

Militant

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Election Emergency

Labour must fight for workers

ELECTION FEVER has gripped the Tory press. Will it be May, will it be June or October? But what is worrying Labour workers is not the date, but how can another Thatcher victory be stopped.

Labour supporters are becoming desperate—why is the Party trailing in the polls? How can some surveys put Labour in third place behind the Alliance? For there is no shred of evidence that working people are content with Thatcher. The reverse—70 per cent of voters oppose her.

And what the Tory papers do not report are the struggles of workers against the government and its big business backers. Civil servants (many of whom must have voted Tory) are striking against Thatcher. Nurses have howled down a Tory minister. Caterpillar workers are continuing their 'illegal' occupation.

But the Labour leadership is failing to convince millions of uncommitted voters that they have a real alternative. Workers will not vote for 'images'. They want to know what benefits a Labour government will bring them and their children.

They want to be inspired with a vision of a better future under Labour. They want to be sure that unemployment, low pay and the destruction of services will be banished.

By Pat Craven

But time is slipping away. Labour supporters must act urgently. The Labour leaders have allowed themselves to be intimidated by the Tory press into abandoning or watering down the party's policies. They cannot be allowed to throw away the chance of victory, by their bland and uninspiring campaigning.

Socialist policy

The tide can be turned. The Tories and their Alliance understudies can be swept to defeat, if the Labour leaders completely change their approach.

They must support all workers struggling for jobs, decent pay and the defence of services. They must give clear commitments to meet the demands of these workers when they are in government.

All the measures taken by the Tories to restrict trade union rights will have to be repealed, all penalties imposed on Labour councillors who defied Tory laws revoked and all benefits cut by the Tories restored.

But if they restrict themselves to operating within a decaying system, Labour will never be able to satisfy the demands of working-class voters.

Labour must adopt the policy of the party's Marxists for taking over the giant monopolies which control the economy, and placing them under democratic control and management. In a planned socialist economy, it would then be possible to provide the jobs, homes, hospitals and schools that voters want.

If that programme is taken to the doorsteps and workplaces and explained, the slanders of the press can be easily countered. The Labour Party can build a mass basis of support which will make them invincible.

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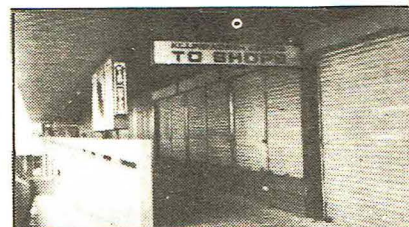
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Militant

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Every country for itself

THE FEARS of imminent trade war; Thatcher's sabre rattling against Japan; the pressure on Reagan to erect tariff walls; these indicate the irreversible decline of world capitalism and world trade. So much for the smug veneer of confidence in the British economy's future exhibited by Lawson in his budget speech. In any trade skirmish Britain, which exports 30 per cent of its production (more even than Japan), would come off worst.

In a period of economic crisis it is every country for itself. The liberalisation of trade in the post-war years allowed for a dynamic expansion of international trade. It pushed ahead at a rate of 12.5 per cent and was a major factor behind the prolonged economic upswing of 1950-75.

That era has definitively closed. Now it is the US, through GATT imposed 'free trade' after 1945, that is leading the trend towards protectionism, while the current world 'boom' is depicted even by capitalist economists as nothing better than a "growth recession".

It has been artificially prolonged (and may continue for another year or so) by a gigantic credit bubble. The US has recorded a record budget deficit, fuelled mainly by its massive and obscene arms expenditure. There has been an enormous credit-based consumer boom. As a consequence the US home market has enormously expanded. A flood of cheaper foreign imports have been sucked in. With the US accounting for 25 per cent of the rest of the world's exports, this gave a major boost to international economic activity.

But how to restore the profitability of beleaguered US manufacturing industry? The recent devaluation of the dollar (by 42 per cent against the yen in two years) will only cut the record US trade deficit by half. A further devaluation might reduce it further, but at the cost of an upsurge in inflation. The alternative, increasingly demanded by US industrialists, is protection of the home market. Japan with its \$50 million trade surplus with the US is their target. Reagan's move to impose 100 per cent tariffs on Japanese semi-conductor exports could only be the start.

Already two thirds of all goods exchanged on the world market are subject to trade impediments, open or disguised. Serious, damaging import controls can only lead to equally severe retaliation. With a new, inevitable and deeper world recession by the end of the decade, a full blown trade war is possible. This would gravely exacerbate the recession and inflict real damage on the weaker economies and their workforces. Britain is now definitely one of the weaker.

It is in this light that Thatcher's threat must be viewed as withhold licences from the 58 Japanese banks operating in London, in retaliation for the apparent refusal of the Japanese to allow Cable and Wireless to break into their telecomms market. If Thatcher is so convinced of the importance of invisible trade in finance and services, taking on the Japanese banks (the largest in the world) runs the risk of retaliatory action in Tokyo against British financial institutions and intensified competition elsewhere.

The real fears of most capitalists at the first whiff of trade war, was demonstrated by the fall on the American stock exchange and subsequently on the London stock exchange, the day after Reagan's announcement of action on Japanese semi-conductors, although in their nervous volatile state, the markets rose again within a few days.

What concessions can Thatcher expect to extract from mighty Japan when enfeebled Britain now lies nineteenth in the industrial league table. She will be forced into some compromise.

But stock exchange jitters, the credit boom, trade battles (all within a 'boom') are ominous portents of fresh economic decline to come.

The Labour leaders must expose the Tories' economic hypocrisy, and the futility of tariffs against Japan. Neither free trade nor protection, devaluation nor currency appreciation can salvage the wreck of capitalism. They should use the conclusive evidence of economic decay to step up the propaganda for a socialist planned economy in Britain, reaching out to workers internationally, which alone could use all the productive potential available to the full, and avoid crisis, slump and unemployment.

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ON THATCHER'S flight back from Moscow, she sent four bottles of champagne to the journalists in the back of the plane. Nothing better symbolised the relationship between the press and the Tory Party.

Their coverage of the Russian visit was pure party political propaganda, and Thatcher went to great lengths to make sure it was. Joe Haines of the *Mirror*, a former press officer to Harold Wilson, perhaps upset that he was excluded from this exclusive band of 22 lobby reporters and two photographers, has exposed the way in which the 'news' was organised:

"The Gang of 24 had no Customs or passport problems when they arrived.

Downing Street arranged their visas. When they left Moscow on Wednesday, British embassy staff collected their baggage. The Soviet Government picked up the (heavy) bill for their 'phone calls. This is private privilege at public expense."

Haines seems concerned that such privileges were not extended to every other journalist. Reporters from *The Guardian* and *The Independent* were also barred, presumably because their devotion to the Tory cause was suspect.

British workers should be alarmed at the blatant way in which the 'free press' prostitutes itself to help the Tories back to power.

Northern Ireland

Workers will pay - sectarian violence flares up again

Militant reporter barred by AEU

THERE HAS been a sharp rise in violence in Northern Ireland.

The Ulster Volunteer Force shot dead a 41 year old Catholic in Ardoyne, Belfast, on Thursday. Groups of youth later took to the streets to prevent the further entry of UVF men into the area.

The dead man was later claimed by the IRA as one of their members. The Ardoyne area has been saturated with troops and police in the last week. Houses have been torn apart and local residents subjected to abuse and beatings.

Two *Militant* supporters in the area last Sunday witnessed troops descend on a group of local youths, who were subjected to a vicious beating, as young girls ran screaming in all directions for cover. In a similar incident later, an RUC policeman pulled out his pistol and started firing into the air. The funeral of the Ardoyne UVF victim, Larry Marley, was scheduled for Monday 6 April, but was cancelled by the family because of the massive RUC presence, which refused to stay 20 feet from the cortege.

The Provisional IRA have also intensified their campaign. An RUC man and a UDR man were shot dead last week. The town centre of Dungannon was bombed. Derry was paralysed with bomb hoaxes at the weekend.

On Monday Belfast was

brought to a standstill, with 40 bomb explosions or alerts. On Monday night five army and police barracks also came under gun, mortar and bomb attack.

A prison siege is also taking place at Magilligan jail, where 29 loyalists have barricaded themselves into a section of the prison and are holding a prison officer and a Catholic inmate. They are demanding an end to forced integration of loyalist and republican prisoners. 100 loyalist prisoners are also reported to be on hunger strike.

"... an RUC man pulled out his pistol and starting firing in the air."

This rise in violence coincides with increased loyalist activity against the Anglo-Irish deal. The Tory government have introduced new public order legislation, which makes illegal marches whose organisers fail to give the RUC detailed notice seven days in advance.

Ian Paisley said that if the law was implemented, Protestants should organise a "simultaneous uprising in every hamlet, village and town".

Loyalists plan to break the new law. Saturday 11 April has been set as a day of defiance. The escalation of the provos' campaign can only

further fuel this backlash.

The media have concentrated on this loyalist claim that the Public Order Act is aimed solely at them. But this new law is another piece of repressive legislation which makes illegal many marches and rallies held by the trade unions. It also hampers the rights of workers to picket, demonstrate and occupy their workplaces.

The conference of the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions which met on Tuesday and Wednesday failed to discuss current developments in Northern Ireland or hammer out a socialist alternative for workers.

Given this failure, it is most likely now that workers here will again pay the price in the form of increased bloody sectarian attacks and repression. Sectarian killers have re-emerged. So also have the sectarian petrol-bombers. On Monday night, a Catholic home was petrol-bombed in Ballynahinch, with several people receiving burns.

These events are a warning to the labour movement that time is not unlimited to put forward a socialist alternative to the Anglo-Irish Agreement, sectarianism, repression and poverty in Northern Ireland.

By a Belfast Militant reporter

FOR THE second year in succession, *Militant* reporter Martin Elvin, a member of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ), has been barred from covering the National Committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU).

This is even more shameful than last year, when the ban was justified as part of a ban on both *Militant* and the *News International* papers, the 'extremists of left and right.' This year *News International* were allowed in.

The decision was manoeuvred through, at the instigation of general secretary Gavin Laird, on a report from the Standing Orders Committee. President Bill Jordan brought the matter to a close with the words: "We aren't going to open up a debate on this issue".

"The NUJ are right behind me and opposed to the AEU's action", said Martin Elvin. "General Secretary Harry Conroy immediately drafted a telex to send to the AEU and contacted the TUC to express concern at the action of a trade union toward a fellow trade unionist".

Only minutes after the AEU's vote to bar *Militant's* reporter, the paper's presence was felt when in the first debate, on Maternity Grants, John Killen, youth delegate from the North East, held up a copy to show the headline *Maternity Emergency*. This received a huge ovation.

John Killen, said afterwards: "You can ban the reporters but you can never ban the paper's ideas".

Tories plan to 'privatise' polys

Education seen as cheap training

UNDER THE guise of 'modernising' higher education, the Tories' White Paper Meeting the Challenge proposes to alter fundamentally the way this sector is run.

These "most far reaching changes in education in decades," taken along with other plans to limit student union autonomy, will eventually mean a streamlined, privatised higher education sector under the control of big business, with policy making in the hands of central government.

The Tories' ideology towards education in a period of economic crisis is clear. They proudly claim that the "productivity of higher education has increased greatly since 1979".

The basis for this assertion is that more students have qualified for less money spent. Applying production line mentality to the education system, however, cannot hide the fact that the percentage of school leavers entering higher education is smaller now than when the Tories first entered office.

Their new plans see big business playing a much bigger role in running education, with further emphasis on science courses. There is no doubt that the Tories view social sciences as a waste of public money and as a possible source of embarrassing opposition to their policies.

Funding

They also state that public spending on education should be increasingly replaced by financing from the private sector. This will only be at the cost of turning higher education colleges into cheap research facilities for industry in which education is only regarded as of secondary importance.

The Tories are proposing to take control of polytechnics out of the hands of local education authorities, claiming that relationships between local councils and

colleges often "inhibit good institutional management." The polytechnics would be run by Boards of Governors, half of whom would come from private industry.

Strategy for this sector would be determined by central government through a newly created Polytechnic and Colleges Funding Council (PCFC). Any local council providing extra resources for a polytechnic would trigger a cut in its government grant.

This represents a further attempt by the Tories to destroy local government through cutting its funding and undermining its responsibilities. In its period in office in Liverpool, the Labour Council increased funding to the polytechnic by £2 million and froze rents for all its students. Under the Tories' plans this would have been impossible and would have led to the closure or merger of 37 courses.

The University Grants Commission will be replaced by a University Funding Council (UFC). Both this and the PCFC would be much smaller than their equivalents now, with a much higher representation from big business. Both these bodies will be appointed by the Secretary of State for Education who will have reserve powers of intervention on any issue.

Both funding bodies will be able to determine which teaching areas colleges spend their money on, while most incredibly of all, all funding will be on a contractual basis, — colleges will only receive funding if they achieve certain targets.

No extra funding will be provided in real terms, but they hope to disguise their reactionary plans by aiming for an increase in student numbers by 50,000. It was made clear what their plans would mean in practice when, in the same week as the White Paper was published,

Cardiff University announced plans to either make a quarter of its academic staff redundant or close six major departments.

The opportunity exists for the Labour leadership of NUS to launch a major campaign against these plans and those which limit student union autonomy. However it was left to Collette Williams, Further Education Labour Students member on the NUS executive, to propose a programme of action at the most recent NUS executive meeting.

This included a conference of rank and file campus trade unionists and students and an emergency national conference to plan a strategy to defeat the Tories. By transforming the Education Alliance into a fighting body and posing an alternative of the Labour Party reversing education cuts if elected, the leadership of NUS could be instrumental in winning the student vote for Labour.

By Simon Kaplan



ELECTION COUNTDOWN

OPINION POLL mania has gripped the Tory press. Labour supporters receive a daily pounding with percentages which purport to show Labour's support slipping away. But the pollsters make sure they get the results the editors want, as the experience of Kevin Williamson from Edinburgh shows:

"To my shock and amazement, I recently came across a real opinion researcher. Not in deepest Muirhouse or Niddrie (two rundown Edinburgh housing estates), but in Princes Street in the city centre.

"Incredibly, this was on a Thursday afternoon, when there obviously aren't many workers about! Most people in Princes Street at that time of day are a cross-section of the blue-rinse, yuppie housewives and Japanese tourists.

"Well, I got collared by the interviewer. But the questions were totally

ridiculous. 'Do you think the Labour Party is too extreme or too divided?' Who is the strongest leader; Kinnock, Thatcher, Owen or Steel?' Did they mean at arm-wrestling, or what? The front-page analyses of these polls would be more at home in the *Beano*. Their whole purpose is to demoralise Labour supporters.

"The real mood of Scottish workers was summed up for me by a pensioner who brought a *Socialist Youth* from me in Muirhouse shopping centre.

"I've never voted Labour in my life, but I'm going to this time. We've got to get her out."

When Labour was up in the polls, the Labour leaders claimed success for their strategy of trying to please the press. But they are keeping mum about the party's current poor showing. Both



Helping industry flourish

You may have seen the Labour Party's recent television broadcast with Glenda Jackson. In it she showed how industry, like plants, needs the right conditions to flourish. The right tools, the right investment, the right ideas and research. This leaflet explains how Labour will give industry the support it needs.

approaches are wrong. They should expose how the polls are used as Tory propaganda.

But, despite the fiddling, there is still obviously a fall in Labour's support. The right-wing's strategy has failed. Canvassers in Dave Nellist's Coventry South-East seat are being greeted with the words: "I'll vote for Dave Nellist, but I wouldn't vote for that Kinnock!" The way to revive the Party's fortunes is to campaign on the socialist policies that Dave Nellist has a record of fighting for.

Labour's new campaign leaflet (left) continues the all-style, no content approach that the Party leadership favours. It's based on what must have been the Party's worst political broadcast ever, when Glenda Jackson explained the message while watering her flowers in her conservatory. Hardly likely to go down well on the average council estate, where there are not many conservatories to be found!

Even Glenda Jackson, when pressed to present the Greenwich by-election candidate with the obligatory red rose, was heard to mumble: "Frankly, I think this is a bit naff!"

Campaigning has already started in seats where candidates committed to socialist policies are standing. The results show that although the right wing fear meeting workers face-to-face, socialist arguments are winning tremendous support on the doorstep. Mass canvasses in Liverpool Broadgreen, Bermondsey, and Coventry South East have all shown majority support for Labour. Up to 70 per cent have said they'll support Labour, even in wards with Liberal councillors.

Maternity lobby

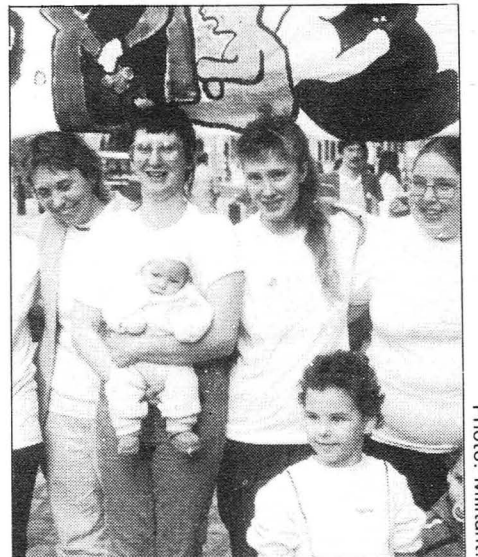


Photo: Militant

WOMEN LOBBY against the scrapping of maternity grants for all.

The 'party of the family' has ensured that half a million women will get nothing when they have a baby. Until last Monday, a maternity grant of £25.00 was universally available and mothers on benefit could receive up to £187.00. Now there is only a means-tested grant for those on supplementary benefit or family income supplement. One in five others have lost maternity allowance and those who do not receive it will be taxed on it. The families of the low-paid will no longer get free milk and vitamins.

Fifty copies of the North-West Labour Women's Charter for Women Workers were sold to lobbies.

Liverpool candidate appeals

THE FIRST appeal to the Labour Party's new disciplinary body, the National Constitutional Committee (NCC), has been heard. Richard Knights appealed against his undemocratic exclusion from the panel of candidates for local elections in Liverpool by the party's official, Peter Kilfoyle.

He was barred from the panel after he had been unable to attend a council selection meeting. His written apology, explaining that he was attending an important trade union meeting on bus deregulation, had been handed in to the meeting.

At the NCC meeting, Kilfoyle was flanked by Eddie Roderick, one of the infamous 'scabby six' councillors who voted with the Tories for £25 million of cuts during the 1984 budget

debate.

Larry Whitty, the party's general secretary, revealed that the Temporary Coordinating Committee (TCC), which was set up to replace the suspended District Labour Party (DLP), had only taken on the powers of the DLP executive committee. The powers of the DLP's management committee had been assumed by the national executive committee which had given all power to Peter Kilfoyle.

Six other left-wingers have also been barred from the panel by Kilfoyle, all on minor technicalities. Although Richard Knights was backed by letters from two TGWU full-time officials, the appeal was lost.

All of the 'crimes' of which the DLP has been falsely charged can be levell-

ed at Kilfoyle. The right wing have wound up the DLP, refused to let the TCC meet and have now officially introduced a one-man dictatorship to run the Liverpool Labour party.

Kilfoyle is now not only stopping left-wingers from standing for the council, but is imposing right-wingers. Eddie Roderick has been imposed in Gilmoor, one of the safest seats, and Malcolm Kennedy in Anfield, where two left wing candidates had already been democratically selected.

To cap it all, Kilfoyle has imposed himself in Allerton.

If Labour's vote drops in May as it did in Knowsley North after George Howarth was imposed, party members will know where to put the blame.

By Martin Lee

Pensioner gets Tory treatment

AN OLD age pensioner who was hit and punched in the House of Commons sums up the treatment given to the elderly in Tory Britain.

Mrs Eileen Miles, 67, was in the gallery to support a Bill abolishing TV licences and standing fuel charges for pensioners.

As the Bill was being killed off by the Tories, Mrs Miles shouted out: "You've diddled the pensioners once again", and security attendants came up to remove her, one punching her arm as she was dragged out.

LIVERPOOL LABOUR COUNCILLORS APPEAL

The House of Lords has confirmed the decision of the courts and upheld the Tory Law which has surcharged and disqualified the Liverpool Labour Councillors. Along with many other Labour Authorities, the Liverpool Labour Group defied the Tory Government in 1985 by setting a late rate. At that time Liverpool and Lambeth found themselves alone - that must not happen now!

WE HAVE A DUTY TO RAISE THE COST OF THE SURCHARGE THROUGH THE LABOUR AND TRADE UNION MOVEMENT.



The forty seven surcharged Councillors are a mixed group in every sense across the political and social spectrum. In age from Jackie Crowley (22 yrs) to Hugh Dalton (74 yrs). In profession from Paul Astbury (an unemployed plasterer) to John Linden (a solicitor with his own practise). What they do have in common is a commitment to help the people of Liverpool and if the legal costs are not met, they face bankruptcy, attachment of earnings, loss of job and loss of personal property.

LIVERPOOL LABOUR COUNCILLORS MUST NOT STAND ALONE

Please send donations to Liverpool Labour Councillors Appeal, c/o 7 Gambier Terrace, Liverpool 1. Telephone 051 427-3071. Cheques payable to the Liverpool Labour Councillors Appeal.

Fighting racism in Brent's schools

LAST MONDAY, Panorama joined the Tories and the Alliance in their cynical attempt to smear "loony left" Labour councils, with an attack on Brent Council's anti-racist education policy.

Brent is aiming to overcome the underachievement of black youth in the borough's schools and educate school students to overcome racial prejudice. Their policy has wide support among Labour activists, but has also aroused genuine confusion among some Labour voters, which the Tories and the press have tried to exploit.

Unemployment

The *Daily Mail* for example has eight full-time staff permanently stationed in the borough. Workers need no lessons on combatting racism from a Tory press which is always prepared to whip up racial hatred when it suits their class.

Brent has the highest proportion of black and Irish people in the country. The south of the borough, which is predominantly working class, has enormous social problems. One in six are unemployed. Stonebridge Park estate, the largest in the borough, has a high concentration of black youth, with 90 per cent unemployment. These conditions are one of the main reasons

for the underachievement of blacks in schools.

70 per cent of the homeless in the borough are black. There are 30 Irish immigrants arriving every day in Brent, with nowhere to live and no jobs.

One of the borough's secondary schools has been closed, possibly for good, because it is unsafe, riddled with asbestos. Most of the schools are old. The council is also short of 200 teachers. These are the conditions which breed racism.

The council's leaders make the mistake of seeing racism in isolation from the borough's appalling social problems. It is portrayed as something which exists only in the minds of white people. Consequently they believe that the only way to eradicate racism is to change every individual's psychology, rather than deal with the root causes.

Open racists should be disciplined, and, if the charges are proved, dismissed from their jobs. But the problems in education, and of racial discrimination against blacks and other minorities will not be solved simply by accusing every white person of being 'inherently racist'.

In fact it plays into the hands of the racists and the press, who use it to encourage a climate of fear and confusion, which may well be

developing amongst Brent's teachers and other council workers.

There are fears that educational standards are falling as a result of the council's approach. This has contributed to a quarter of parents opting to send their children to schools outside the borough. At one school only nine children have been enrolled for next September.

A recent survey showed that this lack of confidence in the borough's schools was most marked among the black population. Only a fifth of the intake at one of the biggest comprehensives next September will be black, in an area where the

racism.

Positive discrimination in times of crisis becomes simply a question of redistributing poverty, not eliminating it.

Brent council in 1986/7 had to overcome a budget deficit of £20 million. This year the council will spend £20 million on house building and have a total capital programme of £40 million—which must be welcomed. But the budget strategy involved selling off council property and leasing it back. Had this not been done the leaders of the council estimated they would have to make £25 million worth of

ly nursery in south Harlesden, on the Stonebridge estate, forcing the nursery, overwhelmingly used by black children, to close. At the same time, certain council posts, such as a nuclear free zone co-ordinator, are being offered at salaries up to £13,480.

Backlash

Unless there is a class approach, and a campaign to save jobs and services in Brent, there is a danger that black and white workers will be pitted against each other in the scramble for jobs. There could be a racist backlash amongst white people, fuelled by the Tory press and all sorts of racist and fascist scum.

The overwhelming priority of the council must be to combat the social conditions suffered by workers in Brent, by building new homes, creating jobs, and expanding services.

The campaign to eradicate racism can only be successful if it is linked to a strategy for improving the lives of all working class people and dealing with the concrete terms of the oppression of black workers in particular and the working class as a whole.

By Leo McDavid

Bermondsey finds lost voters

OVER 160 new voters were registered in Bermondsey last weekend.

Dozens of party members turned out to help in Bermondsey Labour Party's registration drive. It is one of the most successful campaigns in any of the key marginals in the country. This could make the difference between winning and losing, as many of the unregistered voters, especially young voters, are Labour supporters.

Target areas

Labour lost to the Liberals in the Inner London Education Authority elections last year by only 47 votes. Making sure Labour voters were registered then, could have turned the result round.

The registration campaign is part of Bermondsey Labour Party's election

preparations, helping to build support for the Party. 16 new members were also signed up to the Party at the weekend. Target areas have been pinpointed in the constituency where there are a high proportion of unregistered voters.

Labour Parties in other key constituencies should take a leaf out of Bermondsey's book and step up their own registration drives. If there is a summer election the final date for registering new voters is 14 April.

2.5 million people could be denied the vote in the next election according to a Home Office report. The constitutional reform centre says: "It is quite terrifying that one in six of the under 24s are being left out of democracy. It is a challenge to all the parties." Labour can inspire them to register and vote.

Llanelli threat to Militant supporters

THE EXECUTIVE Committee of Llanelli Labour Party has taken the first step on the rocky road to expulsions. On a vote of 11 to 4, half the EC—the other half stayed away—agreed to recommend that long-standing member Muriel Browning's activities in selling the *Militant* newspaper in the market precinct, and in so doing financing a proscribed organisation, be investigated.

Lobbying

It was also agreed by 11 votes to 2 to call Muriel Browning, Neil Williams and Keith Edwardes before the next EC meeting to answer charges of intimidation and harassment of EC members as they went into the meeting. It seems that these

right-wing EC members do not understand the tradition of lobbying in the labour movement. They prefer to adopt the same opinion as the Tories towards protest and picketing.

Rank and file members of the party have expressed disgust that the letter of complaint from a woman member of the EC had been leaked to the local press before the meeting, so near to a general election when the Tory press is playing up the theme of Labour disunity.

Militant supporters will be arguing at the next general management committee meeting for unity in the party and an end to inquiries and purges.

By Militant reporters

The art of speculation



£25,000,000 IS A LOT OF BREAD

GOT AN empty space on your wall? You must be kicking yourself over missing van Gogh's "Sunflowers" painting, sold at auction by Christie's for only £25 million. This is about what it would cost to build a new hospital. Or it could pay War on Want's budget for four whole years. But the rich are absolutely determined that their money shouldn't be put to any such useful purpose. Specula-

tion in art works is reaching record levels. This is great news for Christie's whose profits soared by fifty per cent last year with worldwide sales reaching £402.7 million. It's good news for Sotheby's too. They sold the Duchess of Windsor's jewels for over £50 million last week. Some of the jewels sold for more than a hundred times what Sotheby's expected them to fetch.

Labour council leader expelled

ARTHUR SEED, right-wing leader of Langbaugh Council, Teesside, and another right-wing councillor have been expelled from the Labour Group.

The District Labour Party held a joint meeting with the Labour Group, though only 13 of the 31 Group members turned up, and voted unanimously to expel the two and chose a new leader and deputy leader.

This follows their support for a Tory motion to remove the Labour Housing Committee Chair, Terry Collins. The council, which has a Labour majority of one, passed the motion by a majority of two.

A committee of inquiry into rent arrears, comprising Seed, on whose instruction it was set up, the Tory Group leader and the only SDP representative, alleged that the Housing chair had "acted beyond his powers".

Seed also voted with the Tories and seven other right wingers in favour of plans to set up a City Technology College in the borough.

He has also indicated his willingness to stand in the council elections in May in the South Bank ward, where a Labour candidate has already been selected. He says he does not recognise any of the decisions of the ward party because of the national executive committee's inquiry into Redcar Labour Party, so he may be considering standing as an independent.

Bearing in mind that the bulk of the right wing's allegations of *Militant* infiltration, etc. to the NEC inquiry team have been submitted by Seed, you have to ask whether such 'evidence' can be relied upon.

By a Militant reporter

1985 The first round

THE TORY government has again brought up the threat of forcing all school leavers onto training schemes, by threatening to withhold their benefits if they refuse a placement.

By John Hird
(LPYS National Committee, London North)

Nigel Lawson recently confirmed these moves by saying: "While I am against the direction of labour, and people should have the freedom to turn down a job or a training place, the obligation of the state is a different matter".

What this means in English is that no-one's forcing you on to the schemes but if you are dependent on state benefits, you have the option of starving.

However, 'conscriptio' is not a new threat. As John Hird, ex-chair of the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) explains, the LPYS fought and defeated similar proposals in 1985.

At an after-dinner speech in December 1984, Lord 'UB40' Young said that his government were going to withdraw the right of 16 and 17 year olds to claim supplementary benefit if they refused to go on a YTS scheme.

The LPYS and Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign (YTURC) went into action immediately. Leaflets were distributed and *Socialist Youth* had the headline "No to YTS Conscriptio".

The LPYS and YTURC agitated in the schools, colleges and also among

How YTS Conscriptio was defeated in '85



School students in Manchester on 1 April 87. Students from the age of 12 were clear of the reasons they were striking: "We have no future... £28 is not enough to live on... if the teachers can go on strike—then we can strike!" Photo: Militant

unemployed youth. Feelings were running particularly high in the schools. Students simply did not want to be herded onto dead-end schemes.

The campaign moved up a gear when YTURC went to the labour movement and pop celebrities for support. Paul Weller and Billy Bragg leant strong backing.

Petition

A celebrity petition against YTS conscriptio was launched and signed by the Flying Pickets, Madness and Frankie goes to Hollywood among others.

The petition was handed in to 10 Downing St with

50,000 other names on 28 February by Dave Nellist MP, Paul Weller, Billy Bragg and school students. 5,000 young people lobbied Parliament that day and the Tories began to get a taste of the opposition to their plans.

Many of Labour's front bench spokesmen supported YTURC, including MPs Barry Sheerman and Michael Meacher. Neil Kinnock issued a statement on the day YTURC went to Parliament: "The YTURC is genuinely committed to mobilising and informing young people and my view substantially concurs with the view of YTURC."

Still the Tories would not back down and YTURC

promised to escalate the campaign. In March 20,000 school students in Glasgow came out on strike against YTS conscriptio and for real jobs. The Glasgow strike was the biggest in Britain's history—but only for a month. Up and down the country YTURC and LPYS members reported sporadic action in the schools. The mood was electric and angry.

The stated aim of YTURC was to turn that anger into a mass campaign, to fight for a programme to reverse the government's plans to cut benefits, to obtain full trade union rights and rates of pay for YTS trainees, to win grants of £30 a week for all 16 and 17 year olds in

school or further education, and to secure guaranteed jobs for all trainees, school and college leavers.

These demands were gaining widespread support, national action had to be taken.

Strike call

At LPYS national conference 200 school students formed an action committee and issued the call for a national school students strike outside Scotland.

At first the media tried to ignore the action but eventually they could not. In Kirkby, Merseyside, school students went on strike for a week! YTURC and the

School Students Action Committee representatives appeared on national news, *Breakfast Time* and debated with Lord Young.

The strike on 25 April was a huge success despite police and Education Authority action. The school students were the first item on radio and TV news. Next day they were on the front pages of all the newspapers.

In Liverpool 10,000 marched, London 5,000 and in Northern Ireland Catholic and Protestant youth marched side by side.

The media tried to find school students who were just taking the day off for fun, but they could not, everyone said it was against YTS and the Tories.

The school strike had 250,000 participants and had been inspired by the miners. The Tories did not immediately back down, but waited a few weeks until the MSC wrote to YTURC denying they had any plans to withdraw benefits - a victory for the youth.

The lessons of the victory are that if young people are given a lead they will move into action. There is tremendous energy and will to change things among youth.

On the day of the strike John Clare (*Radio 4's* education correspondent) tried to rubbish the strike by saying it got a poor response. He summed up the action by saying "it's not the last we have heard of the Militant Tendency or the LPYS, but certainly the last of the school strikes in Britain". The school students of London and Manchester have proved him wrong!

Manchester youth protest against YTS

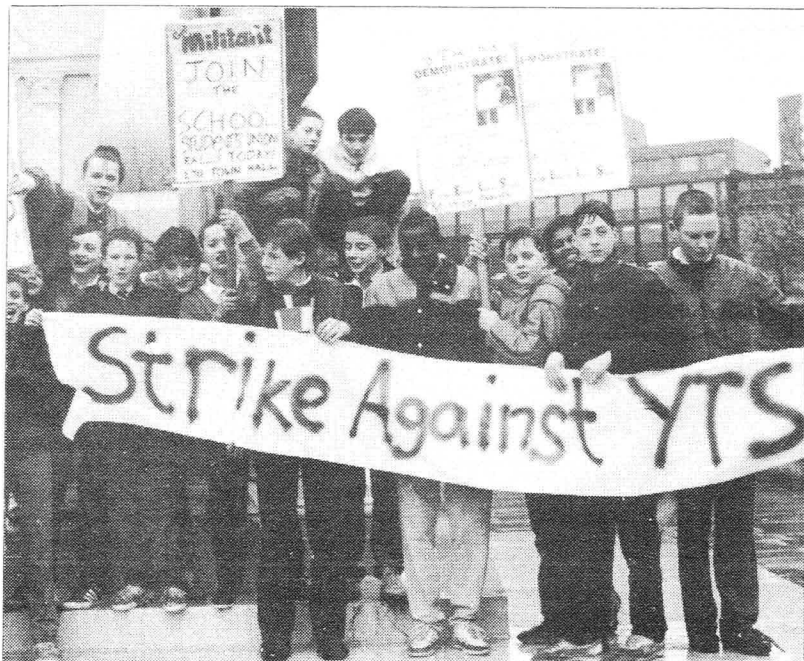
IN MANCHESTER a Youth Action Committee was organised to co-ordinate a demonstration of further education and school students, and YTS trainees against exploitation on YTS and recent Tory plans to force school leavers onto the scheme.

Over 60 attended the meeting including reps from Manchester area National Union of Students. The meeting agreed to hold local meetings in the schools the day before the strike.

The demonstration on Wednesday 1 April was supported by 7-800 trainees and students. It had been called by Further Education Labour Students and the FE national committee of NUS to protest against the miserly £1.20 increase for YTS trainees and to launch a unionisation campaign of trainees.

A second meeting of the Action Committee was held the day after the strike to plan the next step of the campaign and to take up any victimisation. The mood of the meeting was to look for national action against the Tory proposals.

By Louise James



The demo in Manchester addressed by Colette Williams (FELS member on the NUS exec) was a great success despite attempts to undermine it by Gordon Archer (NUS FE officer and NOLS member) who circulated a letter saying the demo had been cancelled. Photo: Militant

Organise to fight slave Labour scheme

A lively meeting of trade unionists and unemployed in Edinburgh established a joint campaign of action against the new Job Training Scheme.

Harvey Duke, from Dundee, one of the scheme's pilot areas, explained to the meeting the steps that had been taken against the scheme in Dundee which included public meetings, pickets and leafletting.

Action taken so far included circulating an appeal to Labour

authorities not to manage the scheme or allow their premises to be used for it.

Further action planned includes a public meeting, leaflets aimed at the unemployed, community programme workers, MSC and department of employment staff.

The people at the meeting agreed that one of the best ways to fight the new JTS is to mobilise rank and file shop stewards and activists in factories where the trainees will be placed. A big

publicity campaign among activists is beginning now.

If every area in Britain begins a campaign now, involving CPISA, NALGO, TGWU and unemployed groups, the MSC will find it more and more difficult to implement the scheme.

By Jim Bennett
(Scotland East MSC CPISA, chairman)

6-2 MILLION YOUTH FOR LABOUR

Labour Party Young Socialists

The campaign by the Labour Party Young Socialists to win backing for its demands during the consultation is having a dramatic effect. It has been so successful that Larry Whitty is 'investigating' Linda Douglas (LPYS rep on the NEC) and John Ellen (LPYS Chair) for producing and distributing a leaflet outlining the LPYS response. The right wing are worried, wherever the LPYS proposals are argued they are getting support.

Debate

The executive of the London Labour Party is recommending that London Labour Party conference discuss the proposals, that conference support the LPYS position and that Paul Hannick, LPYS rep on the executive, sum up the debate. Strong support is coming from the trade unions. Capital Holding Branch of USDAW and TGWU branch 6/688 have sent replies opposing reduction of the LPYS age limit and calling for the consultation to be postponed.

Capital Holding branch are particularly worried any cut in the age limit would

have a 'knock-on' effect inside the trade union structures, most have an age limit of 26.

Make sure all trade unions in your area are being consulted. Collections need to be taken at every meeting to finance the campaign.

Four wards in Brent East, High Fell in Gateshead, Kings Park in Hackney and many others have backed the LPYS proposals. Many constituency parties in West Scotland will be holding special meetings to debate the proposals. What is organised in your CLP?

At least 13 LPYS branches have sent off replies this week. Make sure yours does after its next meeting. LPYS speakers are also being invited to a number of Labour clubs.

Our best response to Whitty's investigation is to ensure every section of the labour movement gets to hear the LPYS position and by collecting money at every meeting where the proposals are discussed.

Don't forget replies only 'count' if they reach Walworth Rd by 22 May. Act now - only six weeks to go!

The Falklands untold story

TV Review

FIVE YEARS ago the Argentine and British governments, both facing growing unpopularity and social upheaval at home, went to war over the Falkland Islands.

The 'loser', General Galtieri of Argentina, was subsequently overthrown and sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment.

The 'winner', Margaret Thatcher, went on to win her second general election with an increased majority, basking in the reflected glory of Britain's successful recapture of the islands.

But *The Falklands War: The Untold Story*, on ITV last week, showed that there was no glory for the British and Argentine soldiers who did the fighting. Their experiences vindicated *Militant's* judgement at the time that "war merely carries the horrors of capitalism to their ultimate extent".

The programme brilliantly conveyed the pain and misery of war. It also showed the soldiers' sympathy with those fighting on the other side, which contradicted the propaganda from the ruling class back home about 'the enemy'.

The potential for working-class unity, advocated by the Marxists at the time was there even on the battlefields. Workers in uniform lost their comrades and suffered agonies of pain for a war over the prestige, power and profits of two ruling classes thousands of miles from the scene.

"We oppose the capitalist war of Argentina against Britain", said *Militant's* pamphlet *Falklands Crisis: a Socialist Answer*, "and we oppose the capitalist war of Britain against Argentina". That opposition was not just based on revulsion at the inevitable horrors of warfare. It was opposition to a war from which workers stood to gain nothing.

"You can always tell if you are close to someone when they've been hit, because you hear the crack of the bullet, but you also hear a sort of horrible thwack as the bullet hits solid flesh and bone... We heard the crack and we heard the thump as it hit an Argentinian. There was a moment's silence and then the most terrible screaming from this Argentinian. He was screaming for his mother. And there was complete silence from both sides at this point and both of us listened to it and I'm sure we were just as horrified as the Argentinians. It went on and on and on."
Lt Alistair Mitchell, Scots Guards.

"We felt this impotence. We were waiting for death and there was nothing we could do about it. So you look back over what you have done in your life. But we were 19, so there's not much we could have done really... I asked myself - how many fathers did I kill? what was the point? did I do all this for my country? What is my country? Are you my country, all those of you dancing and laughing and having a good time while we suffer. We risked our lives at 19. Many did not come back, but we did. What are we supposed to do now?"
Pte Horacio Benitez, Argentine conscript.

For the Argentine military junta the seizure of the Falklands was a "desperate attempt to divert the social strivings of the masses into nationalist channels... The junta's motives in waging this war are determined by capitalist considerations of grabbing resources and escaping from intolerable social contradictions".

On the other side, it was "the prestige of British imperialism and the prospect of exotic riches in the Antarctic, not the interests of the

islanders, which determine the policy of the Tory government... The 1,800 Falklanders are just pawns in the game as far as British imperialism are concerned".

Five years on, the underlying problems in both Britain and Argentina are even more severe than in 1982. The civilian Radical administration of President Alfonsin has been rocked by strikes and demonstrations.

Thatcher's second government went on to fight what some of its members thought of as a second Falklands war against the 'enemy within', the miners. Although the strike was not a victory, it marked the end of the Tories post-Falklands revival and paved the way for their eventual defeat.

The Falkland islanders themselves are maintained by a vast subsidy and defended by a huge military garrison. Yet they face a bleak and uncertain future, as a remote outpost of a declining capitalist power which cannot provide jobs and eliminate poverty in many parts of Britain itself.

By Pat Craven

"I felt tears trickling down the side of my face as I thought about good blokes that had actually died that day and the fact that more were likely to die tomorrow."
Sgt Barry Norman, 2 Para.

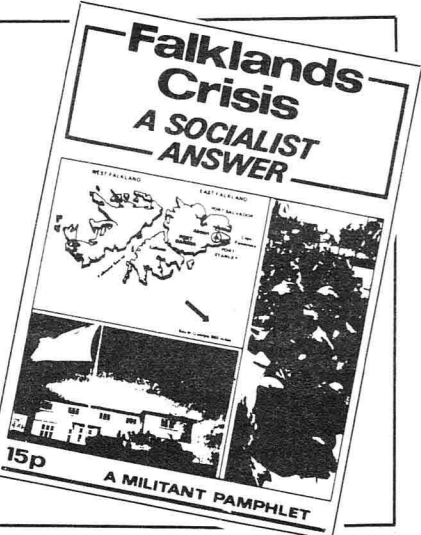
"The skin off my hand had come off and it was like a glove and it was flapping about."
Guardsmen Wayne Trigg, on the Sir Galahad when it was hit.

"You could see the agony these guys had been in when they died. Their legs were all twisted. We found an Argentine officer who had been injured with a belly wound... I went over and he started speaking to me in English. He was telling me he didn't know why we were fighting either.

"I feel bad about the bodies and the state of them and the way we were just trying to toss them into a hole. They were just kids. The guy that was injured, I wish he had never spoken English. He died... It's taken me four years to cry about a few dead people, because obviously you can't cry then. You've got a job to do and you do it. I'm afraid I just didn't see them as an enemy."
Corp Lou Armour, Royal Marines.



Militant pamphlet
produced at the time of the Falklands war
Price 30p including post and packing.
From World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.



Left and Right

Best Friends

IT SEEMS that Keith Best, the MP whose enthusiasm for the privatisation of British Telecom has landed him in trouble with the fraud squad, will find compassion in one quarter at least. Well-known tabloid columnist Joe Ashton MP is reported to have told "sympathetic" colleagues at a Parliamentary Labour Party meeting that they shouldn't demand Best's resignation. The last thing the party wants now is a by-election, Ashton claimed. If they aren't use Best's alleged misdemeanours to Labour's advantage, what confidence can the right have of leading the party to victory in a general election? Even Best's constituency association of the Tory Party is thinking of taking action against him, now that he is said to have over-indulged in Jaguar sales as well.

Crowd Control

COVERAGE OF football matches on Chilean TV must lack a certain at-

mosphere. The sound of exuberant crowds is never broadcast since the chants have a tendency to turn into anti-government slogans. "He's going to fall" is the current favourite with fans who are clearly anxious to show their appreciation of General Pinochet's good works. The dictatorship was reported to be nervous about the coverage of the rallies to greet the Pope where there have been further displays of popular affection for military rule. Official loudspeakers tried to drown out shouts of "Take the gorilla with you" and "Liberty" with songs and exhortations to prayer.

Government to be Banned?

TORY MP Gerald Howarth wants to amend the Obscene Publications Act to redefine what is obscene as anything causing "gross offensiveness to a reasonable person". Doesn't this make the Prime Minister liable for prosecution over her government's record?

SALES Campaign 87

SUPPORTERS IN East Scotland have really taken our sales campaign to heart. They report numerous successes over the last few weeks. In the West Granton area of Edinburgh, they've increased their order every week—and they've sold out every time! They've made every Saturday a sales day, beginning with a street sale and, after a tea-break, going straight on to a door to door sale. Then they follow up the sales made the week before and then deliver to the regular rounds. Three of the newest sellers, Gary Clarke, Gary Frazer and Kenny Cairns were amazed by how easy it was. They sold five papers in the first street they covered.

In Livingston, sellers had a drive to get local

newsagents to stock *Militant*. Out of the first eighteen asked, fifteen agreed to do so.

It's not just in the Lothians that sales are going forward. The sale outside Cardiff Central bus station wasn't going very well, so supporters tried swapping to a Thursday and now sell eight every week. Consistency is the key, but it shouldn't develop into rigor mortis! Don't give up too easily, but look for new opportunities and gear your sale to what is in the paper.

Does your area sell outside the major civil service workplaces? The programme of industrial action

is now under way. Activists will want to know how it is developing. No other paper will give the accounts from all over the country that ours will. So get down there and sell!

Supporters in Coventry have made a special point of selling outside the Alvis factory where the personnel manager is the SDP candidate to stand against Dave Nellist in the election. Nine papers were sold there last week and one of the shop stewards helps out with the selling.

All over the country, sales are taking off. Make sure your area isn't left behind.



Coventry bakers find Militant, tells the truth about their strike.

"AFTER I take the kids to school I do my shopping at Morrisons. I don't have a car. If I bus to Newcastle to shop it's £1 for the fare, so I'm not really saving. It wasn't too bad when Woolco and Presto were open. I remember when Morrisons first opened two years ago. I used to love shopping there, everything there was so cheap. Now I'm having to count every penny, and it's getting worse." Maureen Kirkley, housewife.

Killingworth

What we call for

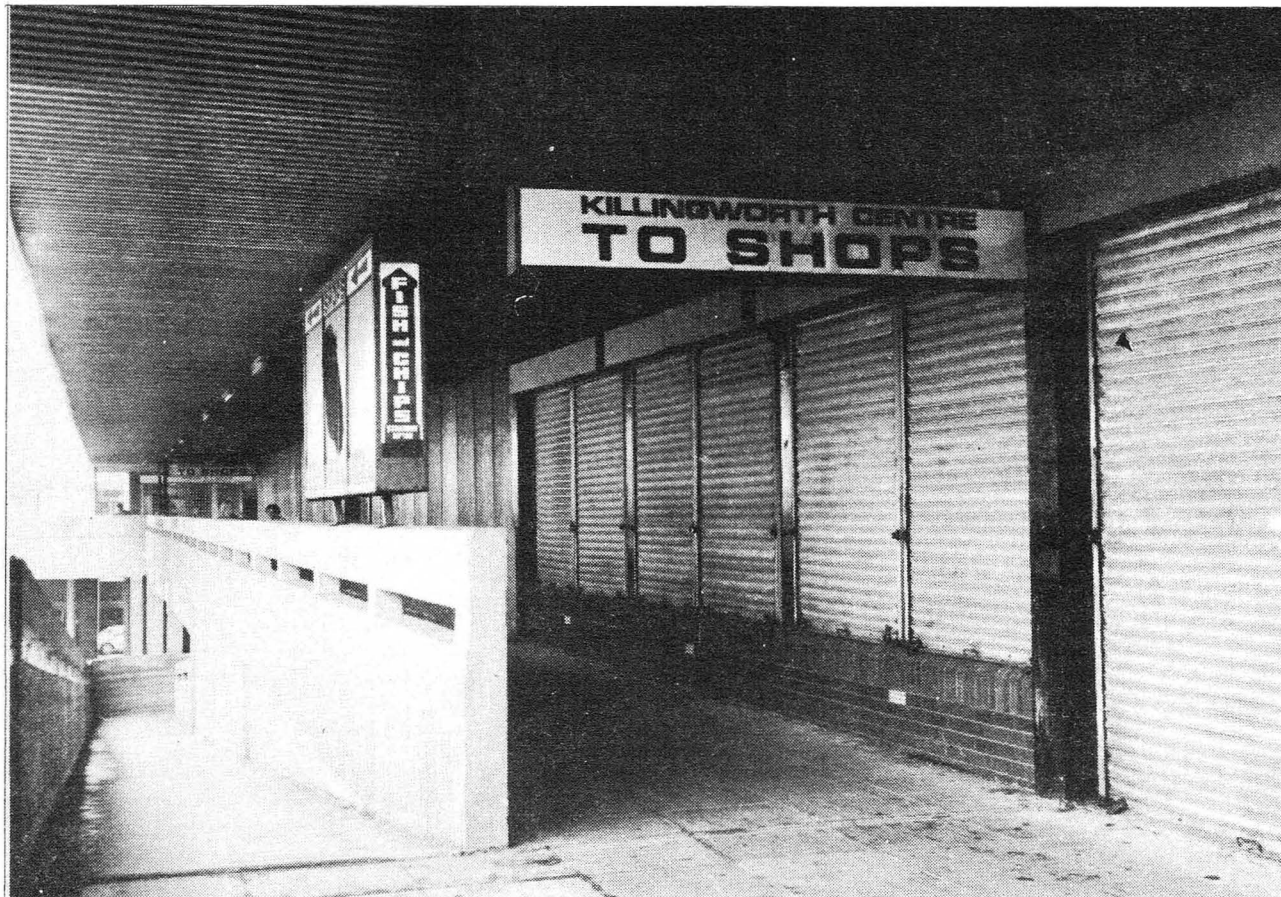


Photo: Dave Pearson.

TALK TO anyone from Killingworth new town in the North East, and despite the unemployment, rising crime figures, deregulation of the local buses and the housing crisis, the problem which affects them above all else is the rundown of the Killingworth shopping centre.

By Councillor Dave McGarr

Property speculators and giant retail companies are deciding the fate of the town, over the heads of the local community.

Killingworth with a population of 11,000 and rising, is served by a shopping centre (currently half closed down) of 25 standard shopping units, four larger stores and a pub. Built of concrete and barricaded behind steel shutters at night, the centre is dirty, vandalised and covered in graffiti. It is depressing by day and frightening by night.

The local people want something done. The freehold on the town centre belonged to Tyne and Wear County Council. But the land was passed on to the Tyne and Wear Residuary Body, a quango of unelected businessmen appointed by the Tories to replace the County Council once they had abolished it.

The residuary body is now going back on the original promise to transfer the land to the local Labour controlled North Tyneside Council. Instead it is following the instructions of the Tory under secretary for the environment, Christopher Hope, that an alternative "disposal" of this land be found. Now they have told him that their inquiries indicate that a private sector buyer may be found, and that the property could fetch

shopping scandal

"After I've been shopping and see what little I've got for so much, I feel like crying. All the basic food in Morrisons has gone shooting up. Beans, biscuits and bacon went up not by a penny or two, but by six and nine pence. What can you do? There is nowhere else to shop. You either pay those prices or you don't eat." Anne Clarke, housewife, two children, husband unemployed.

£300,000 to £400,000.

But while they play monopoly with the shopping centre, the wheeling and dealing of a multi-national is creating a catastrophe for local shoppers. Dee Corporation which owns Carrefour, Gateway, Fine Fare and Shoppers' Paradise, took over the premises of Woolco (Woolworths), the largest store in the centre, in 1986.

They stripped it bare, sacked the Woolco staff and have kept the store empty

ever since. They will give no explanation, but it is widely known that a change of management policy has resulted in an asset stripping exercise.

No control

The local people, even the democratically elected local council, have no control really over the planning of the amenities and services that the community needs.

The refusal to open a Carrefour shop in place of

Woolco, has left the newly constructed superstore, Morrison's, with a virtual monopoly on the sale of food in Killingworth, and prices have shot up accordingly. Of course it is the ordinary families of Killingworth who have to suffer.

With shoppers being forced into Morrison's, which is on the other side of a road from the shopping centre itself, the smaller shops in the centre are being hit. One by one they are being forced to close down. There are also

units that have never opened since the shops were built in 1969.

What future?

In the short term North Tyneside Council may offer the small family traders who are left a rate rebate to help keep them in business. They would have to open their books to prove hardship. But a town this size deserves a decent shopping centre, with a large selection of services and goods available.

Local Labour Party members are campaigning for:

★ The immediate disposal of the shopping centre land to North Tyneside Council and not to private speculators.

★ The implementation of the plan to refurbish the centre.

★ The granting of £9.5 million to the council for urban development grant.

★ The return to the council of the £17 million stolen from it by the Tory government since 1979.

We want the implementation of a report commissioned by the old Tyne and Wear council into the future of the town centre.

This envisaged the complete refurbishment of the shopping centre and the building of new units on the road that divides the shops. Then a giant indoor shopping centre could be established, clean, safe and with a wide range of stores and services.

The total cost of all this development, including the takeover of the interests of the leaseholder of the shopping centre, Makepeace Investment, would be about £9.5 million. It is possible that North Tyneside Council could finance it through an urban development grant. But first it would have to get control of the land from the owners—the residuary body.

Fighting Fund

This week £5268

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 South East	1156		2250
2 South West	605		1900
3 London	2650		9350
4 Southern	763		3050
5 Eastern	691		3200
6 Wales	1059		4800
7 East Midlands	661		3250
8 Northern	647		4600
9 West Midlands	673		4750
10 Yorkshire	1187		8300
11 Scotland East	358		2800
12 Merseyside	866		7500
13 Manchester	411		3850
14 Scotland West	88		3500
Others	9329		6900
Total	21143		70000

Three weeks left for the £70,000

THE CLOSING date for this quarter's target is in sight. There are just three weeks to go.

We have been helped this week by two great donations from readers in London of £1,500 and £1,000. When *Militant* started in 1964 we raised £150 in the first year. In the last six months we have raised nearly £250,000 with £36,500 being collected at the rally last November.

Our success has always been based on boldly asking for cash to make our ideas a concrete reality. The Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) national conference

has always shown its tremendous support for Marxism in the fighting fund collection.

Make this year's collection the best ever. Follow the example of supporters in Canterbury LPYS who asked their fellow YS members to take money for *Militant* to the conference at Blackpool. Approach all the unions sending delegates too.

Last year we raised £5633 despite being unable to hold a readers' meeting so this year we aim to get over £10,000. You should send us a donation even if you can't make LPYS conference. *Militant* sellers in the East

of Scotland raised over £50 on street collections by rattling their tins and asking passers by for donations. Sellers in Manchester and Wolverhampton collected £22.48 and £15.40 respectively by asking for the £1 solidarity price.

Thanks to London LPYS conference £146.55. Readers meeting with Tony Mulhearn £80; North West LPYS conference £58.81; Margaret Ritchie (Carmarthen) £80; C Walter £10; Lea Richards (Swansea) £6; Janice Maguire (in memory of Jeff Haney) £5; Dave Faulkner £3.50.

RUSSIAN REVOLUTION: LENIN RETURNS APRIL

Bolsheviks adopt programme for power

LENIN'S RETURN from exile crystallised a crisis in the Bolshevik party. The leadership in Russia around Kamenev and Stalin, who had assumed responsibility on their return from Siberia in March, endorsed the Soviet's position of conditional support for the Provisional government of Prince Lvov—even though the Soviet held the real power on the streets and in the factories.

Lenin had already rejected this stance, as his *Letters from Afar* in February demonstrated. The Provisional government, in his view, was so bound up with the landlords, the industrialists and the bankers that it was incapable of fulfilling its promises. To believe that the government would end the war, distribute the big estates, solve the economic crisis, and meet workers' demands was a dangerous illusion.

There was no question, as far as Lenin was concerned, of supporting the Provisional government while it carried out reforms in the expectation that, at a later stage, more favourable conditions would emerge for the struggle for socialism. The liberal bourgeois government, pushed reluctantly into power by the February revolution, had already gone as far as it was capable of going. Unless the Soviets smashed the remnants of the old state and placed power decisively in the hands of the workers, the Provisional government would succumb to counter-revolution. The next phase would be a new regime of totalitarian reaction.

In the *April Theses*, therefore, Lenin called for a struggle for a socialist programme based on the independent action of the working class. Its main elements were:

- ★ No support for the Provisional government.
- ★ Fight for the Soviets to take the power.
- ★ End the war.
- ★ Confiscate the big estates.
- ★ Nationalise the banks.
- ★ Establish workers' control of industry.
- ★ Replace the police and army with a workers' militia.
- ★ Replace the old state bureaucracy with workers' administration.
- ★ Proclaim a Communist Party; establish a new international.

A programme on these lines, with the strategy and tactics also spelt out, was an essential prerequisite for the success of the October revolution. In April it was opposed by the leaders castigated by Lenin as 'Old Bolsheviks'. However, by appealing to the leading Bolsheviks at rank and file level—those who had led the workers in the February revolution—Lenin won a majority for his ideas. The new upsurge of the workers and peasants, which provoked a new crisis for the Pro-

visional government, confirmed Lenin's position in a few stormy months. Without the *Theses* 1917 would have ended very differently. Underlying Lenin's strategy and tactics was a clear perspective. This provided a clear guide to action during the ebbs and flows of the revolution. On the other hand, it was precisely because they were working on the basis of a confused perspective, derived from a misinterpretation of Lenin's previous position, that the 'Old Bolsheviks' adopted a policy which prefigured the disastrous Popular Frontism of the Stalinist leaders in the 1930s.



The Petrograd Soviet in session March 1917. The Soviets potentially held the real power in society, but only when the Bolsheviks secured a majority within them, did this become a reality.

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Permanent Revolution

The perspective which Lenin arrived at in 1917 coincided with Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution, worked out following the experience of the 1905 revolution. This resolved the long debate within the Russian labour movement which revolved around three different conceptions of the coming revolution.

All the Russian Marxists were agreed that the tasks of social transformation facing them were those of the bourgeois democratic

revolution. These were: the breaking up of the big estates and the distribution of the land to the peasants. The abolition of the Tsarist monarchy and the establishment of a democratic republic. The separation of the church and the state. The introduction of social reforms, urgently demanded by the workers and peasants, but also necessary to clear the way for the development of capitalism.

Given this, which political forces would provide the leadership?

Would it be (a) the liberal capitalist representatives? If so, would the workers' parties, including the Bolsheviks, limit themselves to conditional support for the liberals, accepting that the struggle for socialism would come later, under more favourable conditions which would develop under a capitalist regime?

Would it be (b) the working class, in alliance with the representatives of the peasantry, who would take the power—limiting themselves, however, at this stage to bourgeois-democratic tasks?

Or would it be (c) the working class leading the exploited peasantry behind them, who would take the power, carry through the bourgeois-democratic tasks—but at the same time implementing radical

changes in their own interest which would begin the transition to socialism?

Menshevik schema

Position (a) was that adopted by the Mensheviks, who formed the right wing of the Social-Democratic party. From Marx, they drew highly schematic conclusions: that feudalism, capitalism and socialism followed in succession and one historical stage had to be completed before another could commence.

There was no question, according to this view, of the working class initiating a socialist revolution until the bourgeois-democratic revolution was complete.

This schema, alien to Marx's dialectical method, took no account of the relationship of forces resulting from Russia's uneven development. Elements of modern industry had been injected, through foreign capital, into a society dominated by landlords and ruled by an absolute monarchy. The capitalists had arrived too late on the scene, and were too cowardly to fight for progressive changes. Long before 1917 they had held the real economic power. But they relied on the Tsar for protection, and feared the consequences of any

big movements among the masses. Above all, they feared the working class—relatively small, but compact, highly class conscious and combative.

The liberal capitalists, in Lenin's view, had long ago proved their inability to carry through their historical tasks. The workers should place no reliance on the liberals whatsoever. Lenin always argued for an independent policy and organisation for the working class.

In the years before 1917 Lenin had accepted position (b). Given the bankruptcy of the liberal bourgeoisie, the revolution would be carried through by an alliance of the workers, the most conscious and dynamic political force, and the peasantry, the preponderant exploited class. This perspective was summed up in Lenin's formula "the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry."

'Dictatorship' did not mean totalitarian rule (this was before the monstrosity of Stalinism!) but class domination, which would be based on democratic soviet-type organisations. 'Democratic' expressed recognition of the bourgeois character of the tasks to be carried out.

However, Lenin was far from putting a Chinese wall between the bourgeois-democratic and the socialist revolutions. He was convinced that, because of capitalism's international character, the Russian revolution would be one link in a

'In order to consolidate bourgeois-democratic revolution to go farther; and we must solve the problems of the bourgeoisie in passing as a 'by-product' of genuinely proletarian activities.'

chain of world-wide revolutions. A revolutionary government in Russia would, through collaboration with revolutionary workers' governments in advanced capitalist countries, move towards a second, socialist revolution in Russia. How quickly this would happen would depend not on any predetermined historical timetable, but on the relationship of forces. Above all, it would be determined by the strength of the proletariat involved in the struggle. As far back as 1906 Lenin had written: "We stand for uninterrupted revolution. We shall not stop halfway."

Lenin's formula, as he explain-

APRIL 1917

Power

olutions. They con-
back in Petrograd
on of the Bolshevik

ed in April 1917, was 'algebraic'.
It expressed the class relationships
but left open the specific weight of
the political forces involved, and
did not attempt to quantify the
concrete tasks to be carried out.

Trotsky, whose perspective was
bolder and more concrete, warned
in 1906 that any tendency on the
part of the proletariat to accept
bourgeois-democratic limits would
become anti-revolutionary, and
could be potentially fatal to the
revolution. A failure on the part of
the revolutionary dictatorship to
implement socialist measures
would in practice undermine the
forces of the proletariat. The
leadership would in reality be con-
ceded, under these circumstances,
to the liberal bourgeoisie—opening
the door to the danger of counter-
revolution.

Old Bolsheviks

By developing the revolutionary
essence of his formula in relation
to the concrete events of 1917
Lenin avoided this danger. With
regard to the 'Old Bolsheviks',
Trotsky's warning proved far-
sighted and all too true. They clung
to Lenin's 'antiquated' and now
'meaningless' (as Lenin made clear
in the *April Theses*) formula of the
democratic dictatorship.

Kamenev and Stalin claimed to
be standing on Lenin's previous
perspective (b). In reality, the logic
of this position—conditional sup-
port for the Provisional govern-
ment and the postponement of the

the achievements of the
revolution... we were oblig-
ed to go farther. We solved
bourgeois-democratic revolu-
tionary socialist

struggle on the workers' own
demands—led them back to the
Menshevik's position (a) of an
alliance with the liberal
bourgeoisie, with the workers play-
ing second fiddle. Was it an acci-
dent that, prior to Lenin's return,
Stalin and Kamenev supported
discussions with the Mensheviks on
re-unification?

The remaining position (c), the
only one which proved to be genu-
inely revolutionary in 1917, was
that of the Permanent Revolution.
This was the position adopted by
Lenin in February 1917, outlined in
his *Letters from Afar* and spelt out
in the *April Theses*:



"The specific feature of the present situation in Russia is that the country is passing from the first stage of the revolution... to its second stage, which must place power in the hands of the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants... The Soviets of Workers' Deputies are the only possible form of revolutionary government..."

The position of Lenin and Trotsky coincided in 1917. Lenin accepted Trotsky's bold conclusion that in the epoch of imperialism, which dominated class relations internationally, the bourgeoisie of semi-developed countries like Russia had exhausted their historical mission. They could no longer complete the tasks undertaken by their predecessors in the classical revolutions of the past. These tasks now fell on the shoulders of the working class, the only truly revolutionary force notwithstanding its numerical weakness. But in taking on these tasks, left over from a previous era, the proletariat could not avoid linking them with socialist measures essential to meet the workers' immediate needs.

Given the economic backwardness and barbarous culture of a country like Russia, however, it was clearly imperative for the proletariat to adopt an internationalist outlook, striving to link up with the proletariat of more advanced countries possessing the material conditions for socialist development. For fundamental material reasons, it is only on the basis of the international extension of the revolution that the workers of a backward country could proceed to the construction of socialism.

Referring to the Permanent Revolution, Lenin told his comrade Adolf Joffe: "Trotsky was right." After 1917 the polemics of the past no longer seemed so important. Lenin's contempt for those who clung to his old formula was made clear in the brutal language of the *April Theses*.

However, there are many later comments which remove all doubt about Lenin's view. On the fourth anniversary of the revolution, for instance, Lenin said: "In order to consolidate the achievements of the bourgeois-democratic revolution... we were obliged to go farther; and we did go farther. We solved the problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in passing as a 'by-product' of our main and genuinely proletarian-revolutionary, socialist activities."

The April Theses today

HAD THE RUSSIAN revolution been successfully extended internationally, with the development of a socialist federation embracing economically advanced countries, the discussion of pre-1917 perspectives would now be only of historical interest to Marxists.

Unfortunately, with the defeat of the revolution in Europe, Soviet Russia was isolated. The revolution suffered an inevitable degeneration. The democratic control of the workers was usurped by a bureaucratic elite, which found a bonapartist representative in the person of Stalin.

As the bureaucracy became more remote from the working class within Russia, so it increasingly gave up confidence in the proletariat abroad. The Communist International was transformed into an agency of the bureaucracy's foreign policy. Searching for national security, the bureaucracy began to play a counter-revolutionary role on the world arena. The perspective of an independent proletarian struggle for socialism was abandoned.

In an effort to provide theoretical, 'Leninist' justification, Stalin exhumed Lenin's old formula of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. In other words, they returned to the policy they had supported at the beginning of 1917—before they had been defeated by Lenin in the struggle within the party.

The revival of this discredited policy was applied with disastrous results to the Chinese revolution of 1925-26. Against the wishes of the leadership of the Chinese communists, the Stalinist bureaucracy imposed a policy of subordination to the Chinese bourgeoisie led by Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuo Ming-tang. This led to the defeat of China's dynamic working class, with the massacre of thousands of Communists and militants. Since then, the same policy has been applied in many countries—always with the same disastrous results.

In the post-second world war period the ex-colonial lands have experienced a series of revolutionary upheavals. The communist party leaders, still dominated by



Stalinist ideology, have invariably subordinated the workers' organisations to the interests of the national-capitalist leaders. In many cases this has meant support for bonapartist, including military bonapartist leaders. Sukharno in Indonesia, Kassim in Iraq, Goncalves in Portugal—the list could be extended around the world many times.

Stages theory

In Chile between 1970-73, the CP leaders supported the popular front government of Allende. This was on the basis of a so-called anti-imperialist, anti-monopoly programme—to make 'inroads' into the power of capital. In other words, their perspective was that of completing a bourgeois-democratic stage of revolution, with the struggle for socialism postponed beyond the horizon. Following this line, the CP leaders helped to restrain the magnificent movement of the Chilean workers—who are still living with the horrendous results.

Similarly, in South Africa the Stalinists within the leadership of the ANC base themselves on the theory of stages. In spite of the magnificent movement of the black workers and youth, they believe that the programme of the revolution must be limited, at this stage, to national-democratic tasks. They fail to see that capitalism has completely exhausted the progressive role that it once played.

The crisis in Stalinism and the

reformist degeneration of the various communist parties has severed many of the links with Moscow. But the CP leaders nevertheless perpetuate the false ideas of Stalin in 1917—ideas which had to be swept aside by Lenin in order to ensure the success of the revolution.

If in 1917 the idea that the bourgeois-democratic revolution had to be exhausted before the workers could move towards socialism was incorrect, today it is totally absurd.

On the one side, the capitalist class of the underdeveloped countries is even more subservient to the big monopolies and banks of the advanced capitalist countries than in the past. Its ability to play an independent, progressive role is exhausted. Even where the national bourgeoisie has taken over, they have failed to complete their traditional tasks. On the contrary, given the world-wide capitalist crisis, they have accumulated even more problems and fostered grotesque social contradictions.

On the other side, the national bourgeoisie of the ex-colonial lands is almost everywhere confronted by a powerful working class. Especially in the semi-developed countries of Asia, Africa, and notably Latin America, the capitalists are paralysed by fear of the proletariat—much stronger now than the workers of Russia in 1917.

Many strikes, general strikes, and insurrectionary movements have proved the preparedness of the workers to struggle.

The weakness of the proletariat in the ex-colonial lands cannot be attributed to the incompleteness of the national bourgeois-democratic revolution. The failure of the workers in these regions to assume the leadership of the exploited peasantry and the impoverished petit-bourgeoisie and to lead society out of its present blind alley is due to its political weakness. This reflects the absence of revolutionary Marxist policy and organisation based on the ideas of Lenin and Trotsky and put to the test in 1917.

That is why the controversy of 1917 is still a live issue. The lessons of the *April Theses* have to be learned, re-learned and carried to class conscious workers throughout the world.

Poland, USA, South America, Romania

Polish workers resist attacks

Pawel and Agnieszka live in a Warsaw flat with their baby. They have been without hot water for six months. Repairs can't be done because the plans for the building are lost, and nobody knows where the pipes are. On top of this their central heating has been 'erratic' during the sub-zero winter. Parts for the heating system are no longer being made, though the building is only twenty years old.

SUCH ARE everyday conditions for millions of Polish working people under the rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy. The regime has led the country into an economic and social impasse.

By George Collins

Over \$5 billion is needed this year for repayments on the crippling \$34 billion foreign debt which the regime has run up in its efforts to modernise the economy. But only \$2 billion is available.

As the price for debt rescheduling, western moneylenders are demanding economic 'reforms', such as the abolition of food subsidies. This would double or treble the price of food in the shops.

Under these pressures the regime announced price rises last month, including food (13 per cent), transport (30 per cent), cigarettes (20 per cent) and energy (26 per cent).

But the simmering discontent of the workers quickly forced it to retreat. The rise in food prices was limited to less than 10 per cent (with wage increases of 15 per cent planned for 1987).

Sporadic protests have made clear the workers' determination to defend their living standards. On the coalfields, for example, miners immediately walked out when the price of sour cream was raised—and by evening the price was back to normal.



Above: food queue in Warsaw. Above right: workers meeting in Lenin Shipyard, Gdansk, 1980. Right: Lech Walesa.

Even the official unions, OPZZ, warned the regime of strikes if the price increases were enforced. Following the government's climb-down Lech Walesa, leader of the banned Solidarity movement, was cheered by 1,500 people in Gdansk when he said that "enough was enough".

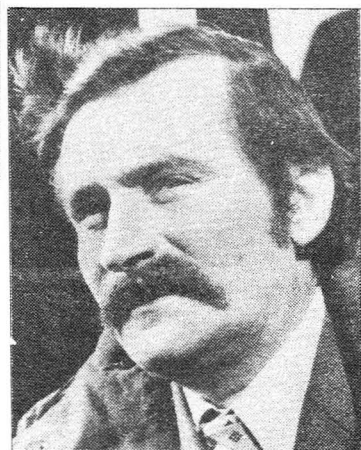
Walesa admitted that workers throughout the country were ready for action, but gave no hint of a lead.

This sums up the stalemate between the regime and the working class in Poland.

Headed off for the moment

from carrying through the devastating cuts demanded by the crisis in the economy, the regime will be forced to return to the offensive. The workers' movement, on the other hand, is still held back by the defeat it suffered in 1981, and by the lack of a determined leadership providing an alternative to the dictatorship of the bureaucracy.

But, with 40 per cent of Polish people living below the "social minimum" (according to the official unions) further attacks on living standards will inevitably prepare the ground for new



movements.

Repeatedly, over the last twenty years, food price rises have been the fuse that touched off massive struggles against the Stalinist bureaucracy itself.

But the crisis faced by Stalinism throughout Eastern Europe today is different from the crises of the

past. Today there is no longer the prospect of prolonged economic growth, as in the 1950s. The future is one of worsening economic crisis as a result of the mismanagement of the parasitic bureaucracy.

Even Gorbachev's reforms in the USSR can have only a temporary effect.

An end to bureaucratic misrule, and workers' control of the planned economy, will be central demands of the workers' movement in the revolutionary struggles ahead—spelling an end to Stalinism, and the beginning of genuine socialist democracy.

International Notes



South America

WHILE THE world's media focussed on the Pope's visit to Chile, explosive struggles have been flaring up across South America.

In Brazil, 750,000 bank workers have come out on national strike, demanding a 100 per cent pay rise in the face of galloping inflation. Universities and government departments have also been closed down as the prolonged strike wave continues.

In the northern Brazilian town of Castanhal mass anger erupted after a 17-year-old boy, accused of stealing a paintbrush, was beaten to death by police; the police station, courthouse and prison were burnt down.

Bolivia has seen a 12-day strike by the heroic tin miners, accompanied by a mass hunger

strike, leading to negotiations with the government. In Ecuador, a 24-hour national general strike against government austerity measures brought transport to a halt while workers' roadblocks cut off the capital, Quito.

Venezuela, following the murder of a student, has been shaken by violent student demonstrations against the judicial system and the country's economic crisis.

All the signs confirm that the revolutionary crisis building up in Latin America will be of continental proportions.

Romania

STRIKES AND go-slows have been reported from Romania, with troops taking over major factories, as protest builds up against the Stalinist regime's "belt-tightening" measures. Top CP officials have been sacked by the ruling Ceausescu clique in their futile attempts to find a way out of deepening social crisis.

USA: Lockheed's four month lockout

IN SEATTLE, 900 Lockheed shipyard workers have entered their fourth month of a bitter lockout.

Lockheed's "last, best and final" offer, last November, included wage cuts of up to 45 per cent. As Bill Gallman, locked out chief shop steward of the Electricians' Union, explained: "We rejected the proposal, after we were locked out, by 95 per cent. We're not going back under those conditions".

Nate Ford, secretary of the Metal Trades Council in Seattle, comments: "The truth is, the company doesn't want us back in that yard at any wage. They are trying to bust us".

According to press reports, Lockheed had closed-door meetings with the State Employment Department before the lockout, and were offered a technicality which made the locked out workers ineligible for unemployment benefits.

Lockheed boss John Hayes made it plain that the purpose was to "exert maximum economic pressure". State officials say such meetings before disputes are "normal procedure".

Instead of mobilising for a complete shutdown of the yard, the union leaders tried to follow the road of least conflict. Despite this there have been three mass pickets involving over 800 workers.

But when the State Senate voted a second time to deny benefits to the locked-out workers, trade unionists were enraged.

At a stormy meeting of Lockheed workers' leaders, a machinists' official called for a two-hour stoppage statewide.

News of the debate spread like wildfire. The waterfront unions pledged their support if a general stoppage was called. The president of the Foodworkers' Union (an executive member of Seattle Labor Council) said he had "always wanted to see a general strike in Seattle". Workers' leaders at Boeing, Seattle's industrial giant, said they would support it.

Backed down

The results were immediate. Lockheed withdrew its opposition to the workers' right to claim. Within three days a law was passed to authorise this, but with a sunset clause phasing it out after twelve months.

Just the threat of solidarity action by the labour movement had forced the bosses to back down.

Within weeks a second call arose. Forty carpenters, after much debate, passed a motion calling for a general strike at a special meeting of their local. Following discussion with the locked-out workers, it called on Seattle Labor Council to begin an education campaign among all members in support of a 24-hour general strike in all industries. The secretary of the Labor Council

supported the idea and, under legal advice, suggested it should be taken to the trades councils which can legally call a general strike.

The Metal Trades Council, representing all the major industrial unions in the shipyard, has now passed the motion in favour of a general strike. The union leaders are opposing the strike call and dividing the membership, but pressure on them will increase in the next period.

What we are seeing in Seattle is the beginning of a return to the historical traditions of American labour. The economic crisis of the bosses' system is forcing workers to question the methods of 'Business Unionism' and once again move towards militant struggle.

As Bill Gallman stressed: "Until the unions start breaking the laws that deliberately hamstringing us, we're not gonna get anywhere".

By Rick Rollins

(member of Carpenters Union and delegate to Seattle Labor Council)

Messages of support/donations to: Lockheed Locked-Out Workers Rank and File Office, c/o International Association of Machinists, 5527 Airport Way South, Seattle, Washington 98108, USA.

Spain ripe for general strike

IN MADRID'S Plaza Mayor last Friday, 15,000 delegates of the Workers' Commissions (CCOO: Communist-led unions) deluged their leadership with demands for a general strike.

The mood was universal. Speakers could hardly be heard over the shouts for a general strike, though workers knew their leaders opposed it (see *Militant* 841).

Marcelino Camacho, CCOO leader, stated the leadership's view that the conditions for a general strike do not exist in Spain. This was greeted with whistles and booing.

Fearing that they would lose control, the leadership cut the rally short by calling for a 'march' to the Ministry of the Economy—500 metres away!

Lost opportunity

Yet another opportunity of calling a national general strike was allowed to slip away. But, in spite of the leaders' conservatism, if ever conditions have existed for a general strike, then they exist in Spain today.

In the Reinosa steelworkers' strike the battle is sharpening, with streets barricaded, hand-to-hand fighting with the paramilitary Civil Guard and trains blocked.

The strike of the Asturian miners remains solid, despite the attempts by the CCOO leadership as well as the PSOE (Socialist) govern-

From correspondents in Spain

ment to get them back to work. Iberia Airways, the railways and Madrid's underground were on strike on different days last week.

More strikes have been called for Easter, a peak holiday period in Spain. Hotels and boarding houses threaten to close—an unprecedented situation in Spain. Public transport strikes have already been called, and petrol stations will be closed.

Tourists who tank up outside Spain could still find themselves stopped by farmers' and health workers' roadblocks.

Radicalisation and militancy have penetrated the furthest corners of Spain. In the small town of Linares in the province of Jaen, the threat of 200 redundancies at a metal factory provoked workers into action. Clashes followed with the police, and a general strike has been called in the town for 8 and 9 April.

Also in the shipyards of Cadiz, workers have fought with the police after threats of further redundancies. The 'Socialist' governor of Cadiz has said he is prepared to



Valencia: farmers block roads with oranges in day of protest against low prices and lack of state assistance.

declare a state of siege because, according to him, the dock workers are like 'terrorists'.

Workers at Santa Barbara munitions factories have held assemblies to discuss the management's proposal to dismiss half the 5,500 workforce. It is a reflection of the mood that a vote was taken on whether or not to

kidnap the bosses (it was decided, for the time being, not to do so)!

But in the small town of Aldeavila the vice-president of the provincial government was kidnapped as townsfolk rose up against the government's threat to bring nuclear waste to their doorsteps. In Santander, workers kidnapped company

directors after they issued redundancy notices.

All over Spain, workers are being driven into struggle over two main issues: the PSOE government's determination to put a 5 per cent limit on pay rises, and above all the need to defend jobs.

All this anger, all this frustration point at classical conditions for calling a

general strike that will unite the separate struggles, give workers a sense of their own power, and force the bosses to retreat. The most serious obstacle at this stage is the refusal by the trade union leadership to give direction to the struggle.

The CCOO leadership has called for a one-day general strike of metal workers on 10 April, and a day of 'general mobilisation' for other sectors. Workers coming out on strike are urged to save their energy for the 'general mobilisation'. Workers are supposed to 'prepare' on this day for the 1 May demonstrations.

Misjudgement

Clearly, the leadership are underestimating and misjudging the workers' mood. They are trying to limit the movement to protests, when on all sides serious struggle to save jobs and conditions is demanded.

In spite of the absence of leadership, it is possible that 10 April may turn, in effect, into a day of general strike as workers take matters into their own hands. Regional and sectoral general strikes could develop spontaneously.

It is also possible that the numerous industrial struggles may combine into a national strike movement. The workers are clearly not prepared to take the attacks launched on them by both the bosses and the PSOE government.



Anti-nuclear demonstration in Hanover. The SPD leadership's failure to present a clear alternative is losing them youth support.

SPD setback warning to Kinnock

THE GERMAN Social-Democratic Party (SPD) suffered a major setback in the Hesse election last Sunday, losing control of the state parliament to a Christian-Democrat/Liberal coalition for the first time since the war.

The SPD vote slumped from 46 to 40 per cent while that of the Christian-Democrats rose from 39 to 42 per cent. The biggest winners were the Greens (up from 6 to 9.4 per cent), showing the search for a radical alternative among youth in particular.

With bold socialist policies the SPD

could galvanise this underlying discontent at unemployment, pollution and growing social problems. Its defeat in Hesse was due to its failure to provide an alternative.

Workers and youth are disillusioned with the right-wing policies, the splits and inertia of the national SPD leadership. In Hesse, 115,000 SPD supporters stayed at home.

This result is a clear warning to Neil Kinnock and Labour's right wing in Britain who are intent on marching down the same road as the SPD leaders in Germany.

German school students' protest against education plans

AFTER THE events in France, Spain and Britain, German school students are also taking to the streets to fend off attacks on education.

By Bruno Hof and Fitz Garvie
(Jusos, Cologne)

On 10 March, students occupied their schools in Hanover, northern Germany, in protest against plans by the Christian-Democratic minister of education for Lower Saxony to toughen up final school exams and make it even more difficult for working-class students to go on to higher education.

Two days later, 15,000 school students demonstrated in Hanover, supported by representatives of the local teachers' and engineering workers' unions (IG-Metal) and local Social-Democrat (SPD) leaders.

The students carried banners with the slogan "Paris, Madrid, Hanover". Even though the Spanish movement, in particular, was more or less boycotted by the press here, German students are aware of the Europe-wide movement of youth, and feel themselves part of it.

It is no coincidence that attacks are being made on education all over Europe

simultaneously. At a time of mass unemployment, shrinking industrial capacity, and with the next recession threatening, capitalists are no longer prepared to pay for youth to be educated on the same broad scale as in the 1960s.

The first attacks came two years ago, when the capitalist coalition of Christian-Democrats (CDU, CSU) and Liberals (FDP) cut financial support for working-class students. Now the government wants to make it more difficult for students to enter higher education.

Provoked

The movement of German school students was provoked by a remark by the education minister of Lower Saxony, Oschatz, that he wanted to create "elite classes"!

This sparked off student demonstrations in Hamburg, North Rhine Westphalia, Hesse and in the industrial Ruhr area. Oschatz was forced to resign.

Students' representative councils in schools all over Germany organised demonstrations on 30 March to show their indignation at plans to be discussed at a conference of ministers of education of the different states on 2 April.

In Dusseldorf, 5,000 students demonstrated. The

mood was very good and political. Many we spoke to recognised the need to link up school students' demands with the demands of the working class in general.

In Cologne, one Marxist school student played a leading role in organising the schools. Far from being "apolitical", as the press would have us believe, school youth are looking for a political solution.

The protests forced the SPD ministers of education to oppose the plans of their CDU counterparts at the conference, and a policy decision has been postponed. However, the plans could have been destroyed completely if the national leadership of the students' councils had mobilised for a nationwide, centrally co-ordinated strike, as proposed by the Marxist paper *Voran*.

Instead, they let students demonstrate locally, so that students in one city didn't know what was going on in others. Non-coordinated actions will not be so effective in forcing the Christian-Democrats to back down.

The school students' leadership must take up the demands of the Marxists for a nation-wide strike, linked to the labour movement, the complete reversal of the cuts in students' grants, and the dropping of the attacks now being planned.

Quotes of the week

J.B. PATNAIK, Chief Minister of the Indian state of Orissa, on reports that destitute peasants are eating ants and larvae because they have no food: "No, not that. It is merely, you see, a type of food popular in many areas..."

In other words, a delicacy? Red ants? "Yes, they like it and fry it and eat it. A type of delicacy."

AN ISRAELI manager, on investing in a remote part of the South African Bantustan of BophuthaTswana: "When we first heard about it the idea sounded crazy, but when we found the labour was so cheap (down to £3 a week—Editor) and there were no unions it made a lot of sense."

Liberals attack security force

Dear Comrades,
 Since the removal of the 47 Labour councillors the Liberals have frozen the non-filling of vacancies. Already 35 vacancies have not been filled in cleansing.
 The Liberals have appointed a lord mayoress, sacked Sam Bond and their third wish is the reorganisation of the static security

force.
 The Liberal deputy leader has been going through the personal files of all security officers to prepare the ground for witch-hunts. Agreements reached under the Labour administration have been reneged upon. The position of the static security force was to be reviewed at the end of the

financial year 31 March.
 A resolution was overwhelmingly passed to maintain manning levels, no reorganisation or victimisation and to take immediate industrial action if the Liberals contravened any of these points.
 Yours fraternally
 name withheld

Service area slavery

Dear Comrades,
 My workplace, a motorway service area, made a million pounds profit last year. I work shifts, 40 hours a week, doing everything from cleaning tables to cooking. What reward have they offered us for the massive profit made from our labour? A grand total of nine pence per hour!
 Apparently, despite the profits, the company has decided that none of the staff are properly trained. They are trying to in-

roduce a scheme where we are all trained on the jobs we have been doing for the past year, by the management. Only when we pass a written exam (in washing up!) will we be qualified to receive the correct pay level for the job.
 A vote on the offer rejected it by a massive 138 votes to two.
 Yours fraternally
 Mark Lee
 Cheshire

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

Straight from the horse's mouth

Dear Comrades,
 Whilst reading the *Guardian* recently, I came across an article concerning staff cuts at the American news company CBS.
 Dan Rather, the managing director of CBS News stated "CBS is not a chronically weak company fighting to survive. It is a profitable... corporation whose stock is setting

new records. But 215 people lost their jobs so that the stockholders would have even more money in their pockets. More profits. That's what business is all about".
 Yours Fraternally
 Jane Nellist
 Coventry

Abortion must be on demand

Dear Comrades,
 I was very interested to read the article in *Militant* 839 about abortion rights. It was particularly relevant to me as I was just going into hospital for an abortion myself.

Though critical of the present system, I felt that even this article did not go far enough in outlining the problems faced by some women.

My doctor offered me no guidance whatsoever and I could not really turn to my parents as they would be less than understanding.

Eventually my boyfriend and I contacted an advice centre who referred me to a women's hospital.

I am unemployed and live with my parents, my boyfriend is also on the dole so we felt that we could not really offer a decent future to any child at the moment. However, after waiting three hours at the hospital and after being subjected to a humiliating examination by five strangers, the consultant decided I "didn't have a good enough reason" for an abortion!

I went back to the advice centre who said that as I was by now 12 weeks pregnant and in the light of the first consultant's decision I would be unlikely to get an abortion on the NHS, so I'd have to have it privately. I paid £24 for a consultation. I was booked into a nursing home a week later and told to bring along £225 in cash!

This figure is obviously massive for someone on the dole but my boyfriend managed to borrow it from some friends (we will be living on £10 a fortnight for a while to come).

It seems to me the 1967 Abortion Act is applied totally differently by the NHS and the private sector. If the Tories and their rich friends had to rely on the NHS you can be sure that they would make certain it offered a decent service to all.

Yours fraternally
 A Liverpool reader

Tory councils ignore homeless

Dear Comrades,
 In the week which saw Liverpool's Labour councillors surcharged and barred from office for amongst other "crimes" building houses, a *World in Action* programme highlighted the plight of the homeless, particularly in Purbeck, in Dorset.

It told how the Tory

council had blatantly ignored "Housing (The Homeless) Act 1977". Families are put into single room accommodation (riden with damp) or run down caravans.

Among those subjected to such conditions was a handicapped boy and an OAP forced to live away from his wife of 44 years

while he waits for a proper home.

Councillors were reported as saying that the homeless shouldn't have children and that their children be taken from them and put into care.

One councillor, Angus MacDonald, described the homeless as "Riff Raff". Having watched the pro-

gramme I wonder how quick the High Court and the Fleet Street rags will be in condemning Purbeck Council as criminals.

Yours fraternally,
 Jim Gilbride,
 Cumbernauld and Kilsyth
 LPYS

Thatcher tightens her belt



Maggie—cutting back to benefit the bosses.

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

Dear Comrades,

Mrs Thatcher is prepared to sacrifice—apparently when she urges the working class to tighten their belts a little more, she is prepared to do the same.

Instead of taking the pay of £48,650 that a Prime Minister is entitled to, she only takes £47,020, a cabinet minister's salary. So what does she do with £1,630?

Perhaps it's given to the National Health Service to help stop more hospital closures, or education to ensure teachers get a fair deal, on housing, or on social services...

The list is endless, but somehow I think Thatcher will ensure that only the working class pay for the bosses' crisis, whilst the rich get richer under her leadership.

Yours fraternally
 Ruth McNally
 Coventry SE Labour Party

Sterilisation would pre-empt improvement

Dear Comrades,
 Chris Thomas' criticism last week of the article I wrote (*Militant* 839) about the enforced sterilisation of a mentally handicapped girl made many good points.

Chris is quite right to point out that the Tories use the policy of moving mentally handicapped from hospitals into the community as a way to make cuts.

The issue is a political one. I have been physically handicapped since birth, and have worked with mentally handicapped people as a volunteer. Society has always treated the disabled

as second-class citizens. The rights of mentally handicapped and other disabled people are being attacked, and it is our duty as Marxists and socialists to defend those rights.

Gennette at the moment has a mental age of five. It is obviously irresponsible to suggest that she is capable of looking after children at the moment. However, her mental age will improve. In forthcoming years she may be able to take on the responsibility of bringing up children. If she is sterilised now, her right to make this decision in future will be

taken from her.

While sympathising with parents and care staff, and appreciating the pressures they are under, there is no justification for Gennette's enforced sterilisation. Contraceptives could be administered by her parents or care staff at the hostel.

Chris's argument that sterilisation is fundamentally no different from abortion is wrong. Abortion, unless it is mishandled, does not lead to sterilisation.

A Labour government should nationalise private nursing homes, reverse the legislation allowing enforced

sterilisation of mentally handicapped people, and implement a massive investment programme to provide the resources needed by disabled people.

Such a programme would enable all disabled people to lead lives free of limitations and provide further manpower in hostels to encourage social development and guard against personal and sexual abuse.

Yours fraternally
 Rick Rooney
 Canterbury LPYS
 Chairman Canterbury
 Physically Handicapped
 Able-Bodied

Swindler left in poverty

Dear Comrades,
 Last week I read in the papers about the plight of Ernest Saunders, the sacked chairman and chief executive of Guinness.

He is currently being investigated for his part in the Guinness scandal when some £25 million was laundered in the Distillers' take-over bid.

The High Court has issued orders freezing his assets up to a figure of £5.2 million. The order however, allows poor Mr Saunders £600 a week for living expenses!

I'm considering stealing a bottle of Guinness in the hope that the courts will treat me as harshly as they have Mr Saunders. That is, freeze my assets and allow me £600 a week to live on.

Some hope!
 Yours fraternally
 Alistair Tice
 Hull

Conditions

Dear Comrades,
 A recent TV programme featured the 'economy of fear' imposed by the South Korean bosses on the country's workers. The rapidly expanding Samsung electronics firm is poised to challenge the Japanese for the much sought-after European market. One of Samsung's managing director's commented on an attempt to unionise his employees, "Samsung workers don't need a trade union... they already have a good working environment".

These 'marvellous working conditions' for the mainly women workforce amount to a 12 hour day, seven day working week. Only two meal breaks per day, and one day off per month! And all this for a disgusting \$250 per month!

Yours fraternally
 Stevie Lees
 Dennistoun Labour Party

Desperate

Dear Comrades,
 David Arthur (44) from Cornwall hopes to sell one of his kidneys in Algiers for £7,000.

"I want to raise enough money to start living a decent life again... This is the only saleable commodity I've got left... Life is pretty grim".

He's on state benefits, his family's split up, DHSS stopped contributions to the rent of his council mobile home, so he's in rent arrears and the council's threatening eviction. He's been without water for two weeks.

"I'm trying to raise some cash off friends for the trip... There's wealthy clients willing to pay good money for organs in Algiers and Casablanca clinics".

Yours fraternally
 Chris
 Plymouth

Australian builders fight back

DAVID CROWDEN is a building union official. His union, the Building Labourers' Federation, has been banned! No, this isn't Poland or Chile, it's Australia under a Labor government. Laurence Coates reports from Sydney.

THE BLF was targeted for attack because of its militancy. In two decades it forced labourers' wages from the bottom to the top of the pay league. I accompanied Dave on his rounds of central Sydney building sites. It's 12 months since the BLF was de-registered and you notice the change just after five minutes in any Australian city. The blue and white Eureka flags that fluttered above every BLF site have all come down.

The attack on the union has ushered in a new regime in the construction industry. Working in the rain, previously outlawed by the BLF, is now commonplace. 'BLs' have been forced to leave their union and join the rival BWIU in order to work. Dave explained the resentment that has built up:

"Blokes complain that when there's a blue on (industrial dispute) it takes the BWIU three or four days to get down there. The BLs used to be down there within hours!"

But the union is fighting back. Despite the active support of Australia's trade union federation 'ACTU' for de-registration, and the organised scabbing of the BWIU leadership—on some sites management buy their men BWIU cards while the men themselves still pay into the BLF - activists like Dave are struggling to rebuild their union.

"Is it true your organisers only get the same wage as the blokes?" I asked him.

"You've got to be joking! On some jobs blokes can make \$500 a week. We're on much less than that."

In fact the unions' full time organisers earn \$270 (£130) a week. Not a bad example for British unions to follow.

On to a building site with leaflets and posters explaining the latest threat to the workers' compensation scheme. Within seconds a supervisor approaches, looking like a schoolboy in a hard hat. Dave hands the little man a leaflet.

"I'm sorry gentlemen, I'll have to ask you to leave." Of course, he's only doing his job. BLF

BLF-I wouldn't give a XXXX for anything else

organisers are not allowed on any site. It's called trespassing!

Dave ignores him and on we go. "This way gentlemen!" he shouts. "Look mate, I come here every week and you ain't had any trouble with me yet," says Dave and we walk over to a group of labourers.

Break a leg

Dave needs no introduction, they all seem to know who he is and take a leaflet. He tells them about a demonstration the union has organised with others, like the nurses, outside Parliament. The state Labor government have announced cuts of 20 per cent in compensation. One bloke gives us a guided tour of his scars.

"...and that's where I broke me leg," he says, "I was off for a year...can't afford to lose money." Dave makes for the huts where the men eat their 'tucker'. Most of the men are working 50 feet above us, so he pins up a poster and stacks of leaflets in every hut.

"Once this foreman followed me around," he tells me, "collecting up all my leaflets. So I came in the hut and hid a load in the fridge!"

Outside we talk to three plumbers. Their union has submitted a \$70 and 36 hours a week pay claim, which represents a major challenge to Labor's pay limits.

One of the men is delegate (shop steward). He tells us of a delegates' meeting to discuss the claim, where the union officials recommended dropping it. The mood was unanimous—"no way, we're sticking with 70 bucks!"

"You fellahs need to set up a rank and file (broad left) here on the site," says Dave, "to keep the pressure on the leadership."

One bloke tells him, "I'm not in your union, but I'll tell you one thing—since they got rid of you lot—this job has gone down the s... house!"

Dave adds, "Well, this is a hard industry, that's why we need a hard union." They nod their heads in agreement. "You see you can't serve two masters. That's one thing no one can ever say about the BLs. We only serve one master—that's the working class!" A plumber chips in, "Bob Hawke and the

sight on Australia's building sites. For Dave and other BLF organisers, arrest is an occupational hazard. Court appearances are now a routine part of the job. Of late, they have taken to defending themselves in court. One activist told me with obvious pleasure how he demolished a policeman in the witness box.

Nerve gas

But the conduct of the police and the courts are no laughing matter. Several prominent BLF members have been imprisoned and for the first time ever in an Australian industrial dispute, nerve gas was used to end an occupation. Hence the union has its legends. Like 'Six pack', the giant 23 year old on the receiving end of the gas. He earned his nickname because it took six cops to restrain him.

"Well, this is a hard industry, that's why we need a hard union."

Labor Party should remember that—it's the working class that put 'em there!"

Despite our brush with the supervisor, we make it off the site without a police escort. The police have become an all too familiar

Another legend is 'Rambo', who's signed more than 80 men back into the union, including some who were never in the BLF! At \$75 a head, on top of their BWIU fees, that's no mean feat. Back to Dave's car, which he ad-



Classified ads

15p per word, minimum 10 words. Semi-Display £2 per column centimetre. Three weeks for the price of two. Militant meeting ads free. All advertisement copy should reach this office by first post on Friday, the week before publication.

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

○ ANY READERS interested in computers, with access to computers and/or modems who would be interested in a Marxist Computer Club, please contact Box No 3, 3/13 Hepscott Rd.

○ 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 Road, West Park, Leeds 16. Tel: 0532 624917.

○ Yvonne Harrison. Best wishes in Watford, from Nottingham Militant supporters.

○ Socialist Summer Camp workers' education group. Saturday 8—Saturday 15 August, 1987. Bracelands campside, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire. Courses on: Marxist Economics, youth and the struggle for socialism, the Russian Revolution, USA, third world. Plus rallies, debates, discos, sports, crèche. Book your holiday now. Cost £40 (£75 for family booking). Brochure available from the end of Easter.

○ 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.

○ 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.

○ Christine and Jimmie Roberts proudly announce the birth of a daughter, Jasmine, on Mother's Day 29 March. Forward to a socialist world.

□ Newham North West LPYS public debate between police spokesman and Linda Douglas (LPYS rep on NEC). "Can the police stop racial harassment?" Monday 13 April 7.30pm, LP rooms 306 High St, Stratford.

Alberta bosses declare class war

THE TORY province of Alberta has the harshest labour laws in Canada.

Massive unemployment and laws which allow bosses to end all a contract's provisions by a 24 hour lockout, have led to huge cuts in wage rates.

When workers at Gainers' meat processing factory in Edmonton struck for parity with other workers they faced a mammoth task. The owner was a leading Tory who could call on the full resources of the state. He even got his scabs from the prisons and sold his meat to the prison department!

Over four hundred workers were arrested in their six and a half month strike. The employers got an injunction in the courts naming hundreds of individuals and organisations including local churches who were to be stopped from picketing. Despite the laws, mass pickets took place daily. Police gave evidence that the factory was like a "war zone" and the province's trade unions and the local community were giving the strikers great backing.

The reactionary employers



Gainers' pickets defy Tory laws

and provincial government were causing a strike wave; they were also having a political effect. A previously Tory province has seen parliamentary representation by the New Democratic Party (the Canadian Labour Party) go up from two to 16.

So a number of establishment figures are looking at the possibility of using more subtle forms of class warfare. A committee has been looking at the way other countries handle the unions, particularly in the construction industry which is very big in the province.

They looked at Britain's encouragement of tax ar-

rangements 'which make it more advantageous to be self employed' as well as British anti picketing laws. They have studied the USA's "right to work" legislation which forces union hiring halls to send non union as well as union labour for jobs.

During the Gainers' strike local activists uncovered papers showing the thought processes of local small and large construction bosses. Representatives of the CLR, the smaller bosses, met with members of the ICA, huge multinationals working on ten and twenty year projects. The smaller employers

mits he parks anywhere. Inside is a collection of parking tickets. "We never pay 'em!" he confesses. "The union's got about a quarter of a million dollars' worth, but we refuse to pay. We tell 'em we're a voluntary organisation and if they want the money they can go and ask the members for it!"

Dave is realistic and still determined about the union's future. The BLF has suffered a massive setback. In Victoria it has retained about 70 per cent of its members, but in New South Wales only 600 of the original 10,000 remain.

By 'illegal' visits to the sites, BLF activists are keeping in contact not just with their own loyalists, but with the thousands of bitter ex-BLs who have been press-ganged into the BWIU, not to mention the rank and file of the BWIU and other unions dismayed at the role their leadership has played.

The BWIU leaders will rue the day they agreed to collaborate in this shameful attack. In Victoria, 3,000 BWIU men have left to join the carpenters' union in protest. Dave quotes the words of the BLF general secretary, Norm Gallagher:

"We may lose some of our members—but one thing we've done, we've taught 'em how to fight and it doesn't matter where they go, they'll still know how to fight!"

wanted a crude war on the unions. The bigger bosses had their doubts.

They wanted to keep a viable unionised sector because this guaranteed properly trained and apprenticed personnel. On a small job a contractor can run away from a botched job; on a scheme lasting a decade or more you might have to rectify mistakes yourself!

They also wanted long term stability of wage levels to sell to their clients. It was all very well having low paid workers but if they suddenly became unionised, wage rates could spiral up.

But most of all they feared the longer term political effects of open class warfare. The problem is they can't avoid it in a period of crisis.

The Gainers' strike became a successful battle to save the entire trade union movement from the bosses' attack. Weak leadership of the union nationally led to a two year wage freeze being written into the final deal, but the bosses are still scared of the power of the working class; they are looking for ways to tame it. The workers themselves will be looking for ways to increase it.

Industrial Reports

Liverpool's low paid organise

MERSEYSIDE BOSSES' attempt to drive down wages and conditions at work for the most exploited sections of the workforce hotel workers, shop workers and cleaning have been met with workers becoming organised into the trade union movement.

The T&G's recruitment campaign, among the previously unorganised sections of workers is having a dramatic effect with workers learning to use their newly found trade union strength to take action and demand their rights.

A strike of cleaners at the Queen Elizabeth Law Courts in Liverpool has been won after less than two weeks' action. When new contractors took over the cleaning, they threatened a reduction in the workforce by eight. The cleaners went on strike one week before the new contractors were due to take over.

On the Monday when the contractors took over, mass picketing meant it took three attempts before a van load of scab cleaners finally managed to get into the Law Courts at 8.30pm. The van was not the same afterwards and the scab cleaners had to clean until 1am.

This experience was too much for the contractors and no scabs appeared the next day. On Wednesday all the strikers were back at work with the full quota of staff at trade union rates of pay and with three weeks' holiday.

A strike at the Law Courts was clearly a grave embarrassment which could not continue.

The strike of cleaners at the India building demanding trade union rates of pay is still continuing into its eighth week. The building

which was cleaned by 60 cleaners, at the moment is being cleaned by the two cleaning supervisors and management in individual offices. The management of the building is being forced to pay an extra £500 per week in security, rather than the £350 per week increase in wages the cleaners are demanding.

The boss of this building seems particularly ruthless and refuses to negotiate with the T&G. The strikers occupied the manager's office for a day two weeks ago until they were removed by a court order. This has still not budged the boss who has now served notices on the strikers to return to work today or be sacked. Clearly, new initiatives are needed in this strike, to prevent the boss from getting away with this attempt to ensure cleaners are kept on low wages.

New strike

A new strike has broken out in Liverpool over trade union recognition by 57 staff at the Moat House Hotel. The staff joined the T&G only last February because management were trying to use casual staff to undermine the full-time workers. After refusing to recognise the trade union, the workers came out on strike and the boss immediately sacked the strikers. This four star hotel which costs £75 per night is now being manned by young



Marie Jockins, activist in Liverpool T&G recruitment drive on NW Labour Women's demonstration. Photo: Militant.

YTS kids and some as young as 14 years old, with no experience.

All these strikes are occurring because the bosses and the Tories want to return Britain to Victorian times and the casual part-time workforce. But what they fail to understand is that they are up against a stronger trade union movement, that women and youth are not prepared to be pushed around.

Marie Jockins shop steward of the T&G cleaners

who won their own dispute last year at the DHSS offices in Huyton and is part of the T&G recruiting team said that these strikes demonstrate the success of the T&G in recruiting "More women are standing up for themselves, if one can do it, all can do it".

But unions like the T&G who are recruiting these sections must also learn how to support these new members. Old methods are no longer applicable. These new members need extra support

and active involvement in the running of their strike, not the occasional visit by a full time official saying everything is OK.

Trade unions must organise:

- 1) Immediate provision of wet weather clothing... and shelters and placards etc.
- 2) Regular meetings of all those on strike to ensure every member is fully informed and members to be given the opportunity to make decisions on how to proceed with the strike.
- 3) Information to go out to other trade union branches asking for support, to prevent deliveries of supplies to the workplaces and to ask for help on picket lines. This is not happening at the moment.
- 4) One full-time official to be available at all times at the union's headquarters to assist strikers.
- 5) Immediate assistance to be given on financial problems for claiming social security etc. And also baby sitting fees for strikers to be paid by the union to ensure women are involved in picketing.

Trade unions must also campaign for an introduction of a statutory minimum wage of £120 for a 35 hour week with pro-rata payments for part-time workers. Casual and temporary jobs to be made permanent. An end to full-time jobs being replaced by part-time or casual and temporary employment. Extension of protective legislation, maternity leave, redundancy pay etc and pensions, holiday, sickness and other benefits to part-time and casual workers.

Victory— Dillons' Workers Bounce Out Thugs

A FORTNIGHT long strike by workers at Dillons' supermarket in Wallasey has ended in victory for the 15 women strikers.

The dispute revolved around the employment of a notorious consortium of night club bouncers as 'security guards'. These thugs were verbally and physically abusive to staff and customers.

In one reported incident, a customer accused of stealing cans of beer was set about with knuckle dusters and truncheons. It turned out the shop did not even sell the brand of beer he was accused of stealing!

Initiative

The strikers showed great initiative in getting the support of local people and the labour and trade union movement (see *Militant* 3 April). On Saturday 4 April a mass picket of 80 people closed the shop down for one day. Next day a Sunday roast dinner was served on the picket line. The determination eventually had its reward, when their demands were met in full. The bouncers were removed. All security staff are to be vetted by the unions and all guards must hold a union card. There is to be no loss of hours or pay due to the use of scabs during the dispute.

The imagination and determination which led to victory should be a lesson to Labour's leaders. If 15 young women workers, many with young families, can become fully involved in such a fight—and win, why can't the party leaders harness such enthusiasm to take Labour out of third place in the opinion polls.

By Mark Hazlehurst
(Wallasey LPYS)

Hotel workers overcome obstacles

THE TRANSPORT and General Workers' Union (TGWU) has just launched a major recruitment drive amongst the growing number of temporary, part time and women workers, targeting the notoriously anti-union Ladbroke hotel chain for March's activities.

Ladbroke's took an interest in

hotels by taking over the Comfort chain in February 1985. Two months later they cancelled payroll deductions and in the August scrapped union agreements.

Management tactics include stealing employees' union cards and searching the hotel staff's clothing and belongings in their locker rooms and

confiscating union information. One hotel, Leinster Tower was shut down for three weeks to try to break the union.

Despite all this, shop stewards still operate at three of their London hotels. The ending of union agreements means that employees are no longer guaranteed a 35 hour

week but are on an hourly contract. This campaign aims at overcoming management intimidation and language difficulties to recruit casual workers.

By Simon Rogers
(TGWU 1/859 Watford Ladbroke recruitment team)

Hangers workers reject pay off

AT THEIR mass meeting on 2 April Hangers' artificial limb maker workers voted to continue to their 28 week old battle for justice. National union leaders Colin Christopher, Ftat and John Jones Tass had come to the meeting with news of a new management 'offer'.

This amounted to nothing in terms of jobs but was only an attempted pay off to get the workers to call the dispute off.

The 'offer' amounted to little more than basic redundancy payments for most workers with many getting only a few hundred pounds or nothing in some cases. This, after six months without wages. The Hangers' workers have fought on magnificently against the ruthless BTR management who sacked the whole workforce in September. They have been fighting for jobs and to defend trade union rights.

Although the 'offer' was totally out of line with what the workers have been fighting for, the attitude of the national officers sowed confusion and memories of *Silentnight's* abandonment are still fresh in the mind.

Christopher had to recognise that the workers were as solid as ever, however, he said he had a 'duty to spell out the facts'. Despite this, the workers voted to continue the fight for their jobs.

This dispute is a fight for basic trade union rights, wages and conditions and must be won. The whole labour movement must rally to the aid of these workers. There is a massive media cover-up of the suffering of disabled people which is taking place because of this management.

- 1) Invite Hangers speakers to your meetings
- 2) Organise a monthly levy for the dispute, in workplace, ward, GMC, trade union branch.
- 3) Pass resolutions demanding public ownership of BTR and all firms supplying the NHS.

Messages and donations to Steve Blease, treasurer, Hangers Dispute, Wessex House, 520 London Rd, Mitcham, Surrey.

By Dave Gartrell



Industrial Reports

Caterpillar occupiers condemn AEU leaders

THE WORKERS occupying Caterpillar's Uddingston factory angrily rejected the AEU executive's decision last week to withdraw support from the occupation.

By Colin Fox

After consultation John Brannan and John Gillen of the Joint Occupation Committee announced that 100 men were to lobby the AEU's national committee aiming to reverse the national executive's decision. Last week Jimmie Airlie Scottish rep on the AEU executive spent a whole day at the factory attempting to get the occupation called off. His argument (and that of his right wing partners in crime, Laird and Jordan) that the 'illegal occupation' should end and picketing begin outside the factory which he suggested would be just as effective, was rejected by the men who booed as he spoke.

Compromise

An attempt to partially meet the executive with a suggested compromise that 45 stewards remain and all other men leave to allow talks with Caterpillar bosses inside the factory was summarily dismissed by management: They will not enter talks "whilst even one man occupies the factory" said Caterpillar management.

The sit-in goes on.

The JOC were forced publicly to distance themselves from Airlie and suggest that president Jordan; "doesn't know what he is talking about and should keep his mouth shut", after Jordan talked about going back to work pending talks.

At the AEU national conference, two resolutions on the occupation are to be debated. One from the West of Scotland (a right wing stronghold) calls for support for the executive council, but one from Dundee calls for the executive council to be overruled and support given to the Caterpillar workers' occupation.

After similar national pressure faced by the AEU the 50 or so EETPU members voted to end their occupation and will now picket the factory from outside.

As it is now clear to everyone that Caterpillar will not reopen the factory, the focus has switched to possible alternative uses for the

site. A feasibility report by the Fraser of Allander institute at the University of Strathclyde has concluded that: "Whilst production of earth movers is not viable there does exist an enormous market for the manufacture of spare parts".

Tannochside may have a future as a spare parts and repairs factory for equipment belonging not only to Caterpillar earthmovers, but also Komatsu, JCB and John Deere International.

High quality

The COMAU robotic multi-flexible and the Schiess-Scharmann NC multi-flexible machines, both costing around £2-3 million, can produce any parts required to high degrees of quality. These are machines the workers want to see kept at Tannochside.

These are the very latest 'state of the art' machines which can only be found at Caterpillar at Tannochside and can produce transmissions, rollers, tracks and drives which could be tailored to all tractor and manufacturers' specifications.

Certainly there is the skilled manpower and machinery in the factory to produce the goods. But the problem is,

like almost all others the workforce face, the global market position. Apart from the obvious limit on jobs this plan would mean, the fact that Caterpillar itself has already markedly moved towards production of spare parts (as opposed to the manufacture of tractors) world-wide, shows that this market also faces serious over-capacity. Indeed Tannochside's previous output was already 65 per cent spare and extraneous equipment for existing tractors.

It is extremely unlikely that Caterpillar will take parts from what would after all be a competitor, whilst its own factories lay idle. Caterpillar bosses' intentions are clearly to get in and move the Comau and Schiess-Scharmann quickly to another plant to enhance profitability.

To stop them, pressure must be brought to bear on the Tories and Rifkind in particular to take these and the other machines into public ownership, otherwise serious asset-stripping will immediately begin.

If these machines are to be kept then the only way that factory can be saved is for it to be nationalised with government backing and government funds.

Meanwhile, a record col-

lection of around £18,000 last week shows that even with the AEU nationally being seen to withdraw, workers see it as even more necessary to contribute to the funds. Similar top names in entertainment like Robbie Coltrane, Hipsway (13 April) and Dick Gaughan (1 June) have agreed dates for benefit concerts throughout Scotland.

Folk band Cuilbeg have recorded a song 'We are not going to leave here' about the Caterpillar occupation and all proceeds go to the Caterpillar occupation funds.

Real hardship

After three months without wages there is real hardship among the families whose only income is £18 union money per week. This has had its casualties in nervous breakdowns, children's tears and severe suffering amongst the families. These families are at the forefront of the industrial struggle in Britain today, so the labour movement has a responsibility to support them.

Send messages of support and donations, however small to: Caterpillar Occupation Committee, c/o Thomas Stevenson, 17 Campsie View, Bargeddie, Glasgow.



Caterpillar solidarity demo in Glasgow.

Photo: Patricia Moore

Gateshead boss refuses rise but 'only women' stand firm

ABOUT 45 workers, mainly women, have been picketing HFW Plastics in Gateshead in all weathers for two weeks. Their strike started over the sacking of eight workers who refused to sign a 'loyalty oath', accepting management's right to dictate conditions. It was sent out by the owners after a pay claim by Sogat members. Last year, they accepted an £8 pay cut to get the business 'back on its feet.' This year the boss refused to negotiate a rise because the workers were "only women!"

These workers who earn £92 a week maximum for 37.5 hours (take home about £70) have not had a rise for four years. Younger workers earn even less. One 21 year old earns some £67 a week.

At the start of the strike, the boss suspended the shop steward and said that all workers who did not turn up on 30 March would be sacked. This has made workers even more angry. The bosses accuse the workers of 'shirking' but in order to get contracts fulfilled they have worked double shifts, 8am until 5pm and then come back to do a full night shift.

The company want to replace unionised workers with a temporary casual low paid workforce.

By Jen Pickard

In Brief

'More money for a decent living wage' is the slogan on the pickets' placards outside GEC Private Systems Divisions, Coventry. The £4.25 management offer has produced a bitter response: 'We're prepared to stay out til we win and we know management will dig their heels in'

The strikers point out that workers at GEC's competitor, Plessey, 'receive £130 compared to our £116 and they've now had a 7 per cent rise on top... yet GEC are making better profits.'

TERM-TIME clerical staff in Coventry schools and colleges have won their year-long battle to stop the Labour-controlled City council from cutting a week off their leave entitlement (ie. a week's pay cut).

Unfortunately new starters will be on reduced leave. Nalgo is not happy with people working on two different sets of conditions but members are not willing to support those not yet employed, so the legal question of whether or not the conditions of service are being broken is being investigated.

ABOUT 300 GMBATU members at BTR's Dunlop Precision Rubber subsidiary at Shephed and Bagworth near Loughborough are on official strike over a 6 per cent pay claim. Shop floor and office workers at all out and the few non-union workers are not crossing the picket line. The average wage is £120 per week but the lowest rate is just £81.

Miners resistance is growing

THE FULL implications of British Coal's proposals for six day production at the proposed new Margam pit in South Wales have been shown in a recent dispute at Lady Windsor colliery in South Wales.

Due to a management error of judgement, a major development drive fell behind in production. Management blamed everyone except themselves for this, and in the third week of March told the development men, working in the drive, they would have to work four shifts to get back on schedule.

In a meeting on Sunday the lodge recommended that the development men work a four shift pattern. They refused, and when they arrived for work on Monday morning for a normal shift they were sent home. Needless to say, the rest of the pit followed them.

At a general meeting on Tuesday 31 March, the men were informed by the lodge that the manager would not back down because he had been given full, unrestrained control of the colliery by the

MINERS IN Staffordshire have voted to hold a one day strike in April to help the campaign for reinstatement of miners victimised during the 84/5 strike.

Although the vote was close the result shows that there is still tremendous bitterness over this and other issues in the Staffs coalfield.

new area director. Despite this, all but two of the 500 men present voted to stay out until the manager changed his position.

A further meeting was held on the Friday of the same week, attended by Terry Thomas, vice-president of South Wales NUM, (who are backing the proposed changes at Margam). The men voted, at this meeting, to return to work while negotiations continued.

This dispute proves that the Coal Board's claim that six day production at Margam will be a one-off is a myth. With colliery managers being given total, unrestrained control of their

In North Staffs there are still nine men who remain outside the pit gates.

This action will be seen by miners locally as a springboard to increased solidarity necessary to defeat the threat of privatisation and other Coal Board attacks.

By Andy Bentley

colliery, they can implement any shift pattern they want. I have no doubt that the minute six day working is agreed on for Margam, then each individual colliery manager will be pushing for the same scheme in his own colliery.

This strike at Lady Windsor shows that the only people who can stop this are the men themselves, and they will fight to maintain their right to a five day working week and the conditions that their forefathers struggled so hard to achieve.

By PB Cox

(Lady Windsor colliery, personal capacity)

Victory to Sheffield Broad Left

THE NEWLY formed Nalgo Broad Left on Sheffield City Council has scored a major victory. They have turned the union round from aiding and abetting the council's Labour leaders' 'package' of cuts in jobs and services, to defiance.

In January, at a mass meeting of Sheffield Nalgo members, on the recommendation of the executive, the original branch policy of opposition to cuts was thrown out by a tiny majority.

After only six weeks, the result of this policy was confusion and surrender. The branch officers were even putting such issues as 'short-time working' on to the agenda.

From frustration came anger, in departments such as family and community services, where co-operation with the 'package' would mean charges for the sick, elderly and disabled. Nalgo members were outraged when their branch officers threatened to go over the heads of the shop stewards in order to break opposition to cuts and preserve the branch policy of capitulation.

The Broad Left and Militant council worker argued for an alternative policy of defence of jobs and services, support for members taking action in carrying forward this policy and withdrawal from all negotiations over the 'package'.

A resolution along these lines was drawn up and adopted by the executive. This policy will now be put at a mass meeting of Nalgo members with a recommendation of support.

However, a similar victory in the manual unions is still required. The full-time officers of all the manual-side unions have signed, sealed and delivered the 'package' without the knowledge of their membership.

Only after the signing were meetings of the shop stewards held, and then they were only given the bare bones—nothing about short-time working, overtime cut-backs and manual workers going on to monthly pay.

By Alan Hartley

Militant

Support Caterpillar workers' occupation
Page 15

Civil service unions' pay claim

Strike against poverty

CIVIL SERVICE unions have started a series of strikes. They are not striking against the poor, but against their own increasing poverty.

By Steve Ion
(Customs and Excise Liverpool, personal capacity)

Real wages in the civil service have declined since 1980. The civil service unions are fighting together for an increase which would ensure a minimum wage of £115 per week. The campaign for a £20 a week rise for lower grades and a 15 per cent increase for executive grades is a big step forward.

Wages at present are so low that a special unit has been set up to handle benefit claims for about 40,000 civil service workers!

All 15 benefit offices and 16 DHSS local offices in Liverpool have been closed to the public from 6 to 10 April. 98 per cent of the workers in the offices are out on strike. Selective action has been solid throughout Wales and the North West, the first target area.

This shows the bitter discontent over wages and conditions. The workers are fighting for a living wage, a shorter working week, jobs and a better service to unemployed workers and claimants.

Large picket lines have been established each day. A leaflet explains to the public 'we are on the same side' and the strike centre issues regular press bulletins. The strike has the support of the unemployed workers' organisations in Liverpool.

Members in other government departments are due to join the strike this Thursday and Friday with a rally in Liverpool on Thursday.

The strike action moves on in week two of a six week regional programme, to Scotland. But members in Merseyside, who will be



CPSPA and SCPS members standing together against previous attacks. Workers in Social Security and Employment offices are fighting low pay, worsening conditions and tensions due to huge dole queues and chronic understaffing. Photo: John Smith (IFL).

returning to work, will be asked to implement an overtime ban, the withdrawal of goodwill and a policy of non-co-operation.

Plan of action

Local union committees have been urged to meet and draw up precise plans for the implementation of these policies. The town pay committee are organising regular activists' meetings with John Macreadie, strike organiser

for the Merseyside, North Wales, Blackpool and East Lancashire area.

Members in Merseyside must not simply return to work and forget about the dispute. The town pay committee and local DHSS and DE branches must urgently discuss what further action they can take, including staying out for the full six week programme of action in order to win the claim.

Action in London and the South East is scheduled for

4-8 May. It must now be brought forward. Every region must have been fully involved in the action before the union conferences on 11-15 May so that the issues can be fully discussed there and plans made for an all-out strike ballot immediately after the conference.

Conferences

The conferences should be used to inspire the activists to go back into the branches

and win a vote for an all-out strike to secure the claim. CPSPA and SCPS members have the power to secure the demands. Despite what the opinion polls say, the Tories have never been more vulnerable. This is understood by every striker.

The Tories are already talking about introducing regional pay and performance related pay into the civil service. We must fight now. Step up the action for victory.

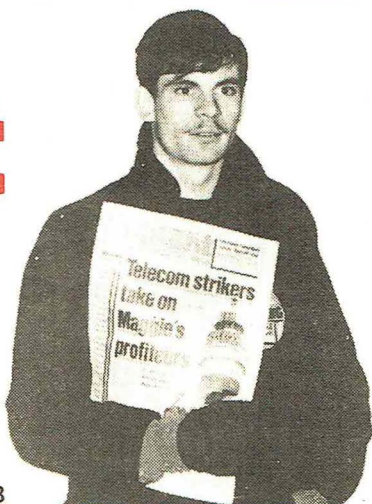
What We Stand for

- 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 business people.
- 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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