

Militant

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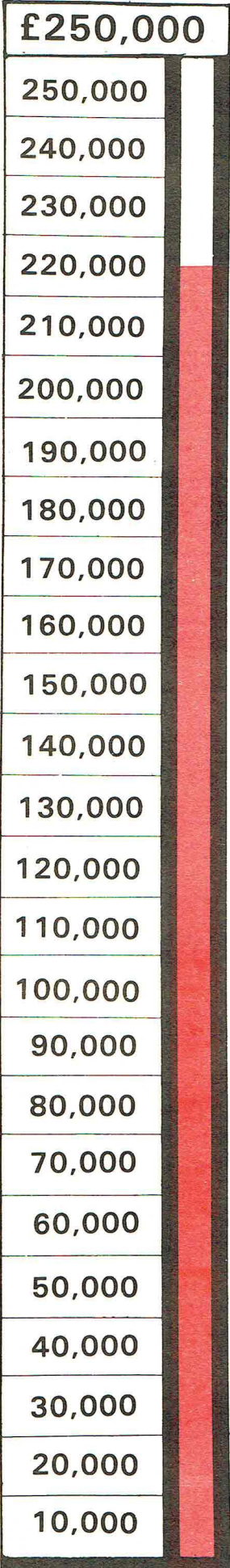
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Militant Fighting Fund



The warning from Greenwich

Labour needs socialist policies

AFTER GREENWICH workers want to know how Labour can win the general election. They know that if the Tories get back they will be hit with a new round of devastating attacks on rights and living standards.

The Tories are preparing new laws to weaken the trade unions. They are delaying more disastrous cuts in local government spending and the welfare state until after polling day. Together with a sweetener of tax cuts they hope to pull the wool over the eyes of the electorate and win another term.

The Tories must be defeated. But Labour cannot beat them if it tries to hide its basic socialist commitments behind a veil of roses. Despite Greenwich, Labour can still rout the Tories at the general election.

The Tories' support was smashed in the by-election, not just because of tactical voting, but because of widespread hatred of Thatcher's right wing policies.

Unlike in the Bermondsey by-election in 1983, when Labour's vote crumbled, in Greenwich Labour's basic support held up. Labour lost only 1,685 votes while the Tories lost 8,298. The SDP gained 9,504 votes—clearly most from the Tories.

Greenwich was a case of missed opportunity. What should have been a Labour landslide was lost. The Party leaders failed completely

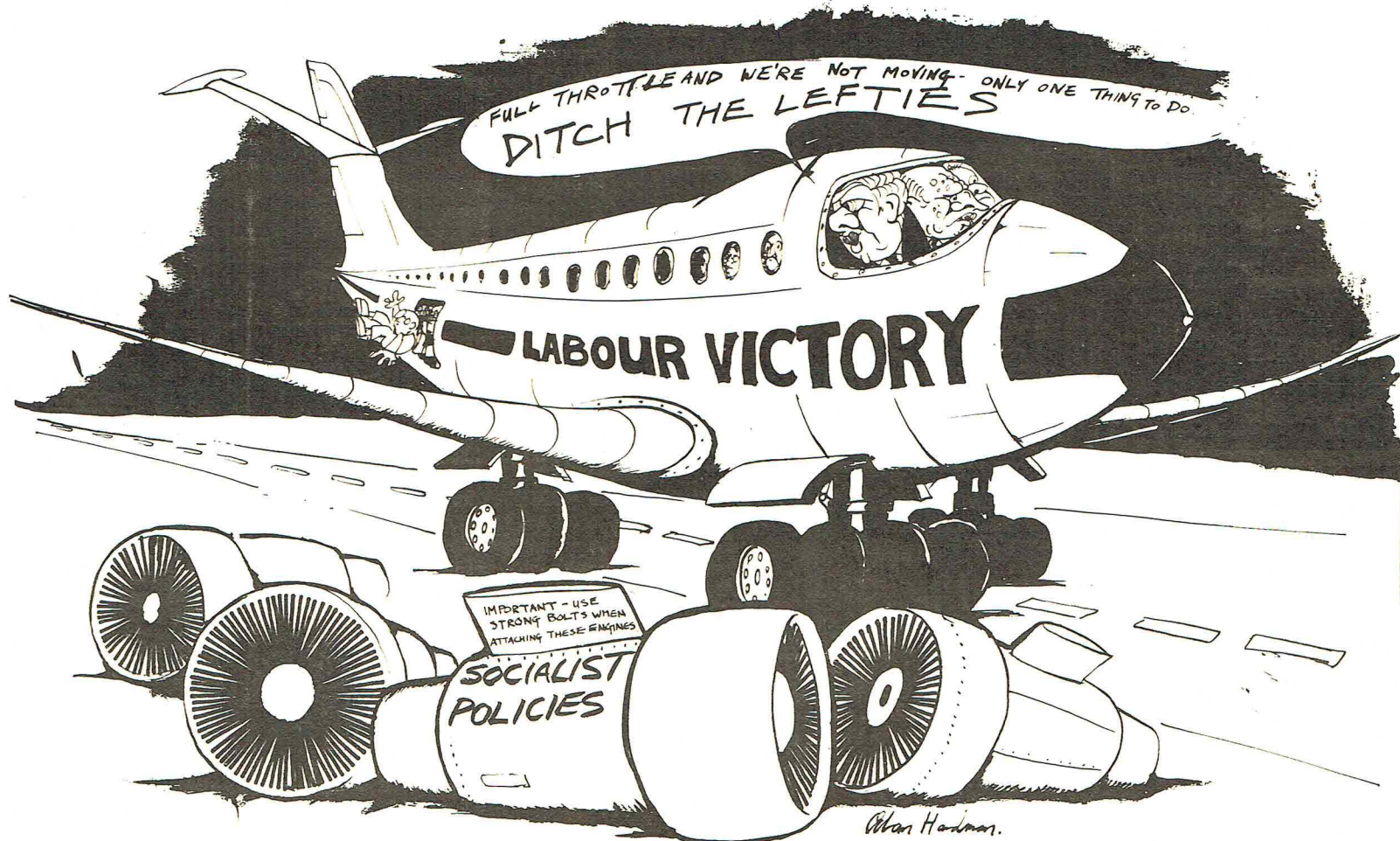
to inspire the electorate. But throughout the country the potential for massive backing for Labour is there.

The general election could still be at any time, and Labour must take immediate steps to turn that potential into real support. The leadership must do an about turn, go on the offensive and campaign on the socialist policies which the Party ranks believe in. If the Party leaders backed a full socialist economic programme they could convince millions more voters that Labour's policies were viable. A commitment to restore all the cuts, a commitment to full employment, and an end to poverty and low pay would then get massive support.

As Eric Heffer said at last week's public meeting in Bristol: "Labour must not be ashamed of its socialist past and policies. We must not turn in on ourselves. That could be disastrous. We must go forward to win the next election, with firm, bold, positive policies and be outward looking. It is the only way to win".

By Ben Eastop

DAVID LOWE from Paisley who has been a reader of *Militant* for twelve years has donated £200 towards our £250,000 appeal. Ian Williams from Manchester has paid £120. As a result of these and many other contributions the total is now £214,888, a marvellous reflection of our readers' support.



THE WAVE of strikes and mass demonstrations of school students which rocked Spain for the past two and a half months, represents a watershed in the post-war history of Europe. Alan Woods draws up the balance sheet of this historic struggle.

In the stormy period following the death of General Franco in 1975-77, Spain lived through a pre-revolutionary situation, with general strike after general strike. Power was on the order of the day. But the workers' leaders, particularly the leaders of the 'Communist' Party which at that stage had a decisive majority, derailed the movement, handing power back to the capitalist class and the 'democratic' monarchy of Juan Carlos.

The betrayal led to a period of profound disillusionment and despair. A whole generation dropped out of politics. The youth organisations of the Socialist Party (PSOE) and CP (PCE) were decimated by expulsions. The adult parties were reduced to shells. The CP split into four factions. Rising unemployment, and the class collaborationist policies of the leaders of the two main trade unions—the pro-Socialist UGT and pro-CP Workers' Commissions (CCOO)—led to a drastic fall in union membership. Only about 10 per cent of the workforce is currently organised in unions.

Thatcherism

The election of the socialist government of Felipe Gonzalez with ten million votes in 1982 marked the beginning of a new period. The workers voted for a 'change'. But the right-wing policies of the PSOE leadership, which had expelled the Marxists, proved to be almost identical to the policies of Thatcher in Britain: a wave of factory closures and redundancies, brutal attacks on wages and living conditions, brutal police repression and the campaign to stay in NATO.

There were strikes of steelworkers, shipbuilders and other sections, but one by one they were defeated.

After the PSOE's second election victory last year, Felipe Gonzalez's position seemed impregnable. Spain looked to everyone to be one of the most stable countries in Western Europe. With the unions apparently 'tamed' and the youth apparently dormant, the right-wing ministers decided the time was ripe to move even further down the road of cuts and austerity. No wonder Neil Kinnock went on a pilgrimage to Madrid, to sit at the feet of Felipe Gonzalez and find out how to deal with the 'Militants', and how to win an election.

Then came the earthquake which nobody but the Marxists had foreseen. On 4

December 1986, 100,000 mainly working class school students erupted onto the streets of Madrid, beginning a movement which would transform the social and political map of Spain.

At first, the capitalist 'experts' tried to explain away the mass mobilisation of school students, as mere 'mimicry' of the events in France. This view is exaggerated. The movement in Spain was no spontaneous upheaval, but the result of months of agitation and propaganda conducted by the supporters of the Spanish Marxist tendency, Jovenes Por el Socialismo ('Youth For Socialism') the public organ of which is *Nuevo Claridad*. As far back as September-October, they had been warning of an explosive mood developing among Spanish youth. 4 December had been fixed for a general strike in the schools, long before the events in France.

Yet the capitalists and their right-wing socialist cronies were convinced that the youth was quiescent. The so-called 'left' parties—the various 'Communist' parties and the sectarian grouplets poured scorn on the proposals for a schools' strike. The Marxists, who a year earlier had launched the school students union (SEM), were compelled to call the strike alone. No other group on the 'left' would support it. Indeed, they did what they could to sabotage it.

But the organisers were confident of success. However, even the most optimistic only expected 10—20,000 to turn out. In the event, they were overwhelmed by the size of the demonstrations, not only in Madrid, but in Barcelona, Seville and other provinces. But the strikes and demonstrations of 4 December only took place in those provinces where the Marxist tendency existed—about 16 at that time.

The impact of the movement was like a heavy stone dropped into a pond. The ripples reached out to the

The lessons of SPAIN



Defence pickets protect the school student marchers from fascist gangs and from the police.

whole country, down to the smallest village.

The next day the press was full of articles about this movement which had so suddenly broken out. And everyone was asking: *Who is behind it?*

'Conspiracy'

For the shallow 'police' mentality, every movement must be the result of a 'conspiracy'. But this mobilisation of youth internationally, is a reflection of the crisis of capitalism. Millions of young people, deprived of a future, instinctively sensed that society is in an impasse.

At one stage, Maraval, the Spanish Education Minister confessed this was not so much a conscious movement with clear demands but a "state of mind" among the youth. "And it is difficult to negotiate", he added ruefully, "with a state of mind".

In Spain there was the coming together of the accumulation of frustration and anger, which had slowly been maturing in the minds of the masses, along with a Marxist leadership capable of giving voice to this mute despair. That is a combination which proved to be unstoppable.

Yet the SEM, prior to the

4 December, and even for sometime afterwards, was not numerically strong. But, as Marx once explained, an idea becomes a material force when it grips the minds of the masses. The idea of the union, its slogans, programme and tactics, struck a responsive chord in the minds of hundreds of thousands of young people, awakened for the first time to political life.

That this was in essence a political movement is not seriously open to question. Why else should millions of working class youth, most of whom with no thought of ever going to university, strike and demonstrate for a

campaign which inscribed on its banner: "The workers' children to the University"? Maraval was right—not so much a "union", more a "state of mind". And a state of mind which recognises that society, as presently constituted, offers no future to young people, and that they must challenge the very basis upon which it rests.

Total strike

The second one-day general strike called by the SEM on 17 December was, unlike the first strike, total throughout Spain. Two million school students



'Co-ordinating committees' unco-ordinated action

A COMPLICATING feature was the antics of the sects and their phantom 'co-ordinating committees' which, from January on, sprang up like poisoned toadstools after a thunderstorm.

In many areas (especially isolated and formally backward areas), there were genuine co-ordinating committees—representative ad hoc bodies of school students.

In every case these committee entered into contact with the union, loyally followed its advice and, especially after the strike, approaching the union to join. Conversely, those self-styled 'co-ordinating committees' dominated by the sects have started to completely disintegrate.

All ideas, programmes and methods are

put to the test in the struggle itself. The tactics of the sects—supported initially by the Young 'Communists' and 'official' Young Socialists was to call for unco-ordinated local strikes of an adventurist and shambolic character (hence the need for a 'co-ordinating' committee!)

But the big majority of the students were quite able to differentiate between this ultra-left idiocy and the tactics advocated by the union.

The SEM advocated national general strikes organised and limited in time, complemented with mass demonstrations. This enabled the school-students throughout Spain to strike together on the same day, at the same hour, for the same demands.



answered the union's strike call. Even the school of sub-officers of the army in Calatayud, and the Spanish language institute in Lisbon came out. There were mass demonstrations all over the country, with over 100,000 demonstrating in Madrid.

From the very beginning the Marxist leadership of the SEM advocated turning the student movement towards the workers. Approaches were made to the UGT and CCOO for joint action. Initially they met with a lukewarm response. Undeterred, the union persisted in seeking a united front at all levels.

In the four day strike of 20-23 January, there was an encouraging response from rank and file workers. The dockers came out on a 24 hour general strike for their own demands, and invited student representatives to their mass meeting and gave money. The transport workers in Saragossa provided free bus rides for SEM members.

Turning point

But the shooting of a 14 year old girl on the massive 23 January demonstration in Madrid was the turning-point in the struggle. Opinion polls showed that 67 per cent agreed with the students and only 13 per cent with the Ministry.

Pressure from below was building up on the workers' leaders. The school-students movement acted as a 'catalyst' which served to galvanise all the pent-up discontent of the workers.

UGT leader, Nicolas Redondo, for the first time in years, broke off negotiations with the employers' organisations, demanding wage increases of 7 per cent or more while the government insists on a 5 per cent limit.

The sight of the SEM's leaders turning down the first, apparently 'generous' offer of the minister, must have inspired millions of Spanish workers used to their leaders signing pathetic wage deals.

However, by this time, there were clear signs of tiredness among the youth. But the union had rejected the government's offer, so a new battle was inevitable. Would the students respond? The school students assemblies in Madrid—the



The school students' negotiators. Above and left. Scenes from the mass demos.

real centre of the storm—voted for strike action, but often by small majorities. In many areas, local deals were being signed. The press was playing up the issue of violence and 'hooliganism', while suppressing all information about the union's new strike call.

In this they received the inestimable aid of the sects' Madrid 'co-ordinating committee', which called two unauthorized demos in a week—one outside the parliament, the other outside the Moncloa (the Spanish No. 10). This was adventurism of the worse kind. Any student who turned up would be asking to get their skull cracked, or worse. There was no organisation, no defence pickets, and fortunately, no students! A miserable 400 turned up on the first and 1,000 on the second.

Workers' action

The week of action of 9-13 February was the last "shove". After that, it would be increasingly difficult to keep the momentum going. But precisely at this moment the strategy of the union finally paid off. Under the pressure of the rank and file, the leaders of the Workers' Commissions approached the SEM for joint demonstrations of workers and students all over Spain on the evening of Wednesday 11 February. Although they were still evasive about strike action. But they offered joint action of the school students with teachers

and agricultural workers, both of whom were in dispute.

That week showed that all the conditions for a general strike of all Spanish workers were present, despite the scepticism of the workers' leaders.

Mass ferment

On the Monday, the UGT and CCOO called a 48 hour general strike of the coalminers in Asturias. The copper miners in Rio Tinto staged a four day strike. The teachers in the private sector struck for 3 days. The SEAT car workers struck and demonstrated together with the school students' union. The Renault carworkers were out. So were the dockers, and a large part of the agricultural workers in Andalusia and Extremadura. To add to it all, there was mass ferment among the oppressed Arab minority in the Spanish North African colony of Melilla.

The culmination was the two massive demonstrations held by the SEM. On the Wednesday, 150,000 students and workers marched through the streets of Madrid. Other joint demos were held all over Spain. Within 48 hours, on the morning of Friday 13 February, the SEM called a 'March on Madrid', bussing students in from all over Spain and calling out the schools in Madrid in support. 200,000 turned up, with flags from all the regions, to march behind the banners of the SEM and the

Marxist Tendency, "Youth for Socialism" and *Nuevo Claridad*. The marchers were preceded by a 'motorised division' of 300 messenger boys on motor-bikes, and joined by 3,000 shop stewards of the CCOO.

The sight of united action between workers and school-students sent the government into panic. The day after the SEM issued a call to "return to class and await the results of negotiations". Privately, the leaders knew that the movement could go no further. But did the government realise it?

Within a couple of days, a new offer was made which really represented an historic breakthrough.

The union negotiations insisted that there could only be a "conditional agreement" subject to ratification by the union's national delegate body and the school students' assemblies. In the overwhelming majority of schools, the deal was enthusiastically accepted.

This represented a giant step forward not only for the youth but for all the working class. Immediately after the signing of the agreement, a general strike of the miners in Asturias broke out, with barricades appearing in all the mining villages. There have been reports of fighting between police and shipyard workers in Cadiz.

Spain is entering a new and stormy period, with many similarities with the 1930s. But also with important differences.

The working class is immeasurably stronger, and the

capitalist class incomparably weaker. But the decisive difference consists in the fact that, for the first time in history, a genuine Marxist tendency has led a movement of three million youth, and led it to victory.

Those sceptics and cynics who thought that the success of the ideas of *Militant* was purely a 'British' phenomenon have been proven wrong. The ideas of Marxism know no frontier. They are finding an ever-wider audience among workers and young people in all countries, because they alone explain the causes of the crisis of capitalism and represent a genuine alternative. The leadership of all the old parties of the working class are perplexed. They cannot understand the new period in which we live and have nothing to offer the new generation.

Expulsions

Like Neil Kinnock, Felipe Gonzalez thought he could 'solve' the problem by mass expulsion of socialists from the PSOE ten years ago. Now his ministers face these same people over a negotiating table, and are forced to recognise them as a force, when the 'official' Young Socialists, purged of all except bureaucrats and careerists, are a public laughing-stock.

Only Marxism, represented in Britain by *Militant* and in Spain by *Nuevo Claridad*, can offer the workers and youth a way out.

THE DEMONSTRATION on 4 December had been attacked by armed fascist gangs, with the connivance of the police. After this the Marxist leadership of the union was very clear: never again would young people be sent out onto the streets unarmed and undefended to be beaten up by fascist thugs.

On the 17 December march and on every subsequent demonstration organised by the union, there was a protective ring of school students armed with staves, tightly disciplined and controlled by Marxist stewards, equipped with walkie-talkies and powerful megaphones. By the night of 17 December more than one fascist lay in a hospital bed nursing a broken head. But not one demonstrator was touched from that day onwards.

In this and other aspects, the Marxist leadership of the union introduced a new tradition into the Spanish movement. There is no doubt that this model will be taken up in every demonstration of the workers and youth from now on.

The media attempted to blacken the name of the students by giving huge publicity to the actions of provocateurs, who threw stones and bottles at the police in an attempt to provoke a reaction which would break up the demonstrations. But they could never succeed in slandering the union, whose defence pickets ensured exemplary order. Neither could the lumpen groups, clearly infiltrated by fascist and police agents, succeed in breaking up a single one of these mass demonstrations.

The striking thing about this generation of youth is its toughness, shown in the incredible courage of these young pickets—girls as well as boys—facing the riot police, fascists and provocateurs without flinching. But equally important is their extraordinary maturity and intelligence. At each stage in the struggle, the youth showed themselves able to understand the most complex tactical questions once they were explained to them openly and honestly.

Militant

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Greenwich: 'left' candidate, right wing campaign

THE LOSS of Greenwich, a seat Labour has held since 1945, has cast a dark cloud of despondency over millions of Labour supporters up and down the country. The prevailing view now in the factories and offices and on the working class estates is: Labour cannot win a general election.

And it could be self fulfilling. If Labour appears to have no hope, if the right wing Labour leaders are incapable of inspiring workers and especially young people to vote, then why bother to turn out. That could be a growing feeling among potential Labour voters. Even in Greenwich one third of the electorate did not vote. How many of them were Labour voters, how many were young

people cynical about the glib promises and neat packaging of all the candidates?

Labour fielded a left wing candidate and spent the rest of the campaign trying to apologise for it. Prominent Party figures actually passed information to the capitalist press with which to hound Deirdre Wood. The Labour leaders did not want a too resounding victory in Greenwich, for a left candidate. And they paid the price.

But Labour had the worst of all worlds—a left candidate, and a tightly controlled right wing campaign, that was incapable of adequately answering the attacks upon her, and seemed to believe that policies were unnecessary. At least the SDP talked about the issues affecting the local people. To some they may even have appeared more 'radical'.

Kinnock's unpopularity

Labour under the control of the right wing is failing to carry conviction. In a poll conducted in the run up to Greenwich Kinnock's personal rating suffered its steepest monthly fall since he became leader. He now has the lowest satisfaction rating with voters of all the party leaders. Right wing policies, Hattersley's gaffe about putting taxes up, the contempt being shown for ordinary voters with Labour party political broadcasts consisting of Glenda Jackson watering flowers in a conservatory (and every council flat has a conservatory!) are sabotaging Labour's opportunity to defeat Thatcher. Yet the collapse of the Tory vote in Greenwich confirms there is overwhelming hostility to her.

But it is true that among particularly older Labour voters in Greenwich, there was concern about what the press dub the 'loony left'. These workers see Labour councils, like ILEA, carrying through Tory cuts, not fun-

damentally improving their conditions of life. (ILEA cannot provide enough teachers for working class children). But at the same time giving money to what they may consider are outlandish causes. Compare this to Liverpool Council which by fighting the Tories in defence of basic services, carried the local people with it, and continued to gain votes despite press attacks.

Now the right wing spurred on by the *Daily Mirror* etc are drawing the conclusions from Greenwich that defeat was due to the left, so rein in the policies still further, water down the slogans still more. They seem to have rapidly forgotten the dreadful results secured by open right wing candidates in the Knowsley North and Newcastle-under-Lyme by-elections. Knowsley North recorded twice the fall in the Labour vote of Greenwich. A further retreat from socialist policies and the vision of a better future under Labour, could be fatal.

However even in Greenwich an exit poll indicated that the same electors, had it been a general election, would have returned a Labour candidate. There is no guarantee that the SDP will hold the seat at a general election. In the special circumstances of a by-election in Greenwich, the Tory press decided that defeating Labour, and what was perceived as a left candidate was the most important consideration. Hence even the lumpen Tory *Sun*, urged its readers to vote SDP. Now the papers will return to rubbishing the Alliance, to build the Tory vote for the general election.

There is still every possibility of a Labour government, if the leadership campaigns enthusiastically on a programme that can meet the needs of ordinary people. But if they should throw victory away they will never be forgiven by the working class who will be the victims of another term of Toryism.

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In the Labour Party NEC becoming rubber stamp

THE MEETING of Labour's national executive committee (NEC) on 25 February, on the eve of the Greenwich by-election, yet again wasted time discussing disciplinary measures.

By 20 votes to seven it was agreed to charge Chris Peace and Tony Wedlake with being members of the *Militant* tendency while they were on the Wales regional executive committee (which neither of them are now on). No discussion of the flimsy 'evidence' was allowed as there had been a short discussion on it at the previous meeting.

It was also agreed that charges be laid against Bob Newall, vice-chair of Blyth Valley Labour Party, for selling *Militant* and publishing a leaflet for a Labour Party public meeting that "looks as if it was printed at the same place as a leaflet for a *Militant* public meeting"! When the LPYS representative asked when selling *Militant* had been made a crime, no answer was given.

Tom Sawyer moved that this be referred back to the Appeals and Mediation committee, on the grounds that the case would provide the press with ammunition for a dirty anti-left campaign in this marginal seat in a general election. This proposal was defeated 15-12 after Neil Kinnock drew out the loyalty vote in favour of an investigation. Tony Benn remarked that we were back to the days when people were expelled for reading Left Book Club books.

Broadgreen

No decision was made on whether to impose candidates for the May council elections on the suspended Broadgreen Labour Party in Liverpool. Two marginal wards are selecting their candidates, but national organiser Joyce Gould has not decided what to do

about the others, despite a promise from party officials in the North West that all wards would be able to select their own candidates.

As usual extra things were added to the agenda without prior notice. This time it was a major policy document on how a million jobs are to be created in two years. NEC members were given 20 minutes to read the 20-page document, they were requested not to amend it as the Shadow Cabinet had already agreed it, each copy was numbered and it had to be given back at the end.

Manifesto

This document will be the basis for the next general election manifesto, yet the NEC will have played hardly any part in drawing it up. All the criticisms were merely 'taken on board' by Kinnock with no guarantee that they will make any difference to the final decision on the document. The NEC is becoming a rubber stamp for the Shadow Cabinet.

Tony Benn said that since 1959 when he first came on to the NEC nothing like this had happened and for him it marked the destruction of the NEC as the main policy making body. Because the NEC was elected at conference and accountable to it, he said, it would have to justify a policy document in which they had played practically no role in drawing up.

The Shadow Cabinet is being used more and more in place of the NEC when it comes to party policy. It vindicates the argument for the Shadow Cabinet to be elected by conference.



Party activists lobby Labour's NEC protesting against expulsions last year.

Wrekin right must re-think

THE LABOUR Party National Executive Committee has been forced to have another look at their endorsement of the expulsion of Pete Jackson by Wrekin Labour Party when he moved into the constituency from Stafford and tried to have his membership transferred.

At the NEC meeting, Audrey Wise questioned this decision, referring to the rule that membership transfers should be accepted automatically and that if the constituency party objects to the member, they still have to follow the full expulsion procedures, which Wrekin had not.

General Secretary Larry Whitty conceded that the rules were 'cloudy' and that the expulsion would have to go through the full procedure. This was agreed.

Pete Jackson has been a member of the party since 1981, holding positions in the youth and student bodies and the Stafford general management committee. When he moved to Telford,

members of that party alleged that he was employed full-time by *Militant*.

At that time they were also trying to expel five other members, but were forced to abandon the attempt when the NEC ruled that the expulsions had been carried through with flimsy evidence and without adherence to the proper procedures.

Unemployment

The witch-hunt in Wrekin has now been going on for two years. Yet it is one of the party's 'top ten' marginal seats, with the highest level of unemployment in the West Midlands, 19.1 per cent. The town, the 'birthplace of the industrial revolution', designed as an overspill area for the West Midlands, has attracted people from all over the country because of its cheap housing and promise of jobs in its 'enterprise zone'. Now the new estates have male unemployment as high as 60 per cent and all the associated symptoms of

deprivation.

Labour therefore has plenty of ammunition with which to attack the Tories. Yet the Wrekin party has spent two years witch-hunting hard-working socialists. This has had a demoralising effect on the membership. One branch in a vast working-class area has been disbanded because no-one was attending the meetings. Another branch, which regards itself as the centre of 'soft left', new right opinion, managed only seven members at its recent AGM.

The workers in Wrekin need a socialist leadership. The witch-hunt has only served to dishearten them. Yet the attacks on *Militant* have tremendously increased interest in the paper and a new layer of young people have been drawn to Marxist ideas, keen to get on with the job of campaigning for a Labour MP in Wrekin and a Labour government nationally.

By Militant reporters

Stevenage debar Militant seller

THE RIGHT-WING dominated executive committee of Stevenage Labour Party has referred back an application to join the party, because the applicant, Stephen Mulholland, has been seen selling *Militant*. They have asked the local party from which the application came to reconsider its sponsorship.

The decision, in a body which has already tried, unsuccessfully, to expel ten *Militant* supporters, was carried by only one vote. The far right wanted to refuse his application point blank. As one of them put it: "We have spent months trying to get rid of these people and now you want to let them join!" "We can cut out all the messing about" added another.

After all the time they spent trying to prevent a good socialist from joining, it took the EC just two minutes to accept, by 17 votes to one, the application of a person who left the party to join the SDP, spoke out publicly against a Labour candidate in a council election (the seat was lost by a handful of votes) and who is not a member of a trade union, because he works for "a company that doesn't like unions".

When 6000 print workers have been sacked because their boss "doesn't like unions", it is abhorrent that the right wing in Stevenage Labour Party are supporting such people.

By a Militant reporter

Tribute to Liverpool Labour Councillors and their families.

Social at Walton Labour Club, 8pm, Friday 27 March. Tickets £3.50.

Guest appearances: Ricky Tomlinson (Bobby Grant) and Tony Scoggo (Matty) from Brookside, Peter Taaffe *Militant*.



The last few years have seen huge demonstrations against nuclear weapons throughout Europe.

SOVIET LEADER Gorbachev's latest arms reduction offer will arouse the hopes of millions for a reduction in the threat of nuclear war and for a cut in arms spending.

Gorbachev proposes the removal of all medium range nuclear warheads (INFs) from Europe, and a reduction to 100 warheads in the Asian area of the USSR and in the USA. This shows a change from the Russian position at the Reykjavik summit last autumn.

Then Gorbachev insisted that any deal on medium range warheads must be linked to the United States postponing the development of its 'Star Wars' space defence programme.

Why the turnaround? Firstly Gorbachev needs to reduce the burden of arms spending on the Soviet economy, currently running at a massive 17 per cent of gross domestic product. This is especially important as his 'reform' programme will arouse aspirations in the USSR for more and better consumer goods.

Secondly the Russians have probably calculated that the madness of the USA's 'Star Wars' programme will not work. One estimation is that by the year 2000, after spending \$121 billion, 'Star Wars' might have a 93 per cent success rate in downing hostile missiles.

In other words 70 out of 100 warheads would strike home; enough to wipe out every major city in the USA!

Peace in our time?

The timing of Gorbachev's proposals, which have been speculated about for weeks, is clearly linked to Reagan's weakened position. Hence Gorbachev's statement that "this historic chance should not be missed! We await a speedy and positive reply."

Despite the White House's cautious response, Reagan will be desperate for a 'victory' to strengthen his own position. Moves by the Reagan administration to reach agreement could provoke a backlash among European capitalist powers, fearing they will be 'unprotected', as happened when a deal seemed likely last autumn.

Stumbling blocks

While agreement seems more likely than at Reykjavik, it could still founder on many issues which reflect the constant manoeuvring for 'advantage' in the arms race. The Russians have not made it clear if they will dismantle or merely remove their missiles from Europe.

Another stumbling block could be Thatcher's insistence on replacing Britain's Polaris nuclear system with Trident missiles, a twelve times increase in warheads.

Whatever the immediate outcome of negotiations, Gorbachev has clearly scored a propaganda victory, following on from the highly publicised 'Peace Forum' in Moscow last month.

These proposals, together with the 'reforms' being implemented in the USSR will undoubtedly lead to illusions within the labour movement about Gorbachev's 'reforming' role.

The TUC General Council recently voted to attend a Soviet 'Trade Union' congress for the first time since 1945, and John Edmonds, the GMBATU General Secretary has heralded the arms proposals as an "enormous breakthrough."

Marxists will welcome any removal of nuclear weapons, and any reductions in the waste of vital resources on weapons of destruction. But it would be fatal to imagine that this will lessen the threat of nuclear holocaust. The present plans will remove about 1300 warheads—leaving 22,000 between the USSR and USA, each many times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb.

Even if all the nuclear warheads in the world were dismantled, which clearly will not happen, the technology to rebuild them would



Gorbachev with Tory cabinet ministers.

remain to be used at a time of heightened tensions in the future.

The threat of war does not arise from stockpiling of arms but from the conflict between the capitalist system and the nationalised, planned economies of the Stalinist states.

But world war in this modern age could only mean nuclear war and in consequence total annihilation.

For the present that nightmare prospect stays the hand of the American and Russian leaders. But this situation can not be guaranteed to last for ever. A massive defeat for the working class and a mad Pinochet style government in the United States would alter this.

Freed from the check of democracy and the labour movement, such a regime would be unbalanced enough to try a 'first strike' against the USSR and so plunge the world into nuclear war.

Gorbachev's reforms, which reflect the impasse and splits in the Russian bureaucracy, and the recent upheavals in Europe, point to the alternative; the overthrow of capitalism, the establishment of workers' democracy in Eastern Europe and the building of a harmonious world socialist federation, which could ensure peace and plenty.

By Kevin Ramage

Greenwich lost by right wing . . .

'DEIRDRE IS a winner', was the unfortunate heading of Labour's final, eve of poll leaflet in the Greenwich by-election.

But it summed up the non-political, personality-based campaign that proved so ineffective. Other Labour leaflets were similarly abstract, stressing: "She's honest . . . she's hardworking . . . she's one of us . . . Deirdre does it in style."

Only one very uninspiring campaign public meeting was organised, with Neil Kinnock answering questions from a ticket only audience. With special appearances from Doctor Legg and Colin from Eastenders. The right wing Labour leadership and their publicity agents really believe elections can be won with balloons and TV stars, never mind the policies. Greenwich has proved them wrong.

One other public meeting was held on

the ministry of women. But that had been arranged before the election was even called.

The Labour campaign was conducted under the uninspiring slogan: "Deirdre Wood understands Greenwich." It is all very well understanding the problems of the constituency—17 per cent unemployment, some of the worst housing in London—it is quite another to campaign with a convincing solution for local working class voters.

A policy decision was actually taken that Deirdre Wood and Neil Kinnock should only talk to committed Labour supporters. This despite the fact some Labour voters were clearly drifting away to the SDP.

The gutter press conducted a disgusting campaign against the Labour candidate, about her family, her private life etc. But every morning the Party still set her up like an 'Aunt Sally' at the ritual press conferences.

As Tony Benn has argued, if the press

want to report on the Labour campaign let them come to the public meetings, let them follow the canvassers and then report on the issues Labour wants to get across, not on the issues the reporters want to use to trip the Labour candidate up.

In the Chesterfield by-election in 1984 the press likened Benn to Hitler in their smear campaign. But by going on the offensive, holding public meetings each evening and not compromising on policies Labour won a fine victory despite press hostility.

In Greenwich the Labour leadership were embarrassed by their candidate's left wing image and she allowed herself to be dominated by the right. They tried to win by concentrating on the homely Deirdre Wood, middle aged mother of three. They lost to an SDP candidate campaigning as a middle aged mother of four!

By Greenwich LP members

... but 'moderate' blames left

THE WELL publicised attack on the left by Labour's ex chief whip Michael Cocks is nothing new. But it made many Labour supporters in his constituency, Bristol South, very angry.

On the night of the Greenwich election Cocks was defeated in the annual election for chair of the general management committee by 48 votes to 27. A few weeks before Neil Kinnock told the press that Cocks' deselection and the selection of Dawn Primarollo was carried out

correctly; there was no chance of the NEC overturning the decision.

Cocks is now using the Greenwich defeat as an excuse for a second bite at the cherry. His allegations of unpopular left policies have no foundation. The night after the by election Eric Heffer and Tony Mulhearn spoke to a packed Campaign Group meeting in Bristol.

Eric Heffer claimed to have been a 'loony left' all his life but when he first stood for parliament he turned a 6,000 Tory majority into a 2,000 Labour majority

and has since increased that margin to 14,000.

Tony Mulhearn pointed out that Liverpool Labour council had not lost an election since coming to power on socialist policies.

Cocks' attacks will be used by the Tory press to weaken the chance of a Labour victory. We need to answer Cocks and get out onto the streets with socialist policies.

By Paul Thompson
(Bristol South Labour Party personal capacity)

LSE students say break apartheid links

STUDENTS AT the London School of Economics (LSE) are fighting for the college to disinvest from companies with South African connections.

From last Tuesday about 300 students occupied the college administration building in a bid to force the governors to take out the £2 million LSE holds in corporations such as Shell, BP, Glaxo and BTR.

For a decade LSE students have urged the governors to cut their economic links with apartheid but to no avail. After the detention of almost 25,000 trade unionists, youth and community leaders, our union has demanded the withdrawal of LSE funds from all companies employing more than 500 workers in

South Africa or Namibia. On 2 March the college authorities took the LSE student union to the High Court which not surprisingly granted an injunction to force students out. The demonstration outside the Court gained support from many colleges throughout the country and messages of backing from anti apartheid groups around the world.

This is only the start of our campaign for disinvestment; we hope to spread the fight to other student bodies so that all can show their solidarity with the South African workers' struggle.

By Joanne Coyle
(NOLS LSE personal capacity)

Protest against YTS

THE NUS Further Education National Committee (FENC) has agreed to proposals put forward by FELS member Cheryl Varley for a demonstration and lobby in Manchester on 1 April, to highlight the exploitation on the Youth Training Scheme (YTS).

That is the date for implementation of the insulting £1.20 'wage rise', for first year trainees. FELS is calling on YTS trainees, LPYS members and trade unionists to build for this demonstration.



Protestors at the Fulham v Walsall game

Football's big business hooligans

THE THREATENED merger of Fulham and Queens Park Rangers football clubs once again highlights the strangulation of professional football by big business.

Property developers Marler Estates which already owned Fulham bought QPR for £5.5 million, which opened the way for a merger, and allowed them to sell Fulham's ground at Craven Cottage.

This is on prime development land in the middle of the 'yuppie' belt and is estimated to be worth at least £15 million if sold for housing development.

The so-called reprieve, after widespread protests, promised by Marler Estates boss David Bulstrode will be short-lived. Bulstrode has offered to 'save' Fulham and write off all its debts to enable a quick sale at a knock-down price. The club may last another season, but without proper backing it will face bankruptcy later on. The ground is still likely to be sold off.

Last year Marler Estates made a loss of £223,000, so the development of Craven Cottage is too much of a

temptation. These property parasites also own Chelsea's ground at Stamford Bridge, but this can't be developed for two years because of the lease with Chelsea Football Club. This ground is worth

Tycoon Terry

BEHIND THE wheeling and dealing with Fulham is one slick operator—Terry Ramsden. He is the major shareholder in Marler Estates with a 30 per cent interest.

Terry Ramsden also likes a flutter on the horses—he's been known to put £100,000 on a nag and his gambling turn-over is £1,000,000 a week. He is also the biggest owner of race horses in Britain.

Ramsden's own company, Glen International is said to be worth £150 million. But apparently he is presently under investigation for VAT irregularities, and a court case is pending in Billericay.

Terry claims to be a Spurs supporter. Still, that's one way of winning the FA Cup—sell off the opposition.



even more—around £25 million as housing development.

When Chelsea's lease is up it is likely that they will also have to move to QPR's ground at Loftus Rd.

It can be guaranteed that both sites will be developed for luxury housing, and not council housing for ordinary working people. Craven Cottage is particularly attractive, being on the river bank.

Players are also likely to lose their jobs. Most of Fulham's third division players are at risk—the new club, Fulham Park Rangers, couldn't sustain a squad of 50 or so players. There were reports that the new club would only take on four Fulham players. The Professional Football Association secretary, Gordon Taylor, has already talked of the possibility of redundancies.

With Charlton already sharing with Crystal Palace, and talk of a Wimbledon merger with Palace it is clear that working class football supporters are more and more being sacrificed on the altar of the property barons.

By John Barr

From a Fulham supporters leaflet:

Interesting fact: David Bulstrode based his fantastic idea to form Fulham Park Rangers on the merger of Corinthians and Casuals in the nineteenth century. Current attendances for Corinthian games run to about forty people. Good idea.

DAVE THOMAS, representing the QPR Action Group, set up in 48 hours to fight the merger, said:

"We want Fulham and Rangers to keep their own identity. Marler Estates have come in to Rangers with this Mickey Mouse name Fulham Park Rangers, which shows their total naivety of the game of football and the gut feeling which is involved. It underlines their ulterior motive - to make as much money as they can, at the demise of the two clubs."

PETER PROVERBS, Fulham supporter said:

"I think it's disgusting. If there were two separate teams playing at Rangers I would go and see Fulham play, but I wouldn't go and see them play as another side."

"I saw that Ernie Clay is trying to put a load together and buy Fulham back. But it's really up to the council. The local Labour MP is taking quite an interest, but the council has got to stop them through the planning application. Even then other people might over-rule them."

OTHER FULHAM SUPPORTERS:

"We want Fulham to stay at Craven Cottage, because it is a local amenity. The pro-

Unite against the bosses

AT LAST Saturday's Fulham match the chant went up, "Football fans unite against the bosses."

Fans from Fulham, Walsall and QPR united in anger at the property speculators' contempt for the game.

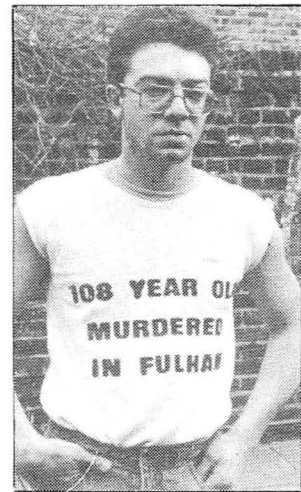
A massive banner held by Fulham fans said: Bulstrode and Ramsden—the real football hooligans."

Emotions were high, but there was no violence, all the anger was vented against the owners of the football clubs.

When the fans took over the pitch at half time, sympathetic stewards and police actually opened the gates to let supporters onto the pitch. Not one arrest was made, although as the comments below show, if the owners of Fulham FC had turned up to the game on Saturday there would have been an arrest for the "murder of a 108 year old in Fulham," as a teshirt slogan said.

erty companies can manipulate the way the players are brought and sold, manipulate the managers and the way the supporters are seen in the press. Bulstrode (of Marler Estates) picked up on reports in the press of 2,500 in the crowd last week. It was our lowest gate for the season, but he quoted that as the general crowd.

"Some of these people



Peter Proverbs—Fulham supporter.

here have been going for 40 or 50 years. We don't want to lose the ground.

"If a deal had gone through like this in the City the Monopolies Commission would have been called in and stopped it. It took them four months before they found out that Guinness was up to no good, and now Jim Gregory, a life long QPR supporter, (ex-chair) has in one week destroyed the whole of west London football.

"All this only started when Ernie Clay bought the Fulham ground off the Church for £900,000 and sold it again for £9 million.

"What they are doing is destroying the democratic rights to see the club of your choice whenever you want. Then they will bring London down to three main clubs, West Ham, Tottenham and Arsenal."

WITH CHANTS of 'supporters united will never be defeated', 2,000 Fulham, QPR, Wimbledon and Palace fans vented their feelings at a meeting on Monday night, organised by the Football in London Action Group.

Hammersmith and Fulham Labour council provided the hall free and council leader Prentice pledged that plans to develop Craven Cottage would be blocked. He also said that compulsory purchase of the ground would be looked at.

Labour MP for Fulham, Nick Raynsford said, as the hall erupted in cheering: "Mr Bulstrode and his friends are only interested in lining their pockets at the expense of the local community".

"The comments of Mr Bustrade are simply not worth the paper they are written on. Do you want to trust that man to control your football club?" Shouts of 'no'.

The meeting ended with chants of 'Bulstrode out', and fans linked arms singing 'you'll never walk alone'.

To stop the developers the council must put maximum pressure on the Tories, to ensure the go-ahead isn't given. The council should take over the club as a local amenity, but finance will be needed. The new Labour administration is already facing financial difficulties and has put up the rates by 50 per cent, and is cutting back on planned spending on housing.

There must be a full blown campaign to get extra money from central government. Ultimately football can only be run in the interest of the fans if it is taken out the hands of big business and run democratically by all those involved as a state sponsored sport.

bureaucratic interference.

Sales should be established outside schools, colleges youth clubs and dole offices in the next month.

Sales at dole offices can be done at any time in the day. If you make an early start then you can catch the staff going in as well. Set up a stall to attract attention. Some literature and a couple of placards, with demands such as the 35 hour week and no redundancies, will get some interest.

Sellers in Tyneside tell us that they are following Manchester's example and are writing to factories in their area to see if they will take bulk orders of the paper. Relevant articles from back issues of the paper are being used to convince shop stewards to order *Militant*.

Why not try this approach in your area?

News of good sales continues to pour in. 200 papers were sold on the Caterpillar demonstration. 40 supporters of the Ancoats Hospital occupation also bought the paper last Saturday.

Estate sales are very fruitful—34 papers were sold by five sellers on two estates in North Shields and Longbenton.

One seller in Stevenage sold 19 papers outside Labour Party meetings this week - and this in the middle of a witch-hunt.

Don't forget to ask for donations to help build a more frequent paper.

By Alan Beacham

Left and Right

ELECTION FEVER is robbing Tory papers like the *Daily Express* of even the tiniest pretence of independence. As early as 2 February the *Express's* lead story was, "Britain is booming", all was roses and would get rosier. "A give away budget on 17 March would add to the recovery and give Mrs Thatcher her election launch pad" they claim.

The smell changed from roses to something a bit fishier when you turned to the City page. There they report that stockbrokers Alexander Laing and Cruickshank have come out against tax cuts. They say, "British industry failed to take advantage of the growth in spending last year and there is little reason to believe it will

do so this year. Tax cuts therefore will simply serve to raise imports."

So unless *Express* read the City page, they just get Tory hype disguised as news.

THE NEW Maxwell London paper the *Daily News* was launched last week. The great 'socialist' proprietor told his equally leftie friend Robert Kilroy-Silk 'I won't write the editorials; it will have a totally independent political line.'

But Maxwell has put serious limits on this freedom. They can't support unilateral nuclear disarmament and they can't write anything nasty about the royal family.

Campaign '87



THE LABOUR Party Young Socialists national conference is drawing near. *Militant's* sales campaign should be linked to the activities to defend Labour's youth section from

6.2 MILLION YOUTH FOR LABOUR

Labour Party Young Socialists

THE CAMPAIGN is being stepped up to win all sections of the Labour Party to support the LPYS's democratic proposals in the Party's youth consultation.

In the last week the Campaign Group of Labour MPs has decided to back the YS's demands. In addition to the Regional LPYS conferences, which without exception carried resolutions or statements against the Sawyer pro-

Win the youth vote

THERE ARE 6.2 million new young voters in Britain. Only 1.2 say they will vote Labour. In the run up to a general election, it is vital that we win the youth vote for Labour.

Labour Party Young Socialist members have always been the "foot-soldiers" of the Party in an election period. Members are the most enthusiastic at canvassing, pollchecking, and "knocking up".

While this work is important, it will not persuade the mass of youth to vote Labour. LPYS branches around the country should instigate lively and interesting campaigns, that will attract youth to the ideas of the LPYS.

In North Beds LPYS, we have launched a campaign to win the youth vote for Labour in our constituency.

To begin with our LPYS branch discussed what we could do. Many good ideas for campaigning events, meetings, and publicity were raised. These were formulated into a loose plan of action.

Plan of action

The next step was to contact our PPC, and invite him to our meeting, to discuss the general election. He agreed with the LPYS that the youth vote was very important, and pledged his support for our campaign.

The LPYS decided to:

- ★ Produce a card aimed at new voters entitled "Why Should Young People Vote Labour?" outlining why a Labour government is needed.

- ★ Produce a leaflet aimed at young voters explaining the policy and programme of the LPYS.

- ★ Produce a youth survey which would gauge the opinions of Bedford youth on low pay, unemployment, leisure facilities and politics. This would be sponsored by local community organisations, trade unions and Labour Party branches.

- ★ Produce a newsletter

By Helen Watson
(North Beds. LPYS)

advertising a programme of meetings which include topics such as Red Wedge, the NHS, a public debate with the Young Conservatives and Labour on education (to be held at the local FE college).

- ★ Organise a disco in aid of the LPYS and the Silentnight strikers.

- ★ Approach the press about doing a feature debating party policy with the Young Conservatives.

- ★ Organise street activities on Saturdays where we would distribute leaflets and surveys. We would also perform a street meeting entitled: "The Trial of Margaret Thatcher".

All the information about the LPYS campaign was sent to local union and Labour Party branches, and the CLP sponsored the production of a 'new voters' card and a leaflet.

All this would prove quite hard work, so each member of the branch was made responsible for the organisation of a part of the campaign eg Media Officer, Meetings Organiser etc.

Our LPYS is just beginning the campaign to get a Labour government elected. Youth have borne the brunt of Tory attacks in employment, education, and all other aspects of their lives. We feel confident that the programme of the Labour Party Young Socialists, will persuade youth that Labour is the only party capable of changing their lives—for the better.

Monday 23 March at the Trades Club, Alexandra Road, Bedford at 8.00pm: Debate with the Young Conservatives on policy. Speakers include: Linda Douglas (LPYS NEC rep.), Bruce Henderson (PPC North Beds CLP).

posals, support is growing in the constituencies and regions.

In Scotland, Pollok and Shettleton CLP's have both sent resolutions supporting the YS to the Scottish Labour Party conference.

The London Labour Party conference has four resolutions on the youth proposals for consideration—not one is in favour of the NEC document.

Again in London, Beckenham CLP are inviting an LPYS speaker to debate the proposals with Phil Woolas (co-author of the Fabian pamphlet "Labour's Youth—the missing generation" and fellow traveller with Sawyer).

In the West Midlands, Coventry South East CLP will be submitting their contribution to the consultation after their next meeting, but in a debate on the question at their last meeting there was not one speaker in support of Tom Sawyer's proposals.

This must be just the beginning. These examples of

support for Labour's youth and for the involvement of trade union and student youth on a democratically elected basis, show that where this campaign is taken up Labour's ranks will support the clear, concise and honest initiatives of the YS.

But time is of the essence! Every section of the Party and its affiliates must be contacted immediately. Many constituencies and wards do not meet in April because of the local elections in May.

Trade unions must be approached, offering YS speakers, to discuss the proposals urgently before the consultation period is up. Walworth Road can and must be deluged with resolutions, as part of the consultation for the YS proposals.

In this way the attacks on Labour's youth can be turned to the advantage of the LPYS and greater involvement of young trade unionists and students in the LPYS can be achieved in the fight against the Tory enemy.



LPYS national demonstration in October '86.

Young voters need socialism

THREE WEEKS ago Bermondsey LPYS launched a campaign to win the youth vote. Every Tuesday night we've canvassed young voters, as well as establishing youth teams to canvass young people as part of Bermondsey Labour Party's fortnightly mass canvasses.

Young people have a habit of never being in, so we've only managed to speak to about 33 young people.

We've produced special youth voter packs which in-

clude our drugs questionnaire, drug and solvent abuse is a particular problem in our area, as well as our printed programme, Labour Party forms and *Socialist Youth*.

The results have clearly indicated a support for Labour, but at the same time a scepticism amongst youth.

Of those canvassed 13 support Labour, four see no alternative through politics, 17 don't know which political party will offer

them a future.

But three of the 'don't knows' bought *Socialist Youth* and joined the LPYS, obviously seeing the only alternative to Thatcherism being the policies of the YS!

"Creating more jobs" has been the main demand of local youth as an end to the misery of drug abuse.

Already we've unearthed massive problems involving drugs which will be the basis for future campaigns.

One example is a 17 year

old school student whose boyfriend and his sister died from heroin. Her little sister even came into their flat carrying a syringe full of heroin from the stairway! This young girl as well as eleven other young people have shown their determination to see an end to drug abuse and the whole of the profit system through joining Bermondsey YS and fighting to get our socialist candidate elected.

Simply Red tour

Simply Red will be touring in March and April. All Young Socialist branches are urged to get along to the concerts to sell *Socialist Youth* and recruit to the LPYS.

March: Glasgow SEC 9, Edinburgh Playhouse 10, Newcastle City Hall 11, Manchester Apollo 13 and 14, Bradford St George's 15, Brighton Centre 17, Portsmouth Guildhall 18, Cardiff

St David's Hall 19, Swindon Oasis Centre 21, London Hammersmith Odeon 23-26, Birmingham Odeon 28, Liverpool Empire 29, Nottingham Concert Hall 30.

April: London Kilburn National 1 and 2, Birmingham Odeon 4, Leicester De Montfort Hall 5, Bournemouth International Centre 8, St Austell Coliseum 9 and Bristol Hippodrome 10.

Tory schemes attack young workers' rights

RECENTLY NEW regulations have been brought in on sick pay for Community Programme workers.

Previously workers received sick pay at their normal rate for the first six days of their illness and if their illness continued they had to produce a sick note signed by a doctor.

Now, however, we don't receive any sick pay for the first three days of any illness. My supervisor said this was because workers were treating sick pay as "an extra holiday". But we still don't receive sick pay even if we produce a doctor's note in the first week.

This happened recently when a co-worker got chicken-pox and was off for two weeks. For the first week of her illness she received only £12.50 instead of the £47.12 she would have got.

The same has just happened to me because I was off for a week with flu.

Far from being an action to discourage skiving these new regulations are yet another attack on part-time, low-paid young workers.

By Jyoti Mishra
(Derby North YS, Community Programme worker)

YS conference '87

Come to LPYS National Conference Blackpool 17-20 April.

Friday 17 April 7pm: "Young workers for Labour Rally." Speakers include: Ron Todd (General Secretary TGWU) Diana Jeuda (USDAW) Linda Douglas (LPYS).



IN DUNDEE, one of the ten pilot areas for the government's Jobs Training Scheme, over 100 people attended a meeting at the Amalgamated Engineering Union office to discuss the scheme which forces the unemployed to take up 'training' places with local firms at no more than their supplementary benefit rates.

Ernie Ross, MP for Dundee West pointed out that "Practically no one sup-

ported the scheme... the lack of financial support for the individual trainee was one of the major complaints... people are being asked to work overtime... two hotels in the area were expecting trainees to work a six-day shift—again that's not part of the scheme. It simply confirms my fears that the scheme is being used by many companies as a means of getting cheap labour".

Women's struggle...

...a struggle for socialism



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S Day is not a feminist event, but a labour movement celebration of the struggle of working class women against the oppression of the bosses' system.

It was born out of the battles in the USA for the eight-hour day and the struggle for women's right to vote. Proclaimed by the American Socialist Party in 1908, it has been celebrated on the last Sunday in February since 1910.

The German Social-Democratic Party in 1910 printed 2.5 million leaflets aimed at involving women in the movement and organising them around the issue of suffrage.

Russia was shaken by enormous industrial struggles between 1910 and 1914. In response to this the Bolshevik paper *Pravda* commemorated International Women's Day in 1913 with a special six-page edition.

Rallies were held in five cities, the largest in St Petersburg with over 1,000 workers present. In 1914 the government banned a Women's Day rally, leading to spontaneous protests.

But the most dramatic confirmation of women's role in the workers' struggle came in Russia in 1917.

In January the police reported:

"The mothers of families, exhausted from endless standing in line at the

stores, tormented by the look of their half-starving and sick children, are very likely closer to revolution than Messrs Miliukov, Rodichev & Co (liberal leaders—*Editor*), and of course, they are more dangerous because they represent that store of inflammable material for which one spark will set off a fire."

That spark came with International Women's Day in February 1917, when the women textile workers struck and set off the fire of the Russian Revolution.

An eyewitness on that day reported:

"The working women, driven to desperation by starvation and war, came along like a hurricane that destroys everything in its path with the violence of an elemental force. The revolutionary march of women, full of the hatred of centuries of oppression, was the spark that set light to the great flame of the February revolution which was to shatter Tsarism".

From the heroic struggle of the miners' wives in Britain to the movement of women in Bhopal, India, following the Union Carbide disaster, women are continuing to prove their key role as class fighters.

HEATHER RAWLING reviews a book, *Women: A world report* (edited by Debbie Taylor; published by Methuen; price £4.95, which shows, with grim statistics, the conditions that are driving women into struggle around the world.

A WOMAN in a Pakistani village spends around 63 hours a week on domestic work. Yet she will also play a major role in agriculture, such as caring for livestock (one third of her time), growing vegetables, etc.

Even in the industrialised countries, a housewife works an average of 56 hours per week in the home, and if she has small children that figure jumps nearly 40 per cent. A working woman has a third less free time than her husband has on average.

Women's work in agriculture is very often underpaid, and sometimes unpaid. In Malawi and Botswana, for example, three quarters of women work on the land without pay.

The harsh conditions suffered by the rural masses in general, and women in particular, are the result of the private ownership of land and productive resources.

The world harvests enough food each year to feed its population twice over, yet 450 million people (one in every ten) are malnourished. In 1980, 15 million children starved to death.

All these millions go hungry because the food they have grown is not theirs. They do not own the land, and they don't earn enough money to buy the food which their own labour has produced.

In Latin America, 17 per cent of landowners own 90 per cent of the land, while the poorest one-third own only one per cent of cropland. Six hundred million people in rural parts of the third world have no land at all.

Food shortages become worse when governments and landowners turn to producing 'cash crops' (for export), rather than growing the staple food of their country.

Only a movement by the masses to take over the land and plan food production using modern methods, can solve the problem of hunger. Women will, of necessity, be at the forefront of that struggle.

Women in industry

THERE HAS been an enormous expansion in industry internationally since the Second World War.

There are now a total of 676 million women wage earners, a third of the world's labour force.

As a result of working-class struggles, 90 countries now have equal pay laws. Yet women are still far from earning equal pay.

A minimum pay law can close many of the loopholes in equal pay legislation, since most of the low-paid are women. However, even this can only be successful if the minimum wage is adequate for workers' needs—for example, not less than £120 per week in this country at present—and backed up by industrial action to enforce it where necessary.

In Portugal, a national minimum wage was one of the gains of the 1974 revolution. As a result, women's average wages rose from just 52 per cent of men's average wages in 1973 to 71 per cent in 1980.

Under capitalism, most of the low-paid are concentrated in the service sector and other jobs considered "women's work". Yet even in the "socialist", centrally-planned economies in Eastern Europe, where it is declared state policy to treat the sexes equally, 45 per cent of women are working in service jobs.

In the USSR women hold 82 per cent of posts in health care, physical education and social security, and 74 per cent of jobs in public education.

This continuing discrimination is the result of the absence of democratic control over production by the workers themselves, and the concentration of power in the hands of bureaucratic cliques who fear any challenge to their privileges.



Alexandra Kollontai—a leading Bolshevik in the Russian revolution.

Unemployment and low pay

IN 1982, women formed around one-third of the labour force in the OECD (industrialised) countries. But even then official estimates put the number of unemployed women at 12 million—40 per cent of the registered unemployed.

In reality, of course, the number of unemployed women is far higher as many do not bother to register.

Women's jobs are under special threat because they tend to be used as cheap labour, in less skilled work where they can be more easily replaced by machines.

But, ironically, in some areas women are so low paid that for the time being they are cheaper than machines. This is truest of all in the so-called 'Free Trade Zones' of the Far East.

Here taxes and wages are low, labour laws relaxed, currency controls waived, and strikes in many cases illegal.

Employers in the Free Trade Zones have shown an overwhelming preference for young women. In Malaysia's Bayan Lepas Free Trade Zone, 85 per cent of workers are women between 18 and 24.

Child care and family planning

THERE HAS been much debate in Britain over women's right to abortion, with some on the right clamouring for a tightening up of the abortion law.

The results of this approach can be seen in Latin America, where the anti-contraception and anti-abortion teachings of the Catholic church have great influence: complications following illegal abortions are the number one killer for women aged between 15 and 39.

It has been estimated that there are about 50 million abortions per year around the world. Only 50 per cent of women in the world who want contraception are able to get it.

Family life is further distorted by the crushing burdens of poverty. In many rural areas of the third world, children are needed for their labour and to care for their parents in old age.

Only 23 per cent of men and six per cent of women wage earners will receive a pension by the year 2000 under the capitalist system.

In the poorest countries, the average rate of infant deaths is 129 per thousand (compared to 15 per thousand in the industrialised countries).

With children needed so badly, but with a big danger of each one dying, women have many more children to ensure that enough survive. Over half a million women die in childbirth in Africa and Asia every year.

The world has the resources and medical know-how to prevent the vast majority of these deaths, and eliminate the drudgery and misery faced by countless millions as a result of economic underdevelopment.

This will only become possible under the government of the working class, abolishing capitalism and directing production towards the needs of all the people.

Then we can move from the "realm of necessity" to the "realm of freedom". Then the basic needs and democratic rights of women can finally be secured, including the right to have only the children that they want.

This understanding is, unfortunately, absent from *Women: A world report*. The first part of the book is packed with facts and figures that will be valuable to anyone trying to understand the real basis for the struggle of women internationally.

Feminist

Ironically, however, the various contributors to the book do not seem to realise the significance of the facts they are presenting. There is a tendency to approach women's problems from a feminist standpoint, as if they were somehow separate from the problems of society as a whole.

One contributor put the following question to a group of working women in India: "If you can summarise them, tell me what are women's most severe problems in India?"

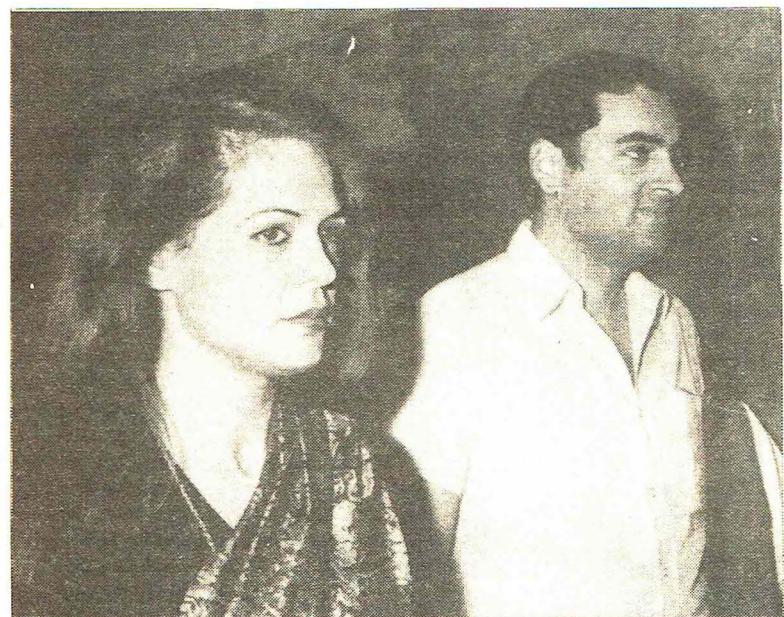
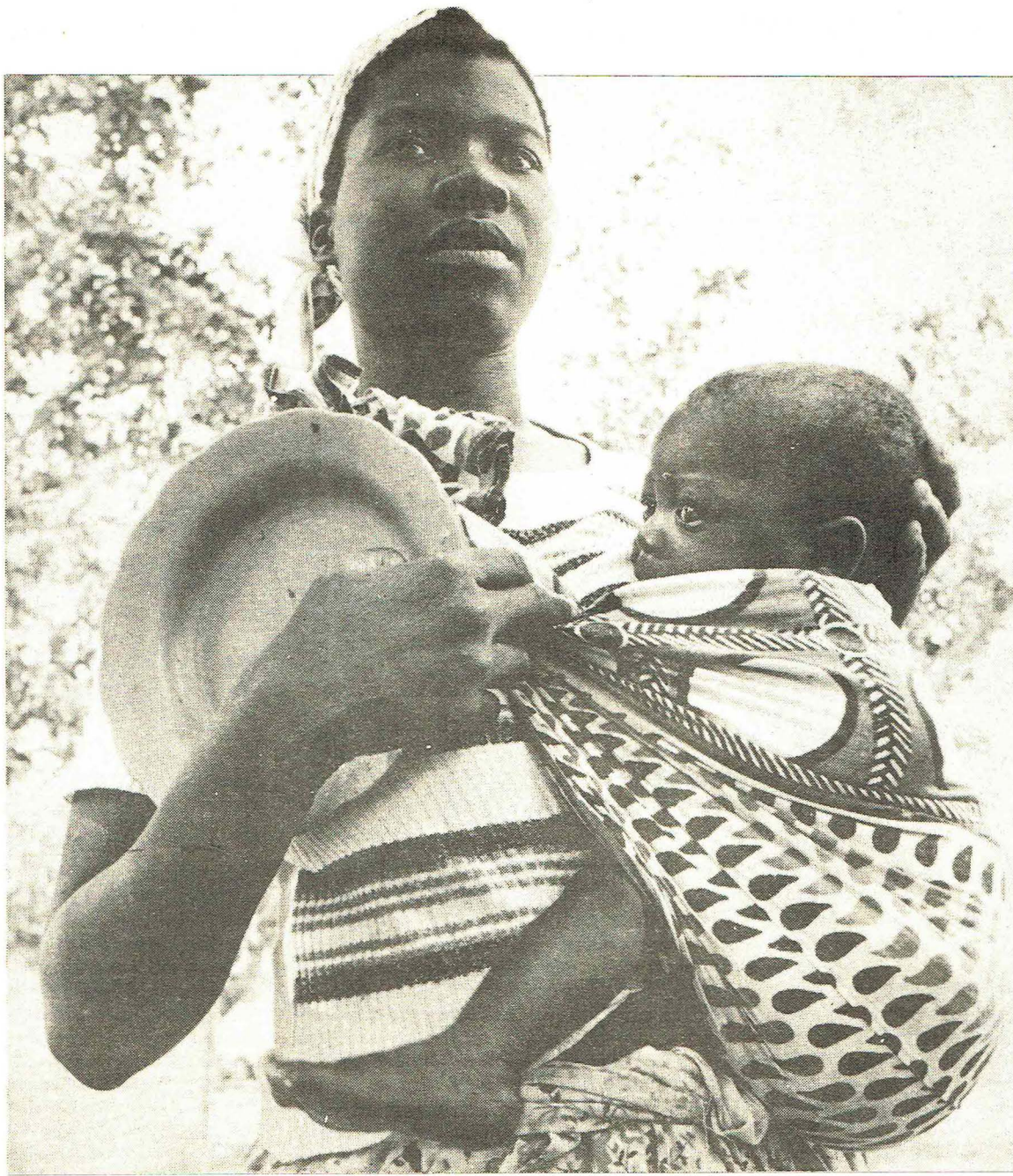
"I expect them", she continues, "to answer: the marriage system, lack of birth control, poverty. But all four of them cry out at once: 'Water, fuel, fodder!'"

For these women, the struggle to transform their lives begins with a struggle to secure their basic needs. It is part and parcel of the workers' struggle everywhere for socialist transformation.

Without a programme to unite and mobilise working people—men and women—on this basis, there can be no solution to the problems of women. That is the central message of International Women's Day.



(Above) A poster from revolutionary Soviet Russia, entitled: "Women! Learn your letters!" Workers' rule and socialist policies freed women from illiteracy. (Right) Tens of millions of women and children face a future of misery under capitalist domination—or a struggle for socialist change.



(Above) Rajiv Gandhi and his wife Sonia lead a life of luxury while working-class women struggle against poverty and degradation.



BEHIND RAJIV Gandhi's modern image lies a decaying and diseased society. Capitalism has failed completely to drag India out of poverty. NINA RAHEL describes the living nightmare that it has created.

SIXTY PER cent of India's population—420 million people—live below the official poverty line of 76 Rupees (£4.47) per month.

Capitalism in India is weak and stunted, incapable of developing industry, creating jobs and offering decent living standards for the masses. It relies on the most reactionary forces in society to keep the mass of workers and peasants in check.

For women this has meant additional and brutal oppression. Desperate poverty imprisons women in the home, where they suffer degradation and misery enforced through age-old customs.

Proverbs from around India reflect these attitudes: "A woman should be a lump of clay" (West Bengal); "The luckless man loses a horse, the lucky man loses a wife" (Punjab); "Be the mother of a hundred sons" (Maharashtra).

"Dowry deaths"

The oppression of women takes on the vilest forms. Although theoretically against the law, the dowry ("bride-wealth", ie payments to the husband's family when a girl marries) system continues. Women are hounded and even murdered when dowry

payments are not considered large enough by the groom and his family.

Complaints about insufficient dowry always arise after the marriage, when the first instalment has been paid. In 1984, for example, 340 "dowry deaths" were reported. In many cases the women were doused in paraffin, then burned alive.

One young woman was nine months pregnant when her brother-in-law, mother-in-law and husband burned her to death.

Faced with horrific poverty, many families resort to killing baby girls in order to rid themselves of the burden of another daughter. Another daughter is another mouth to feed, and once she reaches marrying age, dowry payments must be found to marry her off.

The capitalist magazine *India Today* recently highlighted the plight of the Kallar people of the Madurai district of the southern state of Tamil Nadu. A couple put their newly-born daughter to death by feeding her oleander berries:

"Within an hour the baby began to twitch and tremble fitfully. Slowly she started spouting blood through her mouth and nose. The parents heard her whining for a few more minutes, and all was quiet."

The mother said it was better for the child to suffer for an hour than to suffer for the rest of her life.

Both parents are agricultural workers. When the father manages to find work, he earns 13 Rupees (76p) a day, and the mother six Rupees (35p). The next day's work is never guaranteed.

It is these brutal conditions that push the Madurai people into the horrible act of infanticide, making their lives even more wretched.

At the local hospital, 95 per cent of the Kallar women who give birth to daughters vanish immediately with the babies. The hospital estimates that 80 per cent of the babies are killed.

Muslim women

The miserable poverty of the Madurai people is repeated on a vast scale throughout India. And in Rajiv Gandhi's two years of government his economic policies in favour of the rich have intensified mass suffering, stoking up the fires of national divisions, communalism and religious fundamentalism.

In May 1986 the 'modern' Rajiv bowed to the reactionary Muslim leaders, and forced a law through parliament denying muslim women alimony after divorce.

The question of alimony arose out of the case of Shah Bano, a 73-year-old woman who went to court for a small maintenance to feed herself. Her husband had

divorced her after 43 years of marriage.

The court granted her 500 Rupees (£29.41) a month. She had no other means of subsistence.

But this judgment outraged the fundamentalist Muslim leaders, who have since whipped up wider support. They have played on the fears in the Muslim community, portraying the judgement as yet another attack on the Muslim minority.

As a result, demonstrations against the ruling took place. Rajiv Gandhi buckled under the pressure and introduced his law to prevent other Muslim women from claiming maintenance.

His retreat, on the other hand, added fuel to the fires of Hindu chauvinism, which saw this as yet more pandering to the minority. The whole issue shows how Rajiv is trapped in quicksand.

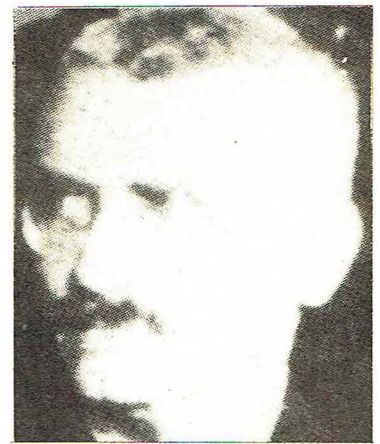
Indian capitalism stands condemned by the poverty and oppression it inflicts on the vast majority of people, on men but still more on women.

But in their millions the working people of India, men and women, have struck back, battled with the police on picket lines, taken to the streets and demanded change.

The energies of the working class must be channelled into struggle to transform India from a living hell into a socialist society. This alone will lay the basis for the eradication of poverty and the oppression of women that comes with it.

Bolsheviks remembered

Smirnov



IVAN NIKITICH SMIRNOV was born in 1881 and murdered by Stalin in 1936. He was the third defendant in the first "great frame up" trial.

In the history of the revolution Ivan Smirnov was one of its greatest heroes—working for many years in the Tsarist army and leading the legendary Fifth Red Army in the civil war. He was a close personal friend of Trotsky, who described him as "the most complete and finished revolutionary type."

He was known as the 'Conscience of Sviyazhsk' when, in the critical month of August 1918, Trotsky, Smirnov and the Fifth Army reversed the White Guard offensive, capturing Kazan and saving the revolution. He led the Fifth army into Siberia where they routed the counter-revolutionary forces of Admiral Kolchak.

Opposition

Trotsky writes in *My Life*: "A fifth army man, in the lexicon of the revolution carries a special meaning. It denotes a true revolutionary, a man of duty and above all a scrupulous one."

Many fifth army men joined Trotsky's opposition against the bureaucratic counter-revolution, and ended their days in Stalin's camps or in the frozen wastes of exile.

Smirnov was elected to the Central Committee in 1920 and for a time headed the commissary of Posts and Telegraphs. He joined the Left Opposition in 1923 and was expelled from the party with Trotsky at the 15th Congress in 1927. Internal exile in Siberia broke his spirit and he capitulated to Stalin in 1929, debasing himself with many contradictory written confessions.

His heroic past and his close association with Trotsky, however, made him a perpetual threat to Stalin, who feared that a favourable turn in international events could resurrect the traditions of the Fifth Red Army.

Smirnov was arrested and interned by Stalin in 1933. In the trial of 1936 he 'confessed' to working under orders from Trotsky, plotting the murder of Stalin and working with the Nazis. His ex-wife was made to testify against him. He was shot along with the other defendants at the close of the trial.

Smirnov will be remembered not as the broken man of 1936 but as one of the finest sons of the revolution.

By Mike Waddington

Pakistan, USA, South Africa

Pakistan: youth lead struggle

TANDLIANWALA is a town of 50,000 people in a remote part of Central Punjab. In the third week of February it was gripped by a total general strike for eight days. Three people were killed by police bullets, including two school students; many were injured and hundreds were arrested.

The struggle began when the authorities announced that a new science college to be built in the town would instead be built in Remy Shah, a nearby village. The only reason for the change was that Remy Shah is the home of the local Provincial Assembly member, belonging to the ruling Muslim League.

The school students were the first to react against this open favouritism. Within days their demand for the college to be built became the property of the whole town.

Threats

There was a whole series of protest meetings and a two-hour token general strike. The only official reaction was arrests and threats. This united the whole town, which went on a total general strike on 15 February.

The local police went mad. Ali Sher (15), Baber (14) and Ali Sardar (60), the father of five school students, were shot dead when they opened fire without warning. Twenty

From a correspondent in Pakistan.

five others were injured.

The brutality of the police only fired the fighting spirit of the masses. Numerous demonstrations followed. The largest ever procession of 50,000 people took place after the killings.

Even the most oppressed and isolated layer, the *Burqah posh* (women in purdah, i.e. wearing the full veil) came into the forefront of the struggle and clashed with the police.

Local administration broke down completely. There was an unprecedented boycott of the police, so much so that policemen could no longer buy food or drink in the town.

Solidarity processions were held in other towns. The movement was spreading like fire.

At this point the government gave in. All the demands of the protesters were accepted: establishment of the college, release of all detainees, compensation for



Students on the march in Tandlianwala.

the dead and wounded.

Only the demand for murder charges to be brought against the police who killed the school students is still under consideration.

Mass revolt

This successful mass revolt has given a glimpse of what could be in store for the whole of Pakistan under the

right-wing Zia regime.

Hardly a day passes without riots in one city or another. In the capital, Karachi, over 1,000 have so far been killed in communal riots sparked off by the regime's policies. There have been general strikes in the last four weeks in Peshawar, Gofra, Pandi Bhattian, Narang Mandi and other towns in Punjab.

The regime has lost all

authority over society. It is still in power for one reason only: the opposition parties—including the mass party, the Pakistan People's Party—have failed miserably to lead the masses to the overthrow of Zia.

Tandlianwala has proven the superiority of the united mass struggle of the workers and youth over all other methods of struggle. During the movement new leader-

ship emerged. New action committees were formed. Young students came to the fore.

United on a programme of socialist transformation, armed with clear strategy and tactics, activists such as these can transform the PPP into a revolutionary mass movement, leading millions to overthrow the worn-out, oppressive rule of the capitalists and landlords.

Victory for SA strikers

AFTER A bitter struggle lasting more than ten weeks the 10,000 strikers employed by OK Bazaars supermarkets in South Africa, have won a significant victory.

Despite the arrest of over 1,000 workers (10 per cent of the strikers), attempts to break the strike by Inkatha, and attacks on pickets, the workers remained united.

In the course of the strike over 500,000 working days were lost, and profits severely cut. Threats of solidarity action from other unions affiliated to COSATU, combined with the unbroken determination of the strikers, eventually forced the bosses to retreat.

Workers have won a R100 per month across the board increase, and a minimum wage of R400 per month. OK has also agreed to reinstate 364 of the 500 workers sacked. But COSATU must continue to fight for the reinstatement of all other victimised workers.

The victory of the OK workers has inspired new workers' struggles across South Africa, boosting the struggle for a national minimum wage. COSATU must take advantage of the mood of the workers for struggle, and set a minimum wage figure to be achieved by the campaign. Plans must now be seriously prepared to draw together and mobilise workers across South Africa.

By Sean Kelly

Reagan suffers crippling blows

THE TOWER Commission in the United States has left the corpses of President Reagan's closest associates all around the White House. Even more resignations and dismissals are possible.

The commission has destroyed Reagan's popularity and left him with less credibility than his Spitting Image puppet.

The commission was looking into the Irangate scandal, the administration's decision to sell missiles to the Khomeini dictatorship in Iran and "launder" the proceeds to give unauthorised funds to the vicious right wing Contras in Nicaragua. Reagan and other top government officials have been playing a game of pass the buck about who was responsible.

Even before Tower reported, Reagan's national security adviser Poindexter had resigned and his aide North had been dismissed for their part in the affair. Another White House Aide, McFarlane, has attempted to commit suicide.

Resigned

After the report Donald Regan, White House chief of staff and regarded as number two in the administration, resigned. Tower criticised Secretary of State Shultz and Defence Secretary Weinberger for not warning the President of the consequences of his actions.

The report tactfully describes Reagan's own role as "detached" but less diplomatic sources talk of lying or at best, incompetence. He claimed to have forgotten what had happened when the Iran deal was struck, but considering Reagan's hatred of Khomeini it is like Faust

'forgetting' his deal with Mephistopheles.

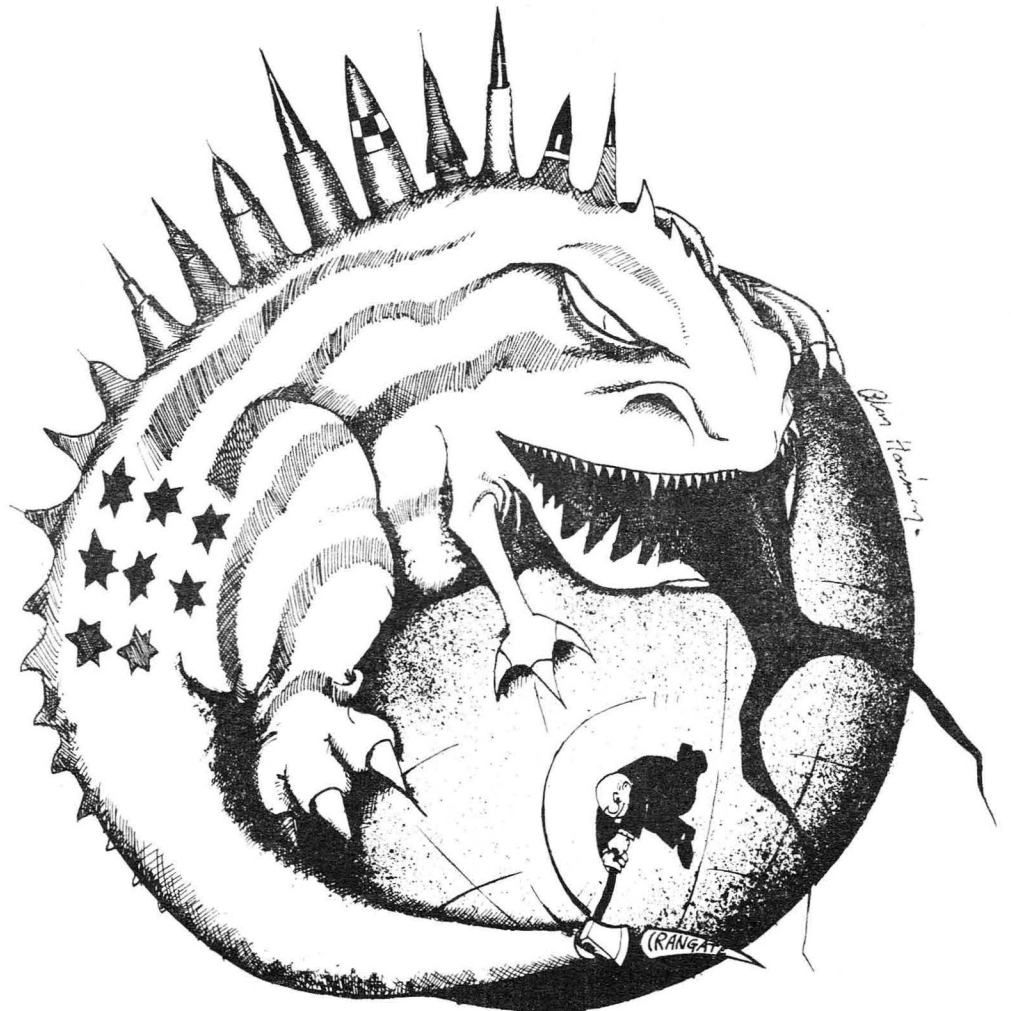
The most charitable analysis is stupidity, possibly senility. When Howard Baker, a slightly more 'liberal' capitalist, took over Donald Regan's post, a former aide of Nixon commented that Reagan had never been more than a glove puppet. "Now at least there's a capable hand up his back," he claimed!

Revelations are likely to continue for some time from different investigations. Reagan's popularity has already slumped. One in three Americans think he should resign and 53 per cent disapprove of the way he is handling his job, according to a poll just after the report was issued.

Lying or senility are not the worst of Reagan's failings over the last six years. The attacks on Lebanon, on Libya (rumoured to have been aimed at assassinating Gaddafi) and Grenada, and the dirty war against Nicaragua, have had more international significance.

But in America the revelations have destroyed Reagan's successful image which he could only maintain thanks to the economic boom, which most US economists think has only a year left to run.

The ruling class would probably prefer to have



more control over policy rather than leave it to the unsubtle far-right enthusiasts of Reagan's old guard.

The other capitalist party, the Democrats, are now more likely than before to win the next presidential election. But they have miserably failed to go on the offensive against Reagan. It is not in their interests to expose the corruption of politics

dominated by big business.

A socialist party, based on the labour movement and prepared to expose the shady deals and cover-ups, would be growing by leaps and bounds at present.

As it is, Reagan may find himself still in office until 1989 but with all his power stripped away, a lame duck president with no ability to take initiatives.

It is an indication of the complete degeneracy of capitalism in crisis, that rather than the bourgeois statesmen of the past, a gross political incompetent like Reagan should have been elevated to the presidency at all.

By Roger Shives

Kinnock gets his priorities right

Dear Comrades,

I have just received "An important message from Neil Kinnock to all members of the Labour Party".

Bemoaning Labour's financial situation Neil says: "We live a hand to mouth existence most of the time". Yet thousands of pounds of members' contributions were frittered away on the inquiry into the Liverpool District Labour Party.

What about the MPs who not only receive a handsome salary, but have outside interests as well?

Yours fraternally Kevin Conway
Bootle Labour Party Young Socialists

Dear Comrades,

Alexander Irvine QC has not only represented the Labour Party NEC against Liverpool socialists, but a NUPE member in Kent, who was disgusted at his ennoblement, told me that he also acted on behalf of Kent

county council in 1982 when they sacked all their school meals staff and re-employed them on short-term contracts outside the terms of the national agreement.

NUPE members in Kent will be amongst those wanting an answer to the ques-

Dear Comrades,

The recent outbursts by Edwina Currie about Glenys Kinnock being the 'real leader of the Labour Party' seems to be a very important issue to be discussing at a time of mass unemployment and social unrest!

But the outburst of Neil Kinnock in the Commons makes me angry—it seems Neil is more upset at his wife being labelled the leader of the Labour Party than supporting working class struggles like the miners, and printers' strikes.

Yours fraternally
T Seddon
Kent

tion in the Left and Right column (*Militant* 835): "Why should Alexander Irvine QC be ennobled in the name of the Labour Party?"

Yours fraternally
Martin Cock
Folkestone and Hythe
LPYS



Opportunities

Dear Comrades,

Just before leaving with a comrade from his flat for a drink, I remarked that when a member of Ballymena YS in Northern Ireland our comrades always followed the rule to carry a workers paper "always and everywhere".

Halfway out the door we decided to bring a copy of *Militant* each.

Within two hours our decision paid dividends as we walked past a pub. One man going inside asked "What's the paper—the *Independent*?"

I replied warily "The *Militant*, a socialist paper". He bought a copy for a pound and gave his name and address so he could receive it regularly.

Yours fraternally
Niell Mulholland
Preston Labour Party Young Socialists

Pushed into politics

Dear Comrades,

Last Saturday I was selling the *Militant* in Gorseinon as usual. Gorseinon is a small, quiet town, and after three and a half years of regular sales, I know many of the faces as they go by, and each week wonder whether to approach them yet again, after they have politely refused every week, month after month.

This week, one of these familiar faces suddenly turned round to buy one. Effing and blinding, he told me that the company he worked for had been taken over, leaving him without seniority, right in the lurch.

Workers may go by for years on end, ignoring politics, but then politics intrudes on them and they have no alternative but to look for political answers.

Yours fraternally
Pat Bell
Gowerton

Words of wisdom

Dear Comrades,

While buying a cup of tea recently, I flogged a copy of *Militant* to the cafe manageress, Anne. The following week I called back and asked her what she thought of it. "Good, really good" she commented, "especially the stuff about the NCU strike". She then bought the latest issue from me.

I then bumped into Kevin an ex-LPYS member, who had no hesitation in buying a paper.

While making my way out of the market I had the misfortune to come across a local right-wing Labour Party member. What were his words of wisdom for the day?

"I joined the Labour Party as a socialist but understand the reality of the situation which is that you've got more chance of being struck down by lightning than you have of carrying through a revolution in this country. You and your working class are as thick as two short planks."

Yours fraternally
Jackie Mulholland
Stevenage

Minimum wage

Dear Comrades,

Selling the *Militant* outside the Hull British Rail station last week, a BR platform worker came up to buy a copy.

He'd just got paid and taking a fiver from his wage packet asked if I could change it. I said that the £5 would be alright as it would help us reach our £250,000 target.

He replied, showing me his wage slip, that unfortunately he couldn't afford that, as for starting work at five am Monday to Friday he took home £64!

Railworkers need £120 minimum wage now. However, he did pay the solidarity price of £1.

Yours fraternally
Alistair Tice
Hull

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

The amazing butter fiasco

Dear Comrades,

Working as a part time 'community befriender' concerned with the welfare of old age pensioners, we are caught up in an absolute fiasco. It involves the distribution of this free pound of EEC butter.

We were told to inform the pensioners in our area that on producing their pension books, distribution would take place in our local community centre. Those who were housebound would have it delivered by us.

We then received information about two girls operating in our area trying to con them out of their books using the free butter as a cover. We were then told that pensioners themselves had to go to a local Salvation Army hall to collect this butter.

This raised the obvious problem concerning those who are housebound.

If we had a socialist system which catered for the needs of the many and not the profits of the few, this fiasco would not have arisen in the first place and old folk would be treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Yours fraternally
Bob Harker Gateshead East Labour Party

History repeating itself

Dear Comrades,

Last Friday on the TV programme *What The Papers Say*, an article concerning the sky high level of house prices in London was mentioned.

It referred to a similar occurrence regarding house prices which happened in the 1800s in France. It seems that during this time property prices in Paris went sky high, just as they have recently done in London.

It also seems that this boom in the property prices was followed by a collapse in price.

If this is true for Paris in the 1800s then it should be a perspective of the paper in regard of prices in London in the late 1980s, 90s.

Yours fraternally John R Smithee Cambridgeshire

Key role of Russian officers

Dear Comrades,

In your article in *Militant* 834 on the Russian revolution, a paragraph in the second column reads: "In the Russian revolution, the officers remained hostile to revolution. And yet nowhere except in Russia did the working class take power".

I realise that some officers were very treacherous. What I want to raise is the officers who played a key role in the setting up of the Red Army.

The revolution did not bring working class warriors with a knowledge of military art. This is a weak spot in all revolutions, as history shows.

Some officers were won over to the ideas of the revolution and played key roles in the fighting units in battle situations. Sadly a large majority of these people were killed during the purges of the '30s.

Yours fraternally
Nigel Buckley
Middlesex

Labour Party double standards

Dear Comrades,

One of the charges levelled against *Militant* supporters is that they cause disunity by criticising or disagreeing with the Labour leadership and party policy.

Yet Bill Jordan, AEU leader, in an article in the latest issue of his union's journal directly criticises Labour's defence policy and calls for a referendum to decide the nuclear weapons issue.

Denis Healey is now stating that American bases may not necessarily be removed in the lifetime of a Labour government.

Both these views are contrary to official party policy and yet no one is calling for the expulsion of Jordan or Healey.

Yours fraternally
Dave Pollock
Scarborough

Early retirement—a solution to unemployment

Dear Comrades,

If men had parity with women at the age of 60 it would help young people obtain proper work.

I appreciate some jobs could be created with a government with different political objectives, but let's face it, with Hi-tec there is

now need for less personnel to be involved in the old work ethic type of society. Why not pursue a policy of early retirement through the European courts?

Yours sincerely
Norman JP Glover
Humberside (CSU)

Erosion of environment

Dear Comrades,

The Tories are now about to plunder green belt land for the benefit of building speculators.

'Efficiency in farming' means 1.34 million tonnes of nitrogen on the land in Britain, a twenty five fold increase since 1942.

In 1984 29,500 tonnes of sprays and pesticides were

distributed. On top of all this poison thousands of additives and preservatives are added to our food.

Approaching the election the environment may become an important issue as it is in West Germany.

Yours fraternally
Mike King
Southampton

Back-door discrimination in education

Dear Comrades,

I have just returned from an interview with a careers officer, which I arranged to ask if I was able to get a grant for further education.

I was informed that unless my parents were able to support me, I would be better off remaining on social security and attending a part-time education course. This means the

most A levels I could do is two, when I want to take three so I can go to university.

My dad is unemployed and my mum earns just enough to keep us going.

This really brought home the importance of having a socialist government.

Yours fraternally Colleen Eccles
Stockbridge Labour Party Young Socialists

Students look to a Labour government

Dear Comrades,

No less than five of the seven students who I share a house with in Lancaster have agreed to join the Labour Party.

Students are becoming more and more discontented with the Tories and their at-

tacks on grants, housing benefits and educational standards and are desperate for the return of a Labour government.

Yours fraternally
Max Neill
Lancaster university

Insult to internationalism

Dear Comrades,

A group of Tory MPs is calling for the introduction of a Sir Winston Churchill National Day to replace the present May Day holiday.

Compared to the many capitalist holidays, bank holidays, religious festivals etc. May Day was fought for and won by the labour movement as a workers' holiday. It is not just a holiday but a symbol of working class solidarity and

internationalism. When the Ayatollah Khomeni built a public lavatory on the site of the old Shah's tomb the Tory media cried 'sacrilege' but that is nothing compared to the insult intended by linking May Day with the name of one of the most vicious, anti-working class figures in British history.

Yours fraternally
Mara Cortesi
Isle of Wight

Intimidation

Dear Comrades,

As part of their bid to improve community policing in Brixton, police and horses in full riot gear have been seen regularly trotting and galloping through local streets and estates.

Whilst Brixton market may be a bustling place on a Saturday afternoon, it in no way warrants these intimidatory and provocative tactics and we in the Young Socialists will be taking up the issue locally.

Yours Fraternally
Steve Nally
Vauxhall Labour Party
Young Socialists

Figures of fun

Dear Comrades,

At last! The answer to the continually escalating crime rate!—cardboard cut-out policemen! Apparently, if these are placed in shops, then they're going to reduce the crime rate. This news comes in a Folkestone free newspaper.

The whole idea was dreamed up by a 'retail security group', but their spokesman got one thing right when he said! "The figures would only attract vandalism!"

Yours fraternally
Kevin Blake

Barbaric

Dear Comrades,

According to an article in the *Guardian*, the European Society of Friends has published a report which examines the conditions and regulations for prisoners awaiting trial in 17 West European countries.

18 per cent of prisoners in Britain have individual cells and only four per cent of remand prisoners have running water, wash basin and flush lavatory, compared with nearly 100 per cent in other West European countries.

Remand prisoners make up 21 per cent of the present prison population. According to British law remand prisoners are 'innocent until proven guilty'. However, because of overcrowding the basic rights of innocent people such as seeing their family and friends cannot be met.

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

New round of Tory union law

ONCE AGAIN the Tories have challenged the trade union movement. In 'Trade unions and their members', a new consultative 'green paper', they have served notice that a Tory victory at the next election will mean further attempts legally to ensnare the unions in order to undermine the fight back against attacks on jobs, living standards, working conditions and democratic rights.

By Brian Ingham

of workers trying to defend their jobs and conditions.

Tragically the trade union leaders proved totally incapable of offering any serious resistance. Never did they attempt to harness the entire weight of the unions in a united stand against the anti-union measures. The Tories fear the organised potential of the unions. But the contempt they have had for the union leaders has given them the confidence at each stage to attack.

Now, in the wake of the defeat at Wapping they have announced their intention to go even further than before. This 'green paper' is a scabs charter. There is already a legal requirement for unions to hold a ballot before strike action, despite the cir-

cumstances and despite any need to respond quickly to management provocation.

Now this document says even if a majority vote to strike any scab still has the right to undermine the struggle of fellow workers and carry on working.

Many unions, including especially the NUM, took careful measures to frustrate the attempts of the courts to get hold of and raid their members' funds. This document suggests measures against union trustees in the hope that this will make unions think less of dodging the law, and more in terms of humbly cow-towing.

This document also threatens to strip away the protection of the union from trade unionists arrested during industrial action. It suggests making illegal compensation by the union for any fines a trade union member may incur. This way the Tories hope to deter workers from taking an active part in picket lines and demonstrations.

Further attacks are also suggested on closed shops, the strongest form of trade union organisation. Despite all their efforts to destroy them, by their own admission, at least three million workers are still organised in closed shops. This is despite the need for ballot support with 80 per cent of those affected voting or 85 per cent of those voting.

Closed shop

Now they threaten a change of law to protect employers opposed to closed shops. This sums up the whole Tory anti-union trade union measures: the attempt to move to unions that meet the convenience of the boss.

Legislation to outlaw dismissals on grounds of non-union membership in workplaces with closed shops is also suggested. That is, in effect, law to close closed shops.

In a chapter headed, 'Extension of democracy in trade unions', the document sets out how the Tories intend precisely to undermine trade union democracy further by the introduction of postal balloting, with a system of so called 'independent' scrutineers.

The government clearly has been alarmed at the way in which their preferred candidates have lost or scraped home in recent workplace ballots. Twice Ron Todd won in the TGWU. In the CPSA the right wing won only on a second ballot after an hysterical media smear campaign and with the help of the Broad Left '84 group who split the left vote and allowed the right wing candidate, Ellis, to win.

This 'green paper' speaks of the difficulty of keeping full up-to-date membership



Civil Service pay

AS A direct result of the hard work, programme and ideas of the Broad Lefts in civil service unions CPSA and IRSF 400,000 out of 500,000 civil servants are behind the united pay claims of the following civil service unions: CPSA, IRSF, SCPS, NIPSA, CSU and possibly IPCS.

This unity was built up against the active opposition of the leaderships of the CPSA and IRSF who recommended separate claims and campaigns at their pay conferences. This seemingly lunatic approach masked a cynical refusal to believe that civil servants were ready to defend their own living standards.

CPSA general secretary John Ellis, writing to the IRSF general secretary Tony Christopher came up with the following analysis of their defeats at the IRSF pay conference on 27 January and CPSA on 27 November: "It would seem that you had a similar day as we did on 27/11/86—maybe we should avoid the 27th in future".

The claim, which represents the pressure of the low paid who make up the majority of civil servants, is as follows: £20 per week for grades below executive officer, 15 per cent for EO and above, £115 minimum wage, six weeks' annual leave, a 35-hour



John Ellis

week, the abolition of wage discrimination for young civil servants and an acceptable long term pay system for the civil service.

If negotiations with the Tories fail to produce results industrial action is likely from the beginning of April. Industrial action, in what is likely to be an election year, is the only way to secure any increase in wages or conditions for civil servants.

Action must be organised now. Civil servants have tremendous political power. This power must be used in 1987 to deal the Tories a powerful blow and prevent any further attempts to introduce merit pay, regional pay, performance pay and the institutionalised low pay which keeps thousands of working civil servants on welfare benefits.

By Bill Boyle

records despite a legal requirement for unions to do so. It shows that more people consistently vote in workplace ballots. Yet it still manages to argue for postal balloting on the spurious grounds that this will eliminate abuses.

Postal balloting is wide open to abuse. This document speaks of possible forgeries. If every ballot paper is individually marked the ballot of course ceases to be the secret ballot the Tories

Rank and file trade unionists should trust only themselves to scrutinise their elections. This can only be done fully if there is full check and control of ballot and ballot papers at every step in the procedure.

Postal balloting is an erosion of democracy, quite apart from the potential abuses, it gives greater scope to the millionaire press to push their preferred candidates and it removes the election from discussion and

forefront of this fight. No-one needs lectures on democracy from the unelected Lord Young, architect of these Tory proposals. There must be no interference from the state whatsoever in union affairs. That must be the position of the trade union movement.

The Labour Party leaders also should announce their full support for the independence of the unions from the state. When it comes to their friends and paymasters in the City of London the Tories speak of 'self regulation', despite the legal and illegal robbery of billions of pounds.

Labour must stand as steadfast by the unions, those organisations protecting workers from the City of London and big business as a whole. No bowing to the baying of the capitalist media! An end to all equivocal talk about keeping certain Tory anti-union laws on ballots! The Labour leadership should pledge that on coming to office it will repeal totally all Tory anti-union laws.

The unions were created in the bitter struggles against far worse laws. Sooner rather than later trade unionists will move into action and brush aside all Tory legal impediments. All the territory that has been lost will be re-conquered; and more! In their attacks on the unions the Tories are living on borrowed time.

The unelected Lord Yong cannot preach to the unions about democracy

profess to support.

There can be no possible check for thousands of forgeries appearing. Nor can there be any check on ballot forms that may go missing or that may be altered in transit in the post. When it comes to tampering with mail, vital trade union mail will not be sacrosanct, on the contrary it will be a prime target.

Independent scrutiny is supposed to make union postal elections fair. But where are the 'independent' people or organisations. The supposedly neutral Electoral Reform Society is believed by many in the trade union movement to be sympathetic to the right wing.

debate in the union branches and workplace meetings.

In order to push forward their assault, the Tories have at each stage latched on to the feeling among union members that their leaders are remote and out of touch; that the unions are undemocratic.

Many general secretaries and presidents of unions with great influence over decision-making do not face regular election. The Tories say in this document that this will end. But from below trade unionists have moved in recent years to ensure there is democratic accountability over all key officials in their unions.

Militant has been in the

Industrial Reports

Reject British coal blackmail

ONCE AND for all the mask has slipped. British Coal's attempted blackmail over the 'Margam Project' is a serious threat to the working conditions of all mineworkers and a direct challenge to the national union.

This is no mere local issue. It is not a simple question of modified shift arrangements. It is another step down the road of the infamous Wheeler plan.

"Continental shifts" are only the tip of the iceberg. Six day production is a cloak for the introduction of extended daily working hours, albeit on the basis of a possible shorter week.

However, according to the *Western Daily Mail*, management may well be offering a six day working week for three weeks followed by a week off.

This would still only be an attempt to establish the principle of continental shifts at a pit that won't come into existence for some time.

In other words, the bosses are using Margam in a cynical manoeuvre. It doesn't matter what agreement they come to at this stage as long as the union is conned into accepting changes in working conditions.

British Coal are attempting to implement the proposals of its Notts Area Director, Bert Wheeler on a piecemeal basis. It is a well tried and well proven strategy.

The original incentive scheme was brought in Area by Area. New Technology has been introduced bit by bit, concealing the true nature, extent and effects of automation from the union.

And the new extra-divisive bonus scheme known as the 'Doncaster Option', which separates face from face, installation from outbye, and underground from surface workers is being brought in pit by pit in a piecemeal basis.

If the South Wales leaders capitulate to the Margam blackmail, other pits and Areas will fall into line like nine pins. A precedent will have been set.

Indeed, the nine-hour day, continental shift working, reported by the press as British Coal's aim for Margam, was originally intended for the North East. However, the miners of Wearmouth in Durham flatly rejected such proposals.

Continental shifts will make Saturdays part of the normal week. Six-day production will mean greater dust levels. And, if management have their way on nine-hour shifts, reduced travelling time would see miners spending more hours per week at the point of production despite a four day week.

Dust

More coal cut means more dust. Outbye workers would not escape the effects. Over the years the Board have claimed falling dust-related illness and diseases. However, the drive for 'greater efficiency' and 'productivity' may already be taking its toll.

It takes years for lung diseases such as pneumoconiosis or progressive massive fibrosis to show up or be diagnosed. The effect of nine hour shifts could be horrific. The carrot of 800 jobs must not be allowed to cloud the issue.

The Board have decimated the

Welsh coalfield since the strike. They can hardly pose as benefactors now. The jobs at Margam are the property of the Welsh mining communities. They are not negotiable. The men of St John's Colliery were denied access to the Margam coal and their pit unceremoniously closed.

We want the jobs at Margam—but not at any price! Negotiations over working conditions must remain the remit of the National Union. The South Wales leadership must not be allowed to bargain away the rights of miners in other coalfields.

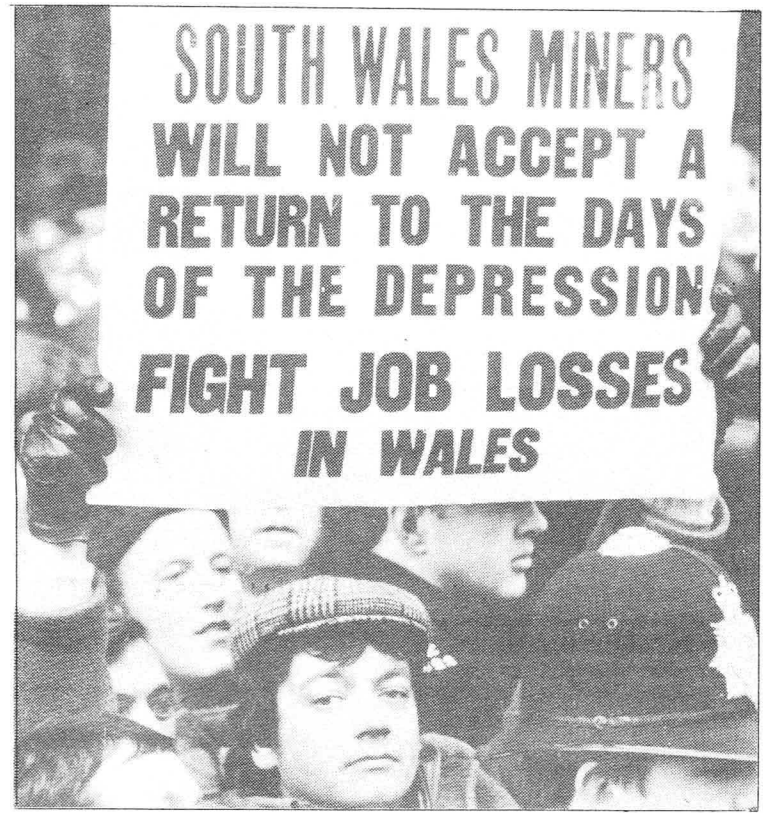
A national ballot preceded by a vigorous campaign of rallies, meetings, leaflet drops and so on must take place on this issue. All mineworkers must be involved in the campaign of resistance.

British Coal have given us the opportunity to go on the offensive. Productivity is at record levels. We must now demand our just reward. The much sought after four day week has been put on the agenda by management themselves.

The union must seize the opportunity. A massive campaign must now be conducted throughout the coalfields for a four-day week now with no loss in pay or conditions.

This would lift the morale of the membership, who have already shown their tenacity and fighting spirit by chalking up 28 per cent of all industrial disputes in the past year, and answer the faint-hearts in the union who believe there is nothing to do but collaborate with management's every whim.

By Chris Herriot
(sacked Monktonhall miner)



THE WHEELER PLAN

- Six day production
- Introduce either 3 x 9 hour shifts or 4 x 7 and a quarter hour shifts per day negotiated on a piecemeal and pit/Area basis
- Make winding shafts available 23 hours per day at full capacity
- Reduce number of pit faces
- Introduce electro mechanics and transfer some maintenance and repair tasks to machine operators
- Cut the number of officials by enhancing the role of the chargehand
- Introduce the Doncaster Option throughout the coalfields
- Increase the use of roof bolts and other American techniques
- Reduce the workforce in every part of the mine and on the surface

DAF deal will destroy jobs

The announcement to parliament two weeks ago by Paul Channon, Industry Minister (a misnomer if ever there was one) of the planned takeover by Daf of Leyland vehicles and the subsequent butchering of jobs and closure of plant is yet another example of British management and Tory government vandalism on a grand scale. It must not be accepted.

By Martin Elvin

Despite all the public relations claims of Tory MPs and Leyland management about the benefits of the proposals, in reality the Daf deal is a disaster for thousands of workers now, and a calamity for the entire company in the longer term.

Under the deal some 2,000 jobs are immediately threatened with the closure of the integrated foundry and engine plant at Leyland, Lancs, cut-backs at the Albion axle plant in Glasgow, 'slimming down' elsewhere and the total closure of the renowned Scammell Motors factory at Watford, Herts.

The terms of the Daf deal, in reality a takeover, a sell-out to the Dutch firm, place a major question mark over the very existence of Leyland as a producer of lorries and heavy vehicles, or indeed anything else.

Already it is proposed that all heavy lorry building should be in the Netherlands and that production in Britain would be limited to vans



The Leyland Scammell plant at Watford faces closure

and lightweight vehicles. So where does that leave the very heavy and specialist work which Scammell had been told was to be transferred to Lancashire following the closure at Watford?

If foundry and engine production are to cease then integrated operations to produce lorries and commercial vehicles in Britain will have ended. What's left will be merely an assembly or 'screwdriver' operation.

To Daf, Leyland will be regarded as an offshore outpost of their main operations. And with some 40 per cent overproduction of lorries and heavy vehicles in Europe, any cutbacks the company make are bound to be at Leyland plants first.

The implications for related and supply industries are colossal. The most conservative estimates reckon that job losses would be double the 2,200 Leyland jobs threatened, although Scammell stewards estimate that 4,000 outside jobs depend upon their plant alone.

Around 20,000 people nationally are employed on work related to Leyland Vehicles, already doubts are rising about the future of the

Cummins diesel engine plant at Darlington.

The circumstances surrounding this deal are shot through with contradictions, acts of wanton destruction and more than a whiff of scandal.

Why have the government been prepared to write off debts of £750 million to assist the Daf shareholders, yet refuse to do the same for Leyland Vehicles, a company which they are supposed to be responsible for running after nationalisation saved it several years ago.

Subsidies

In response to the claim that the lorry part of the operation is a burden on the motor car section, workers point out bitterly that they subsidised motors for several years. Indeed, management's decision to switch away profits and investment played a key part in today's problems.

Their actions amount to sabotage of the company, job destruction for the workforce and theft from the taxpayer. The claims of Leyland Chairman Graham Day and others that this deal

is the way to ensure the company's future is an admission that neither government nor management have any idea of how to develop Leyland and have relinquished control as they are unfit to manage.

But Leyland Vehicles has just recently returned to the top selling position of all lorry builders in the British market. The £120 million order and five year's work just landed by the threatened Scammell factory shows the potential for development.

Instead management have spent the last two years looking for a buyer. If the company is such a lost cause, why have General Motors, Paccar and now Daf all been preying upon Leyland?

Even more scandalous is the way Freight Rover, the van and light commercial vehicle builders, have been tied into the deal. All the arguments for the deal in relation to Leyland Vehicles are turned on their head by Freight Rover. This operation is profitable but is also being torn from Leyland and the taxpayer.

For the government this deal provides a further

chance to attack public ownership and shed more responsibility for running manufacturing industry.

For Daf the deal is a free gift. They will own 60 per cent and allow Leyland a couple of seats on their board. It provides a gateway to the British markets for their own products and the chance to kill off a potential competitor at the heavy vehicle end.

It also has the extra bonus of a profitable extra free gift at the light weight and van end of the market in the shape of Freight Rover.

The whole Leyland/Daf deal is criminal. It must be rejected, not only by the trade unions at Leyland but by the Confed unions, the TUC and the Labour leadership.

A campaign must now be launched to stop the takeover. The lobby of parliament must be just the opening shot.

The orders at Scammell, Leyland's top selling position and the massive shortage of vehicles and transport in the 'Third World' are powerful arguments in Leyland's favour. Words alone will not

be enough, however. Plans for action must be drawn up.

As a first step all Leyland plants need to unite and declare total opposition to the Daf deal. Mass meetings at all plants are vital to prepare the workforce. A one-day national strike on the day of this lobby would have been a good first step and should be considered in the near future.

But it is the action of Caterpillar workers, currently occupying their plant, which sets an example for those at Leyland foundry and engine plant and Scammell, backed up with action throughout the company.

Pressure must be put upon the national leaderships of all unions with members in Leyland to mount a campaign in their support.

Further pressure must be applied to the Labour Party leadership to support the Leyland workers and to give a clear and firm commitment that a future Labour government would move quickly to return Leyland Vehicles to full public ownership.

It must be borne in mind that by the time of the date set for closure of Scammell a general election will have taken place, which Labour could and should win if they take up issues like this one.

- ★ Scrap the Daf deal
- ★ Defend public ownership of Leyland
- ★ Defend all jobs
- ★ No transfer of work
- ★ No factory closures

Industrial Reports

Not so Laura Ashley in Ardrossan union recognition struggle

FOR MORE than five months 23 young workers at Ardrbride Products, Ardrossan, Ayrshire (30 miles south west of Glasgow), a supplier of lampshades and pottery to Laura Ashley shops, have been on strike for trade union recognition and for improvements in the sweatshop conditions in their two factories.

A Health and Safety Executive investigation found that the workers' protests at the conditions were totally justified on at least 11 counts.

Anna Drugan, one of the strike leaders told *Militant*: "Unguarded machinery, excessive fumes from the glue and a major fire risk from solvents stored around the factory were the main complaints we had in the factory".

Striker Jackie Docherty said: "There was terrible dust in the pottery and we didn't even have clean eating areas".

"Apart from the conditions", said Ana, "there were other things we weren't happy with—a pay rate of £1.70 per hour even for overtime. We worked overtime for fear of our jobs and the money—often Saturdays, Sundays and three nights.

"They even paid YTSers funny money to work overtime. We were treated badly. The threat of the dole and starting other people from the dole were posed as a threat any time we asked for improvements".

"We joined the union to start to improve things. The boss wouldn't negotiate in the real sense. It went on for months."

For seeking trade union recognition to negotiate improvements Managing Director Stuart Rose sacked 23 workers who had joined the TGWU, with the com-

ment: "I have got bigger issues in my company to concern myself with."

The young workers' answer has been to picket every shift for more than five months. Over the past few weeks, as knowledge of the dispute has spread so too has support from other workers and youth.

LPYS members at their Scottish conference organised a mass leafletting, a petition and picket of Laura Ashley shops in Edinburgh. They raised £30 for the strike fund.

90 per cent of the orders for Ardrbride Products are from Laura Ashley so picketing is doubly important in the coming weeks when the contract comes up for renewal.

The outcome of the dispute depends heavily on the TGWU officials in Saltcoats and Glasgow: "The nine weeks delay in making the strike official helped the firm" said Anna, "They got some supplies in and started a new workforce. But they haven't been able to match our production." Despite the difficulties these young workers have learned important lessons and are determined to win the right to organise for decent conditions.

Anna again: "We get abuse every day from the scabs. Some of the calls are disgusting. Yet its the owner who gets the police to us. Three of us are due to go up for breach of the peace. They tell lies about our behaviour. It's a disgrace. My eyes have been opened. Before the strike the only politics I knew was who was in number 10."

Messages of support and donations: Anna Drugan, 28d Montgomerie St, Ardrossan KA22 8EQ.

By Paul Collins and Ronnie Stevenson



Photo: Alison Dixon

"PATIENTS IN our hospital are being forced to share beds. One group sleep at night and then are forced to watch TV all day so that others can use their beds.

These conditions at Manchester Royal Infirmary were revealed by student doctors at the Ancoats Support march on 28 February.

The closure of the nearby Ancoats hospital casualty has pushed the MRI's intake in casualty up by 20 per cent and last week forced the closure of MRI casualty to any further emergency cases.

The MRI is supposed to be a medical school! Little wonder that young doctors, not known to be militant, feel forced to demonstrate.

With 700 on the march, it marked a great step forward in the struggle

against the Ancoats closure. It was organised by Manchester's Labour Women's Council and the LPYS.

The Ancoats Action Group was joined by NHS workers, by representatives of Greater Manchester Fire Brigades Union and by strikers from Senior Colman.

The chant of "We'd rather have a sit-in than give-in!" was most popular, summing up the determination of working class women and youth who have provided the back bone to the Ancoats struggle. Even the police and one inspector wore stickers supporting the illegal occupation.

Rob McKeown Nupe steward at Ancoats hospital told *Militant*: "The sit-in has been marvellous, we only expected it to last a couple of days but now it is in its third week.

"We've had donations from workers locally at the Parcel Post, British Telecom, and Francis Shawn, we collected £400 on these demonstrations.

"Now the Nupe District Committee will be looking at ways of setting up support, including industrial action."

Phil Forrester, chair of Manchester LPYS spoke at the rally and called for a trade union conference of NHS representatives and delegates from City centre work places to prepare for industrial action.

As Graham Whyatt the AEU convenor of striking Senior Colman workers said at the rally, "We are all in the same boat together and we should stick together—the alternative is back to the 19th century."

By Sharron Greenwood,

News in Brief

THE LATEST in the catalogue of closures to hit West Lothian is the Golden Wonder plant in Broxburn.

West Lothian, heralded as a major part of Silicon Glen now resembles more of a ghost town.

Over the last 18 months it has seen factory closures like British Leyland, North British Steel, Polkemmet pit, which were all once major employers.

The Golden Wonder group made £6 million profit in the first three months of the trading year which is a slap in the face to the 340 employees at Broxburn.

They were told the closure was to make the Golden Wonder viable. Despite this background, a mass meeting of the workforce took place on Saturday 21 February. Over 250 people attended and they made it clear that they would fight to save their jobs.

If Golden Wonder closes then it will have a drastic effect on the communities of Broxburn and Fauldhouse. The workers know that if they are made redundant then many will never work again.

Figures show there are 10,939 unemployed and only 336 job vacancies. That is 33 people chasing every job

vacancy.

The worst aspect of the jobless figures is the fact that most of the vacancies are in the electronic factories which have made it their policy to recruit school leavers. So there would be little or no hope for Golden Wonder workers.

The Golden Wonder workforce don't see their case as an isolated closure but have made attempts to link up with other workers in struggle in Scotland, organising a bus to the Caterpillar demonstration.

By Wendy Milne and Sam Gibson

Ealing Nalgo

EALING BOROUGH council Nalgo in West London have gone into dispute with the Labour council over a long running claim for inner London weighting worth an extra £657 a year.

Both teachers and manual workers in Ealing receive a higher allowance and neighbouring boroughs such as Brent and Hammersmith receive the full inner London weighting.

In May '86 Labour came to power in Ealing after years of cuts under the Tories. The new council gave hints of paying the allowance. But despite months of negotiations no money has been forthcoming.

In a ballot on industrial action 70 per cent of the 3,000 members voted in favour by majorities of up to 90 per cent.

The various tactics proposed include an overtime ban, non-collection of money, non-cooperation with councillors and a series of monthly and one-day strikes starting on Thursday 5 March.

The response of the Labour council has been disgraceful. One councillor talked of locking out 900 workers from the Town Hall.

An attempt has also been made to link our action with the issue of rate increases in the borough—set to rise by 80 per cent in April. They are trying to claim that our demand would cause a further 20 per cent rate rise.

Local LPYS and Militant supporters have argued in the Labour Party that the council should mount a campaign to regain the £100m that the Tories have stolen from the working class of Ealing rather than offload the burden onto the backs of local residents.

The ballot result shows Nalgo members are on the offensive. A combination of industrial action and political pressure through the Labour Party must be used to ensure the council implements its election promises and concedes to our claim.

By Aryn Jumani

100 JOURNALISTS at the *Sheffield Star* have been locked out now for four weeks, following management's attempts to bulldoze through introduction of new technology.

Management set arbitrary deadlines for training on the new equipment and completely ignored negotiating procedure. Five NUJ members were ordered onto the new equipment, three of whom refused.

The editor suspended the three, which led to a general withdrawal of labour by the NUJ. The paper is at present coming out in an inferior form, produced by the editor. Management, unskilled and scab labour are having to work 12 hours per day, six days per week.

The *Sheffield Star* is the biggest of all the provincial newspapers owned by the United Newspaper conglomerate (*Express*, *Daily Star*, *Sunday Express*). The chairman is the newly ennobled Lord Stevens.

The *Yorkshire Post* and *Evening Post* based

IN A fresh attack on the rank and file of the National Union of Seamen by the national executive over allegations of ballot rigging (see *Militant* 836) the National Ferry Committee has been closed down on the grounds that it had discussed the ballot-rigging allegations.

The Rank and File Committee have had fresh talks with

the TUC over the elections. A proposal is now being put to the NUS for an inquiry committee comprising two from the TUC, two from the rank and file and three mutually agreed independents.

Five thousand leaflets have been produced answering general secretary Sam McClusie's attacks. Members are particularly incensed at the

implicit threat that anyone giving evidence could face disciplinary action.

The R&F leaflet demands: No victimisation of members giving evidence; An independent inquiry; A Special General Meeting to vote on the inquiry findings; Elected rank and file scrutineers for all elections.

Oak Engineering, Stalybridge, who are doing Senior Colman work; Buckfast Tools, Sale; Traseaz, a Manchester taxi firm; Jacksons haulage, Gloucester; Dial-a-Meal, Urmston; Cleanaway, Manchester.

Money is urgently needed. Contact: Senior Colman Strike Committee, AEU office, The Crescent, Salford.

By Gordon Cormack

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.

○ WANTED: Co-op stamps, half or full books. Proceeds to Fighting Fund. Send c/o Circulation Department, 3/13 Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB.

○ 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".

○ LABOUR Theory of Value (Paul Storey). Set of three tapes. Why Marxism opposes feminism (Margaret Crear). £1.50, plus 25p postage, each order from World Socialist Books.

○ *The Burden is Heavy*: video on the growth of the workers' movement in Zimbabwe, with important conclusions for all socialists. Cost of hire: £20 (£10 for YS branches/women's sections). Order from Zimbabwe Trade Unionists' Defence Campaign, PO Box 77, London E8 4TB.

○ BOW *Militant* supporters present the "Rocky Horror Video Night" on Friday the 13th March. Ring Rose on 515 8978 for venue. All proceeds to Fighting Fund.

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

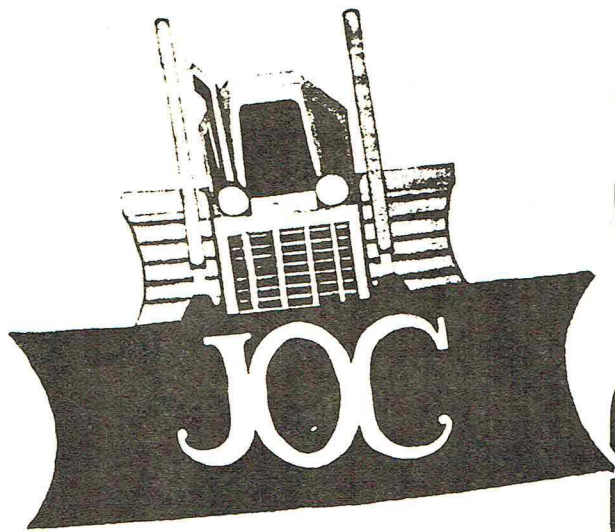
○ CASSETTE tapes with two issues of *Militant* (one each side). Available fortnightly. Tapes £3.50 per quarter, £13 per year. To be returned or send blank C-90 tapes. Contact Dave: 14 Harrowby Rd, West Park, Leeds 16. Tel: 0532 624917.

○ LPYS PUBLIC meeting "save jobs, fight for your future!" Wed 18 March 7.30pm. Broxburn Academy. Speakers include Dave Mackay (Golden Wonder Shop Steward), Caterpillar occupation speaker, Cllr Tony Kinder, LPYS speaker.

Militant

Fight anti-union laws — page 13
Miners and the Margam deal — page 14

Workers internationally



Support Caterpillar occupation

AN ESTIMATED 8,000 marched through Uddingston just outside Glasgow in support of the Caterpillar workers' occupation last weekend. As a measure of the sympathy which the occupation has locally, by-standers cheered as the demonstration wound through the streets.

The LPYS contingent, as ever the most vocal, received tumultuous applause to shouts and songs of: "Fight for jobs—Save the cat" and "We want nationalisation."

Despite a contingent of Scottish National Party banners, the theme of the rally was more to do with internationalism than Scottish nationalism.

By far the biggest welcome was given to the two convenors from the Caterpillar factories at Gosselies and Grenoble.

Michelle Daffe from the FGGB (Belgian metalworkers' union) and Christian Fontaine of the CGT (French trade union), speaking through interpreters, pledged wholehearted and continued support for the Tannochside workers, saying that they were an inspiration to Caterpillar workers worldwide. Now an international Caterpillar workers' combine committee is being established.

As the sit-in passes its 45th day, the workers themselves are prepared for a long dispute. A war of attrition seems likely and if real hardship can be avoided, the Joint Occupation Committee and the workers can win.

Numerous excellent ideas have been conceived by the workers themselves in fundraising activities, including a charity football match between two local junior foot-



March to support Caterpillar workers, 27 February.

ball teams, and a commitment from the rock group 'Hipsway' to donate the takings from their forthcoming concert at the Glasgow Barrowland (capacity 2,000).

As time passes it is becoming clear that the Tories and Caterpillar are both being hurt by this dispute. Caterpillar bosses pretend that they are unaffected but are in reality losing millions of dollars every day. Time is not on their side.

The labour movement must ensure that the workers' hardship is alleviated, by stepping up collections, increasing the blacking of Caterpillar goods.

And pressure must be put on the Labour Party leadership to demand the nationalisation of Caterpillar, with workers retaining the same amount of control of the factory as they have now under occupation.

The same spirit found so readily during the miners' strike is now to be seen with the Caterpillar occupation. This is a fight to save a community.

Workers are pulling together in solidarity. This could be the beginning of something big and dangerous for Thatcher and the Tories.

By Colin Fox

- ★ Support the occupation.
- ★ Black Caterpillar goods.
- ★ Nationalise the 'Cat' under democratic workers' control and management.
- ★ Keep the messages of support and donations flowing in.

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

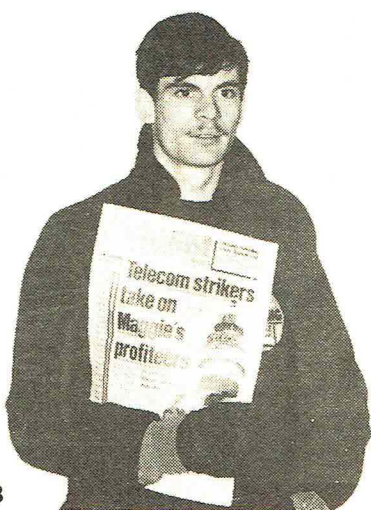
What We Stand for

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

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