

# Militant

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ISSUE 855 3 July 1987



After the election  
what now for Labour?

Militant public rallies. See page 12.

# CPSA stands up to Thatcher



**CIVIL SERVANTS** in the CPSA have found themselves to be first in the firing line of the freshly elected Thatcher government's renewed attack on working people. We have been forced to stand up, to oppose the Tories' miserable 4.5 per cent wage increase, and to ballot for an all-out strike of our union, as the only possible way to win a decent living standard.

Our claim is a just one. Civil servants are demanding an end to their poverty wages which have fallen at least 20 per cent since 1980. Some of our DHSS members are compelled to claim for their own families the very benefits they are administering. That is the Tories reward for providing a public service.

The £20 per week rise we are demanding will reduce the chronic levels of staff turnover which has reached up to 110 per cent in some areas. More trained staff will allow us to provide a better service with fewer queues and delays, particularly in the Department of Employment and DHSS offices.

## All-out action

Thousands of civil servants have already taken strike action despite all the obstacles put in their way, in a magnificent demonstration of support for their union and the claim.

The press has claimed that strikers would be suspended. Management have spread rumours that our CPSA executive had called off the strike and action would have no effect. These attempts to undermine support show how desperate the government is to avoid an all-out strike.

But the only way forward is for all-out action. Ten weeks of selective action has not budged the government one inch.

Now the stakes are even higher. The government wants to introduce a 'flexible pay' system. This would be a disaster for both CPSA and SCPS members. National pay bargaining and 'rate for the job' would

**By Tom Taylor**  
Branch secretary  
CPSA DE London North  
branch in personal  
capacity

be abolished. Member would be set against member.

Now more than ever we need a joint campaign to fight off these threats. The leaders of the SCPS have tragically backed out of any struggle. CPSA members must appeal to SCPS at all levels to organise a ballot on all-out action. We must use our full industrial strength, involving members in the Customs and Revenue sections, the ports and airports, and the benefit services, to secure our aims.

The effect of such action on the profits of the Tories' big business backers would be devastating. They would be queuing up outside number ten, urging the Prime Minister to settle!

## Vote yes

All-out action is never an easy step to take, but the alternative would be the continuation of poverty wages, more attacks on staffing levels and a further deterioration in the service we offer the public. We have no alternative but to fight. We have no alternative but to vote 'YES' for all-out action.

We appeal also to all other workers to give us their full backing. If we are successful in our fight against poverty pay, it will give confidence to the whole labour movement that the new Tory government can be forced back.

## Inside...

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The struggle to save  
Labour Party  
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concede democratic  
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John Macreadie speaks  
to *Militant*.

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CPSA  
OFFICIAL  
DISPUTE



# Militant

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## Class polarisation kills off SDP

LABOUR WORKERS will be watching the demise of the Social Democratic Party with delight. They remember the SDP leaders betraying the Labour Party because they would not accept its democratically decided policies.

For some time this made the SDP leaders the darlings of the capitalist press. They were promised that they would soon replace the 'outdated' Labour Party.

Only three months ago the *Sunday Telegraph* declared them "flavour of the month", while the *Times* commented that they were "attracting votes from an increasingly demoralised Labour Party".

But now the SDP has suffered the fate that *Militant* forecast. In December 1981, we said: "The crisis of British capitalism is such that there is no long term future for any so-called middle party. Society is more and more polarised between on the one hand the labour movement and the Labour Party...and on the other hand the political representatives of big business."

Not for the first time *Militant* has been proved correct in opposing opinions made fashionable by the media. By using the Marxist method we were able to see further than capitalist manufactured public opinion.

The Labour leaders, however, repeatedly bow to its pressure. For some time they believed the Alliance's support would continue to grow indefinitely and responded by trying to adopt the SDP's policies.

The SDP traitors split from Labour because of the Party's shift to the left and especially because it adopted mandatory reselection of MPs.

Their careers were their first consideration then and they are now. It is hardly a coincidence that the ex-MPs, Williams, Jenkins and Rogers are for merger with the Liberals, while those who believe themselves safely ensconced in Parliament for another five years are against!

Now the pro-merger Social Democrats are horrified to find Dr Owen treating them with the same contempt that they all had for the rank and file of the labour movement.

Like a petty Bonaparte, Owen is turning the vote on the merger into a plebiscite on his leadership, by saying he will not stay in a merged party.

Sooner or later, he will no doubt find a home for his dictatorial tendencies on the right of the Tory party.

When it comes down to policies, the defectors who claimed they left Labour for the love of 'democratic socialism' find the Liberals, or at least their rank and file, too left-wing! They are, as they always have been, completely committed to the interests of big business.

It was for big business's sake that they left the Labour Party, aiming to split it from top to bottom but failing to do so. With the assistance of the media, however, they did partially split the Labour vote, and with the inability of the Labour leaders to inspire the electorate, helped the Tories to be returned to office twice.

But as *Militant* forecast, the capitalists would not allow the SDP to eat into the Tory vote in the General Election. They have fashioned the Tory party as their main instrument of government for well over a century. They were determined the Tories would be returned and so decided to put the brakes on the Alliance bandwagon.

The media and the opinion polls which had created the SDP were turned against them. Poor Dr Owen was discovered to be an egomaniac, which, in all fairness, is no more the case in 1987 than it was in 1981, when the press hailed him as a man of principle.

The SDP have been squeezed out by the increasing class polarisation of society which will continue apace as the capitalist crisis deepens.

Yet just at this time some Labour leaders are making clear again their wish to turn Labour into an SDP mark two, fit to reach some sort of electoral pact with the Liberals, as the only way they can foresee Labour ever returning to government. Yet the very likely collapse of the SDP into the Liberals, will mean at a subsequent general election the old Alliance vote being squeezed yet more tightly, and a better opportunity for Labour, armed with real socialist policies, to score a convincing victory.

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## Unions must fight "training" con

**THE TUC General Council has completely justifiably, by 14 votes to 12, withdrawn support from the 'work for your dole' Job Training Scheme.**

**By a Young Socialist.**

On this latest Tory 'training con', unemployed 18 to 25 year olds work for nothing except their benefits. The Tories hoped to fill 110,000 places by September, but only 10,000 have so far enrolled.

It has only been operating in a pilot stage for two months, but already the JTS has lost any credibility as a proper training scheme.

Not only the young unemployed and the unions have seen through the sham. An independent study drafted by the Prospect Centre, for the Manpower Services Commission, strongly criticises the lack of any real training content.

### Boycott JTS

The leaked report says: "Most skill shortages were in highly skilled occupations, and neither the time nor the level of training available in JTS are adequate to enable trainees to fill such vacancies."

But the Tories are determined to press ahead with JTS. Having taken a stand nationally, the TUC leaders must launch a campaign at every level to completely boycott JTS, and to give full support to every trade unionist who refuses to work alongside JTS trainees.

## Labour women: consultation deadline 31 July

**IN SPITE of assurances that at least three months would be allowed for discussion, Labour's National Executive Committee has decided to stick to the deadline of 31 July for consultation on the reorganisation of the Labour Women's Organisation.**

This is despite over a month having been taken up with the general election.

A major issue will be the voting system at Women's Conference. One proposal is an electoral college system, giving the trade unions 50 per cent and the women's sections, councils and constituency parties 50 per cent.

Apart from being totally unwieldy for voting on resolutions etc, if the unions took up their current allocation of delegates they would even now control 45 per cent.

### "Inconvenience"

Some union officials argue that they should be able to control 50 per cent of the vote without the inconvenience and cost of taking up their full delegation. Labour Women's Conference is certainly expensive and steps are now being taken, under pressure from North West region, to make it cheaper and more accessible.

There would be no difficulty in finding enough

to six, rendering impotent the union representatives.

The TUC must now completely withdraw from the MSC. It must not compromise the labour and trade union movement in the eyes of youth, by taking any responsibility for the administration of JTS or YTS conscription.

### Unionise

But it is not enough merely to withdraw. Right wing AEU leader, Bill Jordan, already claims that withdrawal from MSC is tantamount to "deserting" the youth on YTS. The trade union movement

must not desert the YTS trainees. But it can not seriously defend them through a rigged Tory MSC. It must couple withdrawal with a major campaign to unionise YTS trainees, and through normal trade union action defend their rights and conditions against employers, the Tories and the MSC.

If such a campaign is not undertaken then not only will a whole generation have no link with the trade union movement, but they will continue to be used by the Tories to undermine the wages and conditions of organised workers.

## Workers back school students

**THE YOUTH Training Scheme is not the only problem confronting school students.**

The Queen's speech spoke of changes in education allowing schools to opt out of local education authority control. New elite schools for some and exams at 7, 11 and 14 in most schools with limited funds and resources.

So called extra curricular activities such as music lessons, geography field trips and materials for craft and cookery lessons will have to be paid for by parents.

The TUC is withdrawing support from the JTS. Unions like the TGWU and the GMB have spoken of the need to unionise young workers on slave labour schemes.

The School Students Union has a vital role to play alongside the unions. In Brighton we have asked for recognition from the Trades Council. A resolution in favour of the SSU was passed through a local NUPE branch and will be discussed at the union's NEC.

School students should join the SSU and get the active campaigning support of the unions against the Tories.

**By Martin Lesley**  
Convener Brighton SSU

money or delegates if there were report backs and joint campaigns between the women's organisation and the unions at all levels.

There can be no substitute for active participation. People who want to see a healthy women's organisation, based on working class women should support option (c) which links voting to the number of women members in the trade unions and to participation by delegates at the conference.

The other crucial issue is the election of the National Women's Committee, which should continue to take place at the Regional Women's conferences. The major task facing the committee is the rebuilding of

the regions.

However, since many unions now have regional structures to encourage the participation of women, it would be a tremendous advantage to allocate, on a regional basis, a seat, in addition to the two now elected, to be elected by the unions.

In spite of the ridiculously short time allowed by the NEC, all constituency Labour Parties, women's sections, councils and union branches should respond to the consultation paper.

**By Margaret Crear**  
Bermondsey Women's  
Section  
(personal capacity)



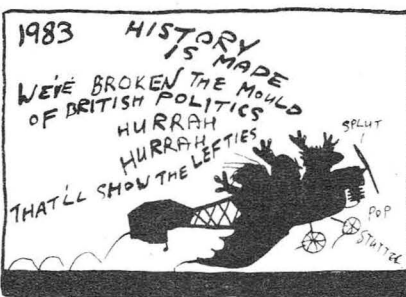
# Obituary: Social Democratic Party

LIFT...

OFF...

AT...

LAST



DAVID OWEN, alias Doctor Death, today turned off the Social Democratic Party's life support machine.

The party's vital organs (hard heart, soft head and credit cards) may be transplanted into the equally ailing Liberal Party, or go with Owen into the Tories. Nobody could agree on the party's age; it claimed to be only six but its policies were as old as Ramsay Macdonald.

The Gang of Four left the

Labour Party on deepest principle. They hated socialism and such 'outrageous' left wing demands as mandatory reselection of MPs.

But six years after they said they were breaking the mould, the SDP are going to be buried in it. The post mortems will ask why they failed to break the Labour Party, even though they helped the Tories to two extra terms.

Despite attracting intellectuals of the stature of the late

Lord George Brown, their ideas, such as the social market economy, were totally contradictory. SDP leader Doctor Owen's diagnosis was that Thatcher won elections so the more like Thatcher he became, the more likely he was to win.

But it was not to be. One last feeble attempt at election victory in tandem with the Liberals collapsed. The press kept predicting big gains for the Alliance, (the mythical

late surge) but no surge came and the SDP got gloomier and gloomier.

Eventually the Liberal Party tried to take it over. The Liberals claimed that people had not voted Alliance because they thought Zaphod Beeblebrox was its leader. The two small unsuccessful parties in the Alliance needed to become one big unsuccessful party. The SDP leader rejected this cure when he realised he would not be in

charge.

David Owen is expected to be buried in the Tory Party where he belongs. But socialists fear that the Zombie Tendency of the Labour Party might exhume the policies and even some members of the SDP to make Labour more appealing to corpses. Let it rest in peace.

By Burke and Hare

## Return of the witch hunters

DURING THE general election, all Labour Party departments turned their attention to beating the Tories. Or all but one; the witch hunt department was functioning 'normally' throughout.

In mid-campaign, ten Stevenage Labour Party members received letters calling them before the National Constitutional Committee (NCC) on 23 June.

One member, Neal Diplock, who was unable to attend because of work, was unceremoniously expelled because the NCC claimed they had not received his letter of explanation, posted six days earlier.

### Hearing

Steve Glennon was questioned for five hours and told to return on 9 July. Jim Horton's hearing only just began.

Labour Party branches must demand that Neal Dip-

lock should get a hearing and that Clause XVI (1)(f) is adhered to: "The NCC or any panel thereof shall meet at such times and places as it thinks fit having regard to the convenience of the individual concerned, the members of the NCC or panel, any witnesses and the effective and proper conduct of the hearing."

Letters of support and cash should be sent to Defend the Ten campaign c/o 45 Walden End, Stevenage Herts.

The ten are Steve Glennon, Janice Glennon, Neal Diplock, Jim Horton, Kim Horton, Jane James, Martin Slade, Tim Lenihan, Pete West and Rob Walsh. Anyone who can testify to

the work done for the labour movement by any of the ten should send it to the above address.

IAN ISAAC, a Labour Party member for 18 years, former Cowley shop steward, St Johns NUM lodge secretary and South Wales NUM executive member and councillor in Maesteg has been called before the NCC on 2 July.

### Uncorroborated

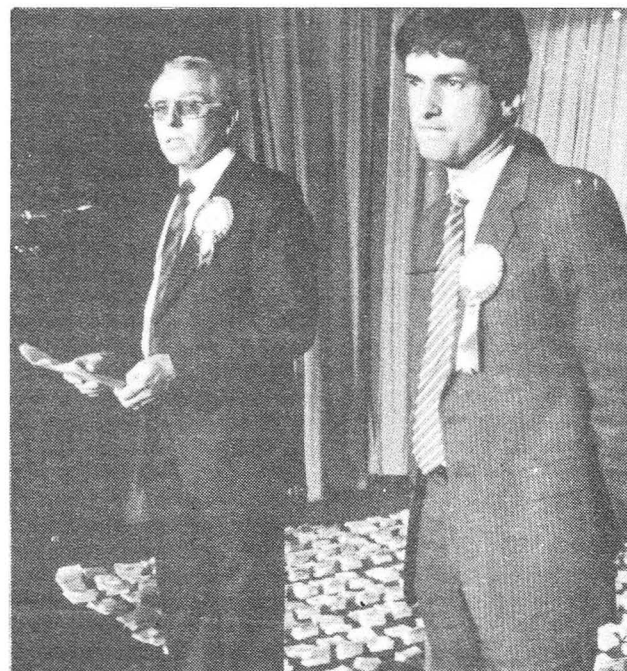
The evidence against Ian Isaac is based on lies and smears which would have been thrown out of a law court. They are taking as evidence conversations recalled from memory seven or eight years ago and uncorroborated by any other record.

Ian is even accused of speaking at Militant front

meetings which were in fact official NUM meetings during the 1984-85 strike.

In the NUM strike, Ian spoke at meetings in every part of the country. He fought a hard campaign to keep open the St Johns pit after the strike was over. His accusers in Ogmere Labour Party are political lightweights compared to Ian Isaac; one even actively supported the closure of a hospital maternity unit.

LIVERPOOL BROADGREEN Labour Party members worked hard for a great Labour victory despite the party being suspended. The party is now being allowed to function again with the constituency AGM on 7 August. Josie Aitman and Elaine Bannister, who were referred to the NCC for allowing Derek Hatton and Roger Bann-



Terry Fields won a great victory in Broadgreen. But the right wing still attack the local party.

ister to say goodbye to the party general committee, have been suspended from nomination for any posi-

tion. This will be seen as an attempt to prejudice the NCC hearing.

## Building a workers' paper

IN OCTOBER 1964 the very first Militant explained: "the sacrifice and collection of money among militant workers and Young Socialists has made possible the production of this paper. It is your paper, write for it, sell it, criticise it to make it better (and) collect money for it."

This is just as true today. We have come a long way from a four page monthly which raised £150 in the first year, but Militant's ideas become more and more relevant to working class struggles as each new battle unfolds.

Demands on our resources have grown tremendously. We need all readers' financial help by contributing to our Fighting Fund and raising it from friends and workmates.

### Momentum

This has been a record start to the quarter. Over £27,500 has been raised in eight weeks. £6,000 more at this stage than in any previous quarter. But now the momentum needs to be increased to reach the £70,000 target.

The targets can be reached. Victor Hopwood sent £100 from Canada for the "Marxist Election Campaign". Many other readers have sent in donations. A GMBATU shop steward on Tyneside donated £10 expenses. A post election meeting in Coventry raised £197. Sellers in Maryhill, Glasgow raised £6.50 on one street sale using collecting tins and stickers. £2.15 was collected on a sale outside Pork Farms in Nottingham. Edinburgh comrades raised £87.70 from a jumble sale.

### New Appeal Sheet

To help all areas raise Fighting Fund over the next five weeks we have produced a new Appeal Sheet, which all sellers should use on every activity. Take it door to door on the estates,

at work, at union and Labour Party meetings, on the streets. With the Appeal Sheet and all the other ways of raising funds we can hit the £70,000.

Militant has always taken a bold approach to finance, confident of support from readers and other workers. In January 1971 while still monthly we launched a Weekly Militant Fund, to raise £1000 for a weekly paper.

### Rapid growth

The target was reached by May allowing the paper to buy a press and camera and go weekly the next January.

The Fighting Fund rapidly grew. £4,680 was raised towards a target of £5,000 in 1972. In 1973 the £10,000 target was exceeded by £49. In the last week we got two individual donations of £250 along with £20 from Brynlliw NUM lodge.

The target was smashed again in 1974, an election

## Fighting Fund

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 Scotland East	1024		2800
2 Scotland West	1219		3500
3 Northern	1582		4600
4 London	2873		9400
5 East Midlands	961		3250
6 Wales	1333		4850
7 West Midlands	1278		4850
8 South West	479		1900
9 Yorkshire	2001		8450
10 Eastern	684		3050
11 Merseyside	1527		7500
12 Southern	553		3100
13 Manchester	440		4050
14 South East	226		2250
15 National	11340		6950
<b>Total</b>	<b>27522</b>		<b>70000</b>

year, with £15,137 raised. And in 1975 despite fire destroying our premises and typesetting equipment, we exceeded the original £26,000 target, raising £27,378.

There have been even greater achievements since. Last year the fighting Fund raised £290,000, including £34,330 at the Albert Hall Rally, where more was

donated in 40 minutes than in all of 1976. Our week's income appeal launched last September produced a flood of donations from workers, unemployed, students and single parents towards our historic £1/4 million Fighting Fund.

Our fund raising achievements are second to none. They represent the sacrifice

and hard work of thousands of ordinary workers to raise the money we need. If you agree with Militant's ideas, send in a donation. Match the sacrifice of the pioneers who built the paper. With your support, selling and collecting for the Militant we will go from strength to strength. This is the way a workers' paper is built.



# Fight to defend jobs, wages

## John Macreadie talks to Militant



John Macreadie

Photo: Dave Sinclair

AS THE Civil Servants prepare to ballot on all-out strike action and thus move into the front line of the fight for decent wages and conditions, JOHN MACREADIE, the Deputy General Secretary of the union at the centre of the dispute, the CPSA, spoke to Brian Ingham:

**What led the CPSA NEC to issue a call for all-out strike action?**

We've tried since 1979 to solve our members problems by talks and negotiations with this Tory government. Their answer has been to attack our members' living standards, jobs and conditions even more.

For the past 14 weeks we have been running regional and national selective strike action and this has failed to push the government to meet our claim. Therefore in line with the policy of the union conference, the executive felt it was now time to ballot the membership on the only other strategy which stands a chance of winning and that is an all-out strike.

The media reaction has been to attack the NEC, despite the fact we are actually balloting the workers and letting them decide. I would draw the comparison with the propaganda against the miners. They attacked the miners for not having a ballot and are now attacking the CPSA for having a ballot. It just

government's pocket by means of VAT and the Inland Revenue, concentrating on ports and airports, concentrating on computer centres, and in this current dispute, 14 weeks of regional and selective action. None of them have been sufficient to force the government to meet the demands of our members.

Therefore the options are either we surrender or we fight, and that means an all-out strike. That's why the NEC in an honest and firm fashion is putting this and recommending this to the members of the union.

**What are the issues at stake?**

The most fundamental issue is poverty wages, members taking home as little as £60 a week. The average wage of the members £83 a week, when the average white-collar wage in Britain is about £200 a week. This shows you the poverty CPSA members face and how far our members' wages have fallen behind those of other workers.

Linked to that is the need

protect jobs and share out the work.

The underlying problems are therefore wages, jobs, conditions and the services that our members provide to unemployed workers, claimants and the public generally.

**What is the attitude of the claimants to your action?**

Throughout the dispute we have received tremendous support from the claimants' organisations and from individual claimants. Some of them sometimes join us on picket lines, because they understand that our fight is not one between us and them.

We have a common fight with the government, because we want to give a better level of service, create job opportunities and try to solve their problems as well as ours. I very much regret the harm that will be caused to claimants in the period ahead. But I am absolutely sure that no matter how much harm is caused, it will be laid at the door of Thatcher and this Tory government.

We are concerned about the services that we provide to other workers, to members of our class, our brothers and sisters, our families. That's why since 1979 we have tried to solve the problems of our members and other workers through talks and negotiations.

The Tories have shown they don't give a damn about our members and the services that we provide to other working people. In previous disputes because of our concern, particularly for claimants, we have excluded our members in the DHSS and the Department of Employment from the disputes, once again showing our concern, the obligations we feel to other workers. But the Tories have regarded that as a sign of weakness.

Therefore in this dispute we have had no other op-

### They attacked the miners for not having a ballot and are now attacking the CPSA for having a ballot

shows you the craven hypocrisy of the Tory controlled media in this country.

**Is there now no other way to win this dispute?**

Our whole experience has been that it will take the full bargaining strength of the union to secure our 1987 wage claim and solve the underlying problems facing our members.

We've tried since 1981 every other sort of industrial action strategy, concentrating on hitting the

to abolish the incremental scale system, the longest apprenticeship in history, to try and establish a national minimum wage of £115 a week.

The Tories have cut 150,000 jobs out of the civil service. The union is determined to try and defend and increase jobs and very important in that is the claim for six weeks' annual leave for all civil servants, irrespective of grade and for a 35 hour working week, in order to try and

## South Yorkshire solidarity

CPSA MEMBERS in Barnsley and Doncaster unemployment benefit offices walked out on strike after management tried to weaken the strike in Scotland by getting local offices to hand-write giro normally issued by Livingston computer centre who were on their regional strike.

The members refused, and six of them in Goldthorpe had their pay notices suspended. Next day the walkouts spread to the rest of South Yorkshire, including DHSS and MSC offices.

Management's heavy-handed action provoked the stepping-up of the campaign. The mood for all-out strike action is there if a lead is given nationally. Members are fed up with one and two-day action. They want all-out action.

By a member of Sheffield DHSS  
CPSA



John Macreadie (left) with Labour candidate John Bryan on CPSA picket line in Bermondsey



# and services

tion but to involve all of our members throughout the entire national union.

**The Society of Civil and Public Servants say they have suspended their action following the CP-SA's call for all-out strike action. What are your comments on this?**

We've run a joint campaign with the Society since February of this year when the claim was submitted. We've run 12 weeks of joint regional and selective action and when we met the Society on 22 June we said that we were prepared to allow that strategy to run for another three or four weeks in the hope that that would be sufficient to force the government to settle our dispute.

however, many ordinary Society members refused to cross the picket lines, and many of their activists actually stayed out on strike and have stayed on the joint pay committees in some areas.

We hope that the Society, once they see that they'll get nothing from this government without fighting, will rejoin the campaign.

In fact Thatcher's answer to the Society was delivered within a few days. The Treasury issued a letter to every civil servant in the country saying that they were determined to try and introduce divisive measures such as regional pay. So-called 'individual performance' pay and flexible

**for the Society executive to join with you in a ballot for all-out strike action?**

Yes.

**Can the CPSA win alone?**

Yes: our members do essential jobs. When our members do not work, government departments grind to a halt. Therefore we have immense bargaining power, in DHSS, the Department of Employment, Customs and Excise and throughout the whole of the government service. And if our members stand firm together, then we can still win this campaign.

We would prefer unity with the Society and with the seven other civil service trade unions. But their leaders' defeatism and their playing with the fire of regional and 'individual performance' pay cannot budge us from our obligation to the membership of the CPSA.

We have to be honest with members and tell them that in Thatcher's Britain the only way they can defend their living standards, jobs and services is to be prepared to fight.

Finally, you have now been nominated to the TUC General Council. What do you hope to achieve there?

It is a tremendous privilege to be able to represent my union at the highest level of the movement. I have given CPSA members my assurance that at all times I will carry out the policies decided by CPSA members at our conference.

On every issue put before me on the General Council, I will apply the approach: What will build and strengthen the trade union movement in Britain and internationally and better the conditions of the working class and other oppressed people?

I believe that the oldest slogans of the labour movement are still the most modern—Solidarity! Unity is strength! As in all my trade union life, these watchwords will guide my approach on the TUC General Council.

**Are you still appealing**

**We have to tell members that in Thatcher's Britain the only way they can defend their living standards, jobs and services is to be prepared to fight.**

But we said that the strategy of regional selective strikes wasn't enough and we had to add more pressure to force the government to settle.

That could only be done by an all-out strike and the Society said to us a number of times during the dispute that they did not discount that possibility, if and when it was necessary. We argued that an all-out strike is necessary now.

However, unlike the CPSA executive who are prepared to give their members the opportunity to decide, the Society's EC refused to ballot the members, unilaterally withdrew from the remainder of the joint regional selective action and have 'suspended the action.'

In other words they've given in, and they hope that the Tory government will offer them something extra because they've given in the struggle.

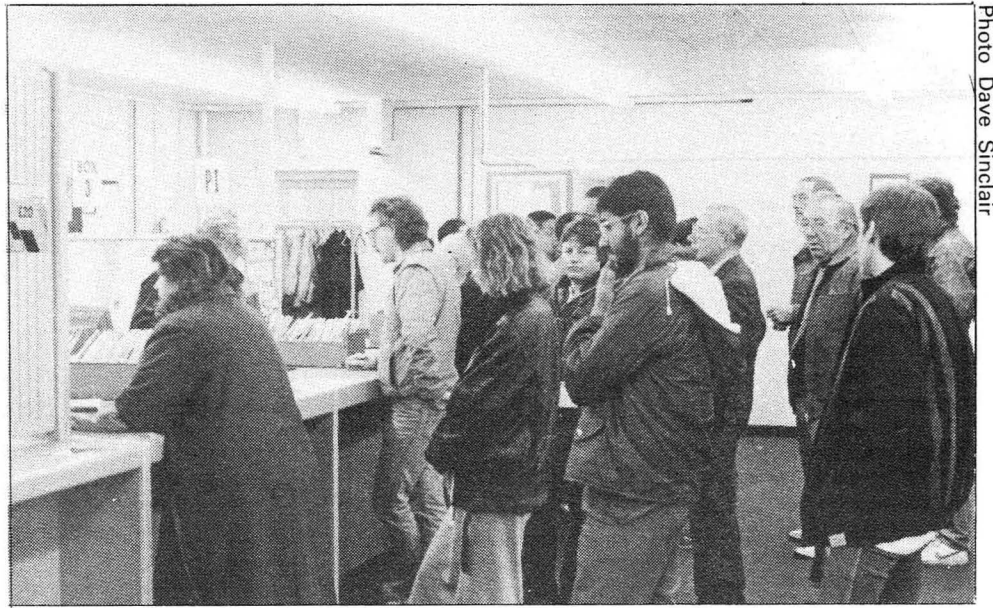
In the regional action in the London and South East area on 25-26 June,

pay, all of which would drive down the living standards of the majority of civil servants, would divide member from member and would be a basic attack on national wage bargaining and the civil service trade union movement.

So if the Society wanted any proof of the naivety of their surrender tactics, then they have had it, and they ought to rejoin the campaign.

On Scottish television last Friday, the Deputy General Secretary of the Society said that we had to accept the political and industrial realities of the re-election of a Tory government. Does this mean they are prepared to lie down and die for the next five years?

I and the CPSA reject that position. Our members have got no alternative whatsoever but to fight to defend their interests, irrespective of what number of Tory MPs there are in the House of Commons.



Queuing at the Barking Road unemployment benefit office in East London.

## Civil servants who claim the benefits they hand out

"THEY'RE just doing the usual thing: tearing up files, picking their nails, getting drunk and having affairs" an unnamed Tory minister is quoted as saying.

Civil servants the length and breadth of the country are appalled by the contempt with which such ministers regard low-paid civil servants. Such remarks have fuelled our anger and bitterness.

In many unemployment benefit offices (UBOs) conditions have reached breaking point. Low pay and lack of trained staff have created intolerable burdens. Turnover of staff in London UBOs averages 42 per cent.

Offices within my own branch experience particularly high rates. One office, with a register approaching 5,000 claims, has only four experienced staff left. No wonder queues build up and there are delays in processing claims.

Lord Young, the ex-chief of Department of Employment, has accused strikers of attacking the "most vulnerable section of the community". This is the man who introduced measures like the 'availability for work test', the new Job Training Scheme (JTS) and 13 week suspensions!

Neither UBO staff nor the unemployed are fooled by

his crocodile tears. We know who has been responsible for increasing tension in UBOs. In the past year we have witnessed 123 per cent increase in 'serious incidents' in the Eastern Region.

In my own office, Holloway UBO, staff have had knives pulled on them. A female member in Tottenham UBO was threatened with rape. Verbal abuse is widely accepted as 'part of the job'.

### Workload

Extra staff have not been recruited in line with the rising unemployment. As a result our workload has increased by 13 per cent at least. In addition we have also had to oversee the introduction of new procedures such as taxation of benefits, and voluntary unemployment deductions.

There never seem to be enough staff to cope. We are expected to do two jobs at once. Staff are constantly interrupted when working on claims to answer phone calls.

For many CPSA members the working day doesn't end at five o'clock, nor the working week on Friday. Many have to take part-time jobs in pubs and bookies or as cleaners to make ends meet. Many

others are forced to claim the benefits their DHSS colleagues administer.

Most of us work in offices which can only be described as slums. They are overcrowded and unhygienic. Members often have to share desks. In my own branch, members in seven offices have actually threatened some form of industrial action to secure improvements.

Given these conditions it's little wonder CPSA members have responded magnificently to the campaign of industrial action. Our answer to the anonymous Tory minister is "We don't get time to pick our nails. We can't afford to get continually drunk and Cecil Parkinson and Jeffrey Archer aren't civil servants"!

Our pay claim and the fight for a better service cannot be separated. We don't like making people wait weeks for their money. We don't like to make them wait hours to get seen, but unless we take all out action to show we're serious nothing will change.

**By Julie Wyeth**

Branch Chair, CPSA DE London North Branch in personal capacity

## Society members outraged

MANY MEMBERS of the Society of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS), the second biggest Civil Service union, have been shocked by the decision of their executive council to call off the industrial action.

After a well-supported campaign of strike action, in response to the government's pay offer of 4.25 per cent, most rank-and-file activists were hoping for an escalation rather than this back-down.

Those few leaders who have dared show their faces since this astonishing decision have been left in no doubt as to the bitterness felt in most areas. Those remaining in the HQ bunker have been bombarded with angry letters, resolutions, petitions and phone calls.

The main reason touted by EC members is that they were blackmailed by the new Broad-Left-led CPSA NEC's decision to go for a ballot on all-out national strike. In fact the opposite is the case. The SCPS has consistently shied away from support for an all-out strike.

The 'Secret Left' who dominate the Society have always balanced between that section of the members who see themselves firstly as workers and trade unionists, and those who are more career and management orientated.

Until now, their rhetoric has appealed to the first while their inactivity has commended itself to the second. But now they have shown their true colours and have lost all credit with those members

who have struggled and sacrificed in the campaign.

Socialists in the SCPS should use the action of the leadership in this pay campaign to build the open Broad Left. It will be organising protests of every sort, including demanding the recall conference.

Pressure should be put on the EC, via branches, districts and group executives to ballot the members on an all-out strike if the CPSA should win their ballot. In the meantime, Society members will do their utmost to help the CPSA to campaign for a YES vote.

**By Society Broad Left members**

### Hackney

**SOCIETY MEMBERS in Hackney were outraged at the SCPS decision. Like the CPSA members, they had been balloted and won the vote with a strong majority to enter a further round of selective action "with a view to balloting for all-out strike".**

Now, before the selective action was even completed, their executive, as one Hackney member put it, "pulled the rug from under our feet".

After the initial shock, however, their anger was channelled into a positive direction. Emergency meet-

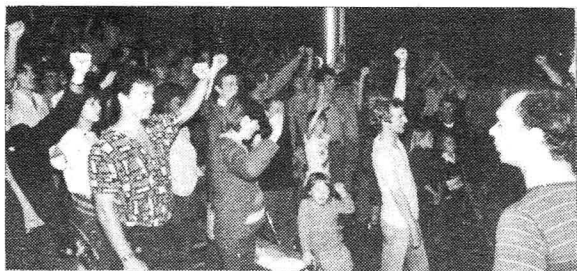
ings held in offices across the East London branch passed motions of censure on the SCPS executive, demanding that they continue the action and ballot for all-out strike alongside CPSA.

In Hackney the motion was passed 26-5, a better vote than for the action itself! They also called for their members not to cross CPSA picket lines.

CPSA members in the meantime recognise they have for the first time an NEC working for their best interests, prepared to lead with confidence and vigour.

Society members must be encouraged to follow that lead, dragging their leaders behind them.





## Socialist summer camp

# What is socialism?

## Sell Militant

REPORTS ARE coming in of big successes in canvassing for new Militant readers. Even one or two sellers can achieve spectacular results if they persist. Dalston sellers report that they sold to a third of all the doors opened to them on the Holly Street Estate, one of the most deprived areas in Hackney.

In Barnsley two small groups sold 21 and 13 respectively on two different estates. In the North East 50 residents in Blyth now receive Militant regularly as a result of door to door canvassing for sales. Out of 12 sold on the street in Old Swan, Liverpool, last week, four have agreed to sell Militant themselves.

Sales can be made even in unlikely places. 11 were sold outside a David Owen public meeting called by the SDP. Clearly people were attracted by the idea of public debate even though they did not support Owen.

Another supporter sold a copy at two in the morning when he gave some people a lift home from a party. So never be without a copy of Militant.

**Want to know ways you can help sell Militant? Phone Circulation Dept 01 533 3311. Ever thought you should send in a report to Militant but lacked the confidence to see it through? Let us help you to help us make Militant even better. Phone Editorial Dept**

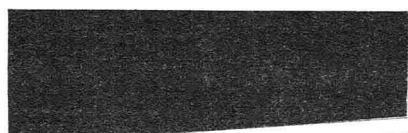
MILITANT IS launching a series examining some of the basic theoretical issues to be discussed at the Socialist Summer Camp, with Mike Waddington answering the question. "What is Socialism".

WITH A THIRD victory under her belt, Thatcher is proclaiming the eradication of socialism. But not military reaction, fascist dictatorship and least of all a temporary parliamentary majority with only a third support of the electorate, can halt the striving of the working class towards a socialist society. Nor, it should be added can witch-hunts, within the labour movement ever purge socialist ideas from the minds of the organised workers and youth.

Did not General Pinochet in Chile declare that he had buried Marxism, having burned all socialist and Marxist books? But the heroic Chilean workers and youth now fighting to throw off the brutal dictatorship, are again embracing the ideas of socialism, and rebuilding and politically rearming the workers' parties.

As long as there is a working class grouped together in large units of production, seeing itself as a class, opposed to capitalism, with its own demands and aims, then the flame of socialism will never be extinguished.

The programme of socialism—the collective ownership and democratic control by the working class majority of the economy and of society as a whole—flows directly from the daily experience of the working class in modern industrial society. Starting with the most class conscious and politically



SHE'S NICE TO REAGAN. SHE'S NICE TO GORBACHEV. WHY'S SHE SO NASTY TO US?

INVESTMENT AS PERCENTAGE OF GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT		
1	JAPAN	27.5
2	FINLAND	23.4
3	AUSTRIA	22.3
4	LUXEMBOURG	22.2
5	PORTUGAL	21.8
6	NORWAY	21.7
7	ICELAND	21.5
8	IRELAND	20.9
9	WEST GERMANY	19.5
10	SPAIN	19.1
11	SWEDEN	19.1
12	GREECE	19.0
13	FRANCE	18.9
14	DENMARK	18.8
15	NETHERLANDS	18.8
16	CANADA	18.6
17	UNITED STATES	18.6
18	TURKEY	18.5
19	ITALY	18.2
20	UNITED KINGDOM	17.2

IF A FOOTBALL TEAM PERFORMED THIS BADLY, WOULDN'T YOU GET RID OF THE MANAGER?

Since the Tories came to power, investment in industry has gone down by a fifth. Manufacturing output is down by 20%. And for the first time ever, we're actually importing more than we export.

The Tories are fond of saying that Britain should remain its rightful place in the world. Yet how can we hold our own when our manufacturing industry is being systematically run down?

THE COUNTRY'S CRYING OUT FOR CHANGE. VOTE LABOUR



80,000 young people homeless.

COUNTRY'S CRYING OUT FOR CHANGE.

800,000 PEOPLE ARE WAITING TO GO INTO HOSPITAL. THEY'RE BEING HELD UP BY THE PRIME MINISTER'S HEART PROBLEM.



The Conservative Party's cold-hearted policies are crippling the National Health Service. 221 hospitals have been shut down since they came to power, and spending on the rest has been cut by millions. If this Government doesn't give a damn about the thousands of people waiting for operations, then the country urgently needs one that does.

THE COUNTRY'S CRYING OUT FOR LABOUR.

THROUGHOUT THE general election the Labour Party leadership congratulated itself on its showbiz publicity campaign, confident of its impact on the electorate. After the election each member of the National Executive Committee of the party received a presentation copy of the advertising used during the campaign. An accompanying letter said: "Polling evidence confirms that our advertising made greater impact and was more memorable than that of the other parties and has also been acclaimed within the advertising industry." Unfortunately the advertising world didn't manage to convince the voters into the same acclaim. The letter ended hoping that the book would be kept "as a memento of our successful campaign"! Should someone let them know we lost?

aware, the workers begin to see the chaos and the in-built crises of capitalism, and come to recognise that the satisfaction of their basic needs is only possible with the planned use of all the resources created by their labour, within a socialist society.

### Scientific

Marxism, scientific socialism, is not based on mere sentiment, or a utopian blue print for the future. It understands socialism as the undeniable historic mission of the working class, leading to the abolition of all classes and class oppression.

With a democratically planned socialist economy, production will be greatly expanded, and distributed according to need, in line with the decisions of the workers and their organisations themselves. The living standards of the top five per cent may fall, but for the overwhelming majority, there will be an abundance, sufficient to guarantee a life free from want.

With full employment

and the rational use of science and technique for the benefit of all, the working day will be greatly reduced. Everyone will have the time and energy to fully participate in the running of society, of their workplace, their neighbourhood, and without the burdens of the struggle and worry about how to make ends meet.

As the higher forms of socialism are reached, classes completely disappear and antagonisms in society are ameliorated, the basis is laid for the "withering away of the state", to use the famous phrase of Karl Marx. This signifies the beginnings of genuine freedom and liberty for all.

But socialism is more than just a better way of organising society, it is a necessary stage in the development of human society. Capitalism itself was a necessary and progressive stage two hundred years ago.

The pursuit of the profit motive initially revolutionised society, breaking up the stagnation of the feudal

middle ages. As more resources were unlocked, society developed at a rapid pace.

Capitalism now has reached its limits. The system is choking on its own contradictions. It has the capacity to feed the starving millions, but the profit motive prevents the rational distribution of resources.

### Change

Some sceptics set up 'human nature' as an insurmountable obstacle to socialist change. However, prejudice (to give human nature in this context its proper name) is under assault all the time from permanent change.

Capitalist society is wreaking changes all the time—for those fortunate enough to have improved their living standards recently, 'prosperity' cannot last.

Every worker, blue or white collar, public or private sector, tenant or owner occupier, will inevitably have to fight to keep what they have gained.

Marxists will intervene in these struggles, assisting the workers' fight, but also helping them to draw the conclusion that every victory is temporary and will always have to be defended against the encroachment of the capitalists. Only by changing society can any gains be lastingly secured.

Despite an electoral setback for the workers' movement, and despite a shortlived move to the right at the top of the organisations of labour, capitalism in crisis each day brings more recruits to socialism. And they will press for the programme of socialism to be unashamedly espoused by their organisations.

The Labour Party and trade unions are in fact an embryo of the future society, growing within the old. For it is the organisations of the working class that will be at the centre of the administration of a socialist society. With the power of the working class and the programme of conscious socialism, this new society will become a reality.

## LEFT and RIGHT

### Timely reminder

THE LAST Labour Party National Executive meeting discussed cutting the party's spending. As any good trade unionist would, Dennis Skinner moved a resolution that there should be no compulsory redundancies at party headquarters at Walworth Road.

"I just want to make sure that there is no one going round in a taxi handing out redundancy notices," he said, reminding Neil Kinnock of his slur on Liverpool Council, repeated in three party political broadcasts even though no Liverpool council workers were made redundant.

### There's no arm in it

BRITAIN (amongst 26 countries) is selling arms to both sides in the Gulf war, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. It appears that with high profits and fierce competition, commercial interests have overridden policy. Sipri's report states that many of the arms sales are taking place without the support and in some cases without the knowledge of the government.

Of course there is supposed to be a British embargo on the supply of any equipment which would exacerbate the Gulf war, but you can't expect a Tory government to stand in the way of profits no matter how bloody.

# Socialist summer camp

8-15 August  
Forest of Dean Gloucestershire

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## New Technology

BRITISH CAPITALISM has been unable to use technological change to benefit the working class.

Workers get the worst of all possible worlds. While technological backwardness reduces old industries to skeletons, advances in computerisation lead to job losses outweighing the new jobs gained.

A recent report by the CBI and the British Institute of Administrative Management argues that the benefits of new information technology come from cutting 750,000 staff jobs over the next three years. Benefits? Well, higher profits for them.

There would be a few new jobs to meet demand for computer equipment, and for systems designed and written by computer analysts and programmers—but nowhere near 750,000.

Already new techniques have reduced the number of computer operators steadily over the last few years. And the newest system development tools reduce the need for programmers; their skills may be outdated only twenty years after they originated!

In Scotland, a number of the hi-tech firms set up in the so-called 'Silicon Glen' have already cut staff as demand for microchips

has slowed down.

Huge trade deficits in data processing and electronic engineering made the head of the National Economic Development Office information technology committee comment that in the new 'sunrise' industries, British capitalism "is being eclipsed before it has even risen".

A socialist plan would use information technology to meet peoples' needs. Capitalism sacrifices that potential in favour of profit and increased unemployment.

By Dave Cartwright

# Sunrise or twilight?

**Telecom workers, on strike this winter, object to BT's demands that workers accept whatever overtime or job losses the bosses want. Telecom trade unionists have accepted many new technology innovations, but have fought for a shorter working week instead of redundancies**



Photo: Militant

## The future on a starvation diet?

JAPANESE AND American scientists have been researching a "fifth generation" of computers, which can interact with people and so operate at about a thousand times the performance of present day computers.

By Ian Wells

In 1978 the Callaghan government, realising that British capitalism could be left decades behind its competitors in this new technology, set up the company INMOS through the National Enterprise Board, with a £25 million investment and a promise of another £25 million later on.

Even with the bureaucratic form of nationalisation they used, INMOS assembled some of the best experts in their fields. They agreed that a new type of device would be needed to give British industry a stake in the "fifth generation" computers.

This was the "transputer", the first true computer built into a single chip. When connected to other transputers, it increased its power depending on how many other transputers it connected to. Previously, microprocessors' power only increased when up to about six such devices connected together; they actually got worse above this.

Until now the world's most powerful and fastest

A PLANNED ECONOMY would allow science to improve health and the environment, boost production and shorten the working week. But science in Britain in particular suffers neglect and misdirection because of the problems and priorities of British capitalism.

Sir John Harvey-Jones, until recently ICI chairman, threatens that poor facilities for training and funding scientists in universities and polytechnics could make ICI pull out of the country. He described funding as short term and pitiful.

The media report on low morale and a brain drain amongst scientists, due more to lack of facilities than to higher wages abroad. The University Grants Committee has had its science support cut by at least 11 per cent from its level at the depth of the 1981 recession.

The Science and Engineering Research Council have to find an extra £8 million this year to stand still because the government won't cover lecturers' wage increases. The Medical Research Council faces a £4.2 million deficit.

In government research institutes, cutbacks and privati-

computers have been the CRAY supercomputers, but their enormous cost meant that very few exist.

### Privatised

A rival US supercomputer company "Floating Point Systems" has been developing a new supercomputer based upon the transputer which connects 16,000 transputers together and operates up to a hundred times faster than the CRAY and at a fraction of the cost.

Given the potential, you might think that the British government would nurture a company like INMOS which could get a real stake in the micro-electronics industry. Far from it.

After the Tory election victory in 1979, the government held back the second

£25 million instalment for over a year, just when INMOS needed investment to develop its new chips. INMOS then became a victim of Tory privatisation policy. Uncertainty paralysed this innovative company.

Eventually in 1984, the Tories forced the sale of INMOS to the Thorn EMI group. The *Guardian* commented recently: "INMOS has been a hostage of political incompetence. City misunderstanding and corporate chaos." They quoted an industrialist: "INMOS is a 10 to 15 year bet and the sell off was really a sell out."

Thorn EMI bought INMOS soon after it failed to acquire British Aerospace. When it was chasing BAe, Thorn EMI shares soared to 700p but when their bid failed and they got INMOS, shares fell to around

sation are lowering morale and draining expertise. Since plans to close the Plant Breeding Institute (PBI) in Cambridge and privatise the National Seed Development Organisation, a third of the staff have resigned including the PBI director.

A scientist who won a major international award for plant genetic engineering was offered redeployment to an institute in Norwich where no plant research will be done.

Before the election Labour spoke of an 8 per cent spending increase over four years. Over half of Britain's £4.5 billion science budget goes on defence; Labour called for a move to civil research. But even that would not have returned spending to 1979 levels.

The cutting of long term research projects shows the lack of confidence capitalism has, particularly in Britain. They don't think they have a long term. We should make their fears come true.

By Gwyn Morris

400p.

Contrary to government propaganda, private firms prefer safe, guaranteed projects to innovative schemes like INMOS, which exist in an extremely volatile world market. INMOS needed big money to develop new products to keep up with Japanese and American competition. Thorn EMI has lost £60 million and invested £240 million since it acquired the firm.

### "Quick buck"

INMOS is said to be over its bad patch but there is still speculation in the City that Thorn EMI are trying to get rid of it. A company like INMOS is too valuable an asset to fall foul of City speculators' 'quick buck' mentality.

New technology could

benefit the working class, through the abolition of boring repetitive tasks. But if that is not to mean just more enforced unemployment, the working class must take control.

INMOS can only develop in public ownership with a massive injection of money and resources to expand. The company should be run on the basis of democratic workers' control and management, where the interests of the working class will be predominant.

A new technology under the control of the working class could develop computers to provide safe well paid jobs for large numbers of workers. It would also allow a massive cut in working hours rather than the lay offs and redundancies which the rise of new technology has meant under capitalism.

## Spiffing time for spivs

ON A TRAIN journey from Sussex to London, two young men sat near to me. They spoke with public school accents.

One, with ginger hair was just 21 but seemed to have plenty of cash already. He asked if his friend wanted to go to Henley regatta at £19 a ticket. He also had tickets for Wimbledon.

He worked for a City property company and was concerned that the bottom might fall out of the sale of commercial properties to other City companies. You can only fit so many firms into one square mile.

The conversation moved on to South Africa, his company had interests there and he'd visited the country.

### "Rational"

Of course, said Ginger, apartheid was morally wrong but...his company had old blacks working for them, who were only happy working for the bosses. They gave them jobs picking up leaves. It was a kind of social security really.

His friend said there was discontent there. No, said Ginger. As long as they had work and a piece of land, most blacks were happy.

The homelands were quite rational according to Loudmouth Ginger. They stop the shanty towns. In India you didn't have apartheid but you have corrugated iron slums.

It honestly seemed never to have occurred to Ginger that the black workers he was happy to see "rationally" herded like animals created the wealth that bought him his tickets for Henley and Wimbledon.

Eventually, another passenger found Ginger's loud comments so offensive that he told him to shut up. I consoled myself with the thought that if this is the new breed of capitalist, they have far less intelligence than they are given credit for.

By Eve Dropper



# Debt crisis threatens new convulsions

THE CAPITALIST press recently spilled pages of ink following the decision by Citicorp, Chase Manhattan, National Westminster and other world banks to raise reserve funds to cover debt defaults by third-world countries.

Citicorp was forced to admit that it would lose at least £25 million (30 per cent) of its £2.8 billion loans to third world countries. National Westminster has been compelled, in effect, to write off £466 million.

These measures were announced following defaults on repayments by a whole series of debtor countries such as Peru, El Salvador and the Ivory Coast. Brazil has only just resumed repayments on some of its debts after a three-month moratorium. Similar measures are being threatened by other major debtors, such as Argentina and Mexico.

This heralds a new stage in the ongoing world debt crisis.

The total third world debt reached a staggering US\$1.3 trillion (million million) in 1986, and is heading for an estimated US\$1.8 trillion in 1987, of which 46 per cent is accounted for by Latin American countries.

Behind these astronomical figures lies the ravaging of the colonial countries by world imperialism, driving millions into a sub-human existence.

Real interest rates soared by 20 per cent in the first half of the 1980s. Since 1979, between 70 and 80 per cent of all new loans has been used just to pay the interest on old loans.

The result has been an unprecedented flow of resources from the colonial countries to the major imperialist powers, further widening the gulf between 'rich' and 'poor' countries.

In the case of Latin America, a net inflow of US\$30 billion from the industrialised countries in 1983 was transformed into a net outflow of US\$100 billion last year. This in itself was equal to the net inflow of resources over the whole preceding decade!

Between 1981 and 1985 the net export of capital from Latin America rose from US\$200 million to US\$42.4 billion—an 85-fold increase. The Bishop of Sao Paulo in Brazil was driven to comment that it is like a blood transfusion from the patient to the "doctor".

On top of the drain of capital and debt repayments has come a catastrophic decline in the prices of raw materials, which form the bulk of third world exports. Average commodity prices fell by 20 per cent between 1980 and 1982 alone.

All these processes are literally destroying the economies of Latin America. And the burden is being placed on the backs of the workers and peasants by capitalist governments throughout the continent.

The imperialist bankers and the International Monetary Fund have demanded the most vicious austerity programmes before agreeing to further loans. The aim is to ensure that the wealth produced by the workers' labour is used first and foremost to repay loans, at the expense of wages and services.

In country after country it has meant that the development which took place after the second world war, the fall in illiteracy and infant mortality rates, has been wiped out. The real purchasing power of Latin American workers has fallen by 30 per cent on average over the last five years.

## Brazil

All these trends are illustrated most conclusively by Latin America's biggest and most powerful economy, Brazil.

For a period Brazil appeared an exception to the general decline. Up until recently it financed a widespread public works programme. But this could not be maintained as the boom ran out of steam. The consequence of high state spending, fuelled by massive borrowing from abroad, was mushrooming inflation.

Temporarily, a lid was kept on inflation by austerity policies combined with a price-wage freeze. But, inevitably, these measures collapsed under pressure from the capitalists as well as the working class, and in recent months inflation was again heading towards an annual rate of over 1,000 per cent.

This has forced the administration of President Sarney to announce a new austerity programme involving the slashing of all the public works schemes and a wage freeze.

Telephone, electricity, petrol, milk and bread prices were all increased by 30 per cent overnight. According to the Industrial Federation of Sao Paulo, 33 per cent of all Brazilian industry is bankrupt.

As one industrialist put it: "All the indicators point to a general breakdown".

The horrifying consequences of the government's policies have been demonstrated most starkly in the north-east of the country, where a virtual civil war is taking place over land reform.

In this region, in 1970, the poorest 20 per cent of the population received 5.2 per cent of income. By 1980 this had fallen to 3.8 per cent. The official infant mortality rate stands at 107 per 1000—one of the highest in the world. In reality, during the past decade 350 children in every 1,000 have died before they reached the age of 10.

In Brazil as a whole 50 per cent of all income is consumed by a mere 10 per cent of the population. It now has the greatest differential between rich and poor in the world.

# revolt

## Mass anger against imperialism

It is this deepening economic nightmare throughout Latin America, and the fear of its revolutionary social consequences, which is compelling growing sections of the Latin American bourgeoisie towards defaulting on their debts.

Already, Sarney's austerity programme has forced the union leaders to call for a general strike. Argentina has had eight general strikes against the austerity measures of the Alfonsín Government.

In May the Populist President of Peru, Alan Garcia, was faced by a police strike, followed by a 24-hour general strike of all workers in protest against the government's programme.

Brazilian President Sarney showed the fear and desperation of the Latin American ruling classes in general when he closed his broadcast announcing the austerity package with the words: "God has always looked after Brazil".

It is against this background that the imperialists are being forced to accept that their third-world debts and interest will never be paid in full. But, needless to say, the third-world countries will not be let off the hook.

One of the remedies the bankers have adopted is the so-called "debt-equity swap"—"selling" a portion of the debt, and acquiring assets in companies, or even state concerns and public utilities, in the debtor countries.

This has been applied with especial enthusiasm in Pinochet's Chile, where water, telecommu-

nications and state electricity have been 'sold' off to creditors. It has been used to a lesser extent in Brazil, and is surfacing in Mexico also, where the largest private grouping, ALFA, is being eaten into by the world banks.

But the use of this remedy is limited by fear of the anger against US imperialism it is provoking among the masses. The reality remains that a large proportion of third-world loans will never be recovered. The "creeping default" is likely to continue. The question is what effect it will have on the world financial system.

### Bank failures

Widespread default would inevitably result in some bank failures. Should the major banks be threatened with a crash, the governments of the advanced capitalist countries would be forced to step in.

It is estimated that in medium and long term loans the major world banks are owed US\$850 billion and will have to write off US\$350 billion. Over a five year period the combined GNP of the countries of the main banks will amount to over US\$8,000 billion. The losses of the banks on these loans will therefore amount to 0.75 per cent of GNP, or 7 per cent of these countries' combined expenditure on defense.

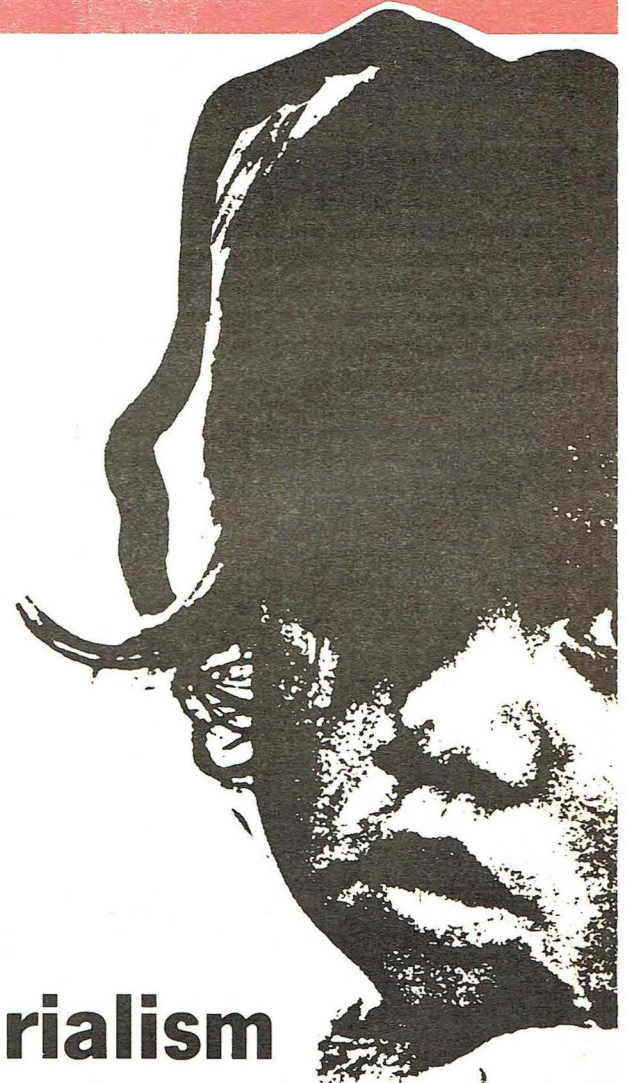
Thus the banking system could survive, but at the cost of enormous losses and major dislocation. And, inevitably, the capitalists and their governments would pass the bill to the working class

# Latin America

# A cor

# in

# revolt



Major borrowers (7 countries) \$ billion.						
1982	83	84	85	86	88*	90*
+7.3	-21.1	-28.7	-29.2	-28.2	-33.4	-39.9
projection*						

This table shows the total of loans to the underdeveloped countries, less payments flowing back to the advanced capitalist countries. Since 1982, the net transfer of money by the underdeveloped countries to the advanced countries has been increasing every year.

of the advanced capitalist countries.

But the fundamental crisis of world capitalism, which is reflected in the debt question, would remain. The repercussions threaten to spark major eruptions over the coming years, in the third world as well as the industrialised countries.

For the colonial world, and Latin America in particular, a degree of misery and exploitation is being created which capitalism can never resolve.

Mass destitution and the stranglehold which imperialism has over Latin America will only be resolved by overthrowing capitalism throughout the continent, by cancelling the debts to the imperialists, nationalising the banks and major industry, and proceeding to the construction of a federation of socialist Latin American states.

By Alejandro Rojas

The imperialist capitalist world can never resolve



ca

# Continent



## Leadership vital to topple Pinochet regime

"HOLY FATHER we are mothers and wives that try to do our best for our families, but this is very difficult for us. Because of unemployment and low wages we live in anguish... There is no money and because of this they cut off our water and electricity... that is how our homes begin to fall apart... Many children are undernourished and when they get ill we do not find adequate medical attention... With each day it is harder for us to send them to school... We want a decent life for everyone without a dictatorship... We demand justice and that the exiles should be allowed to return... These people are bleeding with pain, because the streets are full of blood... because the youth want justice."

With these simple words Luisa Rivero summed up to the Pope last April, in front of a crowd of one million, the misery and terror that Chilean workers and youth endure under Pinochet's dictatorship.

From a correspondent  
in Chile.

In 1973 the Chilean capitalists, backed by US imperialism, demanded military intervention to crush the Popular Unity government of Salvador Allende and the revolutionary movement that was developing.

But, fourteen years on, the capitalists find they are back where they started, with a mass revolutionary movement emerging once again.

The isolation of the dictatorship is complete. The middle class, which in 1973 tended to support the dictatorship, have moved into opposition.

In recent elections of the lawyers association, a bastion of the most conservative petty bourgeoisie, 92 per cent voted for opposition candidates. Even the most reactionary capitalist parties have deserted Pinochet's sinking ship and are calling for a civilian president.

Repression no longer intimidates the mass movement. Every protest results in mass arrests. But on their way to jail in blinded trucks, demonstrators sing the Internationale and the Popular Unity songs.

Yet, after four years of repeated confrontations with the police and army, the dictatorship is still in power. The question in the forefront of the mind of every worker, every poblador (shanty-town dweller), every working class housewife and youth, is: what must we do to topple the tyrant?

When the masses first moved into action, most thought that in a show-down Pinochet would be forced to stand down. But soon they learned that courage and energy was not enough to overthrow a dictatorship determined to stay in power.

To win, you also need a clear programme, strategy and tactics, and the organisation capable of implementing your ideas.

The basic reason why the overthrow of the dictatorship has proved a slow process is the fact that, up till now, the industrial workers have not yet joined the struggle as a class. Partly, this has been caused by the enormous practical difficulties—but the fundamental problem has been the question of leadership.

Along with savage attacks on living standards, the regime took control of the trade unions and murdered the most militant trade union activists. The CUT (main trade union federation) was banned. In

thirteen years of military dictatorship not a single strike was won. Only in April and May of this year two small illegal strikes succeeded in enforcing wage increases.

However, despite these attacks, the working class remains the decisive force that can overthrow the regime. Increasingly in the last year the youth and pobladores—who in 1983 and 1984 showed a lack of confidence in the working class—have turned towards the trade unions in their search for a more powerful force.

Today all eyes are fixed on the National Workers' Command (CNT). In the workplaces, pressure is building up on the CNT leaders to call for strike action—not partial or isolated strikes, but an indefinite general strike with the clear objective of overthrowing the regime.

Workers understand that the battle for jobs, decent living standards and democratic rights can only be won as part of a major struggle to change society. Facing a desperate struggle for survival, they are unwilling to stake their livelihoods on isolated protest actions that will leave unaffected the power of the regime and the bosses to take revenge.

### No leadership

It is here that the main weakness of the movement can be felt. The leaders of the main workers' parties, the Socialist and Communist parties, along with the leadership of the trade unions, have refused to put forward any strategy for mobilising the whole power of the working class and youth.

They do not believe that the workers' movement is strong enough to overthrow Pinochet by its own strength. As a result, all their policies are based on the false idea of a class alliance between the workers and the 'democratic' capitalists of the Christian Democracy against the dictatorship.

This introduces enormous confusion into the movement, and effectively allows the Christian Democrats to dictate the pace of the struggle. The Christian Democracy, which supported Pinochet's coup in 1973, has even been allowed to remain at the head of the trade unions and the student movement!

Cynically claiming that they do not want more bloodshed, the Christian Democrat trade union leaders have blocked the call for an all-out general strike. Instead, different sections of workers are called out at different times. When the leaders have called for general strike action, this has been of a protest character only.

On May Day they refused to call

demonstrations on the grounds that it would 'only' lead to confrontation.

No campaign has been conducted by the Socialist and Communist leaders to combat this confusion or to answer the doubts of the workers. No serious organisational strategy has been put forward to unite the movement and defend it against attack.

This failure to tackle the Christian Democrats head-on has made it extremely difficult for the workers to perceive their strength as a class, and is making the struggle far bloodier and longer than it need have been.

However, within the Communist and Socialist parties an increasing number of activists are demanding a stop to the concessions to the bourgeois parties. This has been reflected in recent trade union and student union elections, where the MDP (Popular Democratic Movement, the alliance of the two main workers parties) has gained important victories—most significantly, in the copper miners union.

The revolutionary mood seething under the surface is reflected also in the paralysis gripping the capitalist class. Attempts at dialogue with Pinochet and the army tops have failed to produce a "controlled" transition to democracy.

Now they are concentrating their efforts on the demand for a free presidential election. Their campaign, however, has totally failed to inspire the movement. Workers and youth know that the only way to get rid of the dictatorship is to go on the offensive.

Over the next months we will see increasing pressure on the workers' leaders to prepare an insurrectionary general strike. Under this pressure it is possible that the bourgeoisie will also attempt to move against Pinochet by splitting the armed forces.

Either way the stage is set for a new revolutionary movement. It is vital for Marxists in the movement to build growing support for a clear revolutionary programme: for the greatest possible mobilisation around the immediate issues, linked to the understanding that we must sweep aside not only Pinochet's dictatorship but also the bankrupt capitalist system he is defending. This alone will make it possible to tackle the daily problems suffered by the masses.

The perspective for taking power is open before the working class of Chile. Whether this becomes a reality, and how the struggle unfolds, will depend on the leadership and programme developed in the workers' parties in the crucial period ahead.

## Chile's economic disaster

UP TO 1973 industrial production had grown at approximately 6 per cent a year. In 1973, however, industrial production fell by 7.7 per cent and in 1974 by 25.6 per cent. This collapse in industry, combined with the savage repression launched against the workers' organisations, had a devastating effect for a time.

In 1982, after some partial recovery, the crisis worsened further, with a fall of over 20 per cent in industrial production. Unemployment reached a record level of 30 per cent, with another 40 per cent underemployed. Youth unemployment is estimated at 70-80 per cent in some of the main cities.

Pauperisation became endemic. Recent estimates suggest that 60 per cent of the population live in extreme poverty.

stranglehold of imperialism will only be broken by smashing capitalism throughout the continent and building a generation of socialist Latin American states.



## South Korea

# Revolutionary battles win radical reforms

**AFTER WEEKS of unprecedented street battles, Korea's ruling Democratic Justice Party (DJP) in a dramatic climbdown has conceded all the main demands of the opposition.**

A "new era for Korean politics" has been hailed by Kim Dae-Jung, joint leader of the opposition Reunification and Democracy Party (RDP). It means the immediate release of all political detainees, the implementation of one-person-one vote direct elections for the presidency, the promise of more press freedom, assurances on human rights, local autonomy, and education reform, plus measures against corruption.

It has taken a mighty wave of protest, reaching revolutionary proportions, to force through these basic reforms in a country that has known only brief moments of 'democratic' rule during the whole of this century.

How long will this "new era" last? What are the forces which have brought it into being? Can there be any guarantee against renewed military intervention?

The phase Korea is now passing through is one of illusions in democracy. A similar mood existed in Haiti and the Philippines after the overthrow of the Duvalier and Marcos dictatorships.

## Democratic illusions

The difficulties facing these regimes have been highlighted by subsequent developments in those countries, including the upheaval of a general strike in Haiti, as workers use their newly-found power to challenge the arduous conditions they continue to face.

Last Friday (26 June), in defiance of a government ban, more than a million Koreans took to the streets of the major cities.

In Kwangju, the 'Peace Demo' numbered 400,000—one-fifth of the city's population! In Seoul, "bus drivers blew their horns in support of the students, while passengers raised clenched fists and leaned out of windows and chanted: 'Down with the military dictatorship!' (Guardian, 27 June)

Onlookers cheered as police buses were set on fire. A total of 3,000 arrests were made, but in some areas police were outnumbered and forced to retreat.

Perhaps the most memorable scenes of the last few weeks have been those of riot policemen cowering behind their shields or rounded up and kneeling on the ground, while their equipment was piled up and burned. The young leaders of the demonstrators would then appeal to the crowd to let the conscript policemen go but to turn on the hated officers.

Up to 15,000 demonstrators have been detained in the course of the street battles, and 245 charged. Nevertheless, what has been dubbed "the most ruthlessly effective riot control machine in the world" could not contain the human flood of protest that burst onto the streets of more than 50

By Clare Doyle

towns and cities.

President Chun has suffered a humiliating defeat. His plans for perpetuating one man, one party rule are in tatters. The future of his hand-picked 'heir', ex-General Roh Tae-Woo, is looking bleak, despite his attempts to take credit for the reforms by announcing them even before consulting Chun!

Yet Roh Tae-Woo's pedigree is no less bloodstained than that of his friend and classmate, Chun. Roh's nomination as President had been the final straw to spark off the latest explosions.

The revolt this time has reached far wider than just the student population. Before the government's climbdown, the Wall Street Journal commented: "active opposition is spreading among ordinarily cautious lawyers, among businessmen, middle-aged matrons and traditionally conservative Buddhist monks..."

"Normally monks are so gentle. They never do anything against the government", said the middle-aged monk... "But when the Buddhist is gentle, the government ignores us. I am really upset about that."

"Working-class Koreans believe an apocalyptic event of some kind is in the making. 'My boss is a member of the ruling party, and he is worried', says Chung Young-Il, a 41-year-old taxi driver. 'We had a meeting with him Friday night, and he said something big is happening.'"

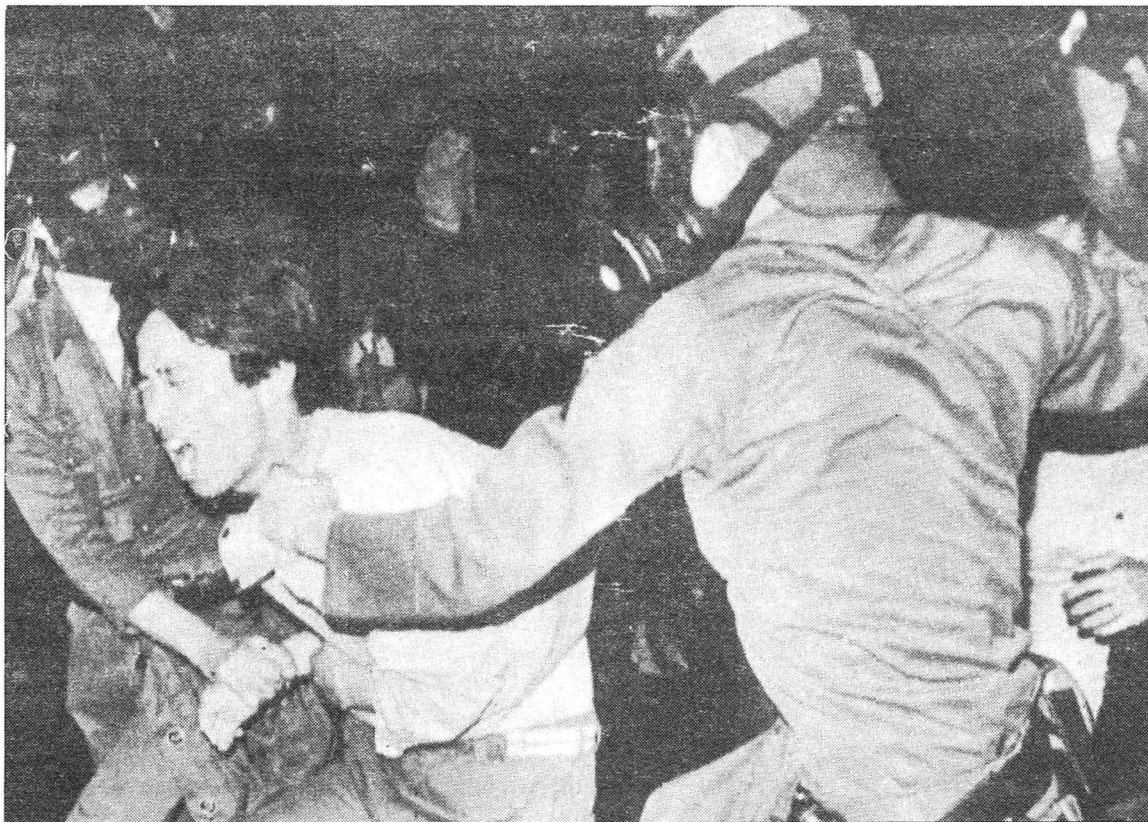
Now that the lid has been lifted, something even bigger than he anticipates may be in store for bosses of taxi firms! Last week in Pusan, Korea's main industrial city, they joined enthusiastically in the anti-government demonstrations.

Taxi drivers have been among the most militant sections of workers in Korea. In 1984 the taxi-drivers of Taegu and Pusan organised a general strike which spread to other sections of transport workers and spearheaded a dramatic increase in new unions being established, though strikes and trade unions were illegal.

160 unions were set up between January and September of 1984—more than in the previous four years—and a remarkable number of company-controlled unions were reorganised into democratic unions.

If this could happen under the dictatorship of Chun, then what a blossoming of organisation we can expect in the immediate future!

Numerous struggles have taken place against victimisation and blacklisting, against wage freezes and for basic rights. Slum conditions abound in the teeming city of Seoul, with its ten million population and in Pusan, with its 3.5 million. More than a million workers are unemployed. Explos-



Police brutality on the streets of Seoul.



President Chun.



Kim Young-Sam.



Kim Dae-Jung.

ive conditions exist just under the surface.

It is the dialectic of history that capitalism, as it develops, creates its own grave-digger—the working class. The rapid and uneven development of Korean capitalism has done just that.

Korean workers are groping for the weapons to transform their lives. For them, democracy is not just an abstract phenomenon but precisely a means of forging these weapons.

But the existence of the monstrously repressive Stalinist regime in North Korea has acted as a disincentive to the creation of a strong socialist movement in the South. This, combined with the absence of a nationally-organised free trade union movement, the disarray of opposition parties and the denial of basic democratic rights, have meant that the church has become a major channel of protest.

## Tightrope

With direct presidential elections, the RDP should win, and the first-ever peaceful transition of power in Korea's history will have been achieved. This is the US paymasters' dream, but they and their puppets in Korea are walking a tightrope.

Even now, commentators suggest the possibility of a military coup if one of the Kims looks like coming to power. In spite of all his efforts, it seems ruled out that Roh Tae-Woo could ever gain sufficient confidence from the electorate to become president.

One thing is certain: little stability can be expected in the coming years against a background of world recession and the aroused expectations of the Korean people.

**A new era has indeed opened up in the South Korean revolution. The masses have come onto the scene of history, and will not take kindly to any suggestion that they should leave it.**

Concessions encourage; repression angers. If the regime continues to lurch from one to the other, it will exacerbate a highly-charged situation. A priest comments: "The government has to declare they are for democracy, or the whole thing is going to blow up."

Even the leaders of the opposition party have not been in control of the situation on the streets. A Western diplomat: "The tail seems to be wagging the dog (of the anti-government movement). That's a very dangerous situation."

The movement could not retain its white heat indefinitely, especially with no mass workers' party to draw all the necessary conclusions, plan a strategy, draw up a programme to unify all the struggling layers in society.

But all the combustible material for the overthrow of the regime exists.

The country's debt is the third-highest in the world, totalling \$50 billion. A large part of every new foreign loan goes to repay this debt.

As one economist explained: "It is low-income workers who account for 80 per cent of the workforce, who are forced to pay the cost of foreign capital and structural imbalances."

With the promise of political

democracy achieved, the students, workers and middle class will be looking with fresh determination for solutions to their fundamental problems: lack of rights, land, poverty wages, etc.

## Expropriate capital

On a capitalist basis none of these problems can be solved. Given the massive contradictions that now exist, a "democratic regime" will have difficulty in sustaining itself if it does not move to take into its hands the 30 top-ranking companies that account for 60 per cent of GNP.

An unstable 'democratic regime' could well crumble and give way to a further unstable military dictatorship.

The RDP itself is a ramshackle coalition of different wings of the opposition movement, and will split asunder again in the future under the impact of events.

The battles of the last few weeks will be as nothing compared with the confrontations of the future. A new era has indeed opened up in the South Korean revolution. The masses have come onto the scene of history, and will not take kindly to any suggestion that they should leave it.



# After Labour's triumph in Scotland

Socialists should call for a labour movement assembly to defend Scotland against the Tory onslaught.

**'TENSIONS THAT could erupt in revolution' was the headline in the Glasgow Evening Times, a week before the general election. The article, like others in the Scottish press in the run-up to the election, revealed the apprehension with which a section of the establishment in Scotland views the prospect of another five years of Thatcher government.**

With 47 per cent of Glaswegians living at or below supplementary benefit levels, the giant housing estates of the city are like smouldering volcanoes which threaten to erupt at any stage.

This was reflected in the electoral obliteration of the Tories in Glasgow on 11 June. With a pitiful 12.5 per cent share of the vote in the city, this must rank as the Tories' worst ever performance in any major city in Britain.

The collapse of the Tories in Glasgow was paralleled in other Scottish cities. In Dundee, the Tories were reduced to a mere 15 per cent share. Even in their former stronghold of Edinburgh, the Tories achieved only 32 per cent. Labour now holds every seat in Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen and four out of the six in Edinburgh.

## Mobilisation

This represents a huge class mobilisation against the Tories on the electoral battlefield, which could be the forerunner of a gigantic industrial movement against the Tories in Scotland at a later stage.

The victories in Scotland were achieved in spite of, rather than as a result of, the campaign of the Scottish Labour leadership. In none of the four Scottish cities did Labour achieve the type of spectacular swings recorded in Liverpool and Bradford, where full-blooded socialist campaigns were conducted in the face of a virulently hostile local and national media.

By Alan McCombes

Nor did the Labour Party in Scotland have to overcome the formidable obstacles erected by the national party leadership in Liverpool, including the closure of Liverpool District Labour Party and the attack by Neil Kinnock on the Liverpool Labour council in an election broadcast.

In Scotland too, left-wing candidates invariably achieved the most outstanding victories. Thus in Edinburgh Leith, Ron Brown achieved the best result in the city, increasing Labour's majority by 6350. On the other hand, 'mainstream' Kinnockite Mark Lazarowicz, leader of Edinburgh District Council only cut Malcolm Rifkind's majority by 600 in the marginal Edinburgh Pentlands constituency.

Similarly in Stirling, another Labour Coordinating Committee member, Mike Connarty, failed to defeat hard-line Thatcherite Michael Forsyth.

Nevertheless, the rout of the Tories on 11 June was an outstanding triumph for the labour movement. Thatcher's claim of a booming economy cut no ice in Scotland's impoverished and devastated communities.

The wiping out of the Tories throughout most of Scotland, in combination with the Tories' 100 seat victory in Britain as a whole, has raised anew the national question in Scotland, with the Scottish National Party (SNP) desperately at-

tempting to capitalise on the situation.

The 50-strong Parliamentary Labour Party in Scotland has stated that the fight for a Scottish Assembly will be number one priority in the next period, and the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) has warned that 'the Tory Government has no mandate to govern in Scotland'.

The potential support for some form of Scottish home rule cannot be underestimated. In the 1979 referendum only 32 per cent of the Scottish electorate voted in favour of devolution. Even then, a narrow majority of voters supported an assembly, despite the unpopularity of the Labour government which put forward the proposals.

## Majorities

Moreover, the biggest majorities in favour of devolution were in the working-class Labour strongholds of Strathclyde, Fife and Central Scotland (in contrast to the situation in Wales).

Today, however, according to all of the opinion polls support for devolution is at least eighty per cent. In addition, the labour movement is now completely united in favour of an assembly, unlike in 1979 when Labour MPs like Robin Cook shared platforms with right wing Tories like Teddy Taylor and Ian Sproat in order to thwart Labour's devolution proposals.

*Militant* is in favour of an autonomous socialist Scotland, within the framework of a socialist Britain. Even on a capitalist basis, the achievement of a Scottish Assembly with powers to deal with unemployment and poverty and to transform the Scottish economy in a socialist direction, would be a big step for-

ward.

It would inevitably be under the control of the labour movement from the outset, and in the event of the ideas of Marxism gaining a majority, could mark the beginning of the socialist transformation of society throughout the British Isles.

The adoption by the labour movement of an assembly as part of its programme has been a factor in isolating the SNP and highlighting the separatist character of that party. In October 1974, when Labour opposed devolution in any shape or form, the SNP reached its peak with thirty per cent of the vote, attracting support from a layer of the population who did not support complete independence, but saw the SNP as the only party who were prepared to take up the 'Scottish dimension'.

Although devolution was not a central priority for voters in this election, the fact that Labour was seen as a pro-assembly party helped to undercut the SNP, who only achieved 14 per cent of the vote.

Nevertheless it is a mistake for the Labour Party in Scotland in the aftermath of the election to concentrate exclusively on the

**With 47 per cent of Glaswegians living at or below supplementary benefit levels, the giant housing estates of the city are like smouldering volcanoes which threaten to erupt at any stage.**

campaign for a Scottish Assembly. By focussing on the so-called 'constitutional crisis', Scotland's Labour MPs are unwittingly playing into the hands of the nationalists.

In particular, a purely parliamentary campaign of disruption is doomed to failure, while at the same time generating a nationalistic atmosphere from which the main beneficiaries will be the SNP.

## Anathema

This Government will not listen to pleas or petitions. Nor are they likely to respond to parliamentary filibustering. The creation of a bastion of opposition in Scotland in the shape of an assembly would be anathema to them and is certain to be fiercely resisted. The mass public support for the retention of the GLC and metropolitan councils did not stop the Tories dismantling them.

There is even less likelihood of Thatcher retreating before the Scottish MPs, provoking as it would a massive backlash within the Tory Party and possibly the resurrection of a campaign to re-establish the GLC and for autonomy for other parts of England and for

Wales.

Only by building mass action outside Parliament can the labour movement defend and advance the interests of the Scottish working class.

Socialists in Scotland should call upon the Labour Party Scottish Executive and the STUC to convene a labour movement Assembly with representatives from trades unions, trades councils, shop stewards' committees, tenants' associations, unemployed workers' groups and Labour Parties to hammer out a programme of action to defend Scotland against the next phase of the Tory onslaught.

Such a programme must incorporate the demand for a Scottish Assembly, but must also take up questions such as the poll tax, the continuing attacks on local authorities, and the destruction of industry.

It must emphasise above all the need for the unity of the labour movement of Scotland, England and Wales, and stress the identity of interest of the working class of not only Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee, but of Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and London.



A major factor in Labour's victory in Scotland was the struggle of the Caterpillar workers and the big demonstrations of the labour movement in their support. Photo: Patricia Moore



Photo: Robert McKeown

# Welsh workers will reject nationalist poison

THE LABOUR Party in Wales won a higher share of the vote than in any other region. Their 45 per cent represented the rock-solid Welsh vote turning out to ditch Thatcher. With some seats recording record majorities of 20-30,000, Labour gained four extra seats.

However, the crowing of Labour's right wing over its success in Wales hides the fact that very little canvassing took place, public meetings were almost non-

existent and the whole campaign relied on the 'charisma' of Neil Kinnock.

The Labour vote in Wales has always been taken for granted by right-wing MPs with huge majorities and rotten Constituency Labour Parties who discourage growth in membership in order to preserve their narrow power bases.

This contempt for Labour voters is reflected in the decline of the Party's support over the past

40 years. Apart from 1983, the Welsh Labour share of the vote was the lowest since the second world war. In 1966, Labour had 61 per cent, giving it 32 seats out of 36. Even with the four gains this time, the Party has just 24 out of 38.

## Devolution

Demands for more autonomy for Wales have already been raised. Neil Kinnock has changed

his anti-devolution stance and given the idea tacit support. With leaders of the Wales TUC and the Welsh Labour Party pushing for it, this could get a certain echo amongst a section of the working class, frustrated at the Tory support in the South of England.

In reality, devolution will be pushed by the leadership not in the interests of the working class, but as an extra gravy train with more jobs for the boys in a new regional bureaucracy.

The big trade union battles, inevitable under the hammer blows of the Tories in the next period, will curtail any leaning towards Plaid Cymru and the poison of nationalism. They will unite workers in struggle in Wales, England and Scotland against the common enemy, the Tories and the capitalist system they represent.

By Alec Thraves



# Last minute repairs

Dear Comrades,

Our local MP in this fair and pleasant East Surrey constituency is the Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe and so on the night of the election we had television cameras at the count which was held in one of the halls at my school.

The roof of this hall, which had needed repair for so long, only got it the week before the cameras moved in. Even our Headmaster insinuated in an assembly that this was a direct result of the fact that we were to be the count's venue.

We cannot have a Conservative Cabinet Minister seen on national television being given an 18,000 majority in a leaky hall!

It may suit them to remove their children from this country's schooling system and place them in private education, but should others who cannot afford this privilege have to suffer? Should we only get what is ours by right when it is in their interest for us to have it?

Yours fraternally  
Jason Scott-Taggart  
East Surrey LPYS

## Tory statistics

Dear Militant,

On 18 June we were informed that unemployment had supposedly fallen to 2,900,000. However, the figures didn't mention the two million-plus people who were not counted.

More than 1.5 million are on YTS, Community Programmes or other government schemes. Also about 600,000 are simply not counted now because they don't receive any benefits.

The YTS is nothing more than industrial conscription. If you say yes to it,

# Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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



John Macreadie

## Macreadie keeps his cool

Dear Militant,

Well done to John Macreadie on Tuesday's Channel 4 News, firstly for defending the low paid workers in the civil service and their right to fight for decent wages and conditions, secondly for not punching Peter Sissons on the nose.

Mr Sissons displayed his utter contempt for civil ser-

vants and his ignorance of the CPSA in general.

On behalf of the government and John Ellis, Sissons launched an abusive attack on Macreadie, whilst almost foaming at the mouth with his obvious hatred.

No doubt the well heeled, unelected, talentless Mr Sissons earns enough not to have to claim

supplementary benefit (unlike many civil servants) I would like to challenge him to do their job on their pay and then we'll see whose side he's on.

Channel 4 and Peter Sissons should stick to presenting the news rather than inventing it.

Yours fraternally  
Judy Griffiths  
Stafford

## Higher turnout in inner city Bermondsey

Dear Comrades,

The excellent article last week by Peter Taaffe and Kevin Parslow commented on the marvellous campaign of John Bryan in Southwark and Bermondsey. However, I believe the comment that the turnout in Bermondsey was 'only' 65 per cent underestimates the scale of Labour's achievement here.

While 65 per cent is well below the national turnout, it must be remembered that

Bermondsey is an inner city seat where it can be estimated anything between 15-20 per cent of the register is inaccurate.

More to the point, the turnout in Bermondsey was between eight and ten per cent higher than similar neighbouring seats. In next door Peckham (also part of the borough of Southwark) with a sitting Kinnockite MP, the turnout was a measly 55 per cent. Over the water in Hackney south

Dear Comrades,

As a new reader to your paper I like the articles and think you've got a good thing going. But I've got a grouse.

I don't like these big words like 'disseminate' or 'personification'—this one in your last issue. You've got to be as clever as the Absent Minded Professor to know what these mean.

Maggie and Neil both try to fool us with big words so we can't see what they're up to. My workmates think "what the 'effin' hell are they on about?" We like it short, sharp and simple like drinking a cup of tea. As I said I think you've got a good thing going, so don't spoil it.

Yours fraternally  
Bob Barker  
Walthamstow

Dear Comrades,

Terry Fields in Liverpool Broadgreen gained the biggest swing to Labour from the Tories in Britain (12.4 per cent) Two unusual polls in Scotland gained greater swings to Labour from the SNP and the Alliance. But in terms of thrashing the Tories, the Militant-inspired campaign in Liverpool Broadgreen is completely unequalled anywhere in the country.

Runners-up were, wait for it, Liverpool Garston and Liverpool West Derby. Llyn Golding's ultra-moderate campaign gained a 5.4 per cent swing from Labour to the Alliance!

Yours fraternally  
Pete Mason  
Leicester West  
Labour Party

it was also 55 per cent, while in the two constituencies in Tower Hamlets it averaged 57.4 per cent.

On election day an old couple who required a lift to the polls told me that they had not voted for 25 years, but after John Bryan's campaign nothing was going to stop them now.

Yours fraternally  
John Bulaitis  
Beckenham Labour  
Party

The criticisms of the race relations industry put forward in the programme were basically the same criticisms being made of the Liverpool Black Caucus. However, during the course of events in Liverpool, the *Bandung File* took an anti-Sam Bond, anti-Liverpool council stance, producing a programme encouraging illusions in the race relations 'experts' of the Liverpool Black Caucus.

Kevin Fernandes  
Vauxhall Labour Party

## Review

# Race relations 'experts' exposed

One of the problems in combatting racism, has been the confusion caused by the 'race relations industry'. An industry which had a particular growth period after the Scarman Inquiry into the riots of 1981.

Their basic method is to reduce the problem of racism down to simply a blacks v whites question, and that all white people are racist. They ignore the historical roots of racism and its role in a class society. Racism awareness courses are part of the basic

baggage of the race 'experts'.

It was therefore welcome to see the *Bandung File* TV programme (20 June, Channel 4) expose the bankruptcy of Race Awareness Training (RAT). The programme interviewed people who had been on these courses and staged a mock training course, using actors, but based on actual training methods.

The course trainer asked the four white trainees "Who in this room is white?" the four put up their hands. Next question,

"Who in this room is a racist?" No hands go up. The trainees are then told that they are racists. "Power and prejudice = racism". (What power do poor whites have?) Whites who say they are against racism are termed 'anti-racist racists'!

Racism awareness trainers admitted that they would try to 'make people cry' and their aim would be to train enough white people, who would then individually permeate the white society.

The programme brought

out clearly that RAT gave no guide for action. People coming out of the courses were either demoralised, affected negatively and were put off the idea of being anti-racist, or came away knowing the 'right' sociological language to use, but not how or why to use it.

It is a pity that the producers didn't show this during the conflict between Liverpool council and the self-proclaimed Liverpool 'Black Caucus' over the appointment of Sam Bond as race relations adviser.

## After the election What now for Labour

○ **Hackney North.** Tuesday 7 July. Crown and Castle, Dalston Junction. Speaker: George Williamson (Greater London Labour Party, personal capacity).

○ **Hackney South.** Monday 6 July. Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street, E9. Speaker: Jeremy Birch.

○ **Telford.** 7 July. Dawley Information Centre, High St, Dawley, 7.30pm.

○ **Mansfield.** 20 July.

○ **Liverpool.** Thursday 9 July, 7.30pm. St Dunstan's Community Centre, Freeman St, Earle Rd, Liverpool 7. Speakers: Tony Mulhearn, Peter Jarvis.

○ **Wallasey.** Wednesday 8 July. Committee Rooms 1&2, Ground Floor, Wallasey Town Hall, Brighton St. 7.30pm. Speakers: Tony Mulhearn and Peter Jarvis.

○ **Brixton.** 22 July. Lambeth Town Hall, 7.45pm.

○ **Bexley.** 8 July. Erith Town Hall, 7.45pm.

○ **West London.** 14 July, Southall Town Hall, 7.45pm.

○ **Ripley.** 21 July

○ **Bootle.** Tuesday 7 July. Stanley Social Club, Washington Parade, (by New Strand station). 7.30pm. Speakers: Tony Mulhearn and Peter Jarvis.

## Classified ads

20p per word, minimum 10 words. Semi-display £3 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.

○ **Summer bargains from World Socialist Books:** Trotsky *Revolution Betrayed* now £4.50 (usually £5.75). Classic account of what went wrong with the Russian Revolution.

Dobbs *Teamster Rebellion* now £4 (usually £4.95). Gripping story of the Minneapolis strike struggle in 1934, by a leading participant. Please add 50p postage for each title. From WSB, 3/13 Hepscoot Rd, London E9 5HB.

○ **House on the outskirts of Paris** available in August. Phone Liz: 01 471 2098.

○ **Wanted** co-op and green shield stamps. Loose, part or full books. All proceeds to the fighting fund. Send c/o Militant circulation, 3/13 Hepscoot Rd, London E9 5HB.

○ **Offensive camp in Sweden.** Monday 6-Saturday 11 July 1987. For information write to Offensive Brahegatan 2, S415 01 Goteburg, Sweden. Tel 031 844 162.

○ **Out now,** no.15 of *L'Avance Socialiste*, French Marxist paper. Articles on May 1968, the Chirac government's arms programme, the French nuclear industry, need for Socialist/Communist unity, Spain, South Africa. Subscription rates: £5 for 5 issues (inc. postage), £10 for 12 issues. Cheques to: *L'Avance Socialiste*, BP no. 705, 75531 Paris, Cedex 11.

○ **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.

○ **TRAVEL X.** We cater for ALL types of holiday and flights at competitive rates. Tel: 01 942 1234 or 01 942 7156. 7a Coombe Rd, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 4PX. 24 hour answer phone service available.

**Debate between Militant and The Morning Star.** "After the election—which way for the left?" Speakers: John Blevin (Morning Star) and Ray Apps (Militant). Medway Manor Hotel, Rochester, Kent. Friday 10 July, 8pm.

○ **London Irish Festival** Sunday 5 July. Roundwood Parks, Harlesden Rd, NW10. Tube: Willesden Green, Jubilee Line. Militant Irish Monthly sellers, meet at main entrance at 10.30 am.

○ **Southampton** Marxist discussion group. Wednesdays 12.30pm. 7 Goodwin Close, Millbrook, Southampton. Crèche provided.

○ **Blackburn** every Wednesday. The Trades Club, 8.30pm.

○ **Chorlton** every Thursday. The Southern Hotel, Mauldeth Rd West, Chorlton. 8.30pm.

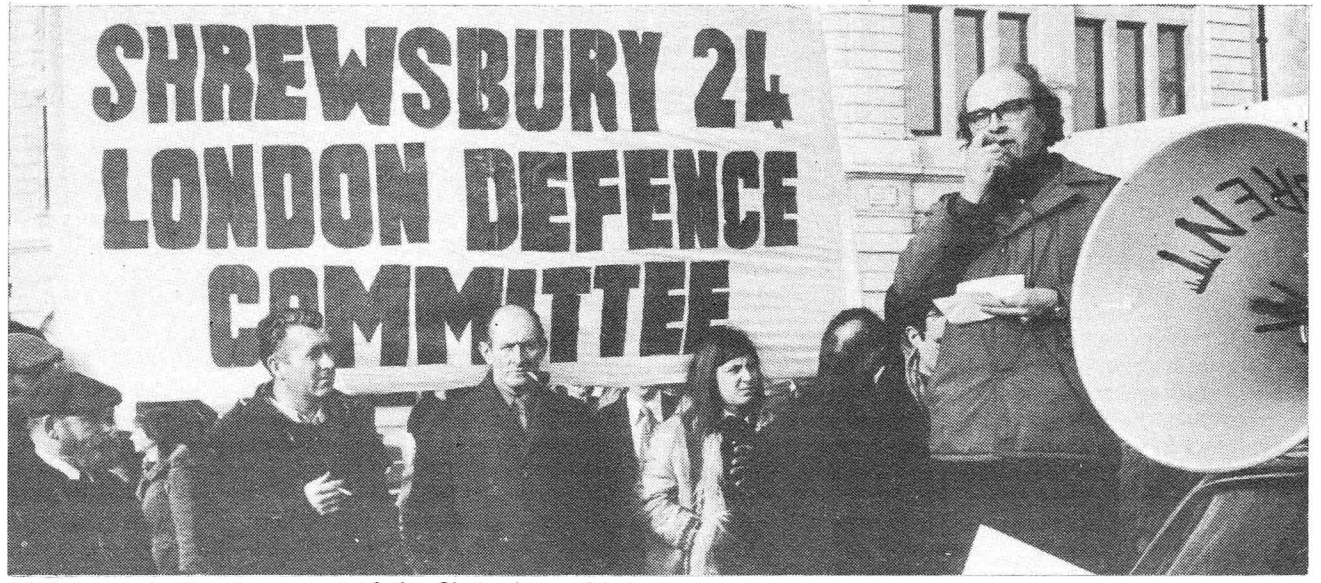
○ **Livingston.** Militant public meeting. Thursday 9 July, 7.30pm. Mews Theatre, Howden, Livingston. Speaker: Richard Venton.



## 1972 building-workers' strike



Ricky Tomlinson speaking at meeting in support of Liverpool councillors.



1974 demonstration in support of the Shrewsbury pickets

MILLIONS OF television viewers tune in every week to watch the soap opera Brookside. One of the main characters is trade union official Bobby Grant, recently pictured defending the Liverpool City Council and suffering attacks from the trade union bureaucracy.

By Richard Knights

The actor who plays the part, Ricky Tomlinson, has his own place in the history of workers' struggles. For organising picketing during the 1972 building workers' strike he was sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

Ricky Tomlinson and Des Warren, were imprisoned after the famous 'Shrewsbury 24' case in an act of blatant ruling class revenge following the most heightened period of class struggle since the general strike of 1926.

The Heath government, elected in 1970, was rocked by a series of confrontations with the trade unions. It hit a peak in 1972 with the battle to release five imprisoned dockers from Pentonville prison and the successful national miners' strike. In June 1972 the first national building workers' strike started.

This strike confounded the sceptics who believed it would be impossible to organise a strike in an industry of poor union organisation. Despite a hesitant national lead the rank and file building workers threw themselves into spreading the strike. Learning from the miners' tactics 'flying pickets' became a feature of the battle.

Ricky Tomlinson and Des Warren played leading roles in the North Wales picketing committee. During the final stages of the strike a call for help came from trade unionists in the Shrewsbury area. 300 pickets coached in to picket out working sites.

At the first site they were threatened by a contractor brandishing a shotgun. He was disarmed by the pickets but was not charged by the police and later appeared as a prosecution witness in the case against Tomlinson and Warren.

The pickets were escorted by the police around the sites and some workers joined the strike. Shortly after that mass picket, however, the national strike was called off.

In November 1972 a team of detectives moved into the Grand Hotel, Pres-

# Victims of Tory conspiracy

tatyn, and over ten weeks interviewed 600 people. On 14 February 1973, five months after the end of the strike, 24 pickets from the North Wales area were arrested and charged with picketing offences.

This was a serious attack on the right to picket as well as on the individual workers. What the ruling class had lost through the mass movements of the dockers and the miners they were attempting to recoup by a legal bludgeoning of the trade unions.

## State machine

The psychology and outlook of the leading representatives of the state machine was revealed by Sir Robert Mark, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, who wrote:

"To some of us, the Shrewsbury pickets had committed the worst of all crimes, worse even than murder, the attempt to achieve an industrial or political objective by criminal violence, the very conduct, in fact, which helped to bring the National Socialist German Workers' Party to power in 1933."

However, the main charge against the Shrewsbury pickets was not 'criminal violence' but 'conspiracy', a legal dragnet, as a radical lawyer described it.

A conspiracy charge meant that the prosecution did not have to prove where or when the participants met, what they discussed or whether a common agreement had been reached, merely to prove a common pattern was enough. Also a charge of intimidation carried a maximum sentence of three months, conspiracy carried no maximum.

For the first time conspiracy laws were wheeled out for use against the trade union movement. A clear political decision was taken to prosecute. This was confirmed later when it was revealed that the police had recommended to the Department of Public Prosecutions that no charges should be laid against the

Shrewsbury pickets.

Shrewsbury, with its lack of trade union militancy was picked as the trial venue and on the opening day a massive police presence came into operation. Two hundred prosecution witnesses were lined up, with much of the police evidence having been extracted during long police interrogation. The trial cost was estimated at £500,000.

The bulk of the prosecution witnesses were 'lumpers', men who worked on non union sites for a lump sum from employers with no tax, no national insurance and no questions asked about safety or building standards. The problem has gone from a scratch in the 1970s to gangrene in today's building industry.

Bovis's and their political bodies are in the dock facing charges of conspiracy to intimidate workers from doing what is their lawful right-picketing."

## Jury protest

The judge gave him a two year sentence. At that point pandemonium broke out when the jury foreman stormed out shouting "It's disgusting", followed by another juror. It took the judge ten minutes to restore order and then to sentence Des Warren to three years.

The jury foreman later revealed that the jury had been split 8-4 but two jurors had been convinced to change their minds on the basis that the accused

release the Shrewsbury pickets. Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson went on hunger strike demanding political status, only calling it off after 22 days, under pressure from the trade union leaders.

Massive pressure built up inside the two building unions Ucat and TGWU for action, but the leaders refused to mount any effective campaign, limiting themselves to pressure on the Labour government.

But the Labour Home Secretary Roy Jenkins, later to defect to the SDP, refused to intervene, claiming that the legal process could not be interfered with.

However, such was the pressure from the union rank and file that the judi-

ciary reached its height with a lobby by 14,000 workers of the House of Commons. However, after that high point the Communist Party wound down the campaign. It was the main organised force and Des Warren was a Party member at the time.

The TUC passed resolutions and referred documents and minutes between the different committees and the General Council. Eventually, at their March meeting they concluded that "industrial action would be counter productive in that it would adversely influence members of the parole board."

Faced with this capitulation Ricky Tomlinson and later Des Warren gave up their protest. Ricky Tomlinson was released on 25 July 1975. Des Warren was then left isolated in prison.

At the end of his sentence Des Warren served six months in solitary confinement, was reported on 36 occasions by prison officers and moved 15 times through ten different prisons.

Such was the pressure on Warren and his family that in February 1976 his wife Elsa suffered a nervous breakdown and their five children were taken into care.

When he made a routine request to phone his wife, it was turned down by the 'humanitarian' Home Secretary, Jenkins.

In March 1976 Des Warren accepted medication which he later described as the "liquid cosh". It reduced him to a zombie-like condition. After his release on 5 August 1976 he was diagnosed as suffering from Parkinsons disease. He is still demanding an inquiry into the drugs he was prescribed. He has since received a paltry £3,000 'non liable' compensation.

The trade union leaders would like to bury the memory of the Shrewsbury trials and the courage the pickets displayed in prison.

But Shrewsbury represented only the beginning of the legal attacks on the unions. Since then the Tories have attempted to outlaw all effective trade union solidarity.

This example of blatant class 'injustice' and the courage of these workers in the face of vicious victimisation, with Ricky Tomlinson recently helping raise funds for the 47 surcharged Liverpool councillors, will provide an inspiration in future battles to defeat the Tories and their system.

**"I have heard the judge say that this was not a political trial, just an ordinary criminal case, and I refute that with every fibre of my being..."**

**"I look forward to the day when the real culprits, the McAlpines, the Wimpeys, the Laings and the Bovis' and their political bodies are in the dock facing charge of conspiracy to intimidate workers from doing what is their lawful right-picketing." -Ricky Tomlinson**

Despite the fact that the charge was 'conspiracy to prevent people carrying out their lawful work' the trial judge ruled out any attacks on the lump system, feigning incomprehension of the fact that the activities of the lump were unlawful.

After weeks of evidence the jury went out to consider their verdict. On 18 December 1973 after a long overnight deliberation they returned a verdict of guilty of conspiracy by ten votes to two.

Ricky Tomlinson spoke before his sentencing: "I have heard the judge say that this was not a political trial, just an ordinary criminal case, and I refute that with every fibre of my being..."

"I look forward to the day when the real culprits, the McAlpines, the Wimpeys, the Laings and the

would be fined rather than imprisoned.

Of the 25 pickets charged, six received prison sentences, 16 got suspended sentences, one was discharged and one found not guilty.

A wave of outrage swept through the labour movement over the trial and the harshness of the sentences. It was clear that the ruling class were attempting to use the Shrewsbury trial to intimidate trade unionists and to restrict flying pickets.

Within months this policy lay in tatters when the second national miners' strike shoved the Heath government out of office. Labour was victorious in the February 1974 general election.

Hopes were immediately raised that the incoming Labour government would

make a neat legal sidestep on 3 June 1974. A review of the sentences was heard at the Appeal Court.

Tomlinson and Warren were released on eight weeks bail while the case was heard. This was a manoeuvre to try and defuse the growing anger

## Prison clothes

that a Labour government was in office while trade unionists remained imprisoned by Tory 'justice'. The Appeal Court upheld the sentences and they were sent back to prison.

They refused to wear prison clothes and were locked up in solitary confinement. Their courage ensured the issue remained in the minds of trade union activists.

In January 1975 the campaign for their release



## Defend left policies

# Transport and General right wing offensive

THE TGWU bi-annual delegate conference starting on 6 July in Scarborough will be one of the most crucial ever. The right wing in the union are organising an offensive to overturn left policies.

At last week's General Executive Committee the right wing ran riot, overturning existing union policy.

The vote in favour of one person vote in selection of Labour candidates was passed on the casting vote of the chair, Brian Nicholson.

As the accompanying article explains it is an attempt by the right wing to undermine democratic control of the rank and file of the labour movement over our MPs. The final decision, however, rests with the BDC.

A major debate will be on Agency labour. Last time the BDC voted to outlaw this practice but the GEC have ignored the decision.

One resolution wants to make it illegal to disconnect pensioners from gas, water or electric. This was voted down by the GEC. Some right wingers argued it would give scroungers a green light not to pay bills!

A resolution giving support to the South African Congress of Trade Unions was also voted out on the basis that Sactu supported terrorism. This is a travesty considering the terrorism of the apartheid state, whatever political criticisms might be made of some of the tactics of the leadership of Sactu.

Some left resolutions



The TGWU have been to the fore in fighting the Tories. That tradition must be defended

were supported, including one asking for indemnification for the Liverpool and Lambeth councillors.

### Witch-hunt

Previous policy on witch-hunts in the Labour Party was supported, with the apparently harmless get-out clause that people who 'break the rules' can be expelled. The rules, unfortunately, are open to a

variety of interpretations, as the right wing have shown on numerous occasions. They were once used in the TGWU to ban Communist Party members from holding union office.

The right wing have established a grip on the GEC. A resolution opposing 'black sections, gays, fringe groups, etc' was passed.

One right winger unsuccessfully moved to go

the High Court to overthrow the Appeal Committee's decision to remove the life ban they had engineered against GEC member Alan Quinn.

The BDC has traditionally voted on the left. The right wing decisions of the GEC can still be overturned—and must be.

By Militant reporters

## One member one vote a media manoeuvre

THE TRANSPORT and General Workers' Union has a fine record in supporting the campaign for more democracy in the labour movement. Our union consistently voted for mandatory reselection of Labour MPs, during the fight for Party democracy of seven to eight years ago.

When that battle was won, the TGWU stood firm to help prevent any attack on reselection with the attempt at one member one vote. The TGWU accepted that real accountability means to the democratically elected delegates from Labour Party and trade union branches, who meeting monthly, are able to continuously scrutinise their MP and to check if he or she remains loyal to the beliefs on which they were originally selected.

Now pressure is being exerted on the TGWU and the rest of the labour movement to steam roller through one member, one vote for parliamentary reselections, in time for the September Labour Party conference.

In deference to the unions, whose political levy payers in their branches would be excluded if a strict one individual Labour Party member, one vote system was introduced, a constituency electoral college is being suggested. But it still means watering down the principle of regular, active accountability. It is the active Labour and union members who after all do the work to get the MPs elected.

Our union and the Labour leaders should be considering how to get more of our members to become activists, fully participating in the movement, not trying to keep them in the dark, and bring them out once every five years to help reselect, so they hope, the sitting MP, whose real record they would not pro-

perly know.

This issue appears on our conference agenda, and unfortunately the General Executive will be recommending support for it.

TGWU members must not forget that those leading Labour right wingers around the Solidarity Group who are pushing so hard for one member, one vote were equally forceful in trying to oppose the whole idea of reselection. They stood out against the TGWU and the rest of the left, in defence of the divine right of Labour MPs to their seats.

### Violence

We should remember too, that it was the long running and acrimonious fight of a local Labour Party to remove TGWU sponsored Labour MP, Reg Prentice, that showed the necessity for mandatory reselection. Prentice merely confirmed what the local Party members thought of him all along, when he ended up as a minister in Thatcher's government.

Yet 120 Labour MPs signed a joint letter defending Prentice against the local Party. Some of them are now leading Labour figures, and are trying to railroad our union and the rest of the movement to water down the impact of reselection.

The Nupe and NUR conferences have already rejected one member, one vote. Whoever gains the backing of our union, which wields the largest block vote, could well carry the day. BDC delegates carry a heavy responsibility. We can use the strength of the TGWU to help defend the principle of active accountability, on behalf of the whole labour movement.

By a TGWU member

## Mood of Cohse conference changes on second day



Broad Left presidential candidate Kevin Mullins

Photo: Wayne Edginton

DESPITE the conference of health service union Cohse backing the leadership's 'new realism' arguments in complying with the government's trade union legislation the mood of conference changed on the second day.

Delegates overwhelmingly carried a resolution calling upon the leadership to mount a national campaign of industrial action to achieve a decent pay increase for ancillary workers in 1988.

This was in spite of the NEC's opposition—which was met with a derision that reflected the feeling of rank and file members about their low pay levels.

On Thursday the leadership's attempts to reverse policy on YTS in the health service was defeated despite the distribution of a glossy pamphlet from the executive and another attempt to dredge up the 'coffee bar' vote whilst the chair delayed proceedings.

The union has had a policy of opposition to YTS in the NHS since 1985 unless they are real training schemes with trade union rates of pay and guaranteed jobs. This policy was reaffirmed.

By Mick Griffiths

## HFW Plastics talks collapse

A SECOND session of talks between management of HFW (High Frequency Welding) Plastics Ltd, Gateshead, and national and local officials of Sogat collapsed after seven hours, over the union's demand for reinstatement of the 47 sacked workers.

A widening of the campaign with increased press coverage and public sympathy has forced management to the table. Although the talks have broken down the company have indicated that they wish to have further discussions — in stark contrast to their attitude at the beginning of the dispute.

Already two big orders worth in total £130,000 have been lost, with firms pulling out because of the picketing. On top of this K&B Transport, the scab firm who have almost caused two deaths have suffered a major set-back.

Following an appeal to council workers at a local incinerator 60 tonnes of rubbish from HFW was turned back, with the shop steward warning the driver that workers at other incinerators are being asked not to handle anything

from K&B.

On 17 June a van load of pickets and supporters leafleted the massive Black & Decker plant in County Durham who do business with HFW. This is the non-union firm splattered all over the news when Thatcher popped in during the election campaign. Our appeals for support received a good response.

Unfortunately the picket line has seen an increase in injuries to pickets. The police continue to wade into demonstrators regardless of sex or age.

### Prentice

The worst of this violence occurred on the morning of Wednesday 10 June when 100 police clashed with over 200 pickets attempting to form a peaceful barricade across the entrance to stop the scab bus entering.

Four pickets, three of them women, were taken to hospital. The man was found unconscious by the side of the road. Witnesses claim he was kicked by police whilst he was collapsed.

Every morning a number of Inspectors come to the

picket line to direct police operations. Pickets are hemmed into one corner, roads are sealed off to allow a clear run for the scab bus and van loads of police reinforcements lie in wait further down the road.

It is on these occasions that a number of the police are at their worst. However, not all the police act so badly and many of them have told pickets they are not happy about the situation and have sympathies with the sacked workers.

Many times individual officers have told pickets that they are 'only doing our job', which to be honest doesn't always go down to well with those who are fighting to save their own jobs.

Though battered and bruised the spirit of the 38 women and 9 men who have been sacked is far from broken. Workers throughout the country must show solidarity with them.

Messages of support and donations to: Sogat, 119 Jesmond Rd, Newcastle Upon Tyne. Tel 281 7971/2. HFW demo 11am, 18 July, Old Gateshead Town Hall.

By Bob Harker



# Industrial Reports

## Support Senior Coleman strikers demonstration

**"We are striking not just for ourselves, but for all workers." That is the message Tony Lowe from the Senior Coleman strike committee Sale, Manchester, will be giving out when the strikers hold a march and rally on 4 July.**

After six months our strike remains solid," said Tony, now it is the management who are worried." The blacking of Coleman's work by the labour

movement and with Coleman's losing lucrative contracts including those for Manchester airport and the city council.

Despite reports of Job Centre collusion to report a scab army for the factory, the company is still operating at less than 50 per cent of capacity.

A victory in this battle over flexibility and trade union rights would be a warning to all the engineering employers and to the AUEW right-wing leaders who are busy trying to

negotiate away rights and conditions won by workers over decades.

Management, however, have already tried to sue for peace with a financial offer to the strikers. The strikers turned it down immediately and instead have added to their list of demands a call for remuneration of loss of earnings during the strike.

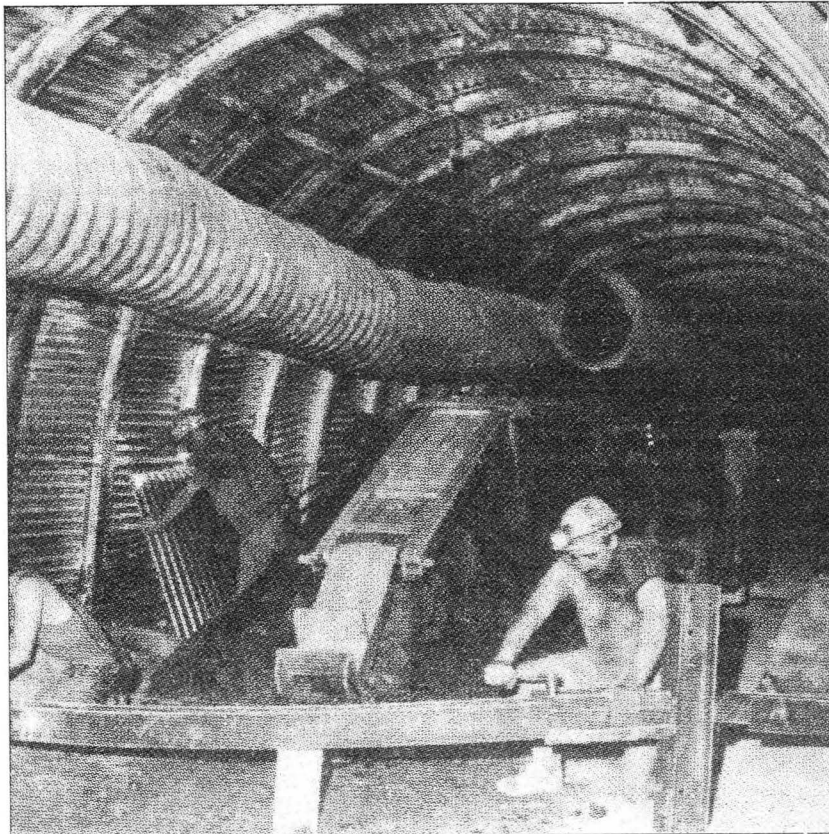
The rally on 4 July will be addressed by representatives of CPSA and BIFU who are also in dispute and joined by the strikers from Howards in Ashburn. The strikers are appealing to

workers to help spread the blacking of Senior Coleman goods and to join them with delegations on the picket lines. Join the march from 11am, at the G-Mex centre and the rally with Tony Benn, Terry Fields and Doreen Purvis of the CPSA.

*For further details contact: Senior Coleman strike committee, AEUW House, The Crescent, Salford.*

**By Phil Frampton**

## British Coal blackmail University manual workers low pay in no 'ivory tower'



Miners at work in Kellingley; safety and jobs must be the priority if new working practices are to be accepted

Bolstered by Thatcher's election victory British Coal have stepped up their campaign to impose Victorian conditions on mineworkers.

They plan to create just a handful of ultra-profitable super pits once the private coal companies can be assured of a cheap, demoralised labour force.

But British Coal will meet stern resistance every step of the way. NUM conference must be the starting point for the fight back. A prerequisite for that is to reject the threat of six day production.

Management and the press have waged an extensive and vicious campaign in support of the six day week at Margam. Demeaning and vilifying Arthur Scargill, the media portray the NUM president as jeopardising 780 projected jobs in South Wales and another 14,000 jobs

British Coal say Margam will be axed if the miners concerned do not accept changes in working practices—a longer week or nine-hour shift.

In an act of open blackmail British Coal chairman, Haslam, is now saying that all further investment is endangered if six-day production is not accepted.

But their whole case is riddled with distortions, inaccuracies and hypocrisy. Arthur Scargill particularly reflects the feelings of virtually all faceworkers in rejecting this blackmail. In a rare chink in the media conspi-

racity a BBC news team visited the Trelewis drift mine last Wednesday and asked miners coming off shift their views on six day working. All but one utterly rejected the idea.

It is a scandal that the whole NUM leadership from national to Area level has not followed the lead of Scargill and those in South Wales who have led opposition to the Margam deal in exposing British Coal's strategy. Scargill's call for a pit head ballot must be adopted by the conference.

The truth is that British Coal have even cooked the books in their arguments for Margam. Oxford economist Andrew Glyn (who wrote *The Case Against Pit Closures*) for the NUM during the strike) and South Wales miner Ian Isaac have produced a study exposing British Coal's figures (see *Militant* 840 and 848, also reported in the *Financial Times* and *Guardian*).

With a workforce of 650 working a five day week Margam could have a rate of return of 15 per cent—way above the 11.5 per cent required to cover annual interest costs. And that is accepting that coking coal prices will fall over the next four years instead of rising.

Six day production would give British Coal a profit rate of well over 20 per cent at Margam. They would also intend to boost production from the projected 1 million tonnes to 1.2 million tonnes per annum.

In order to do this management say they will need to employ an extra 130



Mick McGahey retires this year

men. What they don't tell us is that they will then be able to close less productive pits at the cost of thousands of jobs because the increased capacity at Margam will displace that of smaller pits.

But what would six day production mean for those working it? Already productivity is at record levels. Miners are currently being subjected to the hazards of increased production in terms of increased exposure to dust etc.

Six day coaling will mean six days dust instead of five. The stress factor must also be considered. Miners are already at the top of the stress league. It could only increase, meaning more fatigue, more ill-health and of course, more accidents.

But miners are not dinosaurs, as the media suggest, for refusing to accept a return to the conditions of a by-gone age. New technology must be introduced. There must be changes in the working week.

Safety can be enhanced by the proper use of new technology, increased production and productivity obtained. And so can a shorter week with no extension of daily working hours.

It is about time miners gained some benefit from their labour. Once again miners must be prepared for battle. But this time we intend to win.

**By Chris Herriot**

TRADITIONALLY the title 'university workers' has brought with it the image of tweedy dons and earnest scientists, but this misconception hides the true nature of the majority of university workers.

Those responsible for the day to day running of the campuses all over Britain are the manual and clerical staff—porters, secretaries, maintenance etc.

These people however, are one of the worst paid sectors in public employment, representing another way of how the Tories have savaged all public sectors.

Education cuts are not to be seen just affecting students, but also the majority of workers in these establishments.

Such reductions in the level of spending in education generally can only result in deterioration of the quality of education.

University manual and clerical staff are caught in the 'poverty trap', surrounded on one side by the threat of unemployment and on the other by appallingly low wages.

A report published by the Trade Union Research Unit (commissioned by NALGO and NUPE) has highlighted the poverty of the majority of these workers.

For example, at Sussex University (one of the universities featured in the report) the 'average' take-home pay for manual and clerical staff is £56.63 and £76.96 respectively.

Furthermore, the breakdown of the employment structure at universities reveals a wage differential of only £25 between full- and part-time workers, thus the 'average' wage quoted distorts the situation somewhat.

The situation is made even more shocking by the fact that the average length of service at Sussex university is 7.7 years. This clearly shows the way the Tory government has managed to get away with paying such miserly wages—and is continuing to do so.

One manual worker, quoted by the report said that he would have to "work seven days a week." The university authorities have even ensured that such disgusting pay levels cannot

be increased with overtime.

According to the report, out of the 50 clerical staff at Sussex, some 24 of them are unpaid for their extra commitment, while the remaining were paid the flat rate.

From the figures, it can be seen that working on overtime rates is a rare occurrence indeed. The report asserts "it is difficult to conceive that a workforce will remain dedicated and highly motivated in such circumstances".

Indeed, three-quarters of those questioned considered that their earnings were inadequate for household requirements.

### Hypocrisy

The lucrative trade at such institutions has been built on the backs of these underpaid and exploited workers—more evidence against the capitalist system, with its philosophy of hard work and just rewards.

Obviously for the British working class, this philosophy means long hours and low pay. Such commitment and length of service from these campus workers rarely goes rewarded.

While Vice-Chancellors struggle on £35,000 a year, the only people who ensure that the university can operate at all are forced into the poverty trap. The report accurately identifies the position of many manual and clerical staff, one was quoted as saying: "considering today's living standard costs our basic take-home pay of £56 is ludicrous. Living on social security I would be approximately £4 worse off".

In view of these appalling circumstances, campus trade unions and the labour and trade union movement nationally must demand a £120 minimum wage, a 35-hour week with no loss of pay and a reversal of all Tory cuts in education with the scrapping of all Tory anti-trade union laws.

This is the only way forward for these workers, ensuring they receive the recognition and rewards they justly deserve.

**By two Sussex University Labour Club members**



# Militant

After Labour's Scottish triumph

See Page 11

NUM conference

See Page 15

# Nellist's challenge to Tories

## Workers anger will explode says Coventry MP

A CHALLENGE to the Tories if they proceed with their attacks on working people was sounded in the House of Commons, when Dave Nellist MP spoke in the debate on the Queen's Speech.

He warned that the carrots the Tories dangled in front of voters before the election would go rotten soon, when recession hits the British economy.

When Hooray Henrys on the Tory back benches laughed at this prediction, he silenced them with quote after quote from impeccable Tory sources which showed how fragile Thatcher's boom is.

### Poverty

Dave went on to ask the Tories if they expected workers to take their attacks lying down:

"Do Tory members really believe that tens of thousands of council tenants will welcome the selling off of their estates to rich speculators and watch creeping northwards the horrendous levels of rents that people in London are asked to pay? Grafted on to that will be huge and widespread resentment of the Tories' poll tax."

Turning to the rising poverty among those on

By Tony Cross

supplementary benefit, he told of a Coventry woman who had had no electric lighting for three weeks. Her 13-year old daughter had to hold a torch so that her son could revise for his exams.

"She required £65 to repair the electricity ring main in her house. She went to the DHSS and was told to go away and visit a bank or building society to get a loan.

"I do not know what experience Tory members have of life on the dole. I spent three years on the dole before I became an MP. The idea of a bank or building society giving a single parent a loan is laughable. Every building society and bank she went to rejected her." She could only get the money by taking a written rejection to the DHSS.

Many in work face poverty too, Dave said, including civil servants who claim the very benefits they

hand out.

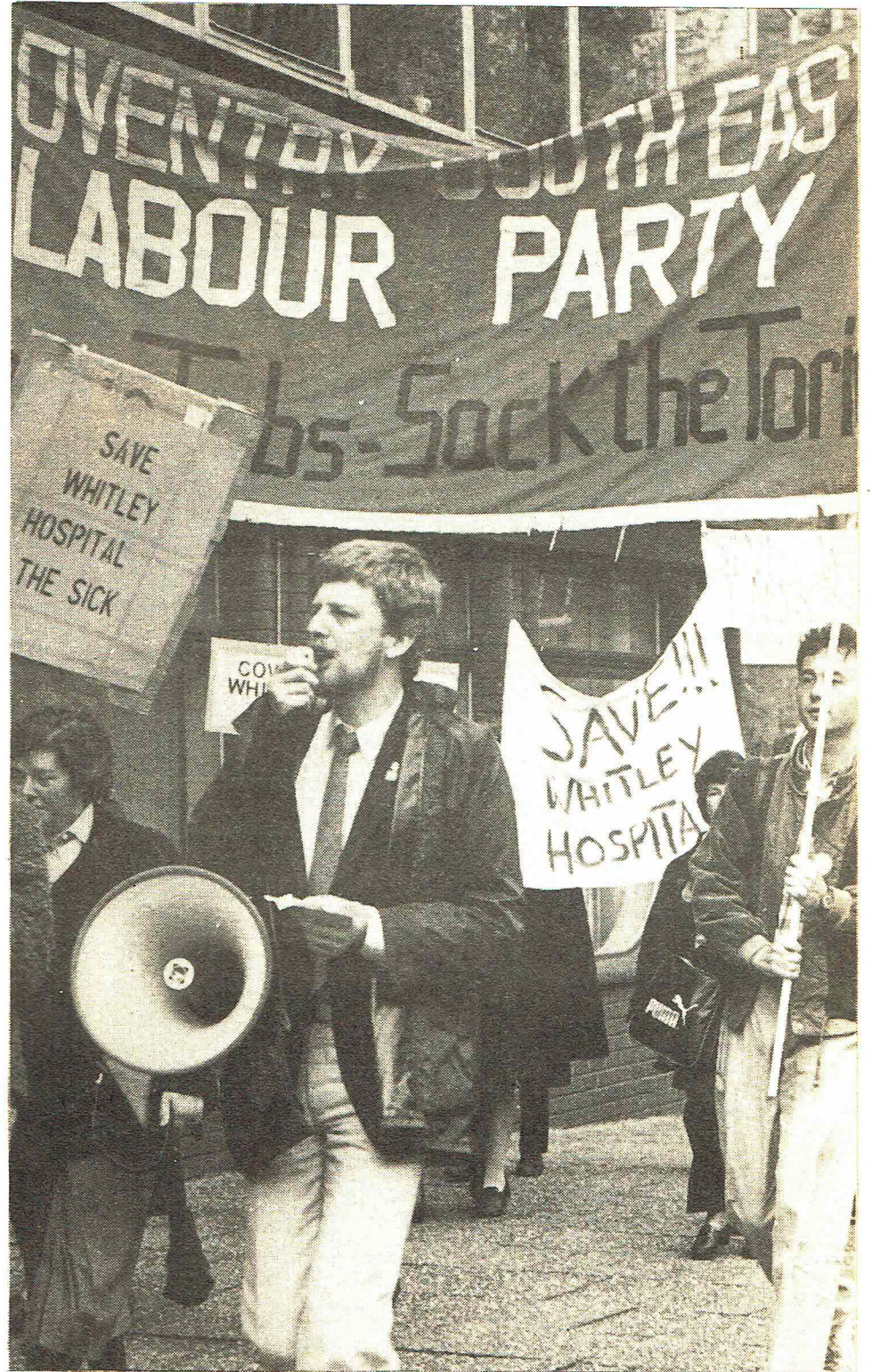
"It is no wonder the anger of those young workers is now reflected in demands for the escalation of industrial action by their union against the government's contemptuous and contemptible offer of a 4.5 per cent wage rise."

The Tories' plans offered nothing to the Massey Ferguson workers entering industrial struggle against enforced redundancies in Coventry.

### Bitterness

"This Queen's Speech will not dissipate the accumulated bitterness among the millions of ordinary people...that compulsory redundancy notice became the catalyst for explosion after months of frustration among those workers. There will be many more catalysts in the months and years ahead.

"The Labour movement outside this building will continue its traditional and honourable way of mobilising the discontent of working people through demonstrations, marches and industrial action to reflect the growing mood of anger of the working class."



Dave Nellist marches with hospital workers fighting Tory cuts. Photo: Dave Sinclair

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## What we stand for

- The immediate introduction of a 35-hour week without loss in pay as a step towards the elimination of unemployment.
- Reversal of all Tory cuts and a massive programme of public works on housing, education, the health service, etc.
- A minimum wage of £120 a week tied to the cost of living for all, including sick and disabled people.
- A socialist plan of production democratically drawn up and implemented by committees involving the trade unions, shop stewards, the unwaged 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 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.