not because of the officials, some of whom are hand in glove with the management at Austin Rover, but because they don't know which way the workers will jump.

A West Midlands Car industry worker spoke to Tony Cross.

Rover

UNIONS REPRESENTING workers in Land Rover and Freight Rover which makes up the Land Rover group have rejected the company's latest pay offer.

Further negotiations take place on 18 February but it is unlikely that the company will put anything better on the table. Eventually the offer will be put to the shopfloor.

A campaign for industrial action must begin now if we are to successfully defend living standards and working conditions. Even with an 'improved' offer all they are talking about is a six per cent rise over two years for a grade 3 line worker.

The offer also includes consolidation of £5 from bonus earnings over two years. As bonus has been on average £17 per week they are merely offering us money we are already earning.

Other elements include a potential £10 per week quality bonus which would be impossible to achieve. Calculated on present quality levels workers would end up owing the company 50p a week.

The proposed nine day fortnight would mean working an extra 40 minutes on the eight hour day in order to have every second Friday off. The unions are demanding a genuinely shorter working week and a 21 a week increase over 12 months.

LRG workers are the lowest paid in the industry. Company profits in 1985 were £10m, expected to rise to 16m in 1986. This has been done by making thousands redundant whilst increasing the pressure on workers to near unbearable levels.

By a Rover worker



Longbridge workers in October 1985 queue for lay-off pay due to 'overproduction'.

New mood at Longbridge

A shop steward at Longbridge, the massive Austin Rover car factory in Birmingham, talked to *Militant*.

FOR THE last fortnight a wave of stoppages has hit various sections of the factory over the issue of bonuses. From a normal £24 per week bonuses have been cut to £8 per week. The management's explanation for this wage cut—'because of the extra heating costs due to the cold weather.'

Section after section in turn downed tools, first cab two went home. When they came back, the paint shop went out. In the resulting pandemonium the company ended up chasing its tail.

In our section they were that afraid of us

also coming out they paid us for leaving early in the heavy snow falls. The bosses are really scared at the moment of upsetting the workers. They seem ready to do anything to keep us at work.

Unsafe

This doesn't mean they don't try it on when they can, for example we stopped work for two hours when we noticed the hoist that carries the cars over our heads from one track to the other had become unsafe.

The only thing that kept the car from falling off was 3/8ths of an inch of bolt. Whilst we were stopped the company 'safety officer' examined the offending bush and pronounced it

'perfectly safe'. An hour later we were still stopped and the bosses had to carry out emergency repairs.

In their frustration management turned on the maintenance workers and demanded to know who had told us about the faulty equipment. At the time of writing they have suspended two fitters who they suspect.

The management has no credibility with the workers anymore. Their explanation for reducing the bonus was laughed out of court, production losses were far greater when Lucas supplies were restricted due to an overtime ban, yet the bonus was higher than it was in the 'cold weather'.

When this was put to them they replied that

they: "couldn't get the cars into the multi-storey car park prior to delivery!"

A new production director has been recently brought in, a "gentleman" by the name of Tom Sargent, he's a real hit man—he goes round F'ing and blinding everybody. It was probably his brilliant idea to save money by cutting our bonus.

I've heard that he went mad at the maintenance gaffers over our stoppage and has sacked one of them. He can do what he likes to them but if they don't reinstate the suspended workers there is going to be trouble.

By Bill Mullins

Photo: John Harris (FEL)

Industrial Reports

Ordnance factories in the firing line

ROYAL ORDANANCE factories throughout the country produce everything from pistols and rifles to field guns, high explosives and tanks. They provide much of the army's requirement.

Security and defence are uppermost in the minds of Royal Ordnance workers, if not the Tories', but in this case it is for jobs and conditions in the face of Tory privatisation. Such fears are well founded.

As AEU Enfield District Committee member and shop steward Bob Simmons commented in a letter to a local paper, "Recently we've had the privatisation of Sealink and sale to the Sea Containers group.

"This was preceded by assurances from both Nicholas Ridley MP and Mr James Sherwood, owner of Sea Containers, that jobs and conditions would be safeguarded... But the reality is 1,400 jobs have since gone."

At Enfield ROF fears about privatisation have been fuelled further by doubts about the very future of the works itself. Closure would be a severe blow to the area.

With a workforce of over



Anti-privatisation rally in London 1984—the struggle goes on.

1,000 people, it is one of the largest employers of skilled engineering labour remaining in the Lea Valley area.

Accusations have suddenly begun to appear in the national press claiming low productivity and inefficiency. An article in the *Sunday Express* (15 February 1987) entitled "The slowest gun" is typical. It claims: "Out of a Ministry of Defence contract to supply 175,000 men and automatic SA80 rifles for the army, the Royal Ordnance factory at Enfield has managed to deliver only a little over half."

Information like that was clearly passed to the press in

order to put pressure upon the workforce to accept changed working practices and flexibility, a break down of demarcation in an arrangement similar to the Engineering Employers' proposals and no doubt in order to further prepare the ground for private ownership.

Bad management

The true situation is revealed in a press statement from the Joint Shop Stewards which states: "The machines dictate the rate of production not the man. Perhaps you should ask who

purchased the machines and to whose specifications? It certainly was not the workers at Enfield."

Royal Ordnance chief executive Roger Pinnington, seems to change his mind like the weather. In the local *Gazette* for 23 October 1985 he condemned closure rumours as "damaging, demoralising and irresponsible."

He could have been referring to himself. In the *Sunday Express* he is reported to have told management that he would padlock the gates and transfer work to other factories unless the situation improved."

He is quoted in the *Financial Times* recently as saying "I can see no alternative to the closure of the Enfield factory if we do not get the second contract." (For the Enfield Weaponry System).

Already the nearby Waltham Abbey explosives factory is planned to close and there are plans to develop housing and shops on a site of 100 acres.

Workers at ROF Enfield feel that Trafalgar House's interest as a potential bidder for the Ordnance factories has more to do with property and land speculation than jobs in production.

The fight back must begin

immediately. As a first step, a campaign must be waged to get maximum support for the national day of action and lobby of parliament planned for the end of February.

A national one day strike on that day should be called. Factories close to London could hold local demonstrations and marches involving the local labour movement, before going on to join the lobby. First and foremost, public ownership must be maintained.

Directly linked to this is defence of existing jobs and conditions. Already the unions at Waltham Abbey have indicated they will fight the closure. A joint campaign by Waltham Abbey and Enfield is vital.

There should be no co-operation with management's flexibility proposals. Such schemes have not saved jobs and plants in the past. Management have merely used them to milk the workforce before sackings. It also encourages management to go on the offensive.

The campaign must be:

- ★ No to privatisation.
- ★ Defend public ownership.
- ★ Defend jobs and conditions.

By Martin Elvin

Usdaw elections

VOTING IS now in full swing in the 1987 Usdaw elections. Throughout the country, Usdaw members will be receiving their ballot papers through the post to elect a president and sixteen members of the Executive Council—two from each of the union's eight divisions.

In the union's Eastern Division, George Williamson, chairman of the Usdaw Broad Left and chairman of the Eastern Divisional Council of Usdaw, is mounting a strong challenge for one of the Executive Council places. A special election leaflet has been produced, and copies of it are still available.

This is the first time that the elections have been conducted by means of a secret

postal ballot. The membership are being presented with an array of candidates of which they know little or nothing.

It is clear at this stage that the vast majority of the ordinary members have now received their ballot papers but have not yet voted. It is essential that as many members as possible are approached and/or leafletted and asked to use their vote.

Every effort will be made to maximise the vote for all broad left candidates in these and other elections right up to the closing date for voting on 2 March.

By Peter Tobey
(Secretary, Usdaw Broad Left, Eastern Division)

Ancoats hospital sit-in now triggers Manchester campaign

THE SIT-IN by local residents protesting at the closure of the Ancoats hospital casualty department in Manchester is now in its third week. The campaign has galvanised trade union opposition to cuts in the health service.

Last Wednesday about 500 people lobbied the Regional Health Authority after a march from Ancoats to Crumpsall hospital and health workers at Crumpsall and Booth Hall went on strike for five hours.

Amid rumours of closure the Withington hospital casualty department and the local Labour Party Young Socialists have organised a lobby of the South Manchester Area Health Authority on Thursday.

Following this lead given by the Ancoats Hospital action group the NHS trade unions in Manchester must now mount a co-ordinated campaign aimed at getting the Ancoats casualty department re-opened and resisting any further cut-backs in the health service.

Maggie Law, a member of the action group told *Militant*: "We are getting people to listen to us, MPs are raising the matter in the House of Commons and the Regional Health Authority have now decided to review the closure after a 3 month 'consultation period'. We have had a lot of support including some Nupe and Cohe members at Ancoats, Crumpsall, Booth Hall and Withington.

"Ambulance drivers have told us that there are only eight ambulances covering the whole Pitea and Manchester area. They also told us that a local man who died of a heart attack last week would have survived if they could have taken him here for treatment."

Send donations, messages of support and requests for speakers to: Ancoats Action Group c/o casualty department, Ancoats Hospital, Old Mill Street, Manchester 4.

By John Hunt

B&I ship officers still on strike

MARINE OFFICERS of the B&I shipping line came out on strike on 2 February in defence of jobs and conditions. They are members of the Federated Workers Union of Ireland.

The strike remains solid, with all five of B&I's ships tied up and occupied, four in Ireland and one in Liverpool, with picketing in Dublin, Liverpool and Fleetwood.

Links are being made with unions on both sides of the Irish Sea. In a magnificent display of solidarity Liverpool TGWU dockers have blacked the movement of B&I freight through the port and donated £250 to the strike fund, donations have also been received from TGWU 6/522 and Wirral Trades Council.

Tentative agreements are being made with the TGWU, NUS, NUR, NUMAST and SUI to black the handling of B&I freight cargo through Fishguard, Holyhead, Fleetwood and Heysham. The marine officers are prepared for a prolonged struggle due to semi-state B&I management's intransigence and the Irish general election.

Donations and messages of support to: FWUI Branch 16 (Marine Section), 29 Parnell Square, Dublin.

By Alan Taylor
(FWUI, personal capacity)

Pit news: Wearmouth, Scotland and Yorks

DUE TO an incredible number of men taking early retirement and voluntary redundancy (the majority in their fifties), Wearmouth Colliery has now been placed in the astonishing position of having a manpower shortage.

Every one of the seven faces at Wearmouth is undermanned and the situation is getting desperate. The union has noticed that the vast majority of job losses are on the coalfaces and these jobs are not being replaced.

I believe it is a deliberate move by management to reduce the number of men who are actually producing the coal and thereby reduce costs.

To be honest, the men have themselves helped management to be bold enough to try and implement this policy.

Wearmouth works on an individual face system, whereby each face has a target of yards to be gained per week, and any bonus earned is divided between the men employed on the face.

Because of this, over the years, men have only been too willing to work undermanned in order to increase their share of the bonus.

Men are working on faces which are grossly undermanned, in some cases two or even three men less than the agreed manpower levels, and producing the same amount of coal as a fully manned face.

This has been a practice which was endorsed by the management and accepted by the men, until now! The men have always thought that they had a choice as to whether they worked undermanned or not and were astonished to find the contrary.

Despite the fact the incentive rates have increased in every pay settlement, the men

have found that there has been no increase whatsoever in the bonus they have earned and indeed in some cases actual reductions.

Certain teams of men decided to take some form of action and refused to underman their face. These men were then informed by management that they could either underman the face or return to surface. Some choice!

The only reason these men were treated in this way is because they or their team mates had undermanned and thereby undermined their position in the past.

The union must act and take the lead to stop this steady erosion of working agreements and practices.

The manpower levels are agreed on between the union and management for the safety of the members. They are written legal agreements and must not be flouted in our faces.

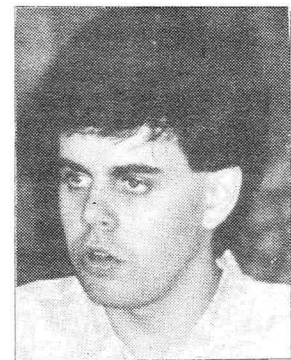
By Charles Lendbitter
(Vice-chair, Wearmouth Lodge NUM, personal capacity)

MILITANT SUPPORTER Joe Owens has been elected chairman of Bilston Glen NUM, illustrating the fighting spirit that prevails in the Scottish coalfield despite the efforts of 'British Coal'.

At only 22 Joe must be one of the youngest branch officials in the history of the NUM. His election is an indication that the young miners who came to prominence on the picket lines and demonstrations of the '84/85 strike are now a permanent feature of union activity.

It is also a reflection of the falling age level of mineworkers—an average now of under 35.

The brutal experience of the miners' strike has transformed the consciousness of mineworkers. The election of a Marxist at Bilston Glen, a pit previously regarded as a weak link in the Scottish coalfield,



Joe Owens

shows that the policies of collaboration with management espoused by Area Vice President George Bolton are being rejected by the membership.

Militant supporters will also be pleased to learn that after a long hard struggle Yorkshire miner Brian Lancaster has finally won reinstatement. The struggle must now continue on behalf of the hundreds of activists who remain victimised by British Coal.

By Chris Herriot

NCU Broad Left rally
Shaw Theatre, 100
Euston Road. 7pm
25 February
Tony Benn MP, Tony
McKenna (Clerical
Group executive), Colin
O'Callaghan (chair of
Overseas Telegraph
branch)

Industrial Reports

Manchester Senior Coleman rally

ON SATURDAY 14 February 700 demonstrators attended the march and rally in support of the Senior Coleman strikers.

They included many friends, wives, husbands and families who are behind the strikers. Stan Orme MP said at the rally: "We are not in the business of negotiating away gains, we are concerned with jobs—jobs I will be fighting for. We will continue to support you outside of Sale within the wider trade union movement".

Management have since replied by issuing a High Court writ in London for distraint against trade. This is against nine pickets including senior shop steward Graham Whyatt. Also a letter has gone to Bill Jordan, Gavin Laird and three others at AEU headquarters threatening legal action and demanding that official support be withdrawn.

On Monday evening a picket was arrested for obstruction for the first time and thrown in jail for a few hours. The pickets are incensed at the local press and radio for recent distortions of the facts.

Striker George Mark was asked how he was coping financially: "There is hardship but people are managing to cope. We have had to cut down on normal spending. My bank loan has been stopped for 25 days. But my family is standing by me." "Dave Ryan, shop steward: "I am being helped by my wife who has a part time job and I am getting by."

At the moment plans are going ahead for a half day Manchester area engineering strike in the near future or similar industrial action.

By Gordon Cormack
(Davyhulme Labour Party, personal capacity)

ILTA leaders reinstated

THE NATIONAL Union of Teachers national disciplinary committee has reinstated the 50 suspended members of the Inner London Divisional Council although they found us technically guilty of breaking Rule 8 in organising the London strike against Baker's Bill on 13 January without permission of the national executive.

The outcome represents a victory for the left in the union and a blow against the national officers of the NUT who were doubtless anticipating lengthy suspensions and the stifling of the main organised opposition to the executive.

Union members will now be asking why the union spent so much time and effort attacking those in the union prepared to fight the Tories rather than in leading that fight itself. In reality the mess that the national officers have made over these suspensions is another facet of the complete confusion of their strategy as a whole.

In hoping to avert a government imposed deal they were prepared to make concession after concession over pay and conditions. But the Tories have seen this as a sign of weakness and opportunity to step up the pressure.

Consequently Baker felt more rather than less inclined to impose his own settlement, which involves the scrapping of all national pay negotiating machinery. The ballot for industrial action provides the opportunity to prove him wrong.

By Bob Sulatycki (ILTA Div Council, personal cap)

Back Caterpillar

DESPITE 200 white collar workers at Caterpillar's Tannochside factory deciding to end their part of the occupation, the majority blue collar workers are continuing.

By Colin Fox

The white collar votes were close, for example Tass voted 34 to 30 to end their action. It reflected the two pressures on office staff. They were not fully convinced they would win and were affected by management's offer to "stay at home on full pay".

The 900 members of the AEU and EETPU are continuing to occupy, determined to force Caterpillar to reverse its decision.

Management recently brought in a team from the United States to lead its attack. Their tactic of dividing white collar from blue collar workers may have partially

worked, but it has also served to make the engineers more determined.

Eddie McDermot of the AEU told a packed LPYS meeting in Tannochside last Thursday: "We are naturally disappointed that the staff unions have ended support for the occupation. But to be honest it was not unexpected."

"This makes the dispute clearer and we are now more determined than ever to win. We cannot afford to lose. With the support of the LPYS and the whole labour movement we will win."

Support

Support has been sought and received from dockers at Greenock as well as agreements from other Caterpillar plants in the UK and Europe asking them not to touch products normally manufactured at Tannochside. The stewards in-

tend to step up the pressure for a generalised blacking campaign against Caterpillar equipment internationally.

Stewards expect in the next few days that management will step up the campaign on redundancy payments, threatening to withdraw them unless the occupation ends soon.

Indeed, the Joint Occupation Committee managed to stop a meeting taking place last Tuesday between management and white collar union leaders in a nearby hotel, where they were to negotiate redundancy terms.

The occupation however is not concerned with accepting redundancy money. Instead the intention is to pressurise the Tories into finding another buyer or failing that, stepping in themselves and sponsoring a government takeover.

Considering the attitude of the Tories and Thatcher toward areas like Scotland,

there is no great faith among the workforce in those efforts. However, the alternatives to fighting are so horrible that each option is given full consideration.

The next step in the campaign is to mobilise for a "Support the Caterpillar workers" march and rally, sponsored by the STUC and the Labour Party, on Saturday 28 February in Uddingston. LPYS branches in the West of Scotland are organising to ensure that they have a large presence on the march.

Support for the occupation itself has continued to flood in, literally hundreds and hundreds of pounds are collected daily in the towns and shopping centres throughout Lanarkshire and Glasgow.

Messages of support and donations: Caterpillar Occupation Committee, c/o Thomas Stevenson, 17 Campsie View, Bargefield, Glasgow.

Stop the transfer of Hangers' work



DESPITE REPORTS in both the local and national press that the dispute at the BTR subsidiary JE Hangers, artificial limb makers in Roehampton, is over, the five month strike continues.

Of the 300 sacked workers about 200 remain solid and are determined to fight on for their reinstatement or redundancy payments for those who choose not to go back. Management is offering only 90 jobs.

The latest development in the dispute is the serving of writs on some workers and the union FTAT after events last week in which pickets outside BTR HQ in Simpson Square tried to enter the building and were evicted.

The company is still trying to bring in scab labour but with little success and

recently advertised for a storeman in a local job centre at £125 per week. This job used to pay over £200.

Pressure is also being put on the apprentices who were not sacked, to scab. And management is threatening them that the dispute will mean they won't be able to finish their apprenticeships and will have to do unskilled work. However, the apprentices fully support the sacked workforce and will not be intimidated.

The threats extend to the Leeds branch of Hangers where the workers are being told that if they do not work compulsory overtime they will face the sack. The union is instructing them not to take on this work and it is a crucial step towards winning the dispute that

work previously done at Roehampton is not transferred elsewhere. If effective blacking is carried out then further solidarity action could quickly lead to victory.

The local LPYS have been active in supporting and publicising the dispute, holding a regular collection in Putney High Street on Saturday mornings, having collected over £3,700 so far. This Saturday there is a benefit disco for the Hangers workers at the Florence Nightingale pub near Waterloo station, everyone is urged to attend.

Donations and messages of support should be sent to Hangers dispute appeal, c/o Tass, 520 London Rd, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 4YQ.

By John Melia
(personal capacity)

HANGERS BENEFIT social/disco

Florence Nightingale pub, 199 Westminster Bridge Road, Saturday 21 February, 8pm til late. Nearest tube Waterloo.

Admission £2

Nupe victimise own official

A NUPE branch secretary from North Kent claimed last week that the union is trying to move her Area Officer, Nick Bradley, to another area because he would refuse to do a deal over school cleaning with Kent County Council outside the national agreement.

Margaret Atkinson, Nupe branch secretary on the Isle of Sheppey, has revealed that Nupe's South East Divisional Officer, Shaun Hilliard, has been taking part in secret discussions with the Labour and Tory leaders of Kent County Council.

The discussion, she believed, involved the union giving

support to a direct labour bid for school cleaning but with workers not employed on the nationally negotiated conditions of service.

A Kent County Council spokeswoman last week confirmed that the meeting had taken place between the union and council officers but refused to discuss details.

Privatisation

Margaret Atkinson explained to Militant that Kent County Council privatised its school cleaning service in 1984 and that contracts are due for renewal in the summer of 1987.

She said that there had been a storm of protest over

falling standards ever since the private contractors came in and that Nupe officials, particularly Nick Bradley had led calls for cleaning to be brought back into the direct control of the council.

She went on to add: "Our branch is totally opposed to Nick Bradley being moved out of Kent. He fought a long hard battle against the County Council in defence of the school meals workers. I am concerned that our union might sell out the school cleaners."

"Of course I want to see the contractors out and the cleaners reemployed by the council. However, they must get not just the proper pay rates but also the holiday



Nick Bradley being removed from an occupation of Medway Health Authority in a protest with Nupe members against privatisation at All Saints hospital.

pay, sick pay and the rest of the national agreement.

"Putting two and two together I wonder whether Nick Bradley is being moved out of Kent because he would have reported back to the members and not been a party to secret talks.

Young Socialists' solidarity meeting

MOTHERWELL LPYS held a highly successful meeting last Thursday in support of the Caterpillar workers' occupation. On a few days prior to the meeting over 150 Militant's were sold in the local housing schemes.

At the biggest local Party public meeting held in recent years over 70 local people listened to speakers David Churchley from Cathcart Labour Party, Tommy Sheridan, LPYS rep on the Scottish executive of the Labour Party, and Eddie McDermot from Caterpillar.

In the discussion, the call for nationalisation was received warmly although the workers at the meeting felt that the option of reversal on the closure decision or a possible takeover was still open.

The workers encouraged local people and Labour Party members to organise financial support. Great sacrifice was shown when over £40 was collected for the workers.

A Viewpark school student highlighted the mood of the meeting when he asked how he and his fellow school students could help the workers financially.

The LPYS and the youth in the local Labour Club will be continuing their active support through further public meetings and benefit gigs etc.

The first benefit gig will be held in the Olde Club, Viewpark on 26 January at 7pm to midnight, with BMX Bandits and local bands supporting.

By John Melia
(personal capacity)

HANGERS BENEFIT social/disco

Florence Nightingale pub, 199 Westminster Bridge Road, Saturday 21 February, 8pm til late. Nearest tube Waterloo.

Admission £2

"It is quite clear that these latest revelations will only serve to strengthen the determination of Nupe members in Kent to fight against what they see as the victimisation of their Area Officer, Nick Bradley and for democratic rights within their union.

Militant

March to defend education
Assemble: Jubilee Gardens,
Near County Hall, London
11am Saturday 21 February
Bring banners

Workers and students unite

STUDENTS FROM all over Britain will be thronging the streets of London this Saturday. Inspired by their comrades in Spain and France who have forced their governments to make concessions, and enraged by the Tories' spending cuts, they will be in determined mood.

The government have announced cuts in funding to seven universities. Cardiff is faced with bankruptcy and the threat of closure. They have revealed plans to take Polytechnics from local authorities and put them under government control. They have agreed to a miserly three and a half per cent rise in university grants, but nothing for further education students.

If the Tories were to win the next general election, it would be a disaster. Universities and colleges would face closure, loans would replace grants, two-year degree courses would be introduced, big business sponsorship would replace government funding and tuition costs of up to £10,000 a year would be charged to students and their parents.

Already at Sussex, attacks are being made on the independence of the students' union. This could set the pattern for every campus.

But students are fighting back. At Warwick a bid to cripple the students' union was defeated when the students linked up with the trade unions and involved their local MP, Dave Nellist.

During the National Union of Students week of



Further education students marching through Liverpool in last Wednesday's day of action.

Photo: Tina Carroll.

action, Further Education Labour Students showed the way to campaign, with strikes, pickets, lobbies and occupations, but above all by initiating joint action with workers.

Build links

"The National Union of Students," said Alex Murphy, Salford University Labour Club's candidate for president of the student union, "must build firm links with the labour and trade union movement. In the past they fought to win our education system. The NUS must affiliate to the TUC so

that the entire labour movement can defend education for working people."

NUS must campaign to make the national lobby of Parliament on 4 March a massive demonstration of both students and workers in the Education Alliance. The demands must be:

- ★ No to student loans
- ★ Reject the three and a half per cent grant increase £400 now, to restore the grant to 1979 levels
- ★ £35 a week grant for all FE students
- ★ No privatisation of education
- ★ £120 minimum wage for all education workers

NUS must also openly campaign for the return of a Labour government. Only the labour movement has an interest in defending and developing education. But a Labour government must deliver the goods, by means of a socialist programme for education:

- ★ A massive expansion of education spending to provide access for all who require it
- ★ A living grant—equal to two thirds of the average wage—52 weeks a year
- ★ An end to divisions in education—a fully comprehensive higher education system

★ Democratisation of the universities, polytechnics and colleges, with governing bodies elected from students' unions, trade unions and the local labour movement.

If this were implemented, education really would become a right and not a privilege. But it would mean breaking the control of big business over education and placing it in the hands of those who need and use it.

By Dave Richards

(NUS Wales executive, in personal capacity)

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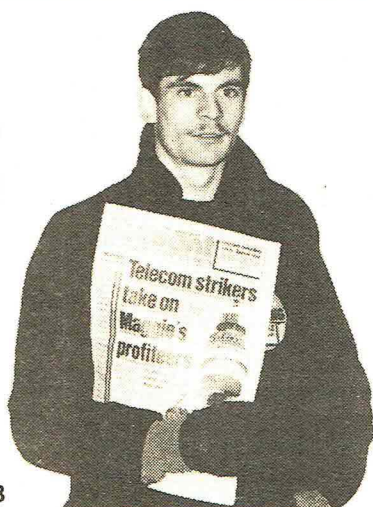
What We Stand for

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

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