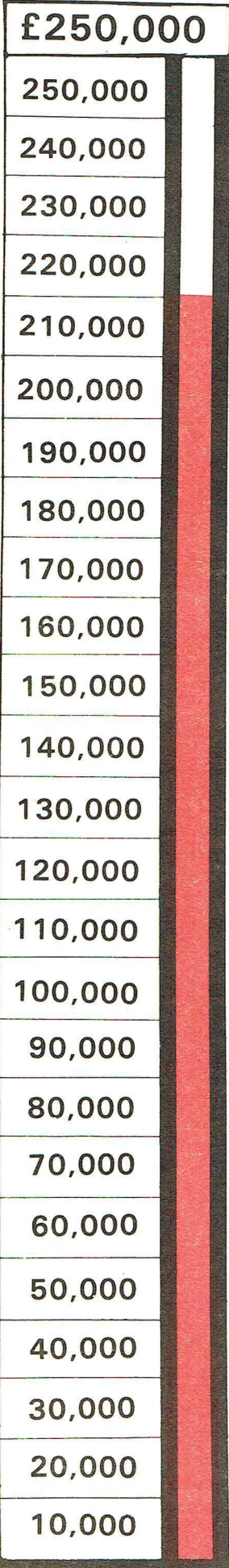


### Militant Fighting Fund



MILITANT NEARS the end of February with a magnificent £210,000 in our Fund. We can make it to the full £250,000 this week alone, if all promises are paid up and if every supporter helps us complete our week's income campaign!

Use the end-of-month pay cheques or savings. Many have even courageously sent pensions and dove cheques.

Send your donation by 3rd March!

## Caterpillar workers

# Fight to save jobs

"I'VE BEEN made redundant before. We have nowhere else to go. We are better inside occupying the factory, than standing outside in the cold picketing. Multinationals like Caterpillar should not be allowed to get away with what they have done to us. Our jobs, our livelihoods and our dignity are all being attacked. We have got to win, and we will win."

By Colin Fox

This was how Kevin O'Shea of the Caterpillar Joint Occupation Committee described to the Scottish Young Socialists' conference the six week factory occupation by Caterpillar workers. Their courageous struggle to stop the closure and to save jobs is an example to all other workers facing closures and massive redundancies—at Leyland Scammell, at Golden Wonder and Vospers etc.

What an answer to all those inside and outside the labour movement who scoff at the ideas of public ownership and workers' management. With the discipline and organisation of their occupation, the Caterpillar workers are demonstrating in action workers' control and management. With nationalisation of Caterpillar, they could take over at once. They are going through their apprenticeship now.

They are aware that the eyes of workers in Britain and around the world are on them, but they are not in the least daunted. In fact they have renamed their much publicised tractor operator, Andy Hotchkiss—'Dustin.'

The Joint Occupation Committee has remained one step ahead of the management all the time—the initiative of occupying the plant, producing a tractor themselves, its subsequent offer to Band Aid, the retraining programmes and all their other actions, are an inspiration to the entire labour movement.

Relaying the messages of support they have received from fellow Caterpillar

- ★ Support the occupation ★ Black Caterpillar goods.
- ★ Join the demonstration and rally on 28 February.
- ★ Nationalise Caterpillar under democratic workers' control and management.



workers in Gosselies, Belgium and Grenoble, France, AEU Deputy Convenor, John Gillen, announced: "Although sharing no common language, the international bond which exist between us as Caterpillar employees was graphically illustrated when we asked, through an interpreter, the Grenoble and Gosselies stewards for help. Their reply was immediate: 'You tell us what you want us to do and we will do it'. Together we sat down and worked out a four point plan of action: 1. Daily contact between the convenors; 2. Boycott of all production normally done in Scotland; 3. Financial support for the occupation; 4. All European production to stop in the event of any police intervention against the occupation."

The French workers will also be sending a speaker to the rally this weekend.

Just as impressive is the support for the blacking campaign from the trade union rank and file in Britain. A meeting this week of the national docks stewards' committee will consider a proposal from Liverpool, for all ports to refuse to handle Caterpillar shipments.

Support for the occupation has been pledged from Jaguar, Peugeot Talbot, BL Longbridge, Massey Ferguson, GEC and many other plants following a JOC visit to Manchester and the West Midlands.

The stewards are also considering an offer by the International Metal

Continued on back

**"Support the Caterpillar occupation"**

Demonstration and rally. Saturday 28 February. Assemble 11.00am, Uddingston train station. March to Caterpillar factory. Bring banners.



# Militant

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

## Lebanese nightmare

THE SEIGE of the Palestinian camps, the street fighting between different militias and the deployment of Syrian troops into Beirut have driven Lebanon even further into chaos. The 'government' has no authority beyond the president's palace. Life has become a nightmare for the thousands of workers caught up in the warfare.

The Palestinians in their slum shanty towns are enduring a nightmare within a nightmare. 2000 residents have been killed, 5000 injured and 80,000 made homeless in the three months in which their homes have been pounded by the Shi'ite militias. They have been forced to eat dogs and rats.

Their suffering is part of the price being paid by the workers and peasants for the imperialist dismemberment of the Arab peoples and the failure of capitalism to begin to solve the national, communal and religious conflicts which it has created.

Lebanon was always an artificial state, carved out of the old Turkish empire by French imperialism and kept separate from Syria with which it is naturally linked. The aim was to create a state dominated by the Christian maronites which would divide and weaken the emerging national struggle of the Arabs. Israel was created as a Jewish homeland for exactly the same reason.

Now the imperialist chickens are coming home to roost, as the communal aspirations of both the Christian and the poorer but now larger Muslim population are exploited by the leaders of the 44 political/military groupings in Beirut alone.

Notwithstanding their occasional revolutionary rhetoric, the leaders of these factions are wealthy warlords. Walid Jumblatt, the hereditary leader of the Druze community is a millionaire, yet leads the 'Progressive Socialist Party', affiliated to the Socialist International to which the Labour Party belongs.

Although other groups, like Hezbollah (the Party of God) and Islamic Jihad, have angered Western capitalist powers through their kidnappings, not one of these militia leaders challenges the capitalist basis of Lebanese society. Indeed they ruthlessly exploit the capitalist system to enrich themselves. Their tactics of kidnap and murder widen the communal rifts between the workers of each community and accelerate the slide into anarchy. On a capitalist basis, none of the Lebanese communal leaders, nor the foreign governments with which they are allied, can begin to unravel the tangled knots of Lebanese society.

This can only be done by a movement of Muslim, Christian and Palestinian workers, united around a socialist programme to transform society. That there is a basis for such unity within Lebanon was demonstrated by the two general strikes in Beirut in July and September 1986, largely ignored by the Western media.

Angered by the doubling of food prices between January and June and the destruction of houses, hospitals and schools, workers forced the General Confederation of Lebanese Trade Unions to call a 24-hour general strike on 4 July.

The strike was solid in both West (Muslim) and East (Christian) Beirut. Shops were closed, all TV programmes except the news were cancelled and all stations, Christian and Muslim, broadcast a statement denouncing "famine, war, high prices and exceptional economic deterioration." A worker described this strike as "the first positive thing that has happened to us since 1975. For once we are all together in this."

Although this strike was soon eclipsed by a new round of car bombings and communal clashes, the murder of a Muslim religious scholar in September sparked off a protest strike in West Beirut which soon spread round the country, including the Christian areas. More recently, students at Beirut university called for a general strike in protest at the kidnapping of an Indian and three American teachers.

These events testify to the instinctive striving of workers and young people for a working class alternative to the war lords and capitalism. The general strikes prove that the workers have the power to override religious and communal divisions.

The problems of the Lebanese workers, however, are bound up with those of all the surrounding countries. All face growing economic hardship and all are affected by unresolved national problems. The solution lies in the workers of all these countries uniting across national boundaries to fight for a socialist federation, in which the wealth of the whole area can be planned and developed for the needs of the people, and the communal and religious antagonism can be eradicated.

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Police preventing black photographer recording their activities.

Photo: Nigel Clapp

# Police on the rampage

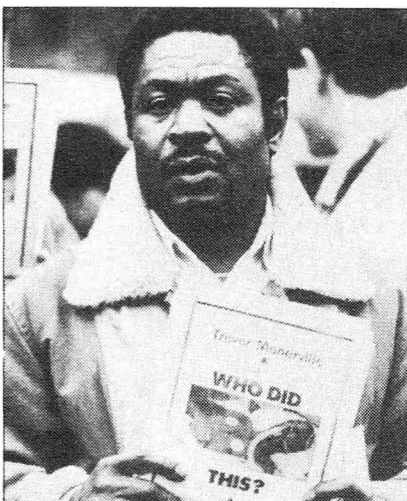
## Clinton McCurbin

**"THEY HELD him on the floor, beating him. One held his legs, the other bent his arm behind his back and the third locked his arm around his neck. After a short while his neck went limp as if it was broken. He just seemed to pass out unconscious."**

In these words, one witness described the death of Clinton McCurbin, a 24 year unemployed black worker at the hands of Wolverhampton policemen on Friday 20 February.

Clinton's death was the latest in a list of police killings, particularly of black people, under the Tory government. As one white working class woman commented: "It's like Vietnam, where the soldiers were psyched up with their gung ho training first, and then sent in to use it."

His death led to a wave of anger which spread to black and white youth in the town centre. Their understand-



John Monerville, Trevor's father, on picket at Stoke Newington police station.

Photo: Monique Blanchet (Report).

## Trevor Monerville

LAST TUESDAY 250 people attended a meeting called by the friends of Trevor Monerville and the Campaign Committee set up after he received horrific injuries whilst believed to be in police custody.

John Monerville, Trevor's father, described what happened to his son: "On 1 January I reported my son missing to Stoke Newington police station. They denied knowledge of his whereabouts. Again on 2 January I reported him missing. The police again denied any knowledge of him."

"On 3 January at Highbury magistrates court, the police charged Trevor with criminal damage. I

Public meeting  
Speaker: Linda Douglas, (LPYS  
Rep Labour Party NEC). The  
Greyhound, Market Street,  
Wolverhampton, 7.30pm.  
Tuesday 3 March.

dable rage was further increased when 400 riot police were called in.

The Assistant Chief Constable pretended to express surprise that they arrived fully kitted out in riot gear: "They happened to be training at the time" he said.

This provocative police action led to police buses and cars being stoned. Immediately the police and the media propaganda went into overdrive, trying desperately to describe Clinton as a drug ridden, violent criminal.

Michael McCurbin, was taken to Wednesfield police station and questioned by the police as to whether his brother took drugs and practiced boxing and kung fu.

## Blatant lies

The local paper at first carried the police story that he had died of a "heart attack whilst violently resisting arrest." It also told of his "violent past" ie he had hit his ex-employer when he was made redundant. All of these 'facts' turned out to be blatant lies.

The postmortem revealed no trace of drugs and the pathologists reported: "McCurbin died from asphyxia consistent with being restrained"—in other words he was strangled. As for resisting arrest, one witness said "he never swung a punch. He never stood a chance." All Clinton's friends and relatives said the same thing, that he was "quiet and law abiding."

His mother, Esther, came back from New York, and expressed anger at the attempts to besmirch her dead son. When she attempted to lay a wreath in the shop where he died, she was prevented from doing so by a security man. She swore that she would make

still had not found my son. During this time in custody Trevor had his fingerprints taken. It took six police officers to hold him down. All this time I was not told of my son's true whereabouts.

"I was eventually told by Stoke Newington police station that Trevor was in Pentonville prison. I eventually found my son in the hospital wing of Brixton prison, on a life support unit. He had bruises all over his body. Even the soles of his feet were bruised.

"I will not stop until I find out what really happened to my son."

Trevor is now paralysed on one side of his body. A demonstration against police harassment is now planned.

By Lesleigh Woodburn  
(Hackney South and Shoredith  
LPYS)

sure that no cover-up would take place—"we will take his body to New York if necessary."

The local council and black community leaders have called for a public inquiry "with an independent judge" but as the *Express and Star*, boosting the so-called independence of the Police Complaints Authority, pointed out: "Roland Moyle, deputy chairman of the PCA and ex-Labour minister, is a barrister" The truth is that this body will be under no legal obligation to publish any more than a summary of its findings, keeping secret any information on the police operation which led to Clinton McCurbin's death or the provocative deployment of the paramilitary riot squad.

On Saturday 32 more arrests were made, with the local papers hypocritically condemning "black violence". The truth is that all youth, black and white, are increasingly alienated from this rotten society.

LPYS supporters in the town have approached the family of Clinton McCurbin and offered their support. They have organised a public meeting for Tuesday 3 March, where they will be calling for:

- ★ A labour movement inquiry into the death of Clinton McCurbin.
- ★ Release of all youth arbitrarily arrested since 20 February.
- ★ Disbandment of the para-military riot squads and all other special police groups.
- ★ Democratic control of the police by elected committees of the local authorities with the power to appoint senior police officers.
- ★ These committees to weed out all fascists and racists from the police.
- ★ Repeal of the special police act.

Speaking at the meeting will be Linda Douglas, the first black woman on the Labour Party NEC and active in the Cherry Groce Defence Campaign. Also invited are members the McCurbin family.

By Bill Mullins

Out now

**Militant International Review**  
New issue out now. Price 90p + 20p p&p from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.



# Labour students need democracy



Students march against Tory cuts through London.

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

**TWENTY THOUSAND** students expressed their opposition to Tory education cuts on the National Union of Students demonstration in London on Saturday. They were well aware what the Tories would do if re-elected—large scale privatisation, course and college mergers and closures, and the introduction of student loans instead of grants.

The National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS), has potentially an important role to play in the struggle to defeat the Tories. Its present leadership, however, is ridden with people who use underhand bureaucratic manoeuvres to remain in control and allow no criticism of their leadership.

This is especially so in the run up to the NOLS national conference to be held this weekend at the University of London Union. In their report to the conference, the NOLS officers claim that this year has been "their most successful."

Successful at what? As a result of the

bureaucracy which stifles any growth and initiatives, NOLS membership has fallen again, for the second year running, from 6,622 to 6,192.

There has been a systematic attempt by the 'Democratic Left' officers on the NOLS NC to rule out all opposition delegates in order to maintain a grip on the organisation. This year, however, the net has been cast far wider, and even clubs that are suspected of being in opposition have been denied entrance to the conference. A key role in this manipulation has been played by the party's student organiser, Sally Morgan.

## Right to appeal

So confident was she of the large numbers of delegates that would be ruled out, that a model letter was produced for clubs in this situation. It did not mention that they had the right to appeal.

There has been only one meeting of the conference credentials committee—as a result many delegates only found out at a few hours notice that they had

a right to appeal. None of them would have been reassured by the fact that Sally Morgan, the same person who had ruled them out, would represent their side of the case if they could not attend—"judge, jury, and executioner" would not be too far from the mark.

Many delegates were ruled out because two different dates for the delegation deadline were given out. Having totted up the figures behind the scenes, a propitious decision was made to abide by the earlier deadline.

In the forthcoming general election, the student vote will not be won by the NOLS officers but by rank and file activists. In order to do that they have to be confident of the leadership of their organisation. The actions of the NOLS leaders in conjunction with the student organiser have destroyed any vestiges of confidence that remained. Not only will they threaten the Labour student vote by their actions; they will also lose support and eventually the leadership of NUS if they continue.

By a Militant reporter

## Protest at arrests

**600 PEOPLE** marched through the South Staffordshire town of Wombourne on Sunday 22 February. They were protesting against the arrest before Christmas of twelve gay supporters who had lobbied the home of the Tory District Council leader, Bill Brownhills.

This councillor had made the infamous comment that "all gays should be gassed."

Unfortunately, according to press reports, he had been supported by the Labour leader as well!

The twelve had been locked up for seven days over Christmas on remand, but then released, with all charges dropped. Even the Tory *Wolverhampton Express and Star* was moved to question the whole proceedings.

It was no wonder then that the demonstrators were on Sunday were saying "Shoot Bill Brownhills," who is reportedly unrepentant about his comments.

By Bill Mullins



## Russia under Gorbachev—new pamphlet

**MILITANT** IS publishing a new pamphlet, *Russia: Reform or Political Revolution*, in which Ted Grant analyses Gorbachev's proposals. It will also 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.

## Dougie Holt

**MERSEYSIDE** comrades gathered to say goodbye to Dougie Holt aged 68, and to salute the memory of a good comrade. He died on 15 February after a long illness.

Present were Eddie Loyden MP and other representatives of the labour movement, with members of his family and friends. Tony Mulhearn, expelled president of the Liverpool District Labour Party, delivered an oration outlining his life.

To those who knew him, Doug was an example to all activists of what a socialist and a human being should be—modest, friendly, considerate and optimistic.

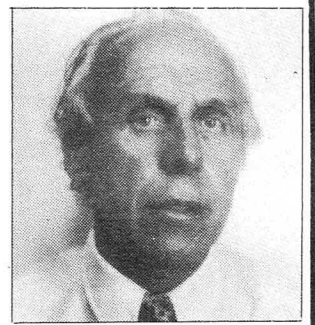
The son of a stonemason, he was born in a terraced house in the Anfield district of Liverpool. He grew up in the turmoil of the pre-war years. Several of his brothers died in childhood, reflecting the conditions of the working class.

He himself spent four childhood years in hospital recovering from scarlet fever. Because of its damaging effect on his education, he became very much a self-educated man, developing an expert knowledge of English literature.

Serving a tool-room apprenticeship he began a lifetime of work in the labour movement. Much time was spent raising money for the struggle in Spain. One of his greatest delights was to relate his presence in the anti-fascist crowd when Oswald Mosley received the gift of a house brick on the head, from the people of Liverpool.

When people talked of Doug, they could not separate him from his wife Doris, his comrade and partner in life who died several years ago.

They were drawn into the Labour Party in the late 1960s and early 70s. They met Tony Mulhearn and Eddie Loyden, when they were active in the tenants' movement, and joined the trades council's campaign against the Tory housing finance act. Soon they were campaigning to secure the elec-



tion of Tony Mulhearn as a councillor. Then Doug was election agent for Eddie Loyden, when he was elected as the first Labour MP for Garston.

Doug was also an activist in the AEU, becoming deputy convener of the British Leyland no. 1 plant, at the time of the nine weeks strike.

He was proud of his three children, Phil, Audrey and Mark, all active in the labour movement and Phil's wife Beryl who nursed both Doug and Doris when they were ill.

Phil Holt recently stood against John Golding, as the Broad Left candidate for General Secretary of the NCU.

Audrey White, his daughter, leader of an important struggle against sexual harassment, against a manager of "Lady at Lord John", a shop in Liverpool, is soon to be depicted by the actress Glenda Jackson in a film on Channel 4.

It is a sad comment on the Labour Party today that only the dead can safely declare their support for *Militant*. But threats of expulsion did not stop Doug.

In the last years he frequently would state the case for *Militant*, patiently explaining its ideas and programme. To the last he remained optimistic, fighting his illness, planning for when he would be fit for battle. In this manner, he left us, always looking forward.

Our condolences go to his children, confident that both he and Doris will live on in the contribution that this family will continue to make in the struggle for socialism.

By Terry Harrison

## John Thomas

**SWANSEA'S** LABOUR movement is once again in mourning after the tragic death of John Thomas while still in his forties. As a NUPE shop steward, John's energies were devoted to defending his members' interests. As a socialist, he was uncompromising in his

hatred of the movement's enemies, whether they be the Tory government or witch-hunting bureaucrats. He will be sorely missed and we send our condolences to his wife and two sons.

By Bill Williams

## Coventry canvass

**FORTY MEMBERS** of Coventry South East Labour Party took part in a canvass of the Stoke Aldermoor estate on 14 February. Their main theme was the housing crisis afflicting estates like this one. A tenant complained that she had to blow into the hot water taps to get the water flowing. She was still waiting for her missing front window to be replaced.

Another tenant, pensioner Jean Hamilton, said that she did not get her five pounds cold weather allowance: "I've worked all my life and helped to build this city, but because I had some money in the bank, they said I wasn't

entitled. I'm not a bitter person, but I'm bitter now. When I see Thatcher on TV, I turn it off."

Eighty copies of *Militant* were sold to voters impressed by the commitment of their MP Dave Nellist.

One hundred pounds was raised at a public meeting which followed the official opening by Eric Heffer of the new Coventry South East Labour Party offices, which will be invaluable in building support for the re-election of "a workers' MP on a worker's wage."

By John Marshman



## Ridley's retreat will only be a breathing space

LAST WEEK Tory environment minister Ridley announced that some of his plans for local government were being postponed until after the election.

The Queen's speech last November threatened legislation to force councils to put many vital services out to competitive tender. They also wanted to stop "contract compliance" requirements where local councils insist that all contractors abide by important policy directives like race and sex equality and boycotting of South African goods.

But this is only a breathing space. The Tories are clearing the decks for an election and have little time for controversial legislation. Council workers and Labour councillors must start preparing now for a new attack; previous heavyweight legislation has already got many Labour councils reeling.

### Ratecapping

Ratecapping has devastated Labour local authorities; the councils need the £21.9 billion the Tories have stolen since 1979. But particularly in the inner city areas councils need even more money to tackle severe problems.

In 1985 it was estimated that £19 billion was needed to restore council housing to a respectable level, let alone tackle the squalor in the private sector. A higher and higher proportion of local authority finance has to be spent on improving existing stock with less available for new homes.

The fight against privatisation and other attacks must be stepped up. If the Tories get their way they would abolish all national negotiations on pay and conditions; they would introduce privatisation by the back door such as the Land and Planning Act and savage staffing levels and services.

## Sheffield broad left

SHEFFIELD CITY Council's £41 million deficit has caused a deep crisis. Already the council have completely frozen recruitment, except for 'essential' posts.

Each department has had to produce 'suggestions' for 5 per cent and 10 per cent spending reductions in their base budgets, ie a cuts package. This includes increased charges for council services including those for the old, sick and disabled currently free of charge. One proposal is to charge social workers £2 a day for car parking.

Unfortunately the crisis has provoked a political crisis too. David Blunkett thinks 'the game is up' and is awaiting rescue by a Labour government. NALGO, NUPE and GMBATU are considering short time working, calculating that if the entire

The array of strikes in councils across the country is a sign of the crisis; of the lack of an alternative strategy from councils and unions. Even if councils can survive 1987-88 without wholesale cuts, council workers need to get organised. Follow the example of the council workers broad left in Sheffield and fight to draw workers, councillors and the local community into a real challenge to Tory plans.

### No option but to fight

ALAN SHADFORTH Hull Joint Shop Stewards Committee told *Militant*: "Ridley's announcement is no cause for complacency. Tory MPs may even try to reintroduce the plans as amendments. We face rates reform, attacks on national negotiations, ratecapping and then Ridley if the Tories win."

"That's why we're looking for a Labour victory, but what do the Labour leaders offer us? Hattersley's always telling businessmen he won't bail out the councils from the £2 billion deficit."

"Labour councils have to start fighting the government or they end up fighting us. Hull's got 52 Labour councillors out of 60 but when the buses were deregulated they proposed a £20 wage cut, longer hours, shorter holidays, total flexibility and 300 redundancies while giving the manager an £8,000 rise."

"The Land and Planning Act allows privatisation anyway. Under this act all tenders over £25,000 have to go out to tender so £4.5 million worth of contracts are up for grabs. Hull has announced 155 redundancies in highways and street lighting. We have no option but to fight for our jobs and services".

council works 35 hours a week with loss of pay the council will save £25 million, which, they say, is better than redundancies.

So a Labour authority could carry out the Tory dream of a local pay agreement, driving a huge hole through national service agreements. Next year, when another crisis looms, do we then accept a 33 hour week with loss of pay?

Workers need an alternative to the pessimism of the council leaders. A NALGO Broad Left has been formed and has already held successful meetings to draw up that alternative. Similar Broad Lefts are planned for manual unions to stop all redundancies and short time working.

By Dave Milsom (Sheffield NALGO personal capacity)

# Labour councils under threat

EVEN THOUGH Ridley's plans for privatisation have been temporarily shelved, in Hackney three quarters of the capital programmes and a third of maintenance are done by private contractors.

In some cases even tenders won by the direct labour organisation (DLO) have been put out to sub-contractors.

The private firms have no commitment to tenants and are often notorious for using lump labour. They can bust without warning, leaving the council to pick up the pieces.

### Expansion

Labour councils and the unions must use this breathing space to bring in measures to strengthen and expand the existing DLOs, to establish effective contract compliance units (which can monitor contracts as well as select lists) and improve management and services.

The councils' financial problems make the threat of privatisation even more likely. Jobs are still at risk. There must be no cuts in wages or staff levels to win tenders. No recruitment drag or cuts in overtime to disguise the cuts, and no selling off of land or estates. Instead there should be urgent action to fill vacancies and for a massive investment in new buildings and maintenance.

The Tories are still determined to undermine the unions and smash national agreements. Privatisation is



Anti-rate capping campaign in Hackney, 1985.

still a means of achieving that. Meetings, leaflets and posters must be used to explain this to the workforce.

Links must also be made with all the unions in the areas, not only those affected by privatisation. Council plans for municipalisation must be explained to the workers in other industries, or it could be a case of 'my job or yours'. Cuts in council wages and services would have a widespread effect throughout industry and the

local economy. Similarly links must be made between tenants and community organisations.

A first step would be to hold a local conference involving all the unions, tenants and community groups to launch a campaign to show the Tories our determination to prevent any more cuts and attacks on the working class.

By Lynne Faulkes (Hackney councillor)

## Brookside on our side?

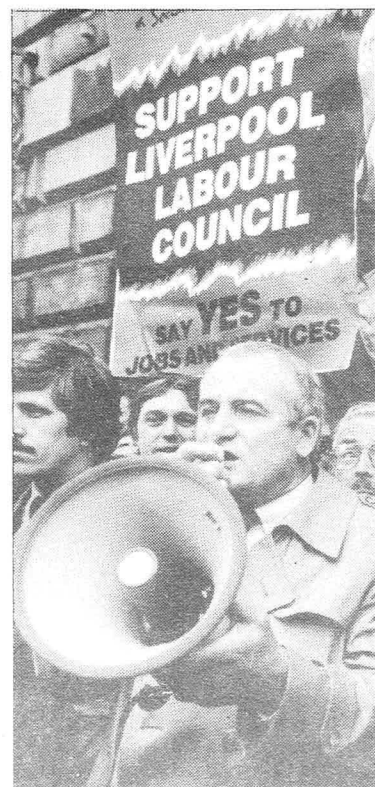
"BROOKSIDE" the Liverpool-based serial this week saw "Bobby Grant" played by Ricky Tomlinson, asked if he was a 'member of Militant.' His reply?

"What if I am? What have they ever done to you—all they've done is build houses. Anyone with the bottle to stand up is branded as a Militant. . . I'm not talking about the tendency. I'm talking about ordinary people with heart and guts to say we're not begging for jobs we're demanding them, but not at any price. . . we want good jobs, good wages and good conditions, if that's a militant count me in."

That's a militant, and a Militant too. Become a Militant supporter!



Brookside's Bobby Grant—Ricky Tomlinson.



## Liverpool

LIVERPOOL COUNCIL is still firmly committed to defending jobs and services. The housing programme, which has so far provided over 4,000 new homes, and the 1,000 new jobs created by the council are protected while Labour stays in power.

Despite the set-back in the battle against the government for more funds in 1985, rate increases this year will only be five per cent.

But this situation cannot last without a commitment from the Labour leaders to fully restore the cuts. The gains made in Liverpool only came about because the council was determined to stick to its election manifesto - to defend and expand jobs and services.

Now local leaders of the council trade union NALGO are issuing disinformation in an attempt to undermine the council's position. They have claimed

## No soft

MORE LABOUR controlled councils are proposing cuts in spending as this year's budgets are being set.

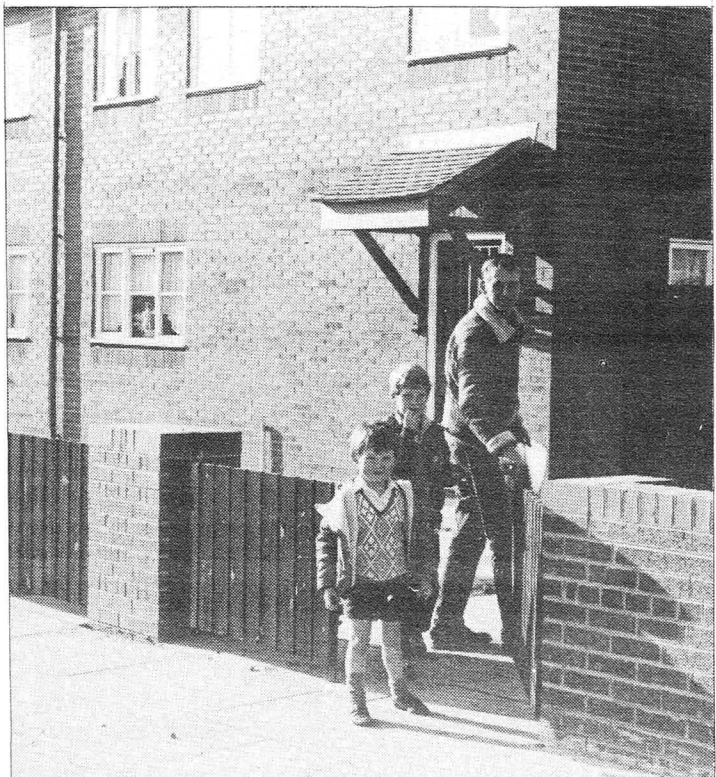
Some, like Sheffield, are directly attacking council workers—they are proposing a six per cent wage cut, as part of a shorter working week. Others, like Ealing and Waltham Forest in London are proposing massive rate increases which could put up to £8 a week on the rate bill per household.

These councils are led by the Kinnockite soft left, or now the 'new right', section of the Labour Party which was the most vociferous in condemning Liverpool council in its battle against the Tories in 1985.

Papers like *Tribune*, and from the outside the *Morning Star* and the Communist Party wasted no time in accusing Liverpool of 'adventurism' and urging the adoption of the package of cuts proposed by Stonefrost.

Now these groups highlight every dispute and difficulty faced by Liverpool, arising from the City council's defeat—a defeat only made possible by the capitulation by this soft left section of the Party when confronted by the government. But they should take a look in their own backyards—where Labour councils, yes *Labour councils*





New housing built by Liverpool council.

## answers accusations

that 744 jobs would be lost through non filling of vacancies, and that these show cuts of "massive proportions", according to NALGO chairman Graham Burgess.

But at any one time two per cent of posts will always be vacant, because of movement in the workforce. For Liverpool this means 600 vacancies. The same would be the case for other authorities, but some are disguising the cuts with a drag on recruitment, and increasing the number of vacancies to an abnormal level.

Undoubtedly there are fears in the workforce in Liverpool about their future security, and these are being exploited by the NALGO leaders. But what they don't say is that two vacancy sub-committees held recently filled three hundred posts, and there is a commitment to fill

the rest.

NALGO only raised the issue when they lost a ballot for strike action recently, and appear to be acting purely out of spite. Their hypocrisy is even greater considering the pernicious role they played in the struggle against the Tories in 1985. Their actions then undermined the council's campaign by confusing their own members, again with disinformation about the council's intentions.

Liverpool's Labour council is under no illusions that there will have to be another fight in the future to defend jobs and services. But if that is to be successful, there will need to be a united campaign involving all council unions, the council and the Labour Party.

By Dave Cotterill

## options for 'soft left'

are making workers pay for real cuts.

David Blunkett, in his role as bridge-builder at Labour's 1985 conference, talked soothingly of a commitment to bringing trade unions and Labour councillors together "to ensure that we do not make those cuts".



David Blunkett

Now Sheffield has a budget deficit of £41 million, and is proposing a shorter working week for all staff - but with loss of pay for some of over six per cent. Union leaders are considering the option as the only answer to the crisis. Neither they nor the council have any other strategy.

Waltham Forest in east London is proposing a massive 70 per cent rate increase, agreed by the Labour group. This could mean an average of £8 a week per household. On top of this

they want to put 65 pence a week on the rents.

Ealing is proposing an 80 per cent rate increase. This could mean an average increase of £8 per week for every household. Although there is a rent freeze, this will push up rent payments.

Brent council in north London wants to sell off the town hall and all the light bulbs, as part of its strategy for fighting the cuts. It would then lease them back from the new owner. That would mean cash for the present but a £30 million bill for 1989. What will be left to sell off then? These are panic measures, which only postpone the crisis to a later date.

The only strategy left to these councils is to wait for a Labour government to bail them out. Neither a Labour government, nor one which is fully committed to restoring the funding removed by the Tories, is guaranteed. In the meantime the problems pile up, and promise an even bigger crisis in the future.

Also being stored up is the potential for widespread and explosive protest by council workers and local communities against the cuts.

By Ben Eastop.

# Stop the bosses' snoop-troop

**THE BOYS on the Blacklist**, a TV exposé of blacklisting by Granada's *World in Action* takes first prize for enterprise and courage in exposing the widespread victimisation of trade unionists and political activists by big business.

The programme's success can be judged by the pained response of the main target, the Economic League. Their reply complains about "hole in the corner methods" and "find(s) it extraordinary that the IBA sanctioned the use of secret cameras and deception".

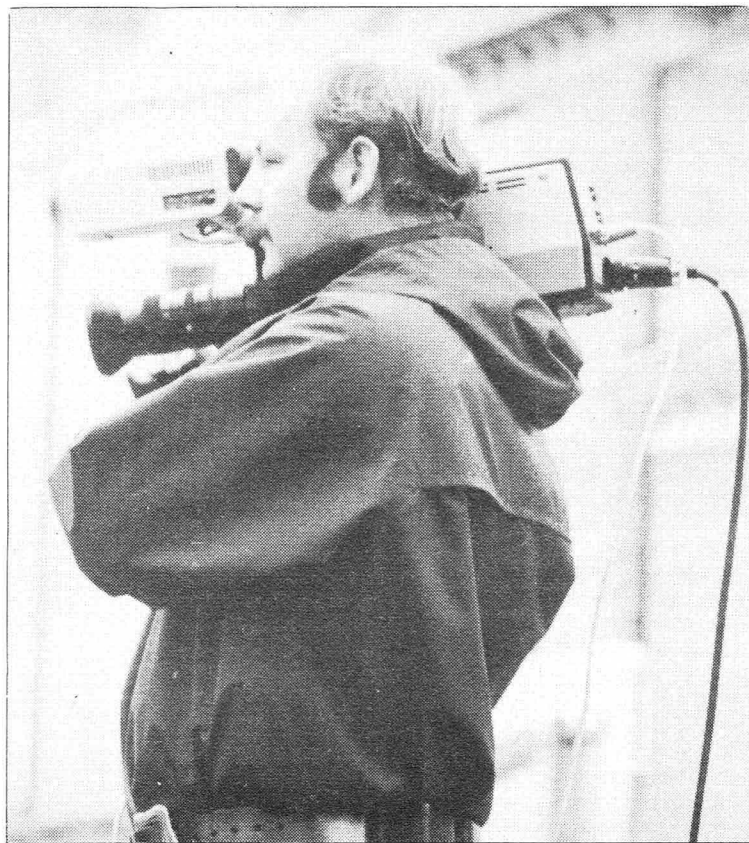
This is incredible hypocrisy from an organisation whose northern organiser Alan Harvey was filmed (secretly) offering to check potential employees against the League's 250,000 name blacklist and illegally obtaining information from the police.

He was even tapped fingering a personnel manager: "While I wish to remain friends (sic) with Ken Mullier... I don't really want him involved in one of my companies that has a future ahead of it."

As a matter of course the League adds names from the left wing press to its blacklist. But its net spreads well beyond political activists. Harvey again: "People like CND, Friends of the Earth, anti-apartheid, they're very useful vehicles for subversives."

The other coup of the programme was to locate a number of cases of people with no political links or history of trade union militancy who had been put on the League's blacklist.

The funniest was Dame Olga (note dame) Uvarov, a top scientist with Glaxo, whose personnel manager was amazed to find her name on a sample list supposed to



Police surveying an anti-fascist demonstration. How much such information goes to groups like the Economic League?

encourage the company to subscribe.

He described her as very "pro-establishment" and upon questioning the League concluded her name was included because it was Russian. He declined to subscribe to anything so unreliable.

But the programme showed that thousands of firms do subscribe to the League, which has sixty full time officials and a number of regional offices.

It's a much more serious business for ordinary workers.

Whole families were shown to have been kept on the dole queue as a result of blacklisting, with all the misery that brings.

Good as the programme was it probably shows just the tip of the iceberg. As class conflict gets more bitter such activities will become more prominent.

Another interesting question which points up the changing political climate—if this had been a BBC programme would it have been shown?

## From witch-hunt to blacklist

TONY BENN'S statement that "the witch-hunt that began against *Militant* has delivered us bound hand and foot to the point where Duncan Campbell's house is raided" (at *Tribune's* 50th anniversary rally) came to mind as I watched *World in Action*.

It was easy to laugh at the Colonel Blimp attitudes of Economic League members, seeing 'subversives everywhere.'

Their activities come as no surprise to labour movement activists though to most people they rightly appear shocking and threatening.

### Tip-offs

More alarming to trade unionists was the Economic League's northern organiser's boast that: "a lot of our tip-offs come from the trade unions themselves. They don't want trouble-makers anymore than we do."

I might have laughed at this claim had not the *Sunday Express* front page headline the day before read "Menace of the Militant Moles".

The article talked about a list of 269 individuals and their union branches reveal-

ed to the *Express*: "Civil Service union officials have verified the list and warned that it could only be the tip of the iceberg."

### Crackdown

Whilst Tory MPs are demanding a 'crackdown' on the employment of members of "subversive organisations" the *Express* story claimed that: "Officials of the biggest civil service trade union the Civil and Public Services Association favour tightening the rules and are backing MPs' demands for a review."

It shows how the right wing's politics easily slip from organisational manoeuvres within the labour movement against socialists to collaboration with the class enemy. They help create an atmosphere of intolerance in which further attacks on opponents of the establishment can flourish.

Step up the efforts to build fighting democratic unions with leaders under the control of the union membership and policies in the interests of the working class not management and bosses.

By Dave Griffiths

## One in six subversives

TRADE UNIONISTS in Hull are outraged at the revelations in last week's 'World in Action' documentary on the involvement of a local private investigator in blacklisting labour activists.

Jacques-Turner of Paragon Investigations claimed to have information on 40-50,000 people in the Hull area—that is one in six of the entire local population.

Even the *Tory Hull Daily Mail* has been forced to draw Orwellian comparisons and comment that even Hull's high crime rate cannot justify such widespread invasion of individuals' freedom.

Jacques-Turner's claim to be "protecting employers from unscrupulous employees who do not mind who they rob" is a hypocritical cover. Victimisation and blacklisting have been unusually common in this area in recent years. Now we know why.

Two monopolies operating locally, Reckitts and Metal Box (who recently locked out several hundred workers for three weeks) were named as having been affiliated to the Economic League.

Not only activists have been angered. Selling the *Militant* last week an old fella bought a copy and proudly displayed it in the middle of the street saying: "Where's the photographer to get this on film?"

The local trade unions and Labour Party should initiate an inquiry into the use of private investigators, blacklists and victimisation and show how it is 'unscrupulous employers who don't mind who they rob' of a living.



## Campaign '87

OUR CAMPAIGN has a vital task in establishing regular bulk orders from shop stewards' committees and workers taking bulk supplies into their office or factory.

Over the past few weeks Manchester sellers have led the way, using the feature on engineering to start a campaign to sell *Militant* in every major factory in the area and to get regular orders for the paper. With last week's issue 12 were sold at the Ancoats occupation and 10 taken by a shop steward at Senior Coleman. Sellers in Rochdale and Oldham report increased sales at SEI, Heywood; Seddon Atkinson, Oldham; Scotts, Oldham and Renold Gears, Milnrow.

Big sales were also achieved on the national student demonstration in London last weekend.

As the demo moved down Piccadilly, the doorman outside the Ritz, dressed in gold braid uniform and top hat was asked to take a copy. After first refusing he stopped our seller before she rushed off saying: "I'll take one of them." She then sold another to a sales assistant in one of the shops in front of the Ritz and to five out of six stall holders along the side of Green Park!

Last week's feature on conditions inside car plants got sellers out at Austin Rover Longbridge and BL Sherpa where 12 were sold! Sellers were also out at the Jaguar and Talbot plants in Coventry. One car worker after watching Brookside where Bobby Grant (Ricky Tomlinson) was asked if he was "in the *Militant* Tendency," went straight out and sold five in his own street!

Saturday sales in Romford got a boost last Saturday when Morris dancers attracted a big crowd! When one of the cast from Grange Hill bought a copy and started to read it there and then, lots of young fans gathered round and sales got another boost!

Sellers in Bermondsey sold over 100 copies of *Militant*, in their campaign. Politics is in the air as the prospect of a general election approaches. Workers will be looking for a paper that tells them how to get rid of Thatcher and replace her with a Labour Party committed to fighting for working people.

# Tory racism threatens democratic rights



**THE TORIES' racist immigration controls have been exposed again, as the government attempts to deport 58 Tamil refugees trying to escape the state sponsored anti-Tamil pogroms in Sri Lanka. Dave Nellist MP forced a statement out of the Tories. Colin De Freitas reports.**

During the last few weeks the Sri Lankan government has launched a military offensive in the Tamil north and east of the country. Between 28 and 30 January 150 Tamil civilians were shot dead near Batticaloa, in the east. A former executive director of the International Trade Centre in Geneva claimed that during the operation he saw 83 Tamils lined up by a church and gunned down.

During the offensive in the north, refugees seeking asylum in churches and temples were driven out and cold bloodedly killed by government troops. Last November, seventeen refugees were brutally murdered at sea by the navy, as they tried to reach India. Their bodies were left to wash up on the shore.

### Tamil horror

Yet amidst all this horror Tory immigration minister, David Waddington, seeks to deport Tamil refugees, telling MPs: "There is no

reason to suppose that people who have left Sri Lanka will be ill treated on their return." He refused political asylum on the grounds that their escape: "Seemed to be organised." As if refugees could ever escape persecution without organising it. He raised the fact that they had gone through racketeers. But they were so desperate they would have used any means. They were 'persecuted' refugees.

Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, told a radio interviewer that "at first blush" the Tamils produced no evidence to show they would be persecuted. So his life and death decision on these Tamils was taken at first blush. As Dave Nellist pointed out the decision to deport was taken in 72 hours, when usually political asylum cases take 18 months or more.

The full hypocrisy of the Tories is revealed. All their rantings about the abuses in Russia or Poland are only dragged out as a scare crow against genuine socialism.

But for capitalist Sri Lanka, financed, supported and armed by Britain—"there is no evidence".

The Tories' callousness over the Tamils, fits in with their whole policy on immigration. Recently, they introduced visa controls for visitors from the Indian subcontinent, Ghana and Nigeria. The resulting scenes of chaos at Heathrow, were then used to whip up racism in Britain.

### Look after own

In the Commons debate Dave Nellist initiated, Tory MP, Anthony Beaumont-Dark, continued on this theme: "Does this country not have its own people to look after." The five million unemployed will be wondering when the Tories are going to start looking after them.

David Waddington spoke of the granting of the Tamils' request opening "a potentially disastrous gap in our immigration control." But then he threw down a

challenge to the Labour leaders on their immigration policy: "At least until the summer the Conservative Party and the Labour Party were supposed to be in favour of firm control. How on earth can one be in favour of firm control and allow such a gaping hole to be driven through by this sort of abuse?"

But he is right—it is a contradiction for Labour to oppose just the worst excesses of Tory racism and immigration policy. Any support for immigration controls gives credence to the Tory argument that black and Asian workers are responsible for scarcity of jobs and houses.

Labour must firmly re-establish the traditional democratic right of political asylum, but it must make the commitment to abolish all immigration controls. Linked up to real socialist policies which could guarantee jobs and decent conditions for all, Labour could undermine the racist ideas propagated by the Tories and their press.



**DAVE NELLIST MP:** (Coventry South East) (*by private notice*) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he would make a statement on the position of the 58 Tamil refugees who were to be deported from Heathrow airport yesterday.

The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr David Waddington): "... Arrangements were made to effect removal of 58 of the passengers by the Bangladesh Biman flight scheduled to leave at 5pm last night. However, the flight was delayed by an apparently organised demonstration by those who were due to be removed. At approximately 7pm the United Kingdom Immigrants Advisory Service informed my right hon Friend's Office that it had obtained a High Court order staying removal action until Monday 23 February.

We shall take steps to contest the order and any application for judicial review. The government remain of the view that the group has no claim to refugee status.

Mr Nellist: No doubt the House will be grateful for that deferral, but we are not grateful to the Minister for his court action to challenge the grounds for that deferral. It is not the generosity of the Minister that is responsible for the deferral because he and his department ignored the normal convention whereby 85 per cent of those arriving in this country and seeking political refugee status are referred to the United Kingdom Immigration Advisory Service.

The Minister's Office usually takes 18 months to two years to deal with a single application for political asylum. In view of that, how can the minister convince us that in 72 hours the Secretary of State went through the cases of 64 people and became convinced that each one of those people is not entitled to refugee status? Were there not co-ordinated and organised attempts by the boat people and by the Jews in 1930s who, without passports, visas or other documents, left the countries in which they were being persecuted? Does the Minister intend to send these 58 men, women and children back to their deaths in Jaffna?

## Left and Right

### Healthy profits

MRS ANN Burdus has been appointed vice chair of the new government health education authority after the Health Education Council is axed in April. She is also director of AGB Research the biggest market research firm in Europe with clients in the alcohol and tobacco industries. Surely even the Tories can not claim

booze and fags as health foods. Last year the health education council had an £11 million budget, of which a mere £326,000 went on anti-alcohol education. £150 million was spent on alcohol advertising—by firms like AGB.

### AIDS hypocrisy

GET RICH from AIDS. That's the message from Warburg Securities. They expect

"awareness of AIDS" to grow in Japan so their tip is invest in Japanese rubber and latex firms "as the AIDS threat becomes apparent". They also recommend the firm with distribution rights for the AZT drug which "should be a continuing focus of investor interest as further AIDS victims inevitably come to light". And the company which markets immune serums "was already well placed to benefit from the onset of AIDS in Japan." Carrying capitalism? Forget it.

### The price is wrong

CONTESTANTS ON a recent edition of *The Price is Right* were asked "if the pay of a British Rail ticket collector is £97.50 per week, what salary per week does the Chairman of BR get?"

Being simple souls (you probably have to be to appear on *The Price is Right*) most of the contestants thought he got about £500. One said £300. The correct answer of course is £1,250 per week. I wonder if he gets cheap travel as well?



# 6.2 MILLION YOUTH FOR LABOUR

Labour Party Young Socialists

## Organise support for LPYS proposals

LAST WEEK every constituency and ward Labour Party, affiliated trade union, socialist society, the Labour Party Young Socialists, National Organisation of Labour Students and the Labour Women's Organisation received the NEC consultation paper on the proposals for the Party's youth section.

The LPYS contribution to the consultation, in the form of a letter to all sections of the Party and its affiliates has now been circulated.

Every branch of the LPYS should be taking up the campaign as a matter of urgency, to ensure a full and thorough consultation takes place at all levels of the Party and trade unions.

Already, Horsham Labour Party in Sussex have called on the NEC to postpone the consultation period until after the General Election.

In Eastern Region, Watford CLP have backed the

LPYS' positive proposals in a motion to the Regional Labour Party Conference by 40 votes to 9, in spite of the opposition of the Prospective Parliamentary Candidate. Tass-Metal Mechanics have also tabled a motion for the Conference, supporting the suggestions of the LPYS.

### Support LPYS

The National Labour Women's Committee has voted to circulate all women's sections and women's councils with the LPYS letter. However, in a scandalous move Labour Party headquarters have refused to send it out.

If every Young Socialist branch raises the issue with wards, CLPs, women's sections and trade unions, the rank and file of the movement can be won to support the democratic proposals of the YS.

# Death on the dole

"DEATH ON the Dole" was the headline in Manchester's local paper on 18 February. Two 19 year old lads had committed suicide by gassing themselves to death in a car in local woods.

Glynn and Louis are just another statistic as far as the Tories are concerned; two of the eight youth who are recorded as having taken their own lives in despair every week in 1986 and 1987.

Glynn's father made the following comments to a local paper "Mrs Thatcher and her policies have a lot to answer for. I have seen similar cases in the newspapers that have happened in other parts of the country and it is all part of the general scene in which the

youth of today have to live. A job today for youngsters is a passport to society. Both these lads didn't have one and without that passport you are treated like a nobody—a bum.

### Driven to despair

"But they weren't bums, they were both trying to find work and simply could not get it."

Glynn's mate Louis had just moved in with him after a family dispute and the DHSS were threatening to stop his benefit unless he had a permanent address.

Since the Tories came to power

suicides of under 25s have risen by 25 per cent. 416 youth were driven to despair last year to take their lives. The everyday misery that faced these lads is repeated up and down the country a million times over.

When the Labour Party leadership say that they cannot guarantee a job for every school leaver, as it is utopian we must demand that this national tragedy be stopped.

By Phil Frampton  
(Withington CLP personal capacity)  
and Michael Lee



Students on last Saturday's demonstration, fighting the latest round of Tory attacks—to introduce a system of 'loans' instead of grants.

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

## Trade unions must involve young workers

TUC YOUTH Conference takes place next Friday, against the background of a major attack on the unemployed through the introduction of the Job Training Scheme, a thinly disguised Youth Training scheme, for the under 25s.

It also takes place at a time when a number of unions such as the TGWU and USDAW have launched initiatives aimed at recruitment and involvement of youth inside the union structure.

Bill Morris' much publicised attempts to open up the TGWU to youth have been praised and rightly so. Unions are now recognising the need to go on the offensive against the Tories' new 'enterprise culture', which only means new levels of exploitation for employees. Recruitment drives have been launched by the TGWU and USDAW amongst YTS and part-time workers.

These discussions have also been a feature of TUC Youth Conferences in the past and this year is no exception.

A TUC consultative document

A JOINT letter from Andy Bevan, the Labour Party's National Youth Officer and Bill Keys, the National co-ordinator of Trades Unionists for Labour, has been circulated to shop stewards' committees, trade union branches and union officers to encourage young trade unionists to attend the LPYS national conference.

The conference rally "Young Workers for Labour" to be held on Friday 17 April has speakers including Ron Todd General Secretary TGWU, Diana Jeuda Labour Party NEC and USDAW, and Linda Douglas LPYS rep. on the NEC.

The letter calling for sponsorship for young people to attend the conference will be a step towards developing greater involvement of young workers in the Labour Party.

Copies of the letter are available from Andy Bevan, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT.

on youth provision is to be presented to the conference. It outlines the situation facing youth in Britain and puts forward a number of proposals to "widen the participation of youth" within the TUC. This document is being circulated to the affiliated unions and will be discussed at this year's congress.

Amongst the proposals contained in the document, are demands that LPYS activists within the TUC Youth have put forward for a number of years.

Since the founding of TUC Youth Conference in 1974, youth activists have been engaged in an annual battle to "open up" the event. It has been seen by successive delegates to conference as a "talking shop" and a "token event".

The LPYS took an active part in the campaign to allow youth a voice in the TUC, and our demands have always been supported by the vast majority of delegates at the conferences.

We have consistently argued for

the right to discuss resolutions, the right to elect a national committee, and have also argued for a longer conference to enable more discussion.

However there are bound to be a few raised eyebrows, not to mention raised voices, over some of the other proposals mentioned in the document which include: the setting up of a TUC Youth forum made up of nominees and General council members, the scrapping of the annual youth conference, and the lowering of the age limit to 22 for trade union youth.

The battle lines are now clearly drawn, which choice congress makes this year, could depend quite largely on the response of trade union youth activists.

The right to have a conference was only won after a determined campaign, the right to keep that conference, and actually make it representative of youth in the trade unions, will require a campaign, that is even more determined to succeed.

Come to LPYS conference Blackpool 17-20 April

Contact Andy Bevan, National Youth Officer, 150 Walworth Rd, London SE17 1JT.

### Gold Fields protest

THE LPYS are lobbying Consolidated Gold Fields which own 48 per cent of GFSa to demand their withdrawal from South Africa. The date for the lobby which appeared in Militant 835 was wrong, the details for the lobby are:

★ Friday 20 March, Assemble at Stock Exchange 11.30am, followed by march to Consolidated Gold Fields Offices and a picket.

## Exposing Tory policies

MAKE A donation to build a Marxist paper that can expose the real meaning of Tory policies. The Tory government claimed last week to have reversed the rise in long term unemployment, and announced that it has fallen by about 20,000 since March of last year. But does anyone, least of all youth on cheap labour schemes, believe them?

Lord Young, the 'Employment' secretary claimed "We have broken the seemingly relentless rise in long term unemployment that has been seen this decade."

This was 'achieved' by suspending claimants'

benefit when they did not take up "invitations" from their local Job Centre for a Restart interview.

Between June and October 27,533 people, already on pitifully inadequate benefits, had their money stopped.

### Electioneering

The supposed drop in unemployment is just an electioneering gimmick to try and give the Tories five more years office—to make five more years of cuts.

The need for a genuine daily Marxist paper has never been greater. Help us achieve this aim—and invest

your cash in a socialist future!

If you can match the magnificent donation of Jill Rees from Coventry, who gave us £200, then Militant will continue to grow from strength to strength.

Thanks also to: £85.55 raised at a readers meeting in Newham; £50 and £36 IOUs from rally paid in by Richard and Ian Harling; Jackie Toward (North Tyne) for £15; David Thompson (London) for £15; Don Salter for £14.70; Mrs Bron Hall (Herefordshire) for £8; S Hauton (Wellingborough DLP) for £8; Hull EETPU members for £7.70; L Howard (Sutton) for £5; Julie Cleverley (Newham) £5.

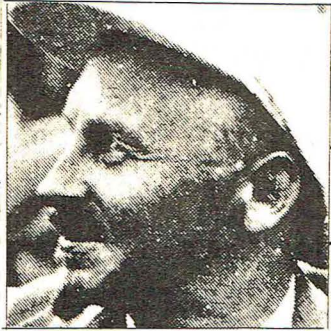
## £250 000 Fighting Fund

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## Bolsheviks remembered



## Bukharin

We continue our series on those Bolshevik leaders murdered by the Stalinist bureaucracy, as part of our campaign for their rehabilitation.

**NIKOLAI IVANOVITCH BUKHARIN**, described by Lenin as the 'favourite of the party' joined the Bolsheviks in 1906. He was a member of the Central Committee and Political Bureau.

Arrested a number of times for revolutionary activity, Bukharin fled abroad in 1911. During the first world war he participated with Trotsky in editing the Russian revolutionary newspaper *Novy Mir* from New York.

Following the February revolution, Bukharin returned to Russia and was elected to the Central Committee at the Sixth Party Congress in July 1917. He worked closely with Lenin and Trotsky, participating in planning and carrying out the October Revolution. He became editor of *Pravda* and was a member of the Political Bureau from 1919.

Lacking practical skills, Bukharin was described by Lenin as the "best theoretician in the party", though he qualified this by saying "Bukharin's views can only with the very greatest doubt be regarded as fully Marxian, for there is something scholastic in him (as he has never learned and I think never fully understood the dialectic)".

During the Brest-Litovsk negotiations to end the Soviet state's involvement in the imperialist war, Bukharin as co-editor of the Left Communist factional paper *Kommunist*, advocated a revolutionary war against Germany. Under the conditions of war weariness and given the military weakness of the young workers' state such a policy amounted to an ultra left adventure.

From 1923 to 1927, the isolation of the soviet state as a result of the defeat of the revolution in the west led to a rising tide of conservatism. Following Zinoviev's break with Stalin, Bukharin became chairman of the Comintern in 1926. Bukharin, the leading theoretician of the ruling group around Stalin, provided the theoretical ammunition for the struggle against the Left Opposition. He supported the expulsion of the entire Left Opposition at the 15th Party Congress in 1927.

But after these expulsions Stalin then turned against the right wing bloc around Bukharin and Rykov in 1928, adopting a hasty and bloody caricature of the Left Opposition programme! Bukharin was removed from posts on the Political Bureau, as editor of *Pravda* and as chairman of the Comintern in 1929.

Despite capitulating to Stalin, he was expelled from the party in 1937 and eventually framed and murdered by Stalin in the last of the notorious Moscow trials in March 1938.

By John Jennings

# No to nuclear nightmar

The Layfield report did not consider the lessons of the world's worst nuclear disaster at Chernobyl. Twenty times the amount of radioactivity was released compared to the fall out from the atomic bomb over Hiroshima. The death toll could be as high as 100,000 over a twenty year period, according to *New Scientist* magazine, as cancers begin to appear.

The fall out spread right round the world, although governments tried to suppress information about the full effects of the disaster. If the wind had been blowing in the opposite direction at the time of the accident there would have been a catastrophe of staggering proportions, because everyone in the area of the large city of Kiev would have been exposed to the radiation. In this case there would eventually have been millions of casualties.

The accident was caused by a combination of poor design and human error. The cause of the explosion at the Three Mile Island PWR reactor in the USA was hardware failure compounded by human error. The immediate effects were not as serious as at Chernobyl, due to the containment structure around the reactor, but the core of the reactor came to within 700 degrees of its melting point of 5000 degrees.

A melt down could have led to molten radioactive metal boring a hole in the earth and contaminating the surrounding rivers and streams. There have been no nuclear power stations ordered in America since Three Mile Island.

The common link between Chernobyl, Three Mile Island and many other nuclear accidents was an unpredictable combination of technical failure and human error. The best safety systems cannot completely design out the effects of this potentially deadly combination, even if the particular causes of the accidents have been eliminated. Many engineers think that a water cooled or moderated reactor, such as the one at Chernobyl or the PWR, is inherently unsafe since water under pressure is in close proximity to the fuel rods. If a rupture in the pipes containing the water occurs for any reason, hydrogen can be produced and cause an explosion. This is what happened at Chernobyl and Three Mile Island.

The CEBG claim that the PWR has a better and safer design than the Chernobyl reactor. This is true in some respects but one potential design flaw, unique to the PWR, was discussed at the Sizewell inquiry. The main steel pressure vessel at the heart of the system could fail, fracturing the discharge, according to Rodney Fordham, a

leading nuclear engineer who resigned from the UK Atomic Energy Authority to publicise the risks in the proposed system and who gave evidence to the Inquiry.

The source of the danger is cracks in the pressure vessel. They may be only one thousandth of an inch long, but under certain conditions could increase in length at the rate of several hundreds of miles an hour, causing the vessel to fracture without warning. Cracks of this size can be very difficult to detect and the high temperatures and pressures in the PWR make it particularly vulnerable to this type of failure.

## Leukemia

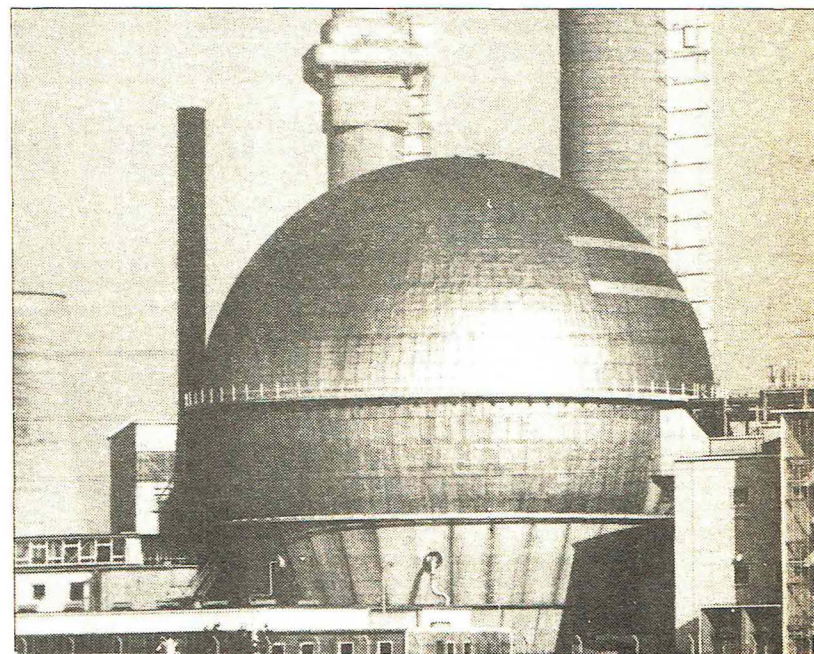
If the Tories do press ahead with their nuclear plans it will mean a big expansion in the nuclear fuel reprocessing plant at Sellafield in Cumbria. The safety record at Sellafield is notorious and evidence of the effects on health of discharges of radioactive waste have been ignored by the Government. In the town of Seascale, just over a mile from the plant, children under the age of ten have an incidence of leukemia ten times the national average.

Although the Government-sponsored Black report said there was nothing to worry about, evidence to the contrary is mounting. At a US Navy shipyard in Maine, the overall death rate of workers involved in nuclear related tasks was twice the national average, and the incidence of leukemia was 45 per cent above average. There workers were exposed to very low levels of radiation, well within safety limits, indicating that there is probably no safe dose of radiation in these circumstances.

Layfield came to the conclusion, to the delight of Peter Walker, the Energy Secretary, and the CEBG, that the small risks involved in the Sizewell project were outweighed by the economic benefits to the country. The very small theoretical risks must be compared to the actual safety record of the nuclear industry internationally.

There have been four major nuclear disasters in the world in the past 30 years, at Windscale in Cumbria in 1957, in the Urals area of the USSR at the same time, at Three Mile Island in the 70s, and Chernobyl last year. In addition there have been dozens of smaller accidents. The theoretical calculations would predict that no accidents should have taken place in the period. The lesson of the Chernobyl catastrophe is that the consequences of an accident are unacceptable even if the risk of its happening is small.

**THE PUBLIC inquiry, chaired by Sir Frank Layfield, p January recommending that the first of a new generation of pressurized water reactors (PWR) be built at Sizewell. The Government will announce its decision on the project in a Parliamentary debate being held this week. Pete Dicks, MP, examines the crucial issues facing the labour movement and the positions of the Tories and big business on the question of energy. The Socialist Party's (below and right) examines the economic and the socialist alternative policies for energy and jobs.**



Sellafield nuclear power station, Cumbria— notorious safety record.

## Unacceptable cost of nuclear

The CEBG argued at the enquiry that energy demand will increase and that existing sources cannot provide enough. This is also the main argument of the AEU leadership. Gavin Laird (*AEU Journal* October 1986) in fact accuses opponents of nuclear power of wanting a return to a pre-industrial society with the attendant decline in living standards for workers.

On the contrary, they want to expand industry and use technology to the full—but on the basis of social ownership and democratic control, satisfying human needs, not profit.

Laird's argument has one fundamental error: he implies that having economic growth at all depends on the availability of energy, and not on the viability of capitalism in a period of world economic crisis.

In a socialist society, it would be possible to eliminate all the waste of planned obsolescence, unnecessary packaging and promotional literature and 57 identical but competing brands of every household product, saving even

more energy. The expansion of cheap and frequent public transport services that go where you want to would reduce the need for private cars and reduce pollution as well as energy use.

The CEBG's estimates for future energy demand have been drastically revised downwards. At the Sizewell Inquiry they admitted to a 25 per cent over-estimate every year for the past 10 years.

## Excess capacity

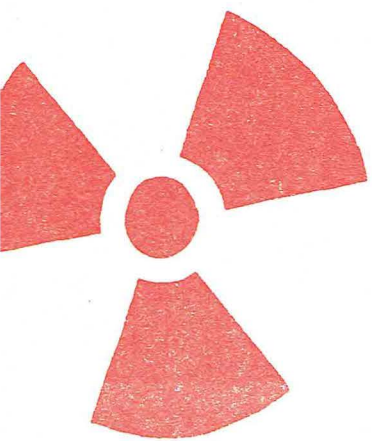
The result of building power stations to meet these overestimates was that the CEBG had generating capacity 28 per cent above the maximum demand at the time of the miners' strike—just what the government had intended.

The CEBG's case for Sizewell was also that it would lead to an overall saving in the cost of electricity of £63 per kilowatt per year compared with a coal fired power station.

The calculations are based on a large number of estimates and assumptions, guesswork and wishful thinking, heavily weighted



# Bar



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poses the real calcula-  
of nuclear power. Vi-  
guments and reviews

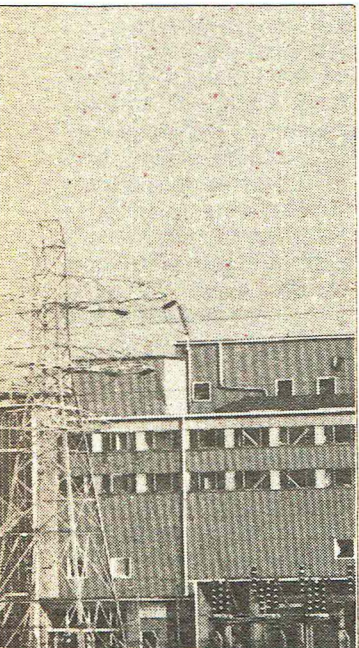


Photo: Alison Dixon

## Nuclear energy

in the interests of those who produce them. To forecast the cost of Sizewell relative to other types of power station, you need to know what the price of coal, oil and nuclear fuel will be after 1994, how much it will cost to decommission a power station when its useful life is over, how much it will cost to reprocess the spent fuel, how much electricity each power station can generate at maximum load, and how much electricity will be needed.

The CEBG estimated cost for building Sizewell B was £1147 million at the time of giving evidence. By publication of the report, the estimate is already £1600m.

Most American PWRs in practise had capacities at least 10 per cent less than forecast. The price of coal is also critical to the estimates—and a reduction in the forecast price for coal undermines the CEBG's case for Sizewell. Doing the calculations in the report with the latest coal price forecasts gives a loss of £1500 million over Sizewell B's life.



Protestors at Fulbeck, Lincolnshire, one of the sites which may be used for nuclear waste.

Photo: John Harris (IFL)

## Alternatives

Nuclear power generates only 11 per cent of Britain's electricity and electricity altogether supplies only 12 per cent of delivered energy. Yet 60 per cent of the total UK energy research and development budget goes on nuclear research. Only 2 per cent is spent on renewable sources and 1 per cent on conservation projects.

The Department of Energy recently announced a "a £3 million injection of funds" into studies of tidal barrages in the Mersey and Severn, which sounds like a lot of money until you compare it with the £10-15 million spent by the CEBG just on preparing and presenting its case for Sizewell.

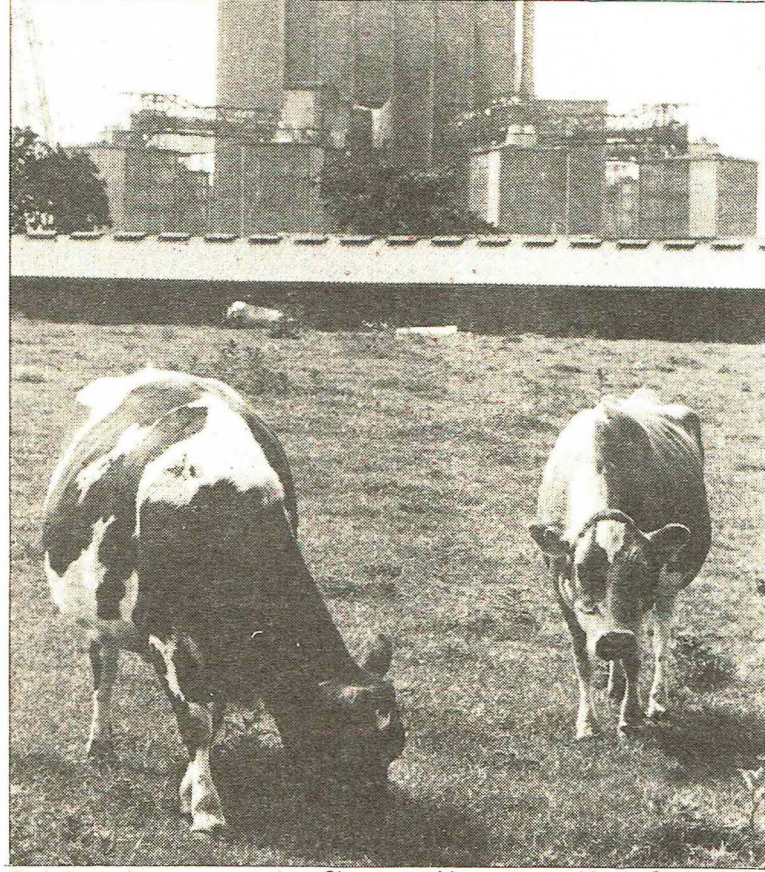
Two thirds of the fuel used to generate electricity is lost to the atmosphere or cooling water. In the Combined Heat and Power (CHP) schemes, this heat is channelled in pipes for heating houses, offices and factories. The technology is well tried and tested as even the CEBG admits. 30 per cent of domestic and commercial heat can be supplied in this way.

The capital cost for a CHP scheme for a city of a million people would be about £500 million, compared to the current estimated cost of £1,600 million for Sizewell (both CEBG figures). The establishment of CHP schemes together with improved insulation of buildings throughout Britain would be an obvious task of a national energy plan. It would create jobs, reduce reliance on electricity, save us all money and cut the number of old people dying of hypothermia each winter.

The technology for harnessing tidal power is well established. An electricity generating scheme based on a barrage across the Severn estuary could produce 4-5 times the output of Sizewell B. The capital cost per kilowatt generated would be lower than that of Sizewell, without the attendant risks. It would be the largest single source of electricity in the country.

In fluidised bed combustion, coal is burned in a hot, churning bed of sand. Heat transfer is better, low grade coals can be used, corrosion of boilers is reduced and the gases that form acid rain are eliminated. Power stations designed to exploit fluidised bed gasification and pressurised fluidised bed combustion would generate cheaper electricity without pollution; and work could start right away.

Labour Party policy is now to phase out nuclear power, although conference voted against putting any time scale on it. Any credible non-nuclear programme must be based not on moral arguments but on the material interests of working class people, which include the need for jobs and decent living standards, as well as not to be exposed to the risk of another Chernobyl. We therefore need to demonstrate that jobs can be provided for everybody by a socialist



Berkely nuclear power station, Gloucestershire. Photo: Martin Shakeshaft

labour government.

A socialist plan of production, for need rather than profit, would mean enormous resources going into schemes that would provide products, services and jobs. Workers who support nuclear power argue that they need the jobs it provides. But the generation of electricity, especially from nuclear power, is just about the most capital intensive sector of industry. If the £160 million capital cost of Sizewell were invested almost anywhere else it would generate more jobs. Capital investment per job created in the nuclear industry is about 20 times that in the coal mining (Institute of Mechanical Engineers' figures).

### Transferable skills

Rather more specifically, however, it is worth examining the ways in which the particular skills of workers in the nuclear industry would be able to provide the services and goods we need. Many of the workers, eg. electricians, clerical workers, and some of the power plant operators and technicians, have skills not specific to the nuclear industry and therefore transferable to other industries and services.

Among the more specific skills, one of the most obvious is the design, production and operation of remote handling and automated equipment for dealing with radioactive material. There are many non nuclear potential uses for this similar equipment, in dirty and dangerous jobs like mining fire fighting and underwater work on oil rigs, for example. The workers would not be made redundant by the machines but their skills used to operate the equipment at a distance from the danger.

The design, development and manufacture of artificial limbs and

their control systems is another example. Work on robotics is relevant to many sectors of manufacturing industry. Power fluidics technology, developed by UKAEA, which eliminates moving or electrical parts like valves or pumps, has enormous potential for use elsewhere in industry—for example in machine tool manufacture or ventilation control.

To implement some of these ideas, not to mention those yet to be invented, delegates representing a socialist labour government, the trade unions and the local communities would need to establish what the skills and resources were available, the technological possibilities, the social needs and the possibility of unwanted side effects to be avoided (eg pollution) and to draw up a plan of research, development and production.

Such a plan should be entirely possible if the next Labour Government were imaginative, innovative and above all if it actually controlled industry and investment for the benefit of all. But if it does not do this, creating jobs for the workers on the dole now, never mind anyone in the nuclear industry, will be so much wishful thinking.

## Socialist programme

The Tories look set to give the go ahead to building the Sizewell B nuclear reactor. An analysis of the issues clearly shows that the motive of the Tories is directly political—to attack the labour movement—and has nothing to do with the harmonious development of energy resources in society. This is proved by the leaked minute of Thatcher's Cabinet in 1979: "A nuclear programme would have the advantage of removing a substantial portion of electricity from disruption by industrial action of coal miners and transport workers."

The Labour leaders must mount a vigorous campaign to oppose the building of the Sizewell reactor and link this in to a socialist energy programme based around the following points:

- ★ An end to the nuclear power programme and the closure of nuclear power stations with a guarantee to any displaced workers of local, alternative work with present wages and conditions maintained.
- ★ A labour movement enquiry into health hazards and the safest method of decommissioning nuclear power plants including the disposal of nuclear waste.
- ★ Transfer of research and development effort in nuclear fission into technology for using coal.
- ★ More investment into investigations of new sources of energy.
- ★ Large scale implementations of programmes in coal gasification and the fluidised bed method of burning coal.
- ★ An integrated plan to use oil, coal, gas and electricity in the best interests of society as a whole as part of a socialist plan of production.
- ★ The expansion of the coal industry and an increase in automation to improve safety and increase recoverable reserves.
- ★ A 35 hour week or shorter in all energy industries if jobs might be lost through new technology.
- ★ Workers' control and management in energy industries.

## NUCLEAR TIME BOMB

### OR A SOCIALIST ENERGY PLAN?

*Militant pamphlet available from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB. Price 60p including postage and package.*



## Southern Ireland election

## A watershed for Labour

Strike  
wave in  
store

Workers were forced into mass opposition to the last Fianna Fail government, as shown in this 1978 demonstration in Waterford.

Photo: Derek Speirs (IFL) III

**THE GENERAL** election that has just taken place will prove to be a watershed in the politics of Southern Ireland. Unemployment has reached an all-time record, with 250,000 officially out of work. In addition it is estimated that 100,000 people, mainly young, have emigrated in the last five years, with 31,000 leaving the country in 1986 alone. Irish workers are already turning back to struggle, against all the capitalist parties, and will look to a fighting Labour Party. Dermott Connolly reports from Dublin.

The most important development in the election, almost completely glossed over by the commentators, is that the Irish Labour Party has broken from the policy of coalition with Fine Gael, which it has pursued since 1970.

The capitalist parties, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, and the new party, the Progressive Democrats, won 89 per cent of the vote and a massive majority of seats in the Dail (parliament). Despite this, the breaking of Labour from coalition signals the beginning of a process that will guarantee the end of the right's domination of parliamentary politics.

The ruling class can take little comfort from the election result. They have financed their parties to the tune of over £4 million in this election, compared with Labour's campaign budget of £150,000. Yet they have failed to get a stable government capable of carrying out the programme of massive cuts in public spending that they desire.

The Progressive Democrats, given huge financial backing and media coverage, succeeded in preventing Fianna Fail, under Charles Haughey's leadership, from gaining an overall majority. But it did so at the expense of Fine Gael, whose vote collapsed to the exact degree of support won by the PD's.

The PD was formed to achieve either of main two tasks: to remove Haughey from the leadership of Fianna Fail, or failing that to

provide a right-wing coalition partner for Fine Gael as an alternative government. Neither has been achieved.

Fianna Fail has emerged with 81 seats, three short of a majority. Fine Gael got 51 seats, and the PD's 14, leaving their combined strength well short of a majority.

This result will mean a very unstable and probably short-lived minority government under Haughey, possibly having to depend on the support of independents, who will demand concessions for their support.

### Big business

Haughey has also the choice of leaning on the support of Fine Gael in the Dail. Fitzgerald, the Fine Gael leader, has promised support on the basis that Fianna Fail maintain the Anglo-Irish agreement, and in essence carry out Fine Gael's programme of savage attacks on the living standards of the working class.

This scenario represents a nightmare for Haughey, whichever option he chooses. If he makes concessions on the cuts to win the support of independents, he will further antagonise Fianna Fail's big business backers. Inevitably they will force his removal from the party leadership.

On the other hand, he can choose to be the virtual prisoner of Fine Gael, until they decide that the time is ripe to bring him down.

It is most likely, given the pressure of big business, that Haughey will lean on Fine Gael's support. Even with

this support, the problems will be enormous.

The government-appointed Commission on Social Welfare has estimated that over 800,000 people (out of a population of 3.5 million) live on or below the poverty line.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions have stated that the living standards of their members have been reduced by 20 per cent since 1980. Economic growth has been stagnant, with 0.5 per cent growth annually on average for the past five years.

Despite the vicious cuts carried out by the Fine Gael-Labour coalition government since 1982, the debt crisis has worsened. The debt actually rose from £9 billion to £23 billion - 141 per cent of Gross National Product. Over £2 billion per year (over 14 per cent of GNP, and a quarter of current government spending) is needed just to service the debt.

Cuts in the region of £1,000 million are necessary just to stop the explosion of debt. Cuts of this magnitude would require a slashing of expenditure on education, health, social welfare and a wage freeze - or even wage cuts - in the public sector.

Fine Gael and the PD's have also adopted Thatcher's programme of privatisation of the profitable state and semi-state enterprises. These measures will meet with massive opposition from the trade unions and from the working class and youth generally.

The Fianna Fail govern-

ment, which had a record 20-seat majority after the 1977 election, was torn asunder by the mass opposition of the working class. There were a whole series of half-day general strikes, mobilisations of hundreds of thousands during this period.

Given this background of unprecedented crisis, it is not ruled out that the major capitalist parties may be forced to come together to attempt to carry out the programme of their paymasters. Already the question of a 'grand coalition' of these parties has been raised.

There is a powerful working class in Southern Ireland, with historically high levels of trade union membership and industrial militancy. The driving down of living standards has created huge anger among workers.

### Coalition's cuts

Yet Labour received only 6.4 per cent of the vote in this election. The reason is very simple. Labour ministers in the coalition were responsible for carrying out the cuts, breaking strikes, and generally doing the dirty work for Fine Gael.

For workers wanting to get rid of the most hated government in recent history, the only choice was to vote Fianna Fail.

If the Labour ministers had not resigned, it is likely that the party would have been wiped out altogether in the election. As it was, it was those individuals most identified with coalition who lost or nearly lost their seats in the main.

Labour leader Spring, who topped the poll in the last election, only managed to hold on by four votes this time! On the other hand, Michael D. Higgins and Emmet Stagg, two well-known anti-coalitionists, won seats

against all predictions.

The result has strengthened the move to the left in the party. There was a very good mood among the activists in the campaign, and a generally good response on the doorstep, with people generally recognising that the party was about to change.

According to an individual at head office, 300 people (mainly ex-members) joined the party in the two weeks after the Labour ministers' resignations. This was about 10 per cent of the membership.

A party conference is now due to take place in May. This will probably be the most left-wing conference in the party's history.

The Labour Party will become the political vehicle for a mass movement against capitalism in the South. No other party can play this role.

Sinn Fein, who were contesting their first election in the South after dropping their policy of abstentionism, did extremely badly. They received only 1.9 per cent of the vote. The new strategy of standing for seats in the Dail, in anticipation of taking them, fell completely flat.

The Workers' Party received 3.8 per cent, going from two TD's (MPs) to four, and did manage to edge ahead of Labour's vote in Dublin. But there is no comparison in the potential of the two parties to grow. Out of coalition, Labour can grow by leaps and bounds, and draw into its ranks all the best class fighters, even more than in the 1960s.

This election opens up a perspective of possibly rapid realignments and above all of Labour moving, over a period, to winning a majority of votes, and leading a huge social movement to challenge capitalism.



Charles Haughey

**AFTER** A couple of years of relative quiet industrially the giant of labour is slowly beginning to re-awake. A new mood of determination and militancy is evident in a whole series of recent and current strikes in the Dublin areas.

Despite a lull there have been a number of heroic and lengthy battles such as Veba, the ESB strike in Cork and Dunnes Stores. These strikes took place after the big industrial movements of '79/'81 had died down. The situation now however, is different.

Against the background of the break of Labour from Coalition and the election of a Fianna Fail government a new wave of industrial struggles is threatening. Such a government, bent on cuts and forced to take on the unions will act as a red rag to an angry and powerful working class.

### Battle hardened

In Aer Lingus 800 workers were out for two months over Christmas to defeat management attacks on work conditions. The strike of nearly 1,000 workers in Packard Electric involves, importantly, a new layer of young industrial militants. These determined youth must fight now for their future.

They will be joined by more battle hardened troops. Workers in Leinster Paper Mills and B+I feel they have given enough concessions and are going to fight for their jobs.

This mood is paralleled by 300 workers in the Collector General's office. Having suffered bad conditions for ten years they have now decided to strike on the issue of low pay and previously non-militant sections of the working class such as the Shelbourne and Pat Grace workers will be provoked to action.

With the threat of imminent downturn in the world economy in the background, the election has seen the capitalist parties competing for the fiercest of cuts. In that atmosphere 1987 will be the year that the giant of Labour will wake with a vengeance.



# Spanish youth show the way

"WE HAVE won the first battle against the Ministry of Education by a knockout".

With these words Juan Ignacio Ramos, leader of the Spanish School Students' Union (SEM), announced to the press and TV the historic victory won by the youth of Spain after months of bitter struggle.

The first two offers made by the Ministry were rejected by the union as insufficient to meet the students' demands, summed up in the celebrated phrase chanted on all the recent demonstrations: "El hijo del obrero a la Universidad" ("The workers' children to the University").

## Surrender

Now, after two one-day general strikes and two week-long general strikes, with hundreds of demonstrations, the government has signed an unconditional surrender.

The terms of the agreement have caused great surprise in working-class circles, used to seeing union leaders sign wage agreements for piddling amounts.

● For the first time in history, education in Spain will be free in state schools for anyone up to 16 years old. This includes also tech students.

● University entrance

By Alan Woods

fees will be abolished for youth from families with less than 1,700,000 pesetas (about £8,500 a year. This would include all children from working-class families.

● For everyone else, the increase in university fees will be limited to 5 per cent this year, in line with the official rate of inflation.

● Twenty five per cent increase in grants this year, and 40 per cent in 1988.

● Modification in selection procedure to make it easier for students to go to university.

● A far-reaching plan to improve apprenticeship schemes and technical education.

● Thirty per cent increase in the budget for running costs of state schools.

● Improved democracy in schools; increased participation of school students in the governing bodies.

● Elaboration of a Charter of Rights for students, to include the right to organise, strike, etc.

To supervise the carrying out of the agreement, the Ministry has agreed to set up three parity commissions with student and government representatives.

Education minister Jose

Maria Moraball claims unconvincingly that "there are neither victors nor vanquished." To no avail! Everyone knows that these "concessions" have been torn from a right-wing Socialist government by the movement of three million, mainly working-class youth, headed by the SEM under a Marxist leadership, with the backing of the workers and their organisations.

Juan Ignacio Ramos warned the government that they had better deliver their promises, and was careful to point out that this was "only the first round in a long battle to change the educational system".

## Assemblies

"After this, nothing will ever be the same again", he said, "because after the struggle of the last two and a half months, we have proved that through struggle you get things done".

The union insisted that the agreement should be conditional, subject to ratification by democratic assemblies of the school students themselves. In the last week assemblies have been held in schools all over Spain, with the overwhelming majority voting in favour of the deal.

The school students' struggle has been a watershed in modern Spanish history. For the first time in



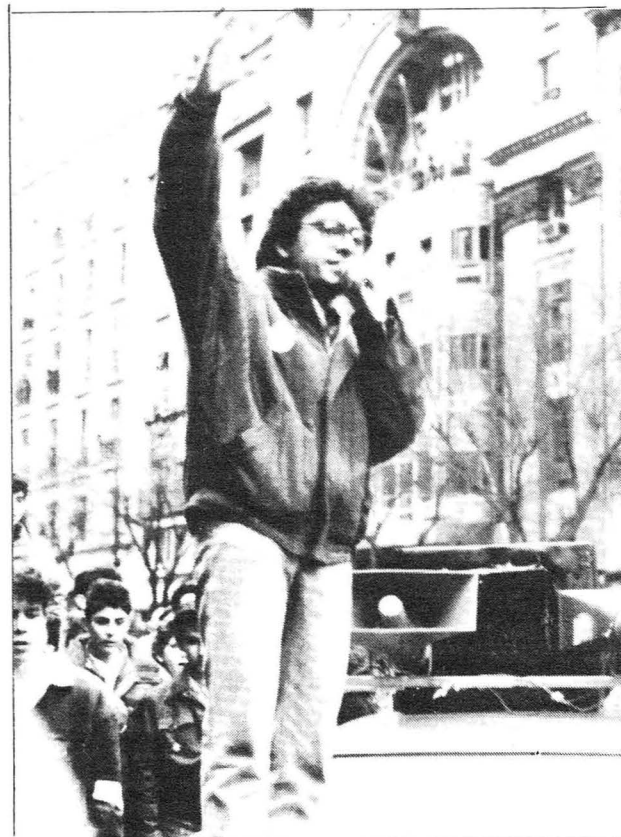
any country for many decades, a genuine Marxist leadership has led a movement which, at its high point, encompassed three million young people.

This movement, now crowned with success, has been an inspiration to millions of workers, who in recent years have grown all too accustomed to defeated strikes.

It is no accident that the leaders of the Workers' Commissions (CCOO) are talking about organising an all-Spain general strike next month, and have asked for the support of the school students' union.

Nicolas Redondo, leader of the Socialist UGT (trade union federation), has broken off relations with the employers and publicly attacked the economic policies of the Socialist government.

As always, the youth have shown the way. By their courage, elan and militancy they have breached the dam. The rising workers' movement will now force its way through, opening a new and stormy chapter in Spanish history.



(Top) Madrid, 13 February: 200,000 youth march behind the banners of the school students' union and *Nuevo Claridad*. (Above) Juan Ignacio Ramos, leader of the school students' union.

# Brazil suspends banks' debt payments

A YEAR ago Brazil's hyperinflation dropped to near zero as the government clamped down its so-called "Cruzado plan", freezing wages and prices. As *Militant* explained (18 July 1986), this could not last.

Now inflation is once again surging towards a yearly rate of 600 per cent, and *The Economist* is lamenting: "Brazil's economy is going downhill so fast it may jump the rails" (21 February).

Following this, the government of President Sarney has been forced to announce a temporary suspension of interest payments on its crippling \$108 billion foreign debt, causing tremors in financial capitals around the world.

The Cruzado plan has failed because it attacked the symptoms, not the causes of the problem. Brazil's hyperinflation has been caused by the government spending money which it did not have, mainly on economic infrastructure. The Cruzado plan did not end this.

But big business did not like restrictions on prices. Through sabotage, shortages and refusal to invest they forced the government to retreat.

As inflation started lifting off, the government reacted by allowing interest rates to rise. By mid-February interest rates had skyrocketed from 22 per cent to nearly 800 per cent, reflecting the capitalists' panic at the prospects they are facing, and further strangling new investment.

Under capitalism, major surgery—the decimation of public spending, and a slump in the economy—would be needed to tackle the roots of hyperinflation. But the strength and militancy of the Brazilian working class holds back the government from going down this road.

## Dictatorship

Economic 'sanity', on a capitalist basis, could only be restored through a new military dictatorship and large-scale butchery of the workers' opposition, as in Chile in 1973.

Brazil's economic boom of the past three years is now over. With the storm clouds of recession and trade wars gathering internationally, Brazil cannot recover lost ground through a surge in exports.

Its trade surplus is dwindling fast (\$127 million for January, compared with \$1,200 million in January 1986) and its foreign reserves

are down from \$9 billion a year ago to \$3 billion.

On the political front, anger is building up among the masses at the government's betrayal of its promises. All their sacrifices, to 'control inflation', have been for nothing.

In particular, the demand to stop the haemorrhage of debt repayments to the international bankers (currently \$5 billion per year) has gathered momentum among workers.

Against this background, Sarney has taken the dangerous step of suspending debt repayments for 90 days.

No doubt Sarney intends it only as a bargaining move in the hope of getting easier terms from the international moneylenders. If seriously implemented by a government under revolutionary pressures from below, however, it could set a precedent for other debt-ridden Latin American states, threatening widespread bankruptcies in the financial sector internationally.

Sarney will try to exploit the atmosphere of crisis by squeezing more sacrifices from the workers. The object of the exercise, as always, is to make the working class pay for the crisis of capitalism.

But the working class has



The metal workers of Sao Paulo have been in the forefront of the workers' struggle.

been pushed to the limits. While the capitalists have \$20,000 million stashed away in Swiss banks alone, a thousand babies under 12 months are dying every day.

Sarney is playing with fire. Six million workers took strike action during last year's 'lull' in the class struggle. Only the absence of a clear working-class leadership held back the movement.

Enormous explosions could be set off in the coming months, opening many possibilities of overthrowing Sarney and bringing to power a workers' government. This would set the whole continent on fire. More than ever the question of working-class leadership will be crucial.

By George Collins

YOUTH STRUGGLE has spread even to Las Palmas, Spain's "holiday paradise" in the Canary Islands. HILARIO SANCHEZ (UGT/PSOE Las Palmas) reports.

UNEMPLOYMENT IS at the staggering rate of 27 per cent in the Canaries—officially. Half the unemployed are under 25.

Services for the islanders are grossly inadequate. For instance, the waiting list at one major hospital in Las Palmas (Nuestra Senora del Pino) grew from 1,006 in December 1985 to 1,098 in March 1986.

In education there is a similar story, with approximately 1,400 secondary school teachers unemployed. The Association of Progressive Students of Gran Canaria has complained of "a lack of laboratories, libraries, classrooms in a bad state, lack of sports facilities, materials, etc."

Two demonstrations were organised by the Association in December, attracting over 1,000 participants. In San Fernando, in the south of the island, parents, teachers and students staged a demonstration in November, demanding school transport and a school canteen.

This demonstration, 400 strong, was subject to police abuse. "They treated us like terrorists", said one mother. "They charged us, pushing and shoving. Some tourists were watching like in the days of the dictadura."



# Once upon a time...

Dear Comrades,

The other day my boss, a 'self-made' millionaire was moaning about the future: "Britain's going down the pan, Chris" he told me, "If Labour get in at the next general election then there'll be 300 hard left MPs who'll ruin us all".

I looked blank, "Oh really?"  
But he wasn't listening. As his eyes glazed over he started to recite the main enemies

of the 'British way of life' in order of their threat to his property:

"Militant, Liverpool, Hatton, Scargill, Ken Livingstone..."

By this time I wasn't listening either. My eyes had glazed over. I was thinking about those '300 hard left MPs!'

Yours fraternally  
A YS member in the Soft South

# New Tory plans mean more homeless

Dear Comrades,

Two families each day have their homes repossessed in Cleveland because they cannot afford to pay their mortgage.

New rules the Tory government have brought in state that people who lose their jobs will only get half their mortgage interest paid for the first four months they are claiming.

The Tories have persuaded many people to buy their own homes and now these

same people will be threatened with homelessness when they lose their job.

It's ironic that at the launch of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, one of the first pieces of legislation implemented by the Tories will make hundreds homeless in Cleveland, and thousands throughout the country.

Yours fraternally  
Eric Morgan  
Middlesbrough LPYS

# Mini crisis?

Dear Comrades,

I watched the Money Programme this evening to see a report on the linking of share prices with many diverse elements, none relating to production.

Amongst the many influences which could put millions of pounds on a firm's value was how many goals were scored by a rival football team, and the length of skirts worn throughout this century have worn!

They put forward the startling fact that during the 1920s with each successive year hemlines increased so did stock market prices! Until in 1929 the peak was reached and the crash came!

I thought that the 1929 crash was caused through lack of investment and overcapacity. You live and learn.

Yours fraternally  
Russell Taylor  
Edinburgh

# Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.



# New technology same bosses

Dear Comrades,

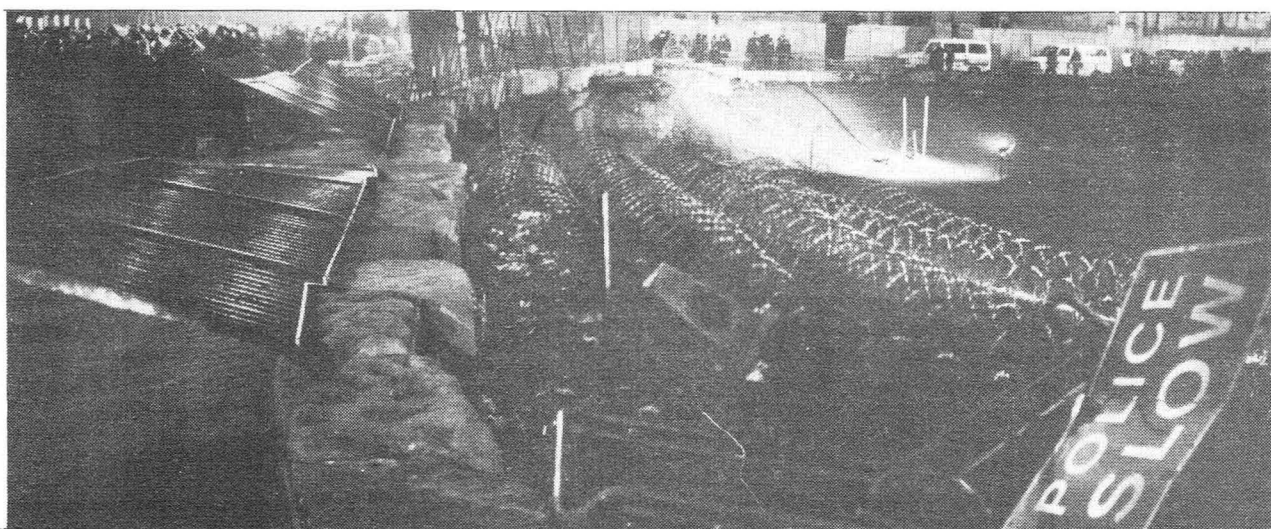
The recent edition of BBC's *Out of Court* focussed on the multinational Electronic Data Systems employment practices; "Does this sun-rise firm mean the sunset of rights and conditions"?

All employees were forced to sign an agreement that they would pay £4,000 to EDS in compensation if they left. "More like golden handcuffs than golden handshake". It was a sackable offence to discuss wages or distribute trade union literature.

One ex-employee spoke of working 100 hour weeks. Getting home at 1 am and going to the office at 4 am.

There were suicides and nervous breakdowns, and for all this they could have "earned more stacking shelves".

Yours fraternally  
Paul Sharry  
Coventry



Battle lines drawn at Fortress Wapping in March 1986.

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

# Press hush-up on Wapping death

Dear Comrades,

I would like to say thank you to *Militant* for covering the death of Michael Delaney on 10 January, when he was crushed by a lorry from Fortress Wapping.

Not surprisingly, Mickey's death received little press coverage, and it was not reported that the driver was allowed to drive for 25 miles before eventually being stopped by its police escort.

As a friend of Mickey's I would also like to thank trade union members and branches who sent floral tributes to his funeral.

It is tragic that his family and friends have been left with such a bitter reminder of the Wapping dispute.

I still wonder if the press and media reaction would have been different had the person killed been a scab or policeman, not just an unemployed teenager.

Yours fraternally  
Sarah-Jane Fox  
Bethnal Green and Stepney  
Young Socialists.

# Un-progressive Liberals

Dear Comrades,

On 11 February I attended a local borough council meeting to lobby support for a nuclear free zone.

The bill was introduced by a Labour councillor. The Liberals and their Tory cronies voted not only to oppose the bill, but to crush any debate on the subject. This is to be expected from the Tories, but shows the Alliance has no place for democratic radicalism.

Yours fraternally  
Martin Gardner  
Middlewich and district  
Labour Party  
Young Socialists.

# Political bias

Dear Comrades,

I was on the picket line at Wheelers restaurant in Market St, Brighton in support of four Chinese chefs that have been on strike for the past three months when a Sogat print worker was arrested for simply making inquiries about the dispute and asking for a leaflet that the strikers were handing out.

I was called as a defence witness to his hearing. The magistrate quoted the forthcoming public order act and stated that he was considering a custodial sentence. The print worker, with no previous convictions was fined £400 and bound over at £150 for two years.

The print worker's letter to me after the case says "I feel that a great amount of political bias was used against me and any hope of an acquittal was about as likely as Thatcher leading the singing at the next Labour Party Conference".

Yours fraternally  
Cllr Gordon Wingate  
Brighton Labour Party  
(personal capacity)

# Child benefit

Dear Comrades,

In *What We Stand For* I read "A minimum wage of £120 a week for all, including pensioners, sick and disabled people". Amongst these special groups you do not mention a large group of people who are doing a socially necessary job, at present hardly paid at all. I refer to women with children.

The Child Benefit scheme was introduced by a Labour government which stated that it was a mother's wage for bringing up a child, not payment for housework. It has been whittled away till it now begins at £7.50!

The Labour Party has promised to raise this to nearly twice the amount, but even this would hardly reach the national minimum it suggests, £80!

Yours fraternally  
Kathleen Jones  
Shropshire

# Buying and selling Militant

Dear Comrades,

It was very heartening to find *Militant* being sold in Romford on Saturday 14 February. I am away quite a lot as I'm a student in Bournemouth, but it was the first time I've seen it on sale in the area.

It was the first time I have bought it, though I will continue to do so in the future. I would like to express my thanks to the young comrades

selling the paper, please continue the good work.

Yours fraternally  
Andrew Woods  
Romford (NUS)

Dear Comrades,

I have just joined the Labour Party Young Socialists and started to read the *Militant*. It has opened a whole new world to me, the truth about Thatcher and her government which has no regard for its people.

Like the right to work, the right to have a job and know it's safe from big business parasites. The right to have a decent wage and a high standard of living.

We must give back these rights to the working class, and the ideas of *Militant* can do it.

Yours fraternally  
W Brown  
West Derby North LPYS

Dear Comrades,

While selling the paper in our local precinct, a policewoman approached us to say that we were breaking a by-law by selling the paper in the main street.

We pointed out that we were a registered newspaper and had actually been to the police station to verify that we were allowed to sell *Militant* in the street.

She then called over a uniformed inspector who was with her. He came down in favour of our being able to sell the paper in the precinct. At this the WPC became very agitated, accusing the inspector of undermining her.

The sight of the police arguing amongst themselves makes paper selling more interesting.

A year ago our sales were low while we were ignored by the police. A steady increase in sales has led to a more unfavourable reaction from the police.

Yours fraternally  
Dave Pollock  
Scarborough

# Guardian reporting bias

Dear Comrades,

Following a report in the *Guardian* of the Young Conservatives conference in Scarborough I sent a letter in to complain at almost a full page being allocated to their reactionary bilge while hardly any coverage is given to the national Labour Party Young Socialists' conference.

Up till now they haven't printed my letter. Obviously the policies debated and agreed at YS conference like guaranteed jobs, minimum wage, free education and grants are not sufficiently interesting or newsworthy for the *Guardian* to report!

Yours fraternally  
Andy Walker  
Redcar LPYS

# Letting in vultures

Dear Comrades,

Whilst visiting a relative in hospital I picked up a copy of COHSE newspaper *Health Services*. It highlights the plight of Trent Regional Health Authority as being the lowest funded in the country.

In an internal management document of the Lincolnshire Health Authority, commercial ventures were being considered which would help overcome its estimated £800,000 deficit at the end of the year.

One of these ideas was to let funeral directors advertise their wares in hospital corridors in return for a fee!

Yours fraternally  
Gavin Marsh  
Southampton LPYS

# Engineering support

Dear Comrades,

This letter was tucked away in the back pages of our local paper, *The Evening Argus*:

"I would like to thank the two pickets that were on duty at the North Street exchange. My phone was faulty, and as I am 81 I rely on the phone. I phoned Emergency Customer Service etc, but nothing could be done."

"I was passing the exchange and spoke to the two pickets, explaining the situation. Within 20 minutes my phone was repaired. Thanks again you two. RJ Johnson, Lewes."

It's obviously not just workers in Telecom who would benefit from a democratic control of BT.

Yours fraternally, Mick Gowler, Brighton

# Poor choices

Dear Comrades,

I'm a housewife with four kids and my husband has been unemployed for six years.

My daughter is nearly sixteen and she is faced with decisions that will not only affect her life but also ours.

She can leave school and go on a YTS which will mean a cut in the unliveable dole money, I will lose my family allowance for her.

Her other choice is to stay on at school for another year in which case none of our benefits will be touched. But she will be dependent on us for clothes and everything else a teenager likes.

What does the Labour Party do? Close down the voice of the youth by shutting the Young Socialists which Grimsby and Cleethorpes Labour Party have done.

Yours fraternally  
Pat McEwan  
Cleethorpes

# Tories' latest banana-skin

Dear Comrades,

It now appears that the Tory government's decision to buy the American AWACS early warning system may be over-ruled by American laws governing the export of high technology products.

Thatcher's enthusiasm to

place Britain further in the pockets of the Pentagon could leave Britain without an aircraft early warning system and has already cost 1,900 GEC workers who worked on the rival Nimrod system their jobs.

At the general election draws nearer it will be interesting to see how the Tories explain this job creation programme to the voters.

Yours fraternally  
Clive Walder  
Brighton Kemptown  
Labour Party





Lobby of Confed executive committee meeting on 5 February. Manchester convenor Tommy Spinks is speaking.

Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (Report).

# Engineers angry over Confed talks

**OPPOSITION** continues to grow in the ranks of engineering unions to proposals being discussed by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions' (Confed) leadership and the Engineering Employers' Federation.

Under the leadership of the right wing AEU President Bill Jordan, the Confed have been discussing the phased introduction of a 37 and a half hour week over a period of years. This in return for the abandonment of rights and conditions won in over a century of struggle.

These proposals are riddled with words and phrases like 'efficiency', 'best use of production time' and above all 'flexibility'. In reality they are all about getting more work from engineers under far worse conditions.

The attack on trade union rights is summed up by the section of the CSEU/EEF joint report entitled 'Demarcation', which states: "The main purpose of this proposal was to remove demarcation lines where these existed purely because of union membership."

The report goes on: "Tasks would be required to be undertaken commensurate

By Frankie McDonagh  
(Tass, Metal Mechanics,  
London District)

with individual capabilities and training."

Yet the next section, entitled 'Training', says: "These proposals related to additional training to build on existing skills." In other words jobs are to be poached by some while others go down the road.

## Demarcation

This is clearly an attempt to foist maintenance work on to production workers, assembly work on to craft-workers etc.

Equally serious is the section, 'Variations in Weekly Working Hours' which is supposedly designed to enable more flexible working hours in industry where demand is seasonal or fluctuates. The proposals would

actually mean an increase in working hours some weeks, without pay at overtime rates, if they were part of scheduled working.

The lobby of the Confed executive committee meeting on 5 February showed the growing anger of engineering workers. It was the largest yet with over 600 engineering workers attending from all over the country.

The mood was bitter against the CSEU and AEU leadership, as some of the statements and comments indicate: "We are expected to give away everything for a cut of one and a half hours in four years time... We've got 200 blokes here today. Last week we had a gate meeting of 1,400 and voted unanimously to reject the proposals."

"They could open the door to continental shifts with Saturday and Sunday working"—representatives from British Aerospace, Hatfield.

"This is the fourth lobby and the largest yet. In Sheffield, the District Committee

called a mass shop stewards meeting and invited AEU executive member Bill Morgan to come and report talks. He didn't come but the meeting voted overwhelmingly against the proposals.

## Opposition

"Factories all over Sheffield have sent petitions to our EC and to Alex Ferry (confed gen. sec.). Meetings of the local Confed are getting bigger and the AEU District Committee have issued a newsletter advising shop stewards of the situation so far."—Sheffield District AEU district committee member.

Perhaps the bitterness was best summed up by representatives from Basingstoke: "Should Jordan continue with his actions he is driving the AEU towards a breakaway union. He's been warned about this on several occasions. He will be a president without a union if he carries on like this. They must keep it in a bottle and just take it out for conferences, because he's not

listening to us."

"They must get a sackfull of mail every day. One area handed in a petition, some three or four inches thick, you should have seen their faces when they got that. There's two blokes here representing 2,000, another ten representing 700. All told this lobby must represent some 100,000 engineering workers."

Despite the opposition of engineering workers, the Confed executive voted narrowly to continue to hold further talks with the Engineering Employers Federation. Nevertheless we must be encouraged by developments so far. The unions, especially the AEU have been brought back to life at local level. Even the AEU leaders have been taken aback by the storm of opposition.

It is quite likely that the

Confed leadership would have voted at their November meeting to sign a deal with the employers. In the event the November meeting never occurred and quite clearly the AEU leaders are hoping to buy time, in a futile attempt to sell a deal to the membership.

They are on the run, we must keep up the fight. At the same time preparations must be made in all areas so that if the leadership ignore the members' wishes then factories and even whole regions are not left isolated, but national industrial action is organised.

- ★ 35 hour week with no strings.
- ★ National backing for industrial action in defence of jobs.
- ★ £170 per week MTR for skilled, pro-rata for semi and unskilled.

## AEU March elections

THE MARCH round of elections in the AEU comes at a crucial time for the union. As well as attempting to negotiate away hard-won gains in Confed/EEF talks the right wing executive have presided over a financial crisis resulting in a proposed restructuring of the union and a further erosion of democracy.

The most important election in this round is for executive council member, division six, which covers Wales and the South West of England. Mid-Glamorgan district secretary Jim Bevan has the support of an active divisional Broad Left whose campaign has every

possibility of ousting the right wing member, John Wheatley.

In his election leaflet Jim Bevan highlights the disastrous record of Wheatley and the rest of the right wing executive:

### Right wing's record

- ★ £3m overspending in 1984-6;
- ★ contribution increases of 77 per cent since 1980;
- ★ abolition of benefits without consultation;
- ★ Japanese-style agreements for engineering—flexible hours and

destruction of demarcation lines, even across union boundaries;

- ★ 61 full-time officials to be sacked;
- ★ districts to be abolished or amalgamated, branches to be closed;
- ★ national committee and rules revision conferences to be reduced by a third;

- ★ acceptance of Tory anti-union employment laws, bypassing the national committee;
- ★ abandonment of any national lead in defence of jobs.

Other Broad Left candidates to support: assistant gen. sec., Terrance Butler; national organiser, Martin Foley; national organiser, Harry Hewitt-Dutton; regional organiser no. 1, Harry McLevy; reg. org. no. 3, Brian Kelly; ass. div. org., Chris Bett; div. org. no. 23, John Hodgkins.

## 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.

○ 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".

□ "Stop Racist Immigration Laws—Fight Tamil deportations". Newham NE LPYS public meeting. Wednesday 4 March 7.30pm, Kensington School, Kensington Ave. E12. East Ham tube and 147 bus. Speakers: Dave Nellist MP, K Sivapalan (Chair of Citizens Committee for National Harmony of Trincomalee) and rep from NSSP.

○ Militant enamel Red Flag badges. £1 each with SAE. Send to Mick Griffiths, 20 Trilby St, Wakefield, W Yorks. Tel. Wakefield, 375 022.

○ Cassette tapes with two issues of *Militant* (one each side). Available fortnightly. Tapes £3.50 per quarter, £13 per year. To be returned or send blank C-90 tapes. Contact Dave: 14 Harrowby Rd, West Park, Leeds 16. Tel: 0532 624917.



# Industrial Reports Defend democracy in seafarers union

**ALLEGATIONS OF ballot rigging are rocking the National Union of Seamen. Thousands of members are demanding an independent inquiry into allegations of widespread malpractice in the elections for the National Executive Committee.**

At an NUS Broad Left meeting held on 10 January, rank and file members presented reports of ballot irregularities. A committee of three was elected to wage an investigation on behalf of the three complainants.

A meeting was organised with General Secretary, Sam McCluskie, who offered an 'in house' inquiry, of two members from the Broad Left committee, two from the NEC, plus president Jim Slater. This offer was refused due to the majority held by the officials on the proposed committee.

Sam McCluskie then approached TUC General Secretary Norman Willis who appointed two people to form an inquiry team.

A meeting was held with the TUC and NUS officials. One of the Broad Left

By Richard Knights

members said "they treated us like a bunch of school children."

At the meeting McCluskie was forced to retract a statement accusing the Broad Left of a "smear campaign" and admitted that the members had "acted in good faith".

## Let members decide

However, he wanted the NEC to judge any inquiry findings. As the complaints centred on the NEC elections, the NEC would be in effect judging themselves.

NUS members are demanding that any inquiry findings are put to a special conference to let the

members decide.

The meeting with the TUC broke up without agreement. The Broad Left are perfectly willing to meet the TUC, but want the rank and file represented on any inquiry.

Many older NUS members have memories of a ballot-rigging scandal in 1964 when an NUS official Thomas Bishop blew the whistle on fiddling in elections.

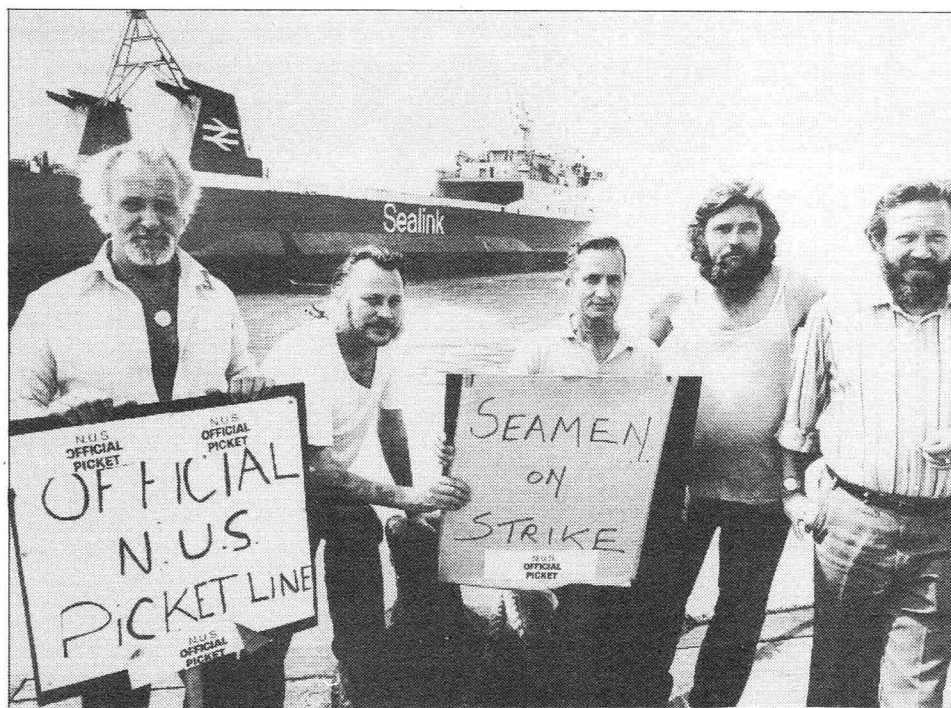
He admitted that he had boarded ships in Tilbury and collected unused ballot papers and had regularly cast 3,000 votes for the right wing candidates. A TUC inquiry refused to uphold any malpractice.

McCluskie has now opened up an attack on those members fighting for democracy. A circular has gone out to all branches and a telex to every ship—costing a lot of money.

In his circular McCluskie threatens that if the evidence is not proven "appropriate action" will be taken. In Holyhead a right wing NEC member has called for expulsions.

The Broad Left have contacted 5,000 NUS members and have the support of Liverpool, Hull, Harwich, Dover, South Shields and Aberdeen branches. Many ships are holding collections to fund the campaign.

Some of the reports which have already emerged are disturbing. The ballot papers are sent out to members' home addresses. Yet 80 envelopes were posted in Epsom, Surrey, on the same



day at the same time.

As the post office franking machine changes every 15 minutes, that means that all 80 members arrived at the same time in the stockbroker belt of Surrey to cast their votes. Members are asking—who are the "Epsom salts"? A similar occurrence with 40 ballot papers in Sydenham, London has also been reported.

## Scrutiny

The envelope containing the ballot papers also contains a pre-paid reply envelope folded into three to fit the envelope posted out by the union. But many envelopes containing filled in ballot papers had no folds in them.

25,000 ballot papers were printed but only 20,130 issued—why the overprint?

Members are further concerned that the election scrutineers are 3 NEC members. The Broad Left

are demanding rank-and-file scrutineers elected by the members.

The shipping industry is facing its worst ever crisis. Pay and conditions are being eroded. Many companies are "flagging out" to foreign countries, hiring labour well below NUS rates.

Concessionaire labour has been introduced by Cunard whereby stewards become self-employed and live off their tips.

The seamen's hospital the Dreadnought was closed with no real protest from the NEC.

The General Council of British Shipping or "the pool", as it is known, is threatened with closure. This acts as a labour exchange, so with its closure, companies could by-pass NUS members and recruit non-union scabs.

In the last ten years the number of ratings employed aboard British ships has declined from 34,812 to 17,382.

The right wing leadership of the NUS have put up no fight against the employers offensive. Whilst the main battle is with the employers, part and parcel of that battle is to build a fighting leadership in the NUS.

## Fightback

Some ultra-left sects have called the ballot-rigging allegations a 'diversion' and even instructed one of their members to burn evidence.

But NUS activists believe any fightback will be hamstrung by the present leadership and the ballot-rigging allegations cannot be divorced from the fight against the bosses.

If the TUC cannot produce a balanced inquiry team, with representatives from the rank-and-file of the NUS, then an independent inquiry must be conducted.

The National Union of Seamen must be put back in the hands of the members.



Sam McCluskie.

## Crosville

TWO HUNDRED and thirty Crosville bus drivers queued up last Friday outside the locked gates of the Love Lane depot in Liverpool. In exchange for their uniforms they received their PSV licence and P45.

As they emerged one-by-one from the depot, bitter feelings swelled up in men who had given 20-30 years service to Crosville.

Bus users are also outraged that due to the actions of Crosville management, towns like Whiston have had no buses for eight weeks.

The drivers are also critical of the national TGWU officials. One driver said: "The local official has been great, but where were the national officials. They should have been with us on the picket line."

Merseybus may put in bids for some of the abandoned Crosville routes which could lead to some Crosville drivers finding employment with Merseybus.

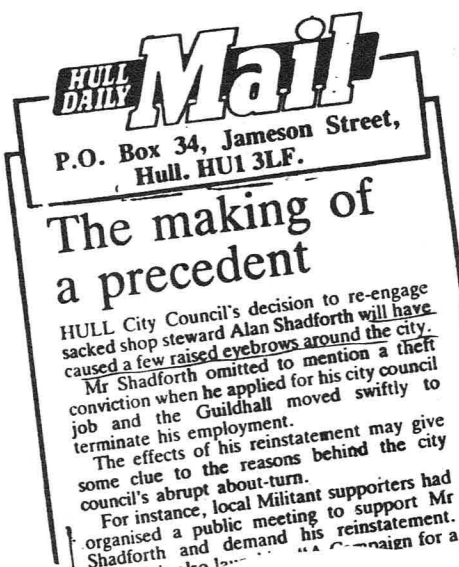
The closure of the Liverpool depot is the first casualty in the deregulation exercise. The "fresh air of competition" has blown some 230 men on to the dole.

The threat of cowboy operators also looms for Merseybus. A new company called Fareway has started an F1 route from Kirkby to Liverpool.

The *Liverpool Echo* praised the four men in this "workers' co-operative" for providing a public service.

In fact the four are bus drivers who sold their jobs and are now trying to poach the work from their former colleagues.

## Hull Marxist wins support despite vicious campaign



Editorial attacks on Alan Shadforth by local paper.

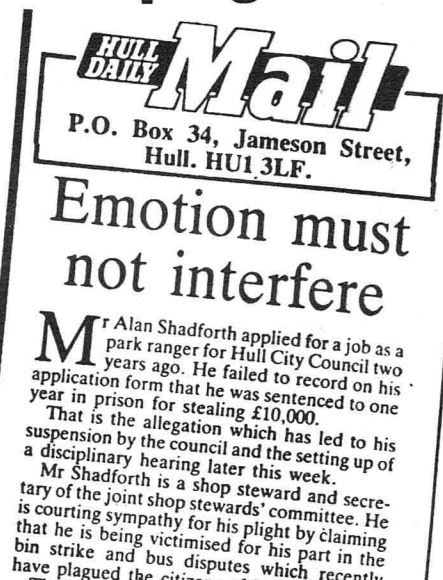
FOLLOWING HIS successful fight against victimisation by Labour's right wing leadership of Hull city council, *Militant* supporter Alan Shadforth has been re-elected as a shop steward.

This follows a hostile campaign against Alan by the local press, management and scabs, and even some GMBATU officers.

The Tory *Hull Daily Mail* at one time carried almost daily articles attacking Alan and the Marxist policies he put forward as secretary of the City council's joint shop stewards committee.

Management even went as far as to produce their own leaflet urging members to vote against "this extremist".

Union notices were mysteriously defaced, supervisors were briefed to encourage strike breakers to attend the branch and



vote against.

The scabs were given access to works telephones in order to organise, and after meeting in the pub at 6pm, turned up at the branch meeting half drunk.

All this was to no avail. A well attended meeting duly elected Alan by a 3 to 2 majority. His outstanding record as a class fighter swept away the luke-warm attitude of the top table.

Parks division employees (Alan works as a park ranger) are equipped with two-way radios. At the weekend, calls were interrupted with anonymous bursts of the *Internationale* much to the annoyance of management!

By a Militant reporter

## New Realism and Nupe

THIS LETTER was sent by Kent Nupe branch officer Jack Osborne, to the *Guardian* in response to an article by Tom Sawyer purporting to attack *New Realism*. It was not printed but *Militant* gives readers the chance to hear a rank and file response to Tom Sawyer.

Dear Editor,

I read with interest Tom Sawyer's exposé of the "serious weaknesses" of new realism (*Frontiers* 29 January).

He criticises the "passive link" of the postal ballot in the election of union executives. Yet the Nupe executive—with his full support—has just decided to change its rules to elect its executive... by postal ballot!

He rebukes the new realist unions because "activist involvement is not encouraged and there is no place for representative democracy." The change in Nupe's rules has been made without reference to a rules revision conference, excluding "activist involvement" and in direct contravention of the rule book.

He claims that his alternative is to "extend union democracy and membership involvement." On 28 January Nupe branch officials from North Kent had to occupy their own Divisional headquarters to protest at the complete disregard by the union's bureaucracy of members' views democratically expressed through our branches.

We have passed resolutions opposing the removal of our full-time official Nick Bradley from North Kent, who we believe is being victimised. He has the support of every single branch in the area and yet, Tom Sawyer, who is so committed to building a "partnership" between activists and the ordinary member, has not even prepared to meet us to hear our point of view, let alone take notice of our resolutions.

Sawyer claims that "industrial action is more carefully thought through". In practice in the South East that meant the withdrawal of official support from workers at Addenbrookes hospital fighting private contractors.

There has been no attempt to organise national industrial action against privatisation in the health service and local government. Thousands of Nupe members have lost their jobs or had their pay cut.

And Mr Sawyer's own union is itself "suffering from a decline in its membership and finances." Yes, Mr Sawyer, just who is the "new realist"?



# Defend jobs in Tories' Daffy deal

## Scammell

ON THURSDAY 19 February, at about the time the so-called Industry Minister Paul Channon was making his announcement to parliament about the take over of Leyland Vehicles and Freight Rover by Dutch firm Daf, workers at Scammell Motors (part of Leyland) in Watford were called to the canteen by management for an information meeting.

It took three minutes to inform them that Leyland Vehicles, the lorry and heavy vehicles section and Freight Rover (vans and light commercial vehicles) were to be sold—and that there was no room for Scammell in the plans.

Just three minutes to tell the workforce of over 600 that after 64 years of high quality specialist vehicle building, with only two and a half days' strike in that time, the factory was to be closed and the entire workforce laid off by the end of 1988.

Up to Monday 23 February management had not even met the shop stewards committee formally to discuss details of the closure proposals. AEU convenor John Beck summed up feelings at the plant: "Everybody here is gutted by the announcement".

Shop stewards are bitter about the circumstances surrounding the Daf deal. As they point out, the government has been prepared to wipe out a £750m deficit to accommodate Daf, so why couldn't they do that for Leyland.

"Without that £750m deficit the company would have been viable on its own. How much were the company paying the government in interest? Leyland has been given to Daf for nothing yet it has cost the



Back of Scammell plant through the allotments—stop it all being put to grass.

Photo: Jez Coulson.

taxpayers millions."

Shop stewards were scathing about the local Tory MP Tristan Garel Jones who actually agrees with the closure. As John Beck said: "It's alright for him to go on television claiming that Watford has other jobs and industry and that Scammell workers can go across the road and get another job. Somebody should tell him that across the road from this factory there is a pub, a church and a school."

### Related jobs

If Scammell does close, a further three to four thousand engineering and manufacturing jobs in suppliers, many in the Watford area could also go.

This plant has just won a £120m order to supply the army with

vehicles. Already eleven prototypes have been built and tested. A further dozen with modifications have now been ordered and it is these which are to see the plant out to 1988. These specialist vehicles have been entirely designed and developed and built at Scammells.

The production run wasn't due to begin until 1989. A total of 1,500 were to be built at a rate of 300 per year. This means there is five years' work on Scammell's order books from 1989.

This gives a strong basis for a fight back. The government and management plans can be defeated. Local action at Watford, backed up by action throughout Leyland lorry plants and a refusal to accept any transfer of work (the army order is rumoured to be going to Lancashire) could halt the entire Daf sell-out in its tracks.

## Freight Rover

FREIGHT ROVER management at the Birmingham, Common Lane plant really tried to sell us the Daf deal.

They distributed leaflets and organised meetings of groups of workers addressed by themselves. The message was the same: 'your future is secure, Daf is a large company with many extra outlets, Daf will invest in new models'.

Of course they did not mention that Daf has its own financial difficulties at the moment. We will be the only van producing section of Daf, so how long will these promises on jobs last?

Freight Rover has only a small share of the British van market, which is dominated by Ford and

Mitsubishi. Freight Rover's Sherpa van has just lost its big telecom order to Ford. As a major multinational Ford was able to undercut us.

Many of the workers at Common Lane are suspicious. "We've heard it all before" has been the attitude of many to the rosy picture management is painting. "Where's all the money coming from" they have been saying.

But whereas the union officials and senior stewards organised activities against last year's General Motors bid, this time they are welcoming the Daf offer. Nevertheless it is privatisation of a publicly owned and publicly financed company. It is their duty to oppose and clearly air Freight Rover workers' doubts.

By a Freight Rover worker

## Selby super pit strike

THE SUPPOSED Selby 'soft underbelly' of the Yorkshire NUM has proved to be just the opposite. Last week the 3,000 miners in the Selby complex walked out on strike.

By Simon Duerden

The origins of the dispute can be traced to a one-day strike at Whitmoor colliery in protest at the visit to the pit of a British Coal official. British Coal retaliated by stopping the weekly bonus at Whitmoor.

More importantly it reflects the growing anger, not just in Selby, but all over the Yorkshire coalfield at management's jack-boot tactics. During talks between Whitmoor NUM officials and British Coal, management challenged the union to spread the dispute to other pits in the complex.

At a series of meetings covering all the pits a total of only 14 men voted against a proposal for a week strike. Apart from a handful of UDM members the strike was solid for the whole week. Thus the Selby miners showed British Coal's idea that they were a soft touch was rubbish.

Only one colliery in the complex is at present producing coal so the Selby miners will become much more powerful as the other pits come 'on stream'. As one miner said: "Management think that they can boot you about from pillar to post.

They can't."

It is estimated that this dispute alone cost British Coal in the region of £1.5m. But there are other sites of militancy in the Yorkshire coalfield. Frequently led by the new generation of youthful activists within the industry, strike after strike has taken place in every part of Yorkshire.

Management are increasingly worried that contrary to their hopes at the end of the 84/85 strike, the fighting spirit of the NUM has not been broken. During a recent visit to Yorkshire chairman Haslam condemned the strikes and pointed out that during the last nine months 438,000 tonnes of coal has been lost due to "rag ups" in Yorkshire.

### Strike figures

More significantly, recent Department of Employment figures showed that during the first ten months of 1986 eight times as many working days were lost due to strikes in mining compared to the national average. In fact mining and quarrying accounted for a staggering 28 per cent of all UK stoppages.

Even British Coal's head of industrial relations was forced to admit that the strike trends are the same since the end of the national strike as they were in the years leading up to it. So despite all the hardships endured in '84/85 the miners are continuing their unfinished work.

## Vosper's Tory vandalism

VOSPER Thornycroft have announced 400 redundancies in their shipbuilding yards at Southampton, Porchester and Portsmouth and 150 of the 200 workforce in the shiprepair yards.

Last year workers in the shipbuilding section resisted the use of large scale redundancies to victimise trade unionists with a successful strike. But since 1982 two thirds of the workforce has been lost in Southampton.

The shiprepairing section has declared itself bankrupt and the accountants called in. A buy out by Thew Engineering is mooted.

This is all despite the acceptance of the introduction of widespread job flexibility and

working all hours during the Falklands to refit the Canberra and QE2. Since then such work has gone to West Germany, there have been no government orders since privatisation. This is how the Tories' reward workers.

Vosper has some of the best resources and skilled workers in the world with the facilities to cope with some of the biggest shops. In Western dock is the King George V graving dock, the largest dry dock in Britain and one of the biggest in Western Europe. Unless a buyer is found it will be filled in.

By Gavin Marsh

## Support Senior Colman

AFTER A week of negotiations and a court case Senior Colman strikers in Manchester see no progress. Management still want to pick and choose who they take back.

The High Court granted the bosses an injunction to limit pickets to eight per gate. Convenor Graham Whyatt, accused of assault on scabs and spitting at cars etc told *Militant* "My character has been blackened for an offence I did not commit but we will be fighting back."

On the other hand nothing was done after scabs leapt out of a car and attacked a picket before driving off at high speed. A major development is the

formation of the Senior Women's Action Group (SWAG). A Saturday stall outside Tesco raised over £100 and future activities are planned.

The call for a half or full day Manchester engineering strike must be taken up. The recent massive local Confed vote against the EEF proposals (see page 13) shows there is the mood for a fight if concrete leadership is given.

Every factory must be visited and the issues explained to every engineering worker to ensure Senior Colman workers win this important engineering battle.

By Gordon McCormack

## Cohse member victimised

ON 13 January my union membership was suspended by the Cohse 1073, Royal Gwent hospital branch, Newport Gwent.

The branch secretary informed me of the branch's decision before the branch meeting and before it had even been discussed.

His 'explanation' was that they had received a number of complaints (unspecified) about my activities. The suspension was to be until a special branch meeting, although it is now in the hands of the region.

The decision shocked me. Six weeks later I was told I had been suspended for breaking rule 13, ie. 'bringing the union into disrepute'. They still refused to say how.

The branch is acting blatantly unconstitutionally, as admitted by regional office at one point, despite a later climb-down. It is only the NEC which has the right to suspend membership and only after a long drawn out consultation process.

Please pass resolutions at Cohse branches and write letters of complaint to: Peter Bristow, 14 Bedford Rd, Newport, Gwent and Dick Edwards, Cohse No.10 Region, 32 Gelliwcotad Road, Pontypridd, Glamorgan.

By Steve Pitman  
(Cohse 1073, Royal Gwent hospital)

### CORRECTION

Last week's article by Bill Mullins on the Longbridge car plant was wrongly attributed to an interview with a Leyland shop steward.

○ May Day Greetings in *Militant*. We invite your organisation to send May Day greetings to the labour movement. Closing date is Friday 17 April. Rates: Semi display 3 column centimetres £6; 6 column centimetres £12. Display sixth of a page £20; eighth of a page £30, quarter of page £60. Cash with copy please. Made payable to 'Militant Publications', 3/13 Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB.



# Militant

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# Back Ancoats occupation

**ANCOATS HOSPITAL casualty department in Manchester has been under occupation since 1 February by local residents.**

They heard the closure announcement just 48 hours before, at a discussion in a local play group. They knew they had to act, it was their hospital, their health care and the well being of themselves and their families that was at risk.

This hospital is only half an hour from the city centre and is well sited for emergencies like the Woolworths fire, it also serves one of the most depressed areas of Manchester with 50 per cent unemployment and local sweatshops which are often subject to fires.

The Ancoats occupation has highlighted the situation in all the hospitals in the area. In the last 15 months, nearby Salford Royal Casualty has closed, the Withington casualty has been shut for odd nights, days even a weekend.

Patients are being forced to queue on trolleys in corridors at Manchester Royal Infirmary as a result of Ancoats' closure. Yet the cost to the Regional Health Authority could be £77,000 more than keeping it open, as more staff and facilities will be needed at MRI.

Ambulance men are being forced to make life and death decisions as to which casualty hospital to take people to.

The sit-in has already had



**Stop the cuts in the National Health Service. Join the demonstration from Ancoats Hospital on Saturday 28 February at 12.30. Fight for a well-financed, free, socialist health service!**

two successful week day demonstrations and Manchester Labour Party Young Socialists and Manchester Labour Womens' Council have called a demonstration in conjunction with the Ancoats Hospital Action Group on Saturday 28 February to show the support of the labour and trade union movement for the sit-in.

The action by Ancoats is part of the fight for all Manchester hospitals. This has already been demonstrated by sympathy strikes in North Manchester General

Hospital. This should now be built on with an all-Manchester one day National Health strike. A conference must be called by the NHS unions to plan for this.

### Full facilities

Such action, alongside the sit-in could force the Health Authorities to re-open Ancoats casualty with full back-up facilities and pave the way for the opening and maintaining of all casualties in the area. We must not let them reduce the area to one

casualty hospital per district, as seems their intention.

The demonstration assembles 12.30, Ancoats Hospital, Old Mill St., Manchester 4, Saturday 28 February, Rally at Albert Square. Speakers include: Bob Litherland MP, reps from the Ancoats Action Group and hospital trade union and local councillors.

Donations and messages of support and requests for speakers to Ancoats Hospital Action Group, Casualty department, Old Mill St, Manchester 4.

## Withington

ON 19 FEBRUARY Withington Labour Party Young Socialists organised a lobby of South Manchester health authority asking for an assurance that Withington hospital casualty department would not close. The lobby, joined by Ancoats action group members and local residents was told the department was safe.

But local people will keep their eyes open. Withington is a key marginal and the Tories would not want to announce a closure before the election. And hospital stewards think that two new consultants at Withington hospital have a brief to look at cuts in casualty provision in South Manchester.

## CPSA vote for political fund

BY 57,553 to 21,497 against, CPSA members, on a 55 per cent poll, have voted to set up a political fund. John Macreadie, Broad Left Deputy General Secretary candidate in the forthcoming elections said "It is an outstanding vote, given the total lack of a campaign by the union's leadership. The next step is Labour Party re-affiliation."

## Fight to save jobs

Continued from Page One

Workers' Federation and also from an Illinois TV station to go to the USA. There they will visit Caterpillar's Peoria headquarters and put their case over on American television, whilst also seeking the support of US trade unions. Needless to say there is a queue of volunteers outside the convenor's office!

Meanwhile Caterpillar management have sent out letters to the workers, from their suites in Glasgow's Hospitality Inn (each costing £150 per night) saying their work is being done in Leicester and Grenoble, there will be no compulsory redundancies until July and that the workers should end the occupation to allow redundancy discussions to take place.

"Rather than this threat weakening the occupation," said Kevin O'Shea, "it has stiffened the resolve of the workers to fight. We all know they are lying about Grenoble and Leicester. We talk to our brothers there everyday. On the issue of compulsory redundancies we have never believed Caterpillar. Remember, to begin with they said that closure would be over an extended 18 month period. Now they say for production workers it will be the 'fair fortnight' (mid-July). Well they are not on."

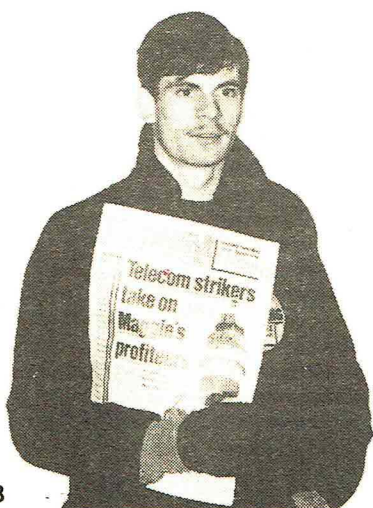
Now the campaign must be stepped up from the demonstration and the lobby of parliament on 5 March, for the nationalisation of Caterpillar, as the only guarantee of all the workers' jobs. The tremendous hardship suffered by these workers must not be forgotten. After all they are fighting not just for themselves but for workers throughout the country. In one afternoon £700 was collected in East Kilbride shopping centre. The LPYS Scottish conference raised £200. A total of £10,000 was raised last weekend. But more support is still needed to keep the battle going.

Messages of support to Caterpillar Occupation Committee, c/o Thomas Stevenson, 17 Campsie View, Bargeddie, Glasgow.

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