

Militant

Solidarity price £1

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth 30p

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Come to the Socialist Summer Camp



See page 6

Tory poll tax robbery

☆ The Thatcher family in Dulwich will save £2,300 a year.

☆ An average family in Southwark will pay an extra £641 a year in the same borough.

THE TORIES have a new way of robbing ordinary workers to give to the rich. It is called the community charge—or more accurately the poll tax. It will make most people far worse off.

The Tories passed legislation to replace the present domestic rates with a poll tax in Scotland before the general election. The rest of Britain would follow suit a few years later.

Along with Tory policies on unemployment, housing, health and education, this grossly unfair tax made Scottish workers even more determined to wipe the Tories off the election map. The Tories are down to just ten Scottish seats, all marginals.

The first figures produced show how much workers in some areas would suffer. The Tories always make political capital out of high rates. But in the Labour borough of Greenwich in London, current average rates of £495 per house a year would become £608 per person, if the Tory tax becomes law, whether you live in a slum or a palace, everybody has to pay.

Cutbacks

Many people will be discouraged from registering for voting as the electoral register will be used as a cross check for poll tax payment.

Poll tax also aims to force down council spending as it goes up for every £ the Tories reckon a local council has "overspent". The Tories hope Labour councils get blamed for this charge and are forced into cuts.

The tax, due to start in Scotland by April 1989, will be expensive, costing £9million to set up and an extra £22m annually to run.

By **Chick Stevenson**
(Glasgow district councillor)

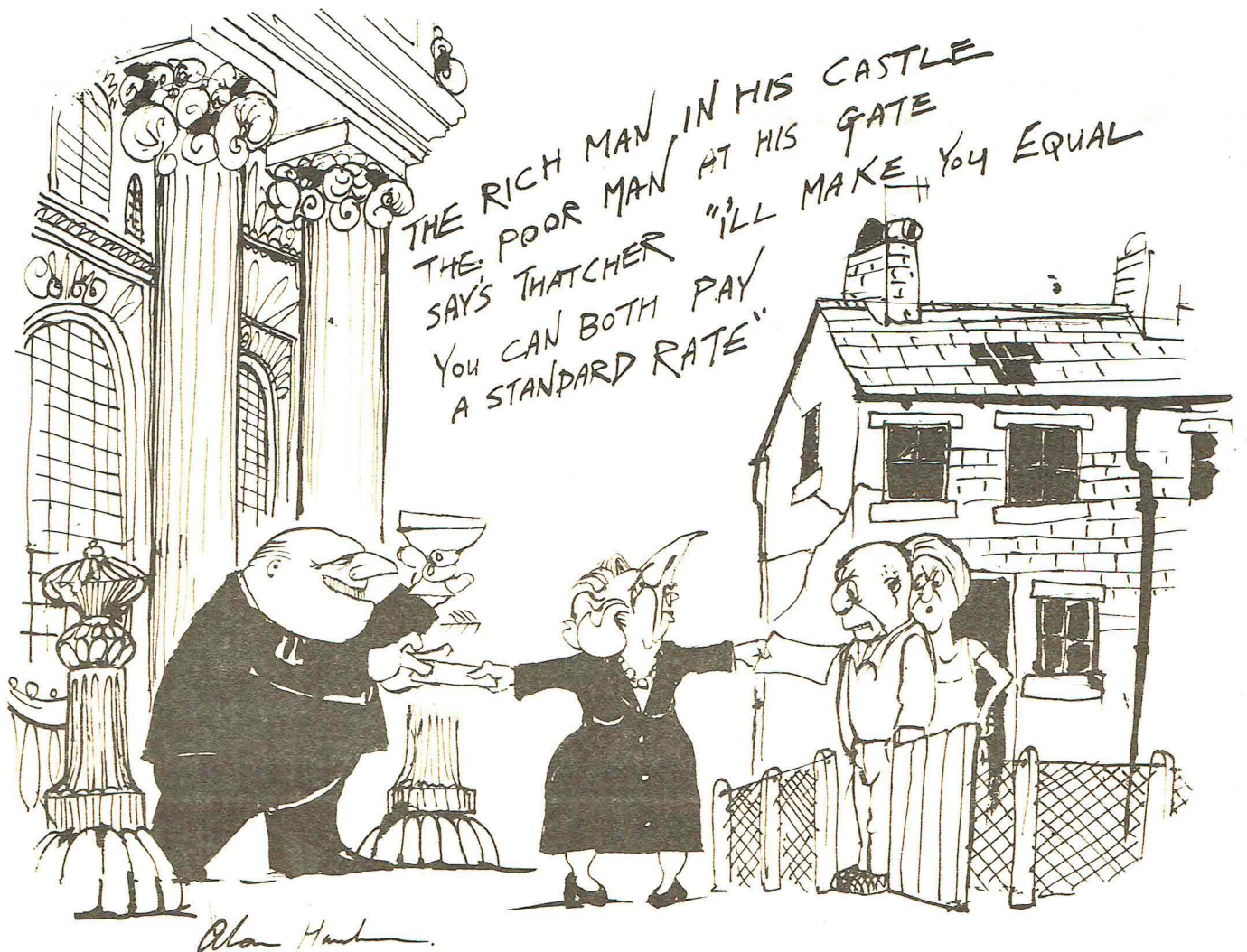
Labour should campaign to show the injustices it will create. But the Tories will not collapse in tears of regret when they are told that working people living in damp, overcrowded housing could pay twice as much poll tax as the aristocracy in their castles or millionaires in mansions. That is why they introduced it!

Battles in parliament and fears about Tory votes may force minor changes to relieve some of the worst effects. But we don't just want concessions or amendments, we want this legislation chucked out.

The labour movement throughout Britain must campaign around this issue. It is just the kind of extra parliamentary campaign that can build the Labour Party and the unions.

In Scotland, the campaign should start straight away with an assembly of the entire movement, involving local Labour parties, trade union branches, unemployed workers' groups, tenants and community organisations.

The movement must mobilise and fight back, drawing up plans for non co-operation and non implementation of this legislation. The labour movement alone has the strength of organisation to see off this attack on our living standards and democratic rights.

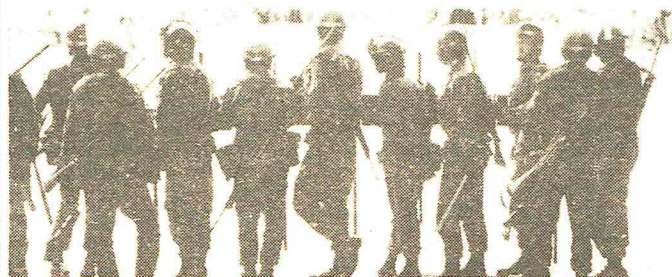


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Militant

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Labour's new right

LABOUR'S SHADOW Cabinet elections have put the Tory press in something of a dilemma. Before the election they were warning that the likely new intake of Labour MPs were more to the left, and would fill up the ranks of the Tribune Group, perhaps even the Campaign Group.

This fresh batch of left wing class warriors, the argument ran, would be the real face of the Labour Party, lurking behind the smiling, family portraits of the now moderated Neil Kinnock.

With the victory for the Tribune slate, and the ousting of four old right Solidarity members, the papers are now talking of a new Shadow Cabinet majority moulded in the Kinnock image. And Gould, Straw, Cook, Brown, like their leader are relatively young, intensely hostile to the hard left, especially Militant, and are seemingly prepared to completely revise the programme of the Labour Party.

Although the leader was still prepared to ignore the placings in the Shadow Cabinet poll, in which Michael Meacher and John Prescott came second and third to Gould, Kinnock gave the most prized positions to the right wing Solidarity group members, much to Prescott's disappointment. But that should give extra weight to the traditional argument of the left for the election of Labour cabinets and shadow cabinets by Party conference.

But what this Shadow Cabinet election really confirms is the final transition of those soft left, or ex-left Tribunites over completely to the camp of the right. The *Financial Times* talks of the shadow economic team appointed by Kinnock (comprising the right wing John Smith and the ex-lefts Gould, Brown and Tony Blair) working "together with specific responsibility for preparing a fresh economic and industrial strategy for the party". The old right leadership is dead, long live the new right.

If Tribunites Meacher and Prescott complain that they are different, still real lefts, let them come out and openly stand against the watering down of socialism that is being threatened.

Even Roy Hattersley, on television, objected (although without mentioning anyone by name) to the Gould/Kinnock approach of "selling our policies using the language of soap powders and dog food".

He savaged those who in the wake of the election defeat are saying: "We change this policy, we have a new defence policy, we abandon nationalisation, we give up our view of equality. What we do is, we send out into the country, just as the Democrats in America did 20 years ago, and say what are the policies people want and then when we find out what they'll vote for, we'll write it into our manifesto".

Maybe as the press reports, there is a personality rift between Hattersley, the old right, and Gould, the rising star of the new right. But really Hattersley has at least some understanding that the leadership cannot so blatantly dispense with Labour's socialist traditions.

Hattersley declared: "Unless a political party stands for some clear ideology, it is doomed". Of course his ideology is that of right reformism, tailoring Labour's policy to the demands of the capitalist economy. And in the period of capitalist decay that means the ideology of counter-reforms. But Hattersley and Labour's old right wing actually have more of a basis in the labour movement and more of a feel for what ordinary workers and Party members will accept.

The new transparent ex-left faction in the Shadow Cabinet, want to compound the fatal errors of the election defeat—erase from Labour's programme any fighting socialist commitments which could inspire the working class base of the Party to campaign for victory. As part of their purge of socialist ideas, they are attacking the Young Socialists, winding up *Socialist Youth* and even *Labour Weekly*, in favour of an 'advertising free sheet' in *Labour News*.

But they will enrage the activists who really are the Labour Party by their slickly presented but essentially empty programme. It is time for the real left to campaign to save Labour's socialist and class identity. The hard left inside and outside Parliament, currently muted in its opposition to this fundamental attack on Party policy, must participate with Militant in a struggle to keep Labour socialist.

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Hooray Henley

IT WAS jolly boating weather at the Henley regatta—the place to be seen on the first weekend of July.

If you're an Eton or Harrow old boy, you must remember to go in your old school uniform; all the other chaps do. There's no

need to take the butler, most people get the chauffeur to stand in and pour the champagne when it comes to picnic time.

It also seems to be good form to have the expensive sort of tea-bag hanging from your top pocket, for some reason or other.



CPSA vote

Lessons of the all out strike ballot

CPSA MEMBERS have decided by 53,251 votes to 19,468 not to take all-out strike action in support of the 1987 pay claim.

This decision is a set back for civil servants. It means a postponement of the urgently needed struggle against poverty rates of pay.

Over 4,000 voting meetings have been held throughout the union. In its short six weeks in office, the new Broad Left controlled CPSA National Executive Committee has demonstrated its seriousness to the rank and file. It has faithfully carried out the strategy passed at the union's May conference, to continue the selective action as a prelude to an all-out strike.

Broad Left

The Broad Left had wanted to use the conference as a spring board for all-out action at the earliest possible date, while the momentum of the struggle was still strong. But, urged on by the union's right wing officials and the so-called Broad Left '84 group, the conference voted against an immediate all-out strike call. It adopted the strategy of the SCPS leadership in the belief that this would maintain the unity of the campaign.

But, after 14 weeks of selective action, ordinary CPSA members understood that all-out action

was the only way to shift the Tory government. Unfortunately there was also a feeling that after weeks of an already exhausting dispute, the call had come too late.

In addition, having started out with the SCPS, it was a blow to the confidence of some CPSA members when the SCPS leadership pulled out of joint action at a late stage.

CPSA members understood the seriousness of the new NEC. But six weeks was not long enough to overcome the difficulties created in this campaign by the CPSA right wing and Broad Left '84. Nor could it overcome the underlying lack of confidence in the power of the union held by some sections of the membership due to the abject failure of the old right leaders to overcome the problem of non-unionism in CPSA grades, and their failure to give any effective lead in successive pay battles.

General Secretary, John Ellis, played a shameful role. He was utilised by the media to ridicule the idea of an all-out strike, and to undermine the confidence of the rank and file. At the rally of CPSA activists held on the eve of the ballot, he said now it was an all-out strike or surrender! Yet in the union journal published after the rally, he set out his naive position of suspending all action in the hope that the Tories would offer

more.

BL'84 played an even more despicable role, tamely following the Communist Party/soft left leadership of the SCPS, who ultimately showed that they had no confidence in their own membership. The Society leaders knew the regional action could not continue. They had repeatedly held out the prospect of an all-out strike ballot if the regional and selective action did not work. When it clearly came to the moment to implement this promise they simply threw in the towel.

The Tories will interpret this vote as a sign of weakness at their peril.

BL'84 actually issued a leaflet just before the NEC called the ballot saying the time for all-out action had come. Then, during the ballot period they issued another leaflet vehemently attacking the NEC's action, while lamely adding at the end that activists should argue for a strike. Their strike breaking role will never be forgiven.

While the vote has gone against a strike, the holding of the ballot itself and the serious way in which the

members confronted the difficult tactical options before them, show that the CPSA is coming of age as a union. As late as 1969, the union had no strike policy!

The new NEC will build on the determination of the campaign and prepare the members to respond should the government now try to impose regional or merit pay. CPSA members will not simply sit back and be trampled upon by the Tories.

Several local and sectional struggles are underway on such issues as casual employment, the introduction of YTS and privatisation. CPSA members now know they have an NEC that will back them up when they decide strike action is necessary.

The Tories will interpret this vote as a sign of weakness at their peril. The idea of an all-out strike is on the agenda of the CPSA. The majority of the members now understand that this action will be necessary if they are to offer any meaningful resistance to the continual attacks of the Tories. The next time the union moves into action as a body to fight for decent pay, very quickly the pressure from below will be for the maximum united action through an all-out strike as the only strategy for victory.

By Steve Dunk
(CPSA NEC, personal capacity)

Keep Labour socialist

Labour NEC's 'grotesque chaos'

USING THE excuse of financial difficulties, Labour's finance and general purposes committee have agreed the closure of three party publications, *Socialist Youth*, *Labour Weekly* and *New Socialist* with forty redundancies.

All the talk of taking Labour's message to the people is forgotten. The right wing Illiterate Tendency have struck a political blow against publications they have been itching to close for over a year, and replace with the leadership fan magazine, *Labour Party News*.

Profitable

One glance at the balance sheet completely refutes the financial reasons given for closure. *Socialist Youth* in particular last year made a profit of £100 and is on target to break even in 1987. *Labour Weekly* reported that it was in the healthiest financial position ever.

But the right wing were in no mood to consider

mere facts. Linda Douglas, representing the Labour Party Young Socialists on the NEC was given 30 seconds to put Socialist Youth's case against closure.

The party leadership claim they have to save £600,000 by closing these publications and axing 40 jobs at party headquarters. This turns logic on its head. Chopping *Socialist Youth* won't save the party a penny because it doesn't cost them a penny.

On the other hand, the new glossy *Labour Party News*, launched at the end of 1986, must raise £718,000 by January to break even, but six months into the year it is still £600,000 off that target. That is just the sum the right wing say they must save.

The right prefer closures and redundancies. Most shocking of all was the attitude of the union representatives on the NEC. Charlie Turnock of the NUR suggested using British Rail management tactics. BR bosses decide to close a rail

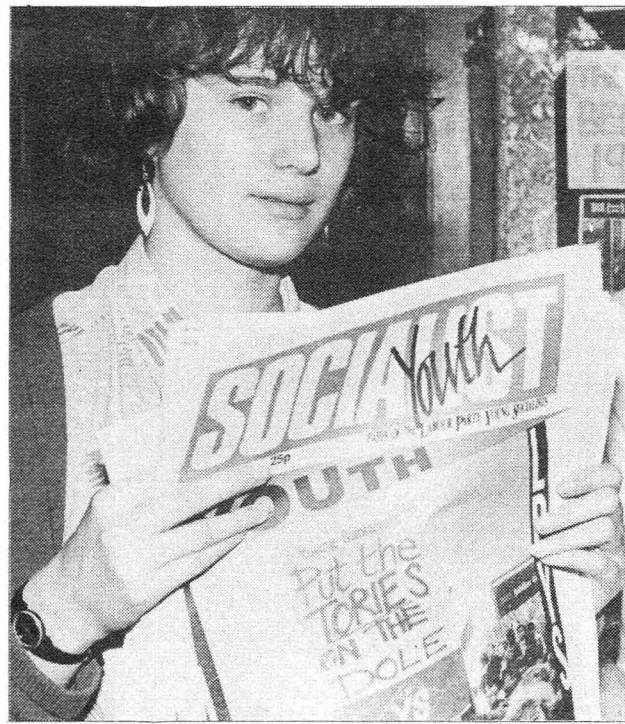
line, then negotiate with the unions with a fait accompli. Audrey Wise took him up on this.

Gordon Colling from the print union NGA whose members stood outside Wapping's gates for a year, must be setting up a newspaper industry record by voting for the closure of three titles in one afternoon.

All these union leaders joined Neil Kinnock in condemning as "grotesque chaos" Liverpool city council's issuing of redundancy notices despite assurances that not one worker would face redundancy and that this was a legal tactic. Liverpool kept its promise.

These hypocrites calmly vote through redundancies without batting an eyelid. The leadership want to stifle the voice of the rank and file. Don't let them. Send protests to the Labour Party, 150 Walworth Road London SE17 before 22 July.

By a Militant reporter



Socialist Youth, the LPYS paper, makes a profit, but it is in danger from Labour's right.

London Labour avoids the issues

THE LONDON Labour Party Conference last weekend was the first major meeting of Party activists since the election setback, but missed the opportunity to consider the lessons.

By Anne Lewin

There are many burning issues; the financial crisis facing Labour councils, the election defeat, the threatened abolition of ILEA and the implications of poll tax, But the conference gave the impression that none of this would happen.

A report written by right-wing officers of the regional executive was railroaded through with trade union block vote support.

It accused the London Party of losing the election because of the "extremist image", the "loony left" caricature, and the image of serious divisions within the party". This report was compiled without even regional executive approval.

It openly called for moves towards "the other groups in society who have different needs and interests from the disadvantaged and the dispossessed"...an unspoken appeal to the share-owning, well heeled 'yuppies'.

Labour party general secretary Larry Whitty's speech was notable only for his hypocritical call on Labour councils: "Our housing policy must be about building council houses." This will be of great comfort to the surcharged and disqualified Liverpool councillors who did so and were vilified by Labour's leaders.

Despite the organisational measures expected at national Labour Party conference, the meeting refused

to debate proposals for reorganising the party youth section, although a resolution opposing compulsory YTS was carried.

The conference was small by London Labour Party standards and many debates had only half the delegates in the hall. Debates on trade unions, housing, South Africa and many others fell from the agenda.

As Militant predicted before the conference, Labour's defeat in the London area was followed by a move to the right in the regional executive elections.

Militant supporters who were allowed to speak blamed Labour's election defeat on the inability of Labour councils to fight the Tories leading to cuts in workers' living standards through massive rate increases.

The packed Militant Readers' meeting was the only time during the weekend that the real issues were discussed. Tony Mulhearn, disqualified Liverpool councillor showed how the barred Labour city council's fighting policies had won Labour a great victory in Liverpool.

Lawrence Hemming a NALGO member in Hackney showed how every Labour borough in London faces a multi million pound budget gap. Council workers would have to struggle for their jobs, but Labour's leaders in London were threatening strikers with the sack.

Marxists were not disheartened by the conference. Socialist ideas are the only realistic path for the labour movement and Tory attacks will soon pose again the question of struggle.

A RESOLUTION calling on Labour's NEC not to change the voting procedure for reselection of MP's—in other words opposing the recent moves towards one member one vote, was supported by 372,000 to 354,000.

Although a close vote, this defeat for the right reveals the shaky nature of their control of conference as constituency delegates resisted the move to the right despite the union block vote.

Liverpool right threaten student posts

THE RIGHT wing majority on the new Liverpool Labour group decided on 13 July to impose a change on Liverpool FE colleges' Student Unions.

If upheld by the council, three of the four elected sabbatical officers will have their wages withheld from 31 July. This decision ignores the fact that legally sabbaticals are employed by the student unions, not the council.

This directly attacks student unions' right to elect their representatives. The change in the student union constitutions has never been discussed by the unions themselves. Even a Tory government circular advises local authorities that they only have the right to endorse or reject changes advised by the students.

This is a politically motivated attack. The council, facing a £56 million budget shortfall, want to cut further education and the student activists have a proven record of defending education.

The labour movement in Liverpool supported the students' lobby of the Labour group. Speakers from the FBU, NALGO, the Moat House strike, and the GMB joined speakers from the LPYS national committee and a discharged councillor.

ILEA follows the Tories

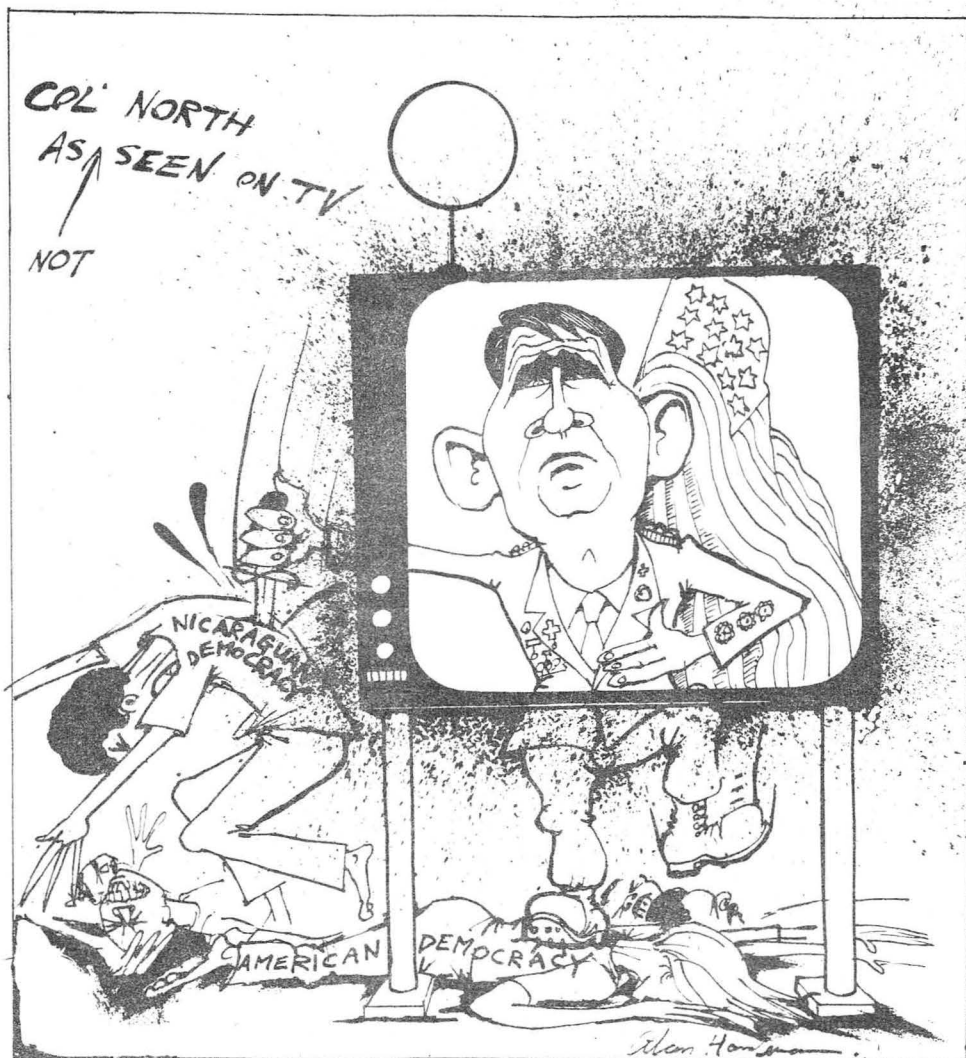
LONDON LABOUR Party conference overturned previous policy on redeployment of teachers in the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), and backed a report which justified compulsory redeployment.

Many delegates attacked redeployment as hidden cuts, shuffling teachers around schools, instead of employing more teachers to take up unfilled vacancies, but the new policy was carried.

The ILEA Labour group further capitulated to the Tories on 13 July when they approved the docking of pay if teachers refused to cover for absent colleagues.

The group decided to put school meals prices up from 35p to 40p in September with another 5p rise in January. It will hit poor families hard and will alienate other workers at a time when councils need to maximise popular support for some bitter fights with the government.

Save Socialist Youth No redundancies



THE TWO politicians who shout loudest about "fighting terrorism" are Reagan and Thatcher. Colonel Oliver North's testimony in Congress has shown up Reagan as the hypocrite he is. (See page 11)

But North has also said that one of his "Oligarchy" was a British former SAS soldier, David Walker who was until last year a Tory councillor in suburban Esher!

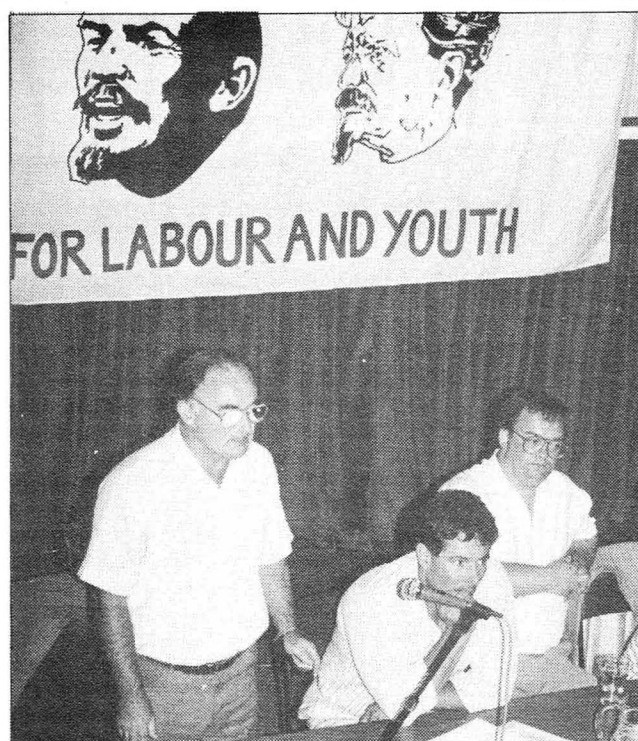
Walker is a director of KMS, a firm registered in Jersey, which supplied British air crews to deliver military supplies to right wing Contra terrorists fighting the Nicaraguan revolution. He was supposed to help blow up Russian built helicopters.

Irangate witnesses described him as a professional saboteur. As *Militant* exclusively revealed (21 November 1986) Walker was invited to speak at an international conference on "counter terror" organised by a group with CIA links, in London last year.

KMS have been linked with atrocities against the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka and are used to 'protect' British embassies abroad. Walker is not the only Tory to actively back the Contras. Some Contra units are reportedly named after the disbanded Tory student organisation.

When is Thatcher going to start "fighting terrorism" in her own party?

Keep Labour socialist



Peter Taaffe speaks to the rally, with Derek Hatton and John Gillen.

Glasgow rally—the fightback starts now

MORE THAN 800 people were attracted to *Militant's* first post-election rally in Glasgow. The hall was packed to overflowing, with young and old, women and men, black and white, looking to *Militant* for an explanation of why Labour was defeated and a strategy for the movement to fight back.

"We have no alternative but to stand and fight" was how Doreen Purvis of the CPSA opened the meeting. There was thunderous acclaim for John Gillen, Caterpillar convenor, and for the struggle that epitomised the traditions of Clydeside. "Our occupation is over for the present", he said, "but our fight to save

By a Militant reporter

those 1,200 jobs goes on from inside".

With regret John told of the scandalous role played by his AEU leaders during the dispute, in pressurising them to give up the occupation. We need better leaders than 'Give-in' Laird and 'River' Jordan if victories are to be won.

John told of his most memorable episode in the 104-day occupation, while he and another steward were in Belgium, speaking to their Belgian and French brothers and sisters about the need for international solidarity. The result was firm commitments to all-out strike should the occupying workers at Ud-dington be attacked:

"We were taken to a room full of hundreds of workers and after we told our story we were greeted with a standing ovation and something special that will stay with me for ever—the singing of the Internationale when it really did mean something". What an answer to the nationalists who so easily forget the

international foundations of the labour movement!

That Caterpillar struggle was a factor in the marvellous results Labour achieved in Scotland, as Peter Taaffe then went on to develop: "But nowhere in the country was there such a pro-Labour swing as in Liverpool, where socialists and Marxists like Eric Heffer and Terry Fields recorded huge votes by campaigning on socialist policies".

Councillors

However, he said, to a barrage of cheers and foot-stamping, the huge Liverpool swings to Labour and all the Liverpool MPs "owed their success to the immortal memory of the 47 surcharged councillors". They had stood and fought when all other councils had given in to the Tories. The working class registered their recognition of this fight at the ballot box in Liverpool.

Peter Taaffe brought the audience to almost euphoria when he concluded: "leaders who are not prepared to stand and fight must now stand aside, or see themselves swept aside, as happened in the CPSA."

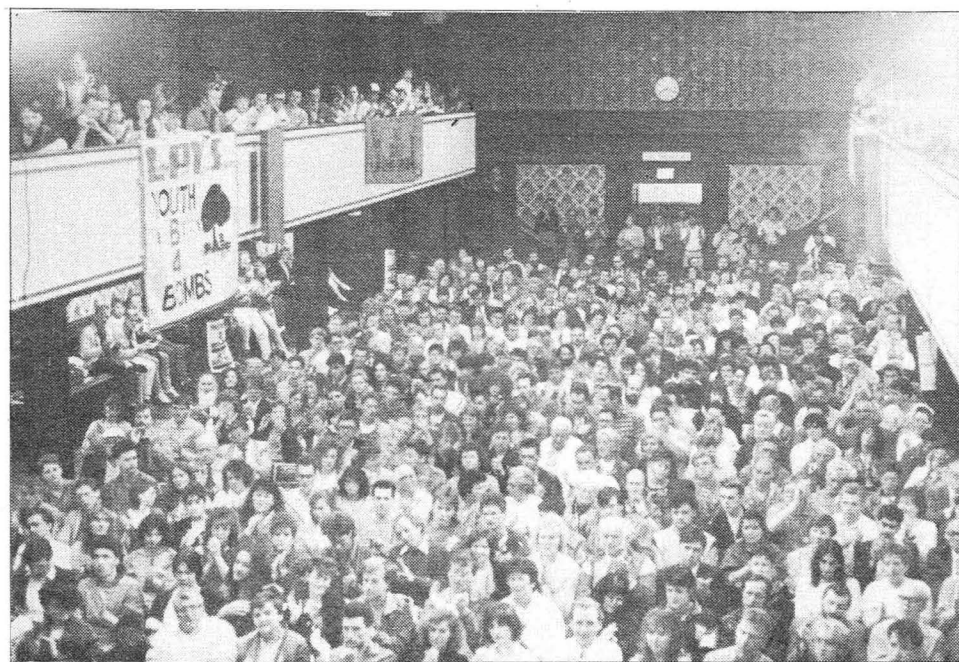
After the Moses Mayekiso choir provided a

musical break and a tremendous collection of £860, Alan McCombes spoke on the Scottish Assembly. He caught the mood of the meeting when he referred to the traditions of the Red Clyde, and how they must be rekindled today.

"We need action, but action on the streets and not Parliamentary debating chambers" was his message: "We have to fight back now, not in three or four years time, because the working class of Glasgow, with 47 per cent on supplementary benefit, cannot afford to wait".

The final speaker was given another rapturous reception, with prolonged applause. Derek Hatton, surcharged, sacked, expelled and continually vilified and slandered in the media, along with the other 46 heroic surcharged councillors, is a leader worthy of the working class.

He said he could not understand the meaning of a couple of words, 'success' and 'liability'. How can a 101 Tory majority be a Labour 'success' and how can the largest swing to Labour in the country be proof of *Militant's* electoral 'liability'? *Militant* supporters won elections because they stood for and explained socialist policies.



1987 Labour Party Conference greetings

We invite your organisation to place in *Militant* greetings to the delegates at the 1987 Labour Party conference.

Militant is read by thousands of labour movement activists in Britain and abroad. Unlike the capitalist press we have no rich backers or big business advertisers. We rely on individual workers and workers' organisations like yours for support.

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6 column centimeters	£15
Display	
one-sixteenth page	£25
one-eighth page	£40
one-quarter page	£75

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General election 1987

Lessons for the Labour and TU movement

Militant presents this important new pamphlet, bringing together the main articles analysing the election with an additional major Editorial Board contribution by Ted Grant, the Political Editor.

Price 50p or 60p inc. postage. Order now from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscott Rd, London E9 5HB.

Steve Glennon expelled

AFTER A long, bitter battle lasting nearly three years, encompassing 60 hours of inquisitions, £2,300 of court fees, and paperwork costing thousands of pounds, Steve Glennon from Stevenage Constituency Labour Party was finally expelled from the Party.

The National Constitutional Committee (NCC), which heard him put his case for 18 hours over two days, took just four shameful minutes to try and wipe out 16 years of Labour Party activity.

This expulsion by the NCC shows what a 'star chamber' it is, a body to rubber-stamp decisions arrived at in advance. The evidence against Steve Glennon fell apart as the case proceeded, even though he was not allowed to call witnesses on his behalf. In the end he was expelled for nothing more than an assumption that he was associated with *Militant*.

The same was true of Neil Diplock, one of nine Stevenage Labour Party members who have been referred to the NCC. He was expelled on 23 June in his absence, despite giving the committee notice that he would be unable to attend the meeting. An appeal is now underway against this decision. Another, Jim Horton is due to appear on 3 September.

The witch-hunt in Stevenage gives socialists a warning that the right wing will proceed to expulsions without any evidence—but also shows the need for stubborn resistance by party members in the face of unconstitutional procedures, harassment and physical intimidation.

The Stevenage Party members were the first to have to go to the High Court, albeit reluctantly, to

expose the lack of natural justice and irregularities which allowed Labour Party members to be expelled without a fair hearing.

Because of this move, many party members who were due to be the victims of local inquisitions managed to get reprieves from certain expulsions.

But they did not limit their fight against the witch-hunt to legal actions, which they fought meticulously, but also campaigned in the labour movement in Stevenage and nationally. Many meetings were addressed and thousands of pounds raised.

On the basis of future events, all those now expelled from the Labour Party will be restored with honour.

Their campaign was so successful that it pushed the right wing in Stevenage Labour Party to desperate acts of violence and intimidation. Having lost the argument they literally tried to punch their opponents out of the party.

Many Labour Party members will be angered by this unnecessary waste of time, money and energy by the Labour Party in the Eastern Region, where Labour now only has one MP, despite having over twenty full time-party agents. In Ipswich, one of the other constituencies in the region where *Militant* supporters have been expelled, Labour lost its seat.

If as much time and money had

been spent on fighting the real enemies of working-class people, instead of long-standing members of the Labour Party, then there might have been a few more Labour MPs in the region.

The right wing in Stevenage Labour Party have learnt nothing from recent events and are now proceeding to compile photographs of *Militant* supporters for further expulsions.

The Labour candidate for Stevenage at the last election was the Father of Chapel at the Sun during the whole of the Wapping dispute and was still allowed to be a Labour candidate by Labour's National Executive whilst they were attempting to expel good socialists!

Despite the expulsion of Steve Glennon, and the lunacy of the right wing promising expulsions of thousands of *Militant* supporters, the ideas of Marxism have been strengthened in Stevenage, with increased support for *Militant*.

Because of this courageous struggle, the right have not had the easy purge they wished for. On the basis of future events, all those now expelled from the Labour Party will be restored with honour, when the right wing have vanished from the scene of political history.

By Keith Baldassara

In previous articles there has been reference to 'ten' members of Stevenage Labour Party. We apologise to Janice Glennon for any impression given that she is a current member of Stevenage CLP.

Sixteen years of service to the movement

Steve Glennon—

Joined Labour Party 1971
Chair Ravensbourne LPYS
Chair Stevenage LPYS
1973-74

LPYS National Committee
1974-79 and LPYS national
Trade Union Officer 1978-79

Delegate International
Union of Socialist Youth
1979

Delegate to Stevenage
CLP GMC for 14 years
Delegate to Eastern Region
Labour Party conference
12 times
Member of Regional Labour
Party executive 1984-86

Presently Vice Chair of
Labour Party ward branch
Highest number of nominations
when standing for parliamentary
candidate in Stevenage in 1982 and
1985

President of Trades Council
1978-79 and 1982-86
Member of Trades Council
executive for 11 years
Six times delegate to
conference of National
Society of Metal Mechanics

Delegate to TUC conference
in 1978
Current delegate to London
District Committee of
TASS metal mechanics
section
Delegate to TASS Conference
in 1987

Keep Labour socialist

Battle for Labour Democracy

WITH THE decision of the TGWU to endorse the Labour leadership's campaign for one member, one vote, September's Party conference could be set to fundamentally alter the system for the reselection of Labour MPs. DAVE CAMPBELL looks back at the struggle for Labour democracy.

The battle over reselection of MPs has never been just about more Party democracy in the abstract. It has been about policies for Labour. Party activists sought to make MPs accountable to the Party, as part of the struggle to hold the Parliamentary Labour Party to the socialist policies adopted at Party conferences. To put Labour MPs under the pressure of the rank and file, to counteract the pressure exerted on them by big business and the Tory press. Now under the guise of a campaign to democratise the Labour Party, the soft left/right wing are trying to ditch many of the socialist aspects of official Party policy.

Some have raised the idea of committing the Party to accepting "the importance of market capitalism as a generator of wealth more enthusiastically". One MP explained that this meant "the rejection of any form of re-nationalisation and accepting the privatisation of some local authority functions". No wonder they want to weaken the ability of local activists to hold them to account!

Divine right

Until the victory for mandatory reselection at the Party conference in 1979, many MPs considered that they had a god given right to hold the seats on behalf of the Labour Party.

But it was in the aftermath of the defeat of the Labour Party in the 1979 election, that the demand for accountability became unstoppable. The Labour Government had been elected on a manifesto that called for "a fundamental and irreversible shift in power and wealth in favour of working people and their families". However, the government was marked, after a short period of minor reforms, by attacks on the living conditions and wages of working people.

Wage restraint (the Social Contract) was introduced against the wishes of the unions and the Party conference. £8000 million worth of cuts were introduced in public spending. Chancellor Healey introduced an economic policy tantamount to an early form of Thatcher's monetarism.

Rather than an irreversible shift of wealth in favour of working people, by 1979, unemployment had topped a million, the rich had grown even richer whilst thousands of low paid workers were forced to take strike action for better pay. At the 1979 general election, Thatcher was elected on a tide of disillusion with Labour.

After experiencing the



Delegates celebrate the carrying of mandatory reselection by the 1979 conference.



Pat Wall addressing Party conference.

failure of the Labour Government to tackle the problems caused by capitalist society, the Party and trade union rank and file pledged to ensure that never again would Labour MPs turn their backs on the wishes of conference. Not only were there moves for the mandatory reselection of MPs, but also for the election of Party leader and for the control of the manifesto by the National Executive Committee, which at that time was controlled by the left.

But the campaign for the reselection of MPs was given a greater importance by some of the battles between MPs and their constituency parties over the previous few years. A whole string of right wingers had put their careers before the interests of the labour movement, which had

given them their public profile. Roy Jenkins had gone off to his £35,000 job with the EEC. Brian Walden took a job with Weekend World, leaving his constituency with less than 100 members and a party secretary who was an infiltrator from the National Front.

Newham NE

But the events that decisively proved the need for local parties to hold their parliamentary representatives accountable, took place in the safe Labour seat of Newham North East. For years, Labour MP, Reg Prentice, had acted as a 'fifth columnist' inside the Labour Party.

He attacked the 'Pentonville Five' and the Shrewsbury Pickets for breaking the law. He accused the

trade unions of 'welching' on the Social Contract. And when the Labour Government introduced devastating cuts in public expenditure, he called them "insufficient" and demanded a cut in social security levels for the sick and unemployed.

Little surprise then that in July 1975, the Newham North East Labour Party voted to instruct Prentice, then a Labour minister, to retire at the next election. Then followed 18 months of wrangling with the NEC refusing to back the rights of the local Party to choose their own candidate.

In October 1976, two Oxford graduates, Lewis and McCormack, joined the Party in Newham with the express intention of involving the courts on behalf of Reg Prentice. These two had no record of activity in the labour movement. They are now on the extreme right wing of the Tory Party.

Their activities, which cost considerable sums of money, raised major questions over who was backing them. The local Newham Recorder discovered a memorandum written by McCormack, and wrote that it: "Increased the suspicions of some party members over links with the security services. The language and phrasing could have come directly out of a security agent's manual, said a former EC member, even if there are no direct links, the influence is there".

Every effort was made to prevent the reselection of Prentice. 180 Labour MPs signed a letter supporting him. Court injunctions were served on the officers of the local Party. At one stage, it even appeared that they might be jailed for contempt of court.

Yet all his friends, in the Parliamentary Labour Party, in the press and in the courts could not prevent Prentice from showing his true loyalties. In October 1977, he joined the Tory Party, to become the MP

for Daventry and even to earn a place as one of Thatcher's ministers. He was later to be knighted by her, no doubt for his services to democracy. But it was no late conversion. He explained that he had been a Tory since 1970.

It was the battle for ideas, however, not just the behaviour of a few maverick MPs that led to the campaign for accountability. The formation in early 1981 of the SDP was proof that the right wing traitors, Owen, Williams, Jenkins and Wigglesworth had lost the debate over policies.

Democracy is about participation and an understanding of the issues.

They had consistently opposed reselection, but when it became clear that it would be carried, they were the first to raise the idea of one member, one vote. Williams even wanted US-style primaries, dissolving the ability of the Party activists to hold MPs accountable, into the mass of inactive Labour supporters.

Of course big business enthusiastically backed the new SDP, which they saw as a means of splitting the anti-Tory vote, and thus preventing Labour winning an election on its new, left wing policies.

At the 1979 Labour conference, reselection came to a head. Moving a successful resolution for mandatory reselection, Pat Wall explained: "We have reselection in every socialist party; we have reselection of our councillors, and our shop stewards face constant reselection as far as their job at factory and office level is concerned. And the reasons for this

campaign of the Tory press and their backers is because they want, not only to pick who leads the Tory party, but they also want a big influence in who leads our movement".

With the system of mandatory reselection that was introduced, every Party member has the right to vote. But democracy is about participation and an understanding of the issues.

Who better to decide a candidate than the Party activists and the trade unionists who attend the meetings as democratically elected delegates from their organisations? It is they who recruit the members and fight the elections, and who through that work can judge the performance of a candidate and decide whether they deserve the privilege of representing the working class people of the area.

With 'one member, one vote', instead of proper discussion and debate, the agenda would be set by the Tory press and by infiltrators such as Lewis and McCormack in Newham who are backed and financed by big business.

Today's new Labour right wing are under the illusion that they can successfully water down the socialist policies and principles of the Party, by attacking the democratic rights of Party members. They will experience a fierce backlash from the trade union and Party rank and file.

A recession in the economy is likely in the next eighteen months to two years. Forced to fight in defence of their rights and living conditions, hundreds and thousands more workers will begin to draw the conclusion that only socialist measures can start to solve any of their problems and once again, they will start calling their representatives to account. The new right are deluding themselves if they think they can prevent all this by tampering with the constitution.

Socialist Summer camp

Women workers demand freedom

IN OUR THIRD article on topics at next month's socialist summer camp, Margaret Crear looks at the course on "Women and the struggle for socialism".

Women have been oppressed under all systems based on private property. The course will ask why.

It will take up the reformist idea that women's liberation can be achieved under capitalism merely by a few reforms, some legislative changes and better attitudes from men. More importantly it will tackle the ideas fostered by capitalism.

REACTIONARIES from Pinochet to James Anderson like to claim a hotline to God. Tory Patrick Jenkin is no exception. He justified his attack on women's rights by claiming: "If the good Lord had intended us to be equal he would not have created man and women."

But the right wing Conservative Family Campaign have brought the argument down to earth. For capitalism, the family has little to do with personal relations; it is a means of shifting the hard work and material cost of caring for the next generation of workers, the old and the sick on to individual men and women.

They say: "Strong families pay the tax bills which allow the government to govern, whereas broken families drain the national coffers in welfare. Policing costs diminish where parents teach their children respect for authority and the self discipline needed to become effective adults."

In contrast, "unmarried mothers need social workers, probation officers and teachers to do the same work which fathers and mothers do freely and infinitely more successfully."

The press can never admit that social ills such as vandalism, violence or drug abuse are products of a declining capitalist system. Instead they peddle the myth that irresponsible parents are to blame.

This way, the Tories not only evade their responsibility for social degeneration, they also justify putting the extra burdens on individual families as education, social services and health are cut back.

Poverty

The Labour leaders' only answer to this nonsense is to publish 'happy family' photos and for Neil Kinnock to tell the Sunday papers that problems like drugs result from permissive 'enlightened' families. He said he was a 'reactionary' when it came to bringing up children.

This insults parents, most of whom struggle to bring up children against a background of unemployment, poverty and bad housing which is not of their making. It also implies that socialists have encouraged crime and abuse.

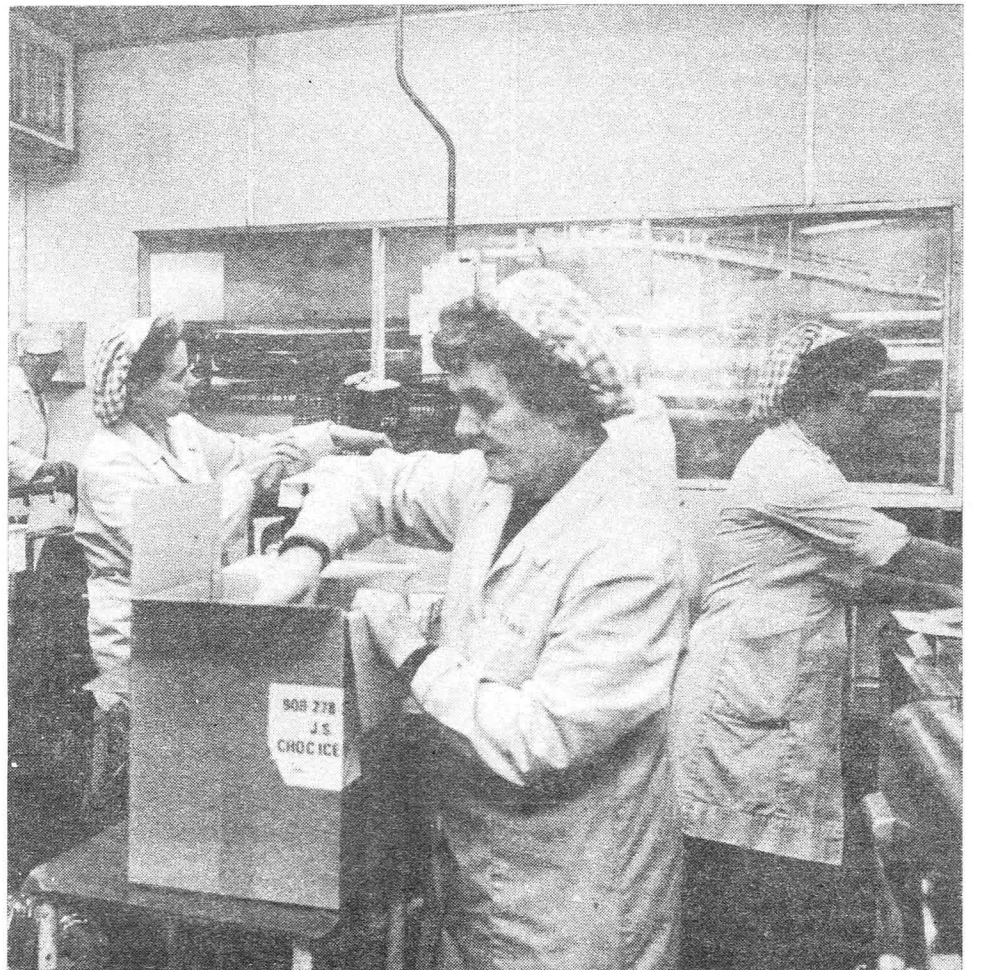
The sessions at camp can

help socialists cut through this forest of reactionary ideas. Engels, in *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State* showed how the family, as we know it, is not eternal or natural and has nothing to do with the needs of women, men and children for harmonious personal relations.

It came into existence to provide for the needs of private property. This placed enormous burdens on the shoulders of women, often isolating them from public life within individual households, depriving them of rights and treating them as galley slaves.

The economic dependence of women and children also imposed a responsibility on men for their financial well being.

According to the Tories, poverty due to unemployment or low wages, happens because an individual 'breadwinner' doesn't work hard enough or have the right skills. Jobs are lost through shiftlessness or being too militant. They blatantly exploited this in the miners' strike by cutting social security benefit to strikers to try to force them back to work one by one.



Women have been oppressed under all societies based on private property. But capitalism, while basing itself on the family also drew women out to work in greater numbers until today they are 44 per cent of the employed workforce.

Women have always fought their oppression but this participation in the workforce raises confidence and aspirations, making possible a higher level of organisation.

The charter for women workers the subject of one

of the sessions drew on the experience of women workers. Published by Liverpool, Manchester and Rochdale women's councils, it has the support of many labour and trade union organisations. It explains the attacks by the Tories and bosses on women workers and spells out a programme of demands to organise and fight around.

Working class women will take the lead in many future class struggles. They will not only fight exploitation as workers: they will

demand freedom from household drudgery, from constant responsibility for the material welfare of the young, old and sick and freedom from the degradation and violence they are subjected to.

The camp gives an ideal opportunity to prepare theoretically for these struggles and discuss how to achieve a socialist society which will provide the basis for the liberation of women.

Marxism in the sun

THERE ARE only three weeks to go to the socialist summer camp. If the heatwave keeps going, the camp, which is in a beautiful country setting, will be better than ever.

Speakers so far confirmed include Ted Grant, Clare Doyle, Lynn Walsh and Alan Woods. Marxists from Africa and Australia will also be speaking.

Transport should have been booked by now. Garretts Green College Labour Club in Birmingham has sponsored four people to go to the camp, donating £100 to cover part of their expenses.

Make sure the camp is publicised at the readers' meetings taking place across the country. Don't be the one to miss out on a brilliant holiday. Send your deposit now for the Socialist Summer Camp 1987.

Socialist summer camp
8-15 August
Forest of Dean
Gloucestershire

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LAST WEEK, we reported that sales in Livingston after their local feature had been good but "the real work starts on Monday."

And so it did with 250 extra sales on the housing schemes! "Even though it's our annual holiday fortnight, we were selling to one in every two doors that answered." They collected



61 names and addresses of people who wanted a paper every week so this sale will not just be a flash in the pan.

One GMB member on the doorstep told *Militant* sellers: "I didn't vote Labour in the election because of the way they (the Labour leadership) treated *Militant*." He then

gave £10 to the fighting fund. Local sellers held a public meeting for *Militant* readers and sold another 40 papers.

Follow the example of the comrades in Livingston and launch a sales drive in your area.

By Ruth Campbell

LEFT and RIGHT

Completely different

"IMMORTALISED BY Monty Python, guzzled by millions" started the blurb in the *News on Sunday* advertising an inside feature on 50 years of Spam. Amid reports on celebrations of half a century of cholesterol poisoning, the *News* manages one paragraph on last year's bitter strike which disrupted the Hormel factory in Minnesota which makes Spam.

Conditions in the food packaging industry have been bad since the days of Upton Sinclair's famous novel, *The Jungle*. Hormel's workers struck after their wages were cut and production rates were boosted at the expense of doubling the number of accidents. Over 600 workers were sacked and armed national guards helped to break the strike. It led the way

for other meat bosses to take similar action in the USA and Canada.

It's something completely different from Monty Python. And from the radical reporting we were told to expect from *News on Sunday*.

Teesside— sur— Seine

STUART BELL MP, secretary of Labour's right wing Solidarity group was fined recently for a minor offence, driving without a valid licence.

He argued that he didn't need a UK licence as he was a French resident with a valid French licence. Workers in Middlesbrough will be comforted to know that their representative is not only a member of Lloyds but a barrister with an international law practise in Paris.

Lynn Walsh examines the issues raised by Ken Livingstone's maiden speech in parliament

THATCHER REACTED with fury to the demand, renewed by Ken Livingstone in his maiden Commons speech, for an inquiry into murderous 'dirty tricks' carried out by the secret intelligence services in Ireland.

How dare anyone, was her response, how dare they question the record of SAS Captain Robert Nairac, a military hero murdered by the IRA? But if there is nothing to hide, if the allegations are entirely baseless, why not hold a full inquiry to bring out the truth?

More than a decade after the events concerned, the Tories are still desperately trying to maintain the cover-up. They are determined to protect the shadowy 'guardians of democracy' from public scrutiny of any kind of democratic accountability.

Thatcher was particularly stung by the allegation that through friends like Airey Neave, a former intelligence officer who kept up close links with the service, the Thatcher coterie, even in opposition, was well aware of what was going on.

Ken Livingstone is right to raise the issue again. In spite of the publication in the *Sunday Times* of the memoirs of former intelligence officer, Peter Wright, confirming the MI5's use of smears and illegal tactics against the last Labour government, the Labour leaders have not pushed energetically for the exposure of this ruthless, clandestine arm of the state.

Illegal tactics

On the contrary, by their half-hearted complaints, Wilson, Callaghan, and former Northern Ireland secretary, Merlyn Rees, have let the Tories off the hook. Despite the fact that Kinnock and his front-bench friends, if they were returned to office, would face exactly the same kind of sabotage, or worse, on behalf of the ruling class, they have diplomatically declined to take this up as a vital issue for the labour movement.

At the same time, the incidents in Northern Ireland referred to by Livingstone should cause Ken to reflect on his own position of support for Provisional republicanism, whose policies and tactics have played into the hands of the very forces he is now trying to expose.

The allegations raised last week centred around Nairac, an undercover SAS officer who was rec-



Ken Livingstone MP

ognised and murdered by the IRA in 1977. Nairac, it is said, organised loyalist para-militaries in a series of 'dirty tricks' operations.

Nairac crossed the border, according to a number of accounts, to murder a leading member of the Provisional IRA, and also attempted to kidnap another from the South. The claim that SAS units were allowed by Gardai (Irish police) to operate in the 26 Counties is now being investigated by the Gardai.

The most serious allegation, however, is that Nairac organised the sectarian killing by loyalists of three members of the Miami Show Band, supplying the murderers with the gun and bomb used in that outrage.

These are only some of the violent and bloody incidents which were part of a sustained 'dirty tricks' campaign run by various sections of the security forces. The allegations are not new. The most serious come from the accounts of two former serving army intelligence officers, Fred Holroyd and Colin Wallace, who have backed up their revelations with detailed evidence over the last few years.

The Peter Wright memoirs confirm important aspects of these allegations. Recent examination of Nairac's activities by RTE (the Irish broadcasting authority), has also helped bring the issue to the fore once again.

The 'dirty war', according to Wallace, was pushed to murderous extremes by bitter rivalry between MI5 and MI6. Their competitive adventures rivalled those of the para-militaries in their cold-blooded ruthlessness.

Incidents linked to this 'dirty war' include bombings, assassination plots, kidnapping plots, bank

Dirty war in N.Ireland



Photo Reflex

British troops in the open, in Portadown in 1985. Now their secret role is being exposed.

robberies, operations in the 26 Counties, leaks to expose rivals' operations, 'black' propaganda smears, and sectarian killings (including the Miami Show Band murders).

Both MI5 and MI6 wanted to speed up the commitment to an all-out military solution, unrestrained by any political scruples on the part of their political 'masters'. In spite of their rivalry, both MI5 and MI6 were at one in their desire to discredit and undermine the Labour government (returned in February 1974).

Smears

From the time of the Ulster Workers' Strike, which underlined both the bankruptcy of Labour's policy and the powerlessness of the army to intervene against a mass strike, Wilson, Rees and the government in general were subjected to a sustained campaign of leaks and smears organised by the intelligence organisations.

Northern Ireland has been used

as a laboratory in which the security forces, including covert intelligence organisations, can develop new methods of surveillance, provocation, political manoeuvre, and ruthless repression. It is vital for the labour movement to expose these activities, bringing home to workers the danger they pose for the working class in the future.

Labour must demand a full inquiry, seizing every opportunity to expose the Tories' involvement. Relying on parliamentary or judicial procedures alone, however, would be a fatal mistake. The labour movement must set up its own, entirely independent, inquiry, appealing to all those with personal or expert knowledge to give evidence—and taking the results to the ranks of the movement.

Continuing repression in Northern Ireland, moreover, underlines the need for the labour movement to fight for a socialist solution to British capitalism's legacy of exploitation and repression in Ireland. The Provisional

IRA, basing itself on sectarian policies and terrorist tactics based on tiny armed bands, will never mobilise the forces needed to defeat the state.

On the contrary, their methods provide the opportunity for the state to reinforce its military-police apparatus, allowing the Tories to seize on bombings and killings to legitimise repression—which can then be turned against the labour movement.

Class unity

The incidents raised by Ken Livingstone show that the military can live with the IRA—while they will never completely eliminate them, so long as the underlying problems remain, they can contain their activities—using the province as a training ground.

Only the labour movement can cut through the spiral of terrorism and repression, breaking through the sectarian divide on the basis of class unity and socialist policies.

LABOUR'S OFFICIAL publications, *Labour Weekly* and *New Socialist* face the chop, after losing £200,000 last year. Contrast that with the financial support workers have given *Militant*, the only paper to give full backing to the CPSA's battle with the Tories.

Now we need your support again, to help the paper to expand. So rush in a big donation. With only a fortnight to go to the end of a quarter, we need every supporter to make a superhuman effort to raise the £37,000 we still need.

Next week must become a *Militant* Fighting Fund Week, with fundraising activities around the country. There is no end to the ways you can

raise cash, from pub collections, jumble sales and socials to workplace collections and simply asking every reader for a big donation.

We have already shown what we can achieve, raising £36,500 at last year's *Militant* rally. Go for this amount again—don't stop until we reach £70,000.

Collections

This week we received £600 from Mick Suter, the profit from a house sale. A Halifax reader donated £40 and Domenic Hill from Bristol sent £100. A supporter in Liverpool raised £37 by selling his scooter for the fighting fund.

£15 was collected on the streets of Edinburgh by selling stickers and in

Ross-shire, one comrade raised £25. In Glasgow £31 was raised at a Country 'n Western night, thanks to P Barry and the band, who not only played the gig for free but also paid for the hire of the PA.

This week, let's see a hive of activity for the *Militant*. Don't forget the basics—always use a collecting tin, use the new appeal sheets and ask for the solidarity price of £1 for the paper. Good luck, comrades. We can do it!

Thanks this week also to Colin Jones, Gwent, for £25; Dave Watts, Hull, £9; Hull AEU and EETPU readers, £14-10; E Maxted, Isle of Wight, £10; S Ryder, Ilkeston, for a regular £5 a month and an Oxford public meeting £47.

Fighting Fund

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 London	4943		9400
2 Northern	2059		4600
3 Scotland East	1148		2800
4 East Midlands	1311		3250
5 Scotland West	1349		3500
6 Eastern	1052		3050
7 South West	625		1900
8 Wales	1484		4850
9 West Midlands	1365		4850
10 Yorkshire	2376		8450
11 Merseyside	1824		7500
12 Southern	682		3100
13 Manchester	659		4050
14 South East	255		2250
15 National	11766		6950
Total	32899		70000

The sweatshop strike that shook the country

Ten years after the Grunwick strike

TEN YEARS ago, when a Labour government was in office, workers at the Grunwick factory in North London were locked in struggle for basic rights and conditions.

JOHN BULAITIS, the London representative on the Labour Party Young Socialists National Committee at the time, was active on the picket line and in support of the strike. He tells the story of Grunwick below:

7am. 11 July 1977. A crisp, fine summer morning. The normally quiet backstreets of Willesden are alive with activity. Outside the gates of the Grunwick film processing factory stand a group of sari-clad Asian women.

It is a spot they have occupied throughout the preceding spring, winter and autumn. The determination with which they and their male comrades have pursued their struggle for reinstatement and union recognition has inspired the whole labour movement. They have smashed the myth of the weak, submissive Asian woman.

Today, their ranks are swelled by printers, building workers, engineers. In all, 15,000 trade unionists have joined them to picket Grunwick. The backbone of the demonstration are the miners.

Ring of steel

Two weeks earlier 200 from Yorkshire joined the picket. They were roughed up by the police and Arthur Scargill was arrested. Now they are back in force. Every pit in Yorkshire and Wales has sent a coach; over 1000 miners in all.

A determined and disciplined human ring of steel surrounds the factory. Despite the provocations and probing of the Special Patrol Group the bus carrying the scab workforce is unable to get anywhere near the plant. The mounted police line up in battle formation with the intention of charging the picket. They are met by a phalanx of workers, arms linked chanting 'the workers united will never be defeated'. For over six hours, that morning, the Grunwick gates stay firmly shut...

The awesome strength, utter selflessness and instinctive solidarity of the organised working class was clearly demonstrated that day. Jayaben Desai, treasurer of the strike committee, and leader of the 'sari militants' exclaimed: "I was sad before but now I am happy, when they talked of the power of the Trade Union movement I listened but I didn't really believe. Now I see that power."

Yet this was an unofficial demonstration that the leadership of the movement had done their best to cut across and prevent.

11 July was the glorious high point in the historic and heroic dispute of the Grunwick workers. This was a battle that brought out all the best in the British trade

union movement, but ended in one of the worst betrayals ever by its leadership.

To begin with these workers had hardly any comprehension of what a trade union even was! Faced with intolerable conditions and a management of the type endured by Oliver Twist they initially went to the Citizens Advice Bureau who advised them to join APEX.

Grunwick managing director, George Ward, treated his race horses better than his workers. The slightest misdemeanour meant instant dismissal. Overtime was compulsory and often imposed at short notice. Holidays were two weeks and had to be taken in the winter. Take home pay was £21 for 40 hours. When the workers walked out in August 1976, demanding a union to deal with their grievances, they were immediately sacked.

The strike began as a simple, localised fight for reinstatement and trade union recognition. It was to become in the summer of 1977 a trial of strength between all the forces of the establishment and organised labour. Tory front bencher Keith Joseph denounced the workers as 'terrorists' and warned his colleagues in the ruling class: "Grunwick could be all our tomorrows, it is a litmus test".

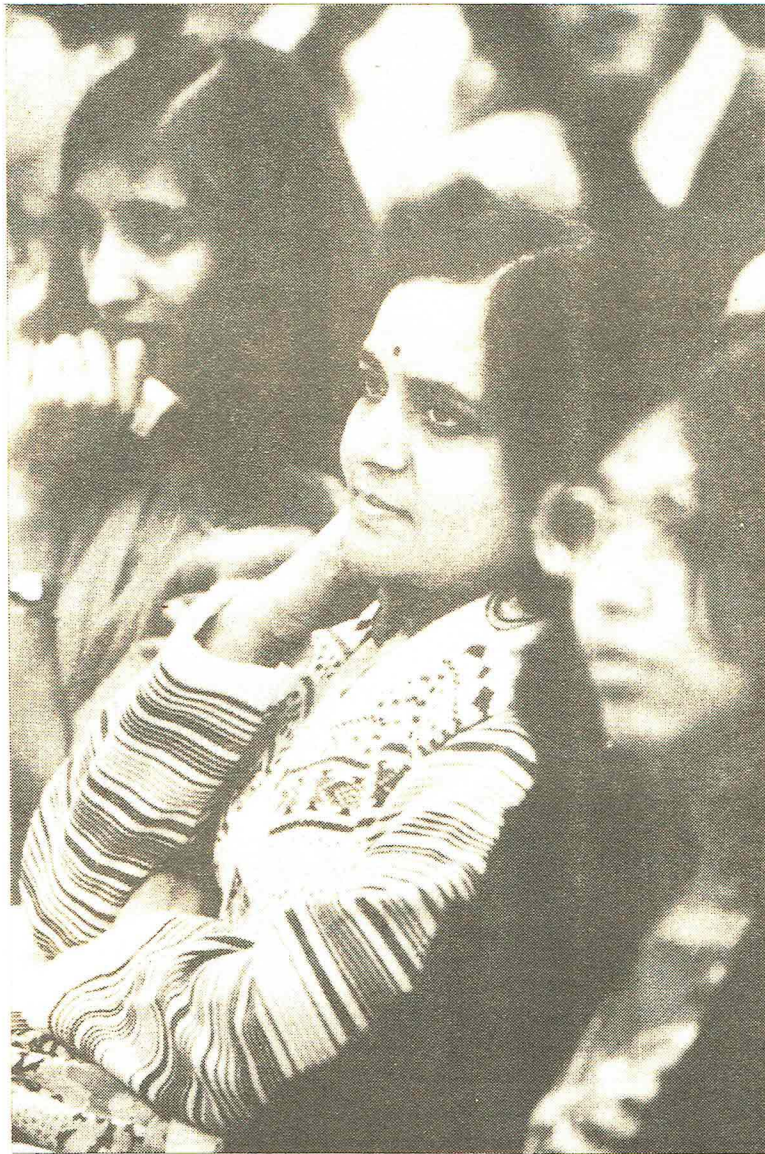
1977 was the third year of the Wilson/Callaghan Labour government. Operating within the framework of capitalism, the programme of reforms they were elected on had been ditched in favour of wage restraint and Denis Healey's package of public spending cuts. This policy of cutting workers' living standards was dressed up as a 'social contract' between the unions and the Labour government.

Log jam

The right-wing TUC leaders gave their full backing to Wilson's call for austerity and urged workers to 'give a year for Britain'. The 'left' trade union leaders failed to provide any alternative and in effect acted as apologists for the right.

Amongst the ranks of the trade unions and labour movement the initial mood had been 'give the government a chance'. After all, enormous sacrifices had been made in the battles against the Heath Tory government and now 'our people were in office'. There was a lull in the struggle on the industrial front.

However a burning anger with the policies of the Labour govern-



Most of the strikers were Asian women whose lives were transformed during the strike.

ment and a frustration that the road of struggle was being blocked by the trade union leadership was now developing.

Hence the ranks of the trade union movement clearly identified with the Grunwick struggle. Not only did they feel the responsibility to come to the aid of a weak and vulnerable section, but they also saw the possibility of Grunwick breaking the log jam facing the movement as a whole.

From the start solidarity was magnificent. It was clear that the strikers could not win alone and local workers responded swiftly. British Oxygen and Kodak workers cut off supplies. Heathrow workers blacked Grunwick's overseas work. However the key to the outcome of the dispute was always the post. The bulk of Grunwick's business was its mail order film developing. In November 1976, after pressure from the local Cricklewood branch, the Post Office workers' union, the UPW, declared Grunwick mail blacked.

The company was on its knees! A full victory was only days away. It was not to be. The misnamed National Association for Freedom (NAFF) now became Grunwick's advisors. In face of the threat of legal action and in return for a 'promise' from Ward to

cooperate with ACAS (the government's arbitration service) the UPW leaders quickly retreated. The blacking was lifted.

Of course Ward had no intention of reaching a deal through ACAS. Instead he used every trick in the book to obstruct and drag out the ACAS enquiry. He was later to denounce ACAS as the 'Association of Comrades for the Advancement of Socialism'!

"Grunwick could be all our tomorrows. It is a litmus test."

Keith Joseph.

Throughout the cold winter months the Grunwick pickets stuck it out. They were abused by the police and assaulted by management and scabs. The trade union leadership continued to promise full support. Len Murray, TUC general secretary, visited the strike headquarters and proclaimed that the TUC was "not just behind you, we are right alongside you". These were to remain just fine words.

But the strikers had in a few



Police brutality was a feature of the industrial struggles.

months become experienced and militant trade unionists. They organised regular mass meetings. Foreshadowing the wives' support groups of the miners' strike, meetings were held to involve the husbands and families of the women and tours arranged the length of Britain to rally support. In contrast, the APEX and TUC leaders were putting all their faith and hope in a legal and diplomatic solution.

ACAS was eventually to report in favour of the strikers but its recommendations were rejected by Ward who promptly began legal action against ACAS itself.

150 arrests

The strike became bogged down in a legal quagmire created by NAFF and Ward and walked into by the APEX and TUC leadership. In fact, things appeared to be petering out to almost certain defeat.

In an attempt to break the deadlock, the strike committee called for a week of mass pickets. It turned out to be the tactic that reignited the strike.

It was the brutality of the police that shocked the trade union rank and file and rallied hundreds and thousands to the Grunwick gates each morning. The first mass

ke try



dispute as it was to be in many later



"The workers united will never be defeated". Miners lead a march through Willesden after stopping the scab bus.

and crucially another 20 Grunwick workers now joined the strike.

Most important of all though, the Cricklewood postmen bravely defied their own national leadership and renewed the postal blacking. They were immediately suspended without pay by the Post Office. Mass action, culminating with the monster picket on 11 July, and trade union solidarity had brought the dispute again to the brink of victory.

The Tories and their press were foaming at the mouth. The Grunwick workers must be defeated at all costs. 'law and order must prevail'. The Commissioner of Police at one point warned the Home Secretary that he did not have sufficient forces to control the pickets. This glimpse of the potential power latent within the working class movement struck the fear of god into the Tories and the capitalist class.

Shamefully, Jenkins joined the chorus speaking of 'violent behaviour against the police force'.

Labour leaders

Rather than giving full support to the strikers in the same way that Tory MPs were aiding the Grunwick bosses, the whole approach of the Labour Government was to attempt to diffuse the movement. A special cabinet committee was set up which met daily. Its aim: stop the mass picketing, stop the blacking and divert the dispute back onto 'safe' legal channels and therefore certain defeat.

The Labour government and the right wing TUC leaders were not only concerned that the whole 'social contract' was now threatened by the dispute but that the situation if allowed to continue to escalate would get out of control and threaten the government itself.

The government put forward the proposal of a 'court of enquiry'. This 'court', under Lord Scarman, was to have no legal powers and therefore could not force Grunwick to implement any findings favourable to the strikers.

The right wing APEX and UPW leaderships, gratefully agreed to co-operate with the Government and undermine the action. They proceeded to place the most disgraceful pressure on the workers involved in

struggle.

The Grunwick strike committee were threatened with suspension from the union and the loss of strike pay if they didn't halt the mass pickets. The Cricklewood postmen were threatened with expulsion from the UPW and therefore the loss of their jobs if they didn't lift the blacking of the mail. (The leaders of the Cricklewood postmen were later disciplined and shamefully fined up to £500 each by the UPW for taking this action).

Faced with this ruthless pressure from their own so-called leaders both strike committees voted narrowly to back down.

The APEX leadership had informed the strikers that if Scarman found in their favour, the pressure of 'public opinion' would

"When they talked of the power of the unions, I listened but I didn't really believe. Now I see that power."

Mrs. Jayaben Desai, strike leader.

force Ward to back down! Indeed Scarman's Enquiry supported many of the strikers' demands. Not surprisingly, it was quickly rejected by Ward.

However it had served its purpose and undermined the action. The strike committee tried to resurrect the mass pickets but the action of the leadership had taken the momentum out of the dispute. There were still large turn-outs of 5000 and 8000 in October and November. But the police gained their revenge for their humiliation on 11 July and the pickets were ruthlessly smashed up with many arrests and injuries. 243 pickets were taken to hospital on 7 Nov alone.

In desperation six strike leaders went on hunger strike on the steps of the TUC and were promptly suspended from APEX.

The strike was officially called off in July 1978 after nearly two years of struggle. These heroic workers had been beaten not by George Ward, NAFF, or the police but by their own trade

union leadership.

The main responsibility must be laid at the door of the Labour and TUC right-wing. But the 'lefts' on the TUC failed to differentiate themselves from the right and offered no positive alternative strategy to win the dispute. Their position was in effect 'don't rock the boat' and cause difficulties for the Labour government.

A major influence on the running of the dispute was the Brent Trades Council under the leadership of a young radical lawyer, Jack Dromey (now a leading official in the TGWU) and a number of Communist Party members. The Trades Council leaders undoubtedly gave invaluable advice and a certain direction and backbone to the strike committee. But they also built up enormous illusions in the 'left' trade union leaders.

The key to their strategy was to rely on these leaders for a solution to the dispute. Because of this, in the closing stages they failed to put the preparation into organising a direct appeal to the electricity, gas, and water workers to cut off Grunwick's supplies.

But the effects of the strike were long-lasting and immense. Grunwick strikers inspired a whole series of revolts in non-union sweat shops the length and breadth of Britain.

The concrete unity on the picket line of Asians and white workers was a major factor in undermining the racist poison of the National Front who had picked up some support at that time.

The thousands who participated were radicalised, and learnt important lessons about the role of the state and the role of the leadership. Grunwick sped up the shift to the left in the trade unions and Labour Party that took place in the late '70s.

It was the prelude to the enormous movements of the fire-fighters, Ford workers and public sector workers against the government's wage restraint policy.

11 July 1977 will be forever ingrained in the consciousness of the movement as a great victory, a day of solidarity, but also a glimpse of the future. When the labour movement is fully mobilised no power on earth will stand in its way.

Diary of a strike

23 August 1976. Grunwick strike begins. First picket.

2 Sept. Grunwick sacks the 137 strikers who have now joined APEX.

1 Nov. Union of Post Office Workers (UPW) blacks Grunwick mail.

4 Nov. Under threat of legal action UPW leaders lift blacking.

13 June 1977. First mass picket. 84 arrests.

15 June. Cricklewood postal workers unofficially black Grunwick mail.

23 June. Miners support picket. Arthur Scargill arrested.

30 June. Labour government announces Scarman Court of Inquiry.

11 July. 15,000 picket and 20,000 join demonstration. Factory sealed off for duration of picket.

29 July. Postal Workers vote to end blacking. Strikers vote to call off next mass picket.

25 Aug. Scarman report calls for union recognition and reinstatement while criticizing the mass picket and postal blacking.

31 Aug. Grunwick rejects Scarman report.

6 Sept TUC Congress unanimously agrees to step up campaign against Grunwicks.

17 Oct. Mass picket 5000 strong.

7 Nov. Mass picket 8000 strong.

21 Nov. Four members of strike committee go on hunger strike on steps of TUC Headquarters.

14 July 1978. Strike committee announces strike over.

INDIA The agony of a dying system

THE MASSACRES of bus passengers by Sikh 'Khalistan Commandos' in Punjab and Haryana point to the growing crisis gripping India. Workers and peasants of all communities are once again the victims of the incapacity of parasitic Indian capitalism and its corrupt political agents to hold the country together.

It is little more than two years since the widely acclaimed 'Punjab accord' signed by Rajiv Gandhi and Sant Longowal, which was naively expected to lessen communal tensions and exorcise the danger of the establishment of a Khalistan (independent Sikh state).

In fact the 'accord' was only a cheap trick. None of its concessions were ever implemented: neither the establishment of Chandigarh as state capital of Punjab alone (at present shared with Haryana); nor a greater share of river waters; nor a public inquiry into the slaughter of up to 10,000 Sikhs in the communal riots of November 1984; nor even the release from detention of hundreds of Sikh youth.

Repression

The 'moderate' Akalis who signed it and formed the Punjab state government were left naked, branded as collaborators with a central Government which had no answer to terrorism other than continued brutal repression. The Akali Dal eventually split, lost control of events and was finally dismissed from office.

Neither the military storming of the Golden Temple in June 1984, nor the fraudulent 'accord' of 1985, nor its tearing-up through the dismissal of the state government and the reimposition of dictatorial 'President's rule', have solved anything. The rate of communal murders—rising sharply, from ten per day before the latest massacres—is worse than

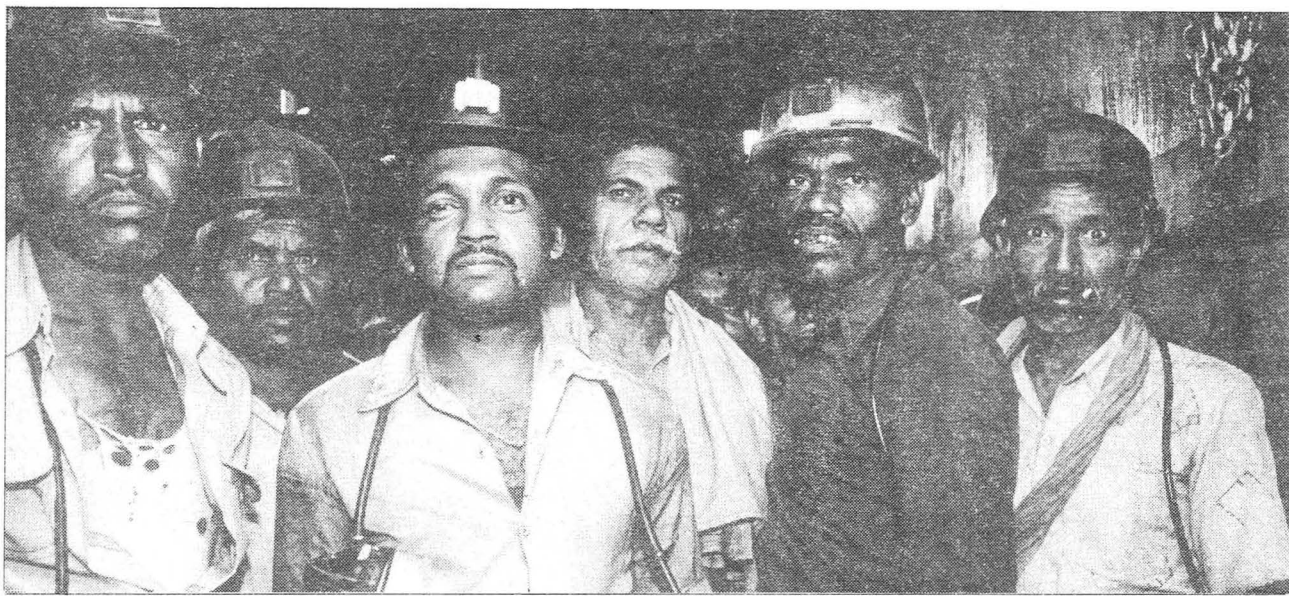
By Martin Riley

ever.

The Sikhs find themselves under the doubtful protection of unstable and murderous communalists, who prey on their legitimate grievances. Their strategy is to destroy the harmonious relations that have traditionally existed between the workers and peasants of both Sikh and Hindu communities in Punjab; to drive Hindus out of Punjab, and commit ever more monstrous atrocities in the hope of provoking new pogroms which would stampede the Sikhs throughout India into Punjab. Thus the demographic foundation could be prepared for a Khalistan.

The complete collapse of Rajiv's Punjab policy is a measure of the spectacular loss of authority of his government. In December 1984, in the wake of Indira's assassination, on a wave of sympathy and wild expectations, he was swept to power with a four-fifths majority. The starving masses believed 'Mr Clean' would 'take India into a 21st Century' free from poverty and corruption.

The Indian Marxists alone kept their heads: 'Under Rajiv and his politically brainless business friends, there is absolutely no reason to expect the stability and sense of purpose that eluded the last three governments....The problems of society which erupted in riots, pogroms, strikes, mass agitation, assassinations—and freak election results too!—remain unchanged. For Indian capitalism, this is a



In the solidarity of the workers' struggle, communal divisions can be overcome.

hollow victory which solves absolutely nothing.' (*Indian Left Review*, January 1985).

The unending saga of terrorist outrages and of communal bloodbaths testify eloquently to the bankruptcy of Rajiv's government. There are dangerous communal tensions in every corner of India. Hundreds were killed in recent Hindu-Muslim communal riots in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh. The alienation of the Sikhs in Punjab and the Gorkhas in West Bengal could in future tear the army wide open (since the army is largely made up of troops from both these communities) and open the door to India's break-up.

Assam

The next 'accord' to collapse will probably be that of Assam, where Rajiv irresponsibly conceded the state government's right to deport four million Bengalis.

These tensions are rooted in the failure of capitalism to solve the urgent needs of society. 61 per cent of the Indian

population remain illiterate, and 64 per cent suffer from malnutrition.

Above all, the government of 'Mr Clean' is exposed today as being just as dirty as its predecessor. Ironically, the only Minister who had seemed to justify the new Government's claim to fight corruption, former Finance Minister V.P. Singh, is now in disgrace for taking the 'crusade against corruption' a little too seriously! He was hastily switched to the Defence Ministry—where he unearthed some new scandals!

In just one of these cases, which has rocked the Government, it was revealed that a bribe of nearly \$50 million was paid by the Swedish arms manufacturer Bofors into the numbered Swiss bank account of an anonymous middleman linked to Rajiv's government, to fix a lucrative deal. Similar bribery has been exposed in the case of a West German submarine transaction.

The Congress(I) has split wide open. V.P. Singh was sacked and reviled for bringing these crimes to light. Cabinet Ministers

have branded him a 'traitor', and compared him to 'Judas' and 'Satan'! Singh (himself a big landlord and powerful Congress boss) has recently linked up with the gangster trade-union leader Datta Samant in Bombay and called demagogically on "the working class to fight against those big capitalists who are swindling the country".

Split

On the other hand, 70 Congress(I) MPs who support the faction of Rajiv's cousin, dismissed Minister Arun Nehru, have called on Rajiv to resign. The split has even pitted Rajiv in an open war of words against outgoing President Zail Singh, who was for a time publicly rumoured to be considering dismissing Rajiv from office.

Rajiv has dabbled in foreign-policy adventures in an attempt to silence criticism and divert attention. A few months ago he irresponsibly risked war with Pakistan by ordering a build-up of troops on its borders. More recently he made the hollow gesture of air-lifting supplies to Jaff-

na, not only as a warning to Colombo against the destabilisation threatened by its policy of genocide against the Tamils, but also to curry favour with Hindu chauvinism.

Since his election in December 1984, Rajiv's Congress(I) has lost every state election: in Punjab, Assam, Mizoram, Kerala, West Bengal, and now even in Haryana, in the previously 'solid' Hindi heartland. Only by switching sides, and supporting the Farooq Abdullah government it had previously dismissed, did it manage to share power as a junior partner after the elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

In last month's elections in Haryana, the representation of Congress(I) in the 90-seat Assembly dropped from 61 to five! The Chief Minister Bansi Lal, who seven months ago won 98 per cent of the votes in a by-election, was defeated! This debacle came in spite of the most frenzied efforts by Rajiv, who was prepared to risk new turmoil in Punjab by dismissing its state government in the vain attempt to appease the Hindu communal vote in Harya-



THIS TRIBUTE to Nimrod Sejake's role in the workers' struggle in the 1950s recently appeared in *New Nation*, a mass-circulation weekly in South Africa with a mostly black readership.

It makes only one mistake when it suggests that the 1957 Treason Trial brought Nimrod's activities to an end. Labour movement activists in Britain, Europe and the USA, where Nimrod has continued to campaign in support of the workers' struggle and socialism in South Africa, know otherwise.

In exile, Nimrod is a co-ordinator of the

Southern African Labour Education Project (SALEP), which campaigns to build direct links between workers in South Africa and internationally, and to support the struggle of South African workers to overthrow capitalism and apartheid.

The photo (above) shows Nimrod greeting James Motlatsi, president of the SA National Union of Mineworkers, at an LPYS lobby of Congress House in July 1986 calling on the TUC to campaign for workers' sanctions against the Botha regime.

Nimrod Sejake: the man who made bosses tremble

WORKING CLASS LEADERS

NIMROD Sejake was probably one of the most feared trade unionists in management circles. He supported militant action against bosses and seldom hesitated to call workers out on strike for higher wages and better working conditions.

Between April and September 1955, Sejake led hundreds of workers out on strike. He was arrested and together with 78 others, was charged with 'inciting' African Lamps workers.

GUILTY

They were found guilty and fine £10 each. The workers won their appeal against the sentence and had their fines reduced to £3.

But for Sejake, the more important victory was the wage increase workers had won as a result of the strike.

His fighting spirit inspired workers to take frequent strike action, and fellow trade unionists tried to persuade him to adopt a more conciliatory approach.



Clothing worker Graham Morodi, who helped organise metalworkers during his spare time during the late '50s, recalled: "We said to him he should not only use strikes

because nearly every week there were strikes.

"We said you should try some negotiation first ... the bosses might agree to some of

dedicated trade unionist, he built the Transvaal branch of Sactu's Iron, Steel and Metalworkers Union into a powerful organisation.

It was Sejake who ensured the continued existence of the union when its executive resigned, leaving him as the union's only organiser.

STRATEGIC

Having realised the strategic importance of the union in the metal sector, Sactu appointed another trade unionist, John Nkademeng, to help Sejake from 1955. Nkademeng is Sactu's current general secretary.

When Sejake was elected general secretary of this strategic union, it was a reflection of the respect he had earned among workers.

Sejake's career was also headed for a premature end—he was arrested with scores of other Sactu militants and tried for high treason in 1957.



The Sikh quarter of New Delhi: after the communal riots of 1984.

na. The election results gave a fitting reply to the crooks who had ruled Haryana. The state is notorious for bribery and defection even in India, already a playground for political gangsterism.

In 1980, to save itself from the possibility of dismissal by Indira Gandhi's newly-elected central government, the then Haryana Chief Minister and his entire state Government, which had been elected on the Janata ticket with 75 seats out of 90, switched allegiance overnight to Congress(I).

Again, following the 1982 state elections, the state Governor engineered an unconstitutional coup and appointed Congress(I), which had come second, to form a Government—which then secured an instant majority, increasing its representation from 36 to 63, by bribing eager defectors from the other parties.

In only two of the state elections—West Bengal and Kerala—did the masses have the chance to vote for a left alternative to Congress(I). In both cases the Communist Party (Marxist) and its allies scored brilliant victories. This shows the tremendous potential support for a socialist alternative even amongst the peasantry. (One factor in the victory of Lok Dal in Haryana was its promise to

write off the poorer farmers' debts and help the landless.)

It is a criminal mistake of the CPI and CPI(M) to refuse to put up an independent banner. In nearly every case they have participated in alliances with landlord, capitalist and even outright communal parties.

In West Bengal the CPI(M) offered the capitalist Janata Party a majority in 1977. It was only due to Janata's inordinate greed that negotiations broke down and they fought on separate lists. The workers and peasants eagerly seized on this rare opportunity to give the CPI(M) a massive overall majority! It has won three successive elections despite itself and is still in power ten years later!

Proletariat

Unfortunately it has refused to use this power to mobilise the masses against capitalism. Instead it has appealed for investment from the multi-nationals.

The degeneration of the nominally 'secular' Congress(I) into a party of vicious Hindu communalism proves once again that the proletariat is the only force in India capable of rising above communal divisions.

In the huge waves of strikes that have engulfed the working population over the last ten years—

including the current massive mobilisations of 600,000 state employees in Andhra Pradesh, 42,000 central government public works department employees, 8,000 central government doctors, 600,000 postal workers, 2,100,000 heavy industry public sector workers, and 1,800,000 railway workers—caste, religion and language barriers melt away in the solidarity of the picket line. The workers' parties must build politically on this rock-solid militant foundation.

The Campaign for a Workers' Front, launched by Marxists arguing for the workers' organisations to put up common candidates on a socialist programme, independent of alliances with capitalist/landlord parties, won a certain amount of sympathy within the big factories of Faridabad in Haryana.

These ideas will be put forward insistently within the Labour Movement in different parts of India at every opportunity in the fight to provide a way out of the masses' continuing nightmare of hunger, massacres and the threat of war.

Due to a translation error, incorrect totals of workers taking strike action were reported in *Militant* last week. The correct numbers are given above.—Editor

Behind Reagan's arms spending spree

BEHIND REAGAN'S drive to push military spending to new heights lies the vested interests of the arms manufacturers.

The arms industry has increased its political donations by 225 per cent since 1980, and the Pentagon's top 20 suppliers donated \$3.6 million to Reagan's 1984 election campaign. It has a network of supporters among the military top brass, in the Pentagon and within the heart of government.

Reagan's campaign was coordinated by the director of Litton Industries, an important arms company. Defence Secretary Casper Weinberger resigned as president of the military construction firm, Bechtel Corporation, in order to join the government.

Another former Bechtel president is George Schultz, Reagan's Secretary of State.

The US administration spends \$800 for every citizen on arms every year. A Senate committee estimates that 169 companies have been making up to 200 per cent profits on their military orders,

while the average rate of return for America's top 500 industrial companies has not exceeded 14 per cent over the last decade!

With \$3 trillion worth of orders attached to the Star Wars programme, there are now even richer pickings for the military/industrial complex.

Small wonder that industrial giants are increasingly concentrating on arms production at the expense of their traditional operations. General Motors closed 11 auto plants in 1986, and has invested the proceeds in the \$620 million of Star Wars contracts it has won in the last three years.

That is the logic of a crazed economic system: cutbacks in the production of useful commodities in favour of more and more waste of resources on means of destruction which would wipe out all industry, science and technique, and the working class too, if they were ever used.

By Jeremy Birch

Class struggle 'outdated'?

DESPITE THE claims of the 'new realists' that class struggle is a thing of the past, the findings of a report published by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions show the opposite.

During 1986 and the early months of this year more than 200 trade unionists throughout the world

were murdered for their union activities. Some 4,500 were imprisoned.

The report reveals that there has been an increase in the repression of trade unionists in recent years. It tells of abductions, torture, invasion of union offices and death threats against officials and union activists. 55 countries are cited:

South Africa holds the record with around 3,400 arrests.

Britain also gets a mention. The report refers to the "most outrageous attack" on British unions: the ban on union membership at GCHQ.

By Soraya Lawrence

Irangate exposure

The 'other' US government

THE TV COVERAGE of the Irangate hearings has been like a soap opera. It seems to have made Colonel Oliver North a star.

By Roger Shriver

The real lessons have been hidden. US capitalism is prepared to go to enormous lengths to defend its interests worldwide and even within the United States. But the last people you can expect to show the dangers of these actions, even to American workers, are politicians from America's two capitalist parties.

Just look at some of the dirt which has come to the surface. The scandal started when the secret arms deal with Iran, Reagan's public enemy number one, came into the open.

The deal helped free US hostages in Beirut, but more importantly it gave a secret income to be diverted to the murderous contra forces fighting the revolution in Nicaragua.

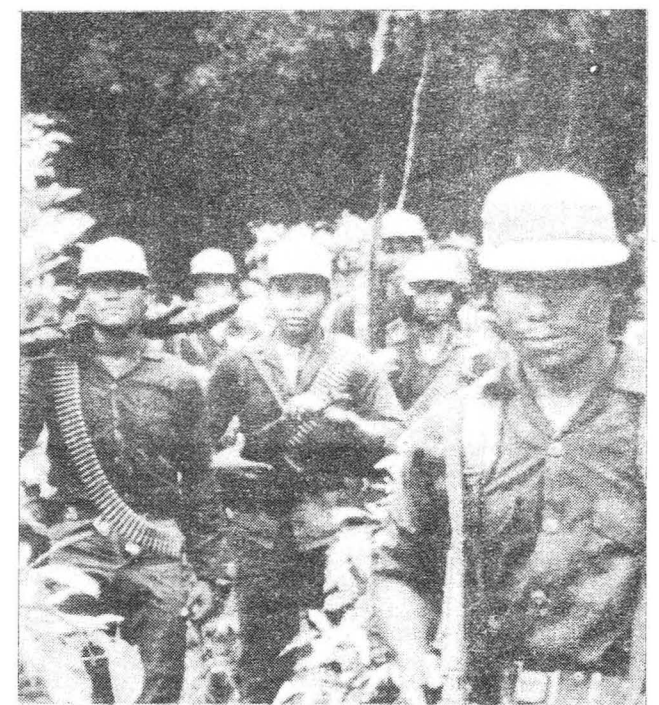
North admitted the existence of a secret team within the CIA, a 'government within a government', a permanent self-financing body which could fund overseas operations without Congress poking their noses in.

Money from arms sales and other privately acquired finance was stored in Swiss bank accounts and had already been used for other covert activities in Afghanistan, Angola etc. North helped set up a private network of planes, ships, warehouses and Swiss bank accounts to get funds for the contras.

North claimed he had promised Iran that the US would be willing to overthrow President Hussein of Iraq and 'protect' the Khomeini dictatorship in Iran from the Soviet Union. This from a government which now has a provocative build up of ships in the Gulf with their guns pointed at Iran.

One source of slush funds was the Saudi Arabian government. Nicaragua was no military threat to a country 12,000 miles away, but the reactionary Saudi government cooperated to get arms for their own purposes.

The British secret service dirty tricks department were also implicated, providing Irish passports to



Right-wing Contras are stepping up their terror raids in Nicaragua with arms and money from their backers in the Reagan administration.

help US officials tote round the Middle East for funds.

North himself helped plan other international terror campaigns such as the bombing of Libya, the invasion of Grenada, and the forcing down of an Egyptian airliner after the Achille Lauro kidnappings.

The secret CIA is nothing new. A radical pressure group has exposed some dealings of this 'privatised' agency—including smuggling tons of cocaine into the States to raise money for a private anti Sandinista army!

Back in the 1970s, Air Force general Secord is alleged to have bought arms from the US government at cost price, and sold them to Middle Eastern allies at a profit. That profit was transferred into the 'secret team' which offered arms to the right winger who was then dictator of Nicaragua, Somoza. They also offered to assassinate Sandinista oppositionists. All this was contrary to official US government policy.

US imperialism often bullies third world countries to safeguard its interests. But North also helped write a plan to suspend the US's own constitution!

American state and local government would be ousted and the country put under martial law in the event of a national crisis such as war or insurrection—including, presumably, general strikes. US capitalism is preparing itself for big class battles when recession reappears.

The congressional inquiry has only uncovered part of this. The two parties in Congress, Republicans and Democrats are capitalist twins. The Democrats wanted at first to prove that Reagan knew the details of the Irangate deal. That is a secondary issue. Whether Reagan is guilty, innocent or guilty but insane, his administration are up to their necks in this international gangsterism.

Now the Democrats don't even want to push this question in case they damage the presidency! They do not in any case disagree with Reagan's fight against the Nicaraguan revolution—only with some details of how he goes about it.

A socialist party based on the working class would expose the hoodlums who try to run the world in big business interests, linking the foreign adventures with the threat to democracy and workers' rights in the USA.

Some congressmen have exposed North's private profit from his deals such as buying snow tyres and food with blank cheques from the contras, but the real questions have not been asked. Popular distrust of capitalist politicians gives North the chance to look like a hero bucking the 'system'.

The US labour movement should highlight the corruption and anti-democratic nature of capitalist rule, to show the need for a socialist party based on the working class.

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 Hepscoth Rd, London E9 5HB.

□ **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 Hepscoth Rd, London E9 5HB.

□ **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.

Condolences to Mr and Mrs Muxlow, Audra and family on the death of John. From Nottingham and Lincoln Militant supporters.

Militant meetings

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

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

○ **Southampton** Marxist discussion group. Wednesdays 12.30pm. 7 Goodwin Close, Millbrook, Southampton. Creche provided. Thursdays 7.30pm. Tel 786879 for details.

○ **Cricklewood.** Wednesday 29 July. Anson Primary School, Anson Rd, NW2, 7.30pm. Child care facilities available.

○ **Mansfield.** Monday 20 July. Mansfield Library Lecture Theatre, 7.15. Speaker: Nick Wrack.

○ **Battersea.** 21 July 7.30pm. York Library Hall, Wye St (off York Rd), Battersea. (Nearest station Clapham Junction) Speaker Tony Cox.

○ **Ripley.** 21 July

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

Skeleton service

Dear Comrades,

Two or three months ago my dad had to go to hospital for a minor operation on his prostate gland, but was told he would have to wait three weeks for the operation because of the waiting list. In the meantime, he was put on painkillers.

My mother has back-trouble and the doctor has

said she has to go to hospital, but there are no spare beds so she has also been put on painkillers.

It's disgusting, this is Nottingham, where the Queen's Medical Centre, a relatively new hospital is standing with half its wards empty.

Yours fraternally
Bill Buchanan
Gedling Labour Party

Dear Comrades,

It was reassuring to read that the ruling class don't let cutbacks prevent them from bailing each other out, in this instance, millionaire adventurer Richard Branson.

Not only were the RAF on the alert to save this bored millionaire, but a luxury suite in a top hotel was laid on to ensure his speedy recovery.

Contrast this to a 15 year old lad who was found unconscious in a local park with a can of butane gas by his side. Two security guards immediately phoned the ambulance and the police. After 45 minutes and no sign of either, they phoned the fire brigade who arrived within minutes. They brought the lad back to consciousness however, by the time the ambulance arrived, one hour and 35 minutes later, he was

unconscious again.

The boy died on the way to hospital. One of the security guards who had witnessed all this was visibly shocked asking how many lives these cutbacks would continue to take before something would be done to stop them.

Yours fraternally
Ann Lynch
Drumchapel, Glasgow



Ambulances frequently arrive at the scene of an accident an hour or more late.

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

Arrested for defending himself

Dear Comrades,

Recently 150 people attended a meeting called by the Newham Monitoring Project in support of victims of racial attacks in the Forest Gate area.

One Asian family, after years of harassment by neighbours, was forced to move, only to face further harassment by the same family in their new home.

A West Indian man was stabbed in the face and hand by a gang, some of whom had been previously harassing his family. He was arrested for defending himself.

Speakers included councillors and council officers. The discussion centred around the defence of the community against racial attacks and the role the police had played in the area. One speaker said:

"The council has a lot of power; the police have a lot of power; but what do they do with it?"

The role of the police was taken up by a local policeman. However he tried to confuse the issue of racial attacks by comparing them to ordinary street crime, such as mugging. The meeting was not taken in by his dismissive attitude towards harassment. Calls were made for the police to be more accountable to the local community.

The Labour council must be committed to reverse all the Tory cuts, to carry out a programme of building houses and improving lighting on estates, as the former Labour council in Liverpool did.

Yours fraternally
David Kaplan
Newham NW Labour Party Young Socialists



Asian youths face police harassment.

Callous management

Dear Comrades,

The attitude of management at Leyland day BV which builds the Sherpa van recently hit a new low. Following the tragic death of a workmate in a motorcycle accident, it was agreed that three of his workmates could attend the funeral to represent the whole shop, yet come the morning of the funeral there were a number of absentees, and the three could not be covered, therefore they were told they could not go.

The superintendent who was more concerned about keeping the production line running even told one of the three workers to "grow up, your work mate's dead now". Word of all this quickly got round the shop floor and only when it seemed likely that there was going to be a stoppage did the superintendent concede and allowed the three to go.

Yours fraternally
Leyland day worker

Dear Comrades,

In view of Labour's defeat in the General Election I think we should be aware of the implications that a continuing Tory government will bring to us.

Firstly, being Scots, the issue of Poll Tax is paramount. Being unemployed will mean that I will pay £55 minimum per year in poll tax, not to mention the

implementation of the Fowler Review proposals, which will severely affect my benefits.

Secondly, being a part-time student means that I will not only lose a percentage of statutory benefits, but will not be supported financially to continue my studies. However, if all Labour controlled councils took the initiative of Liver-

pool we would be provided for. Strathclyde Regional Council not only do not take the stance of fighting the Tory cuts but in fact implement all cuts to the extent where we have no free travel, books, stationery or meals and are therefore in the position of accepting the situation or giving up our right to education.

Finally, being a prospective single parent, not only do I face being unable to provide the necessities of life for my child, I am unable to find creche facilities for my child so that I might be able to study or work. Creche facilities in my area are so bad that I have been advised to apply right now and perhaps in a year or two's time a place

would become available. We cannot accept the Tories lying down. We must all stand up and be counted and unite, working-class, trade unions and pressure groups, etc. to defeat the Tories.

Yours fraternally
Rosemary Ankers
Glasgow

The Warhorse and the Carpetbagger (from Alliance in Plunderland)

"The time has come" the warhorse said "to talk of many things; of PR stunts and balancing acts and audiences with kings; Of how to win on TV shows and play percentage swings."

"O voters, come along with us" wee David did implore: "A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk about the coming war. There's bunkers for the leaders and they've room for just two more."

"Just wait a bit" the voters called "before we have our chat. What about low pay, the old, the sick, jobs, crime and VAT, The schools, the bomb, and how on earth we'll ever get a flat?"

"No hurry" neighed the old war horse "let's kiss and all be friends. For I have moved among you all, to keep up with the trends. (We had to move the workers out: one must match means with ends).

"It really is not nice to see the classes locked in hate. Ban unions and we'd settle things by rational debate. (And if the underlings rebel, they're enemies of the state).

"To no-one is our way of life more precious than to me: The freedom and the holidays, the wine, democracy. But when the poor want more and more that threatens property.

"If we could choose we'd like to win in ballots fairly fought. But when we lose, say, Liverpool, we just go to the court. A mayor and horse instead of homes (the press is cheaply bought).

"If we could win we'd gladly play the democratic game. But since we can't we're quite prepared to govern, just the same. We'll join the strong; when things go wrong, there's someone else to blame.

"We'll balance left and right, or right and wrong, unfair and fair. When bosses make a profit, they should give their men a share—(And only pay their workers if there's anything to spare).

"You know we can't build homes for you, so make do with your shacks. We've done one thing: in Tower Hamlets we've cleared out half the Blacks. We can't make jobs but can make sure our friends need pay no tax.

"We think it's wasteful bursting warheads out in space (Let's give annihilation an acceptable face) No need to point bombs skywards if your goal's the human race."

"No more, enough" the workers cried and turned extremely red. "If you should win the power then we might as well be dead. The best thing you could do for us is run off home to bed.

"The time has come to cut the crap and organise instead." But answer came there none this time: for once no word was said. And this was scarcely odd because they had already fled.

By Julian Silverman (apologies to Lewis Carroll)

Poor hit hardest by Tory poll tax

In view of Labour's defeat in the General Election I think we should be aware of the implications that a continuing Tory government will bring to us. Firstly, being Scots, the issue of Poll Tax is paramount. Being unemployed will mean that I will pay £55 minimum per year in poll tax, not to mention the

implementation of the Fowler Review proposals, which will severely affect my benefits.

Secondly, being a part-time student means that I will not only lose a percentage of statutory benefits, but will not be supported financially to continue my studies. However, if all Labour controlled councils took the initiative of Liver-

pool we would be provided for. Strathclyde Regional Council not only do not take the stance of fighting the Tory cuts but in fact implement all cuts to the extent where we have no free travel, books, stationery or meals and are therefore in the position of accepting the situation or giving up our right to education.

Finally, being a prospective single parent, not only do I face being unable to provide the necessities of life for my child, I am unable to find creche facilities for my child so that I might be able to study or work. Creche facilities in my area are so bad that I have been advised to apply right now and perhaps in a year or two's time a place

would become available. We cannot accept the Tories lying down. We must all stand up and be counted and unite, working-class, trade unions and pressure groups, etc. to defeat the Tories.

Yours fraternally
Rosemary Ankers
Glasgow

National Union of Mineworkers' conference

NUM left stands firm

Delegates reject six-day week and pledge industrial action against the disciplinary code.

LAST WEEK'S NUM conference in Rothsay was probably the most important in the union's history.

By Militant reporters

Held against the backdrop of incessant government and management attacks and with the threat of privatisation hanging over the industry, the ruling class and the media hoped it would mark a defeat for Scargill and the left.

In his opening address Arthur Scargill set the tone by reflecting the growing determination that the NUM rank and file would fight back. Of the recent general election he said: "I have not come to this conference to mourn. Trade unionism means having the courage to use our ability to fight against overwhelming odds both industrially and politically."

He pointed out that he had not been elected president to negotiate or accept an extended working day or week. Referring to the resolution calling for industrial action against British Coal, he remarked: "I say if you are fed up with harassment and intimidation at local and area level you'll not only support these resolutions but translate them into positive action throughout the coalfields."

Most of the media attention focused on the passionately debated question of flexible working. Unfortunately the South Wales delegation, supported by the Scottish delegation, showed alarming signs of having caught 'new realism' throughout this debate and all the others.

By saying that there was no alternative to flexible working, by claiming that rejection of flexible working would play into the hands of the UDM they showed no stomach for the struggles upon

which the NUM has been built.

They rejected the argument that flexible working would increase output which then in a static coal market would inevitably lead to more job losses. However, they never explained why they rejected this argument.

They also called for the national executive committee to negotiate with British Coal. But as many speakers pointed out British Coal don't want to negotiate with the national union.

Instead British Coal want Area or pit agreements to further fragment the National Union of Mineworkers. As Sammy Thompson said: "I've never heard a working miner say yet he wants to work on Saturday."

Dennis Murphy from Northumberland stated "If it means conflict to retain five-day working, I'm prepared to take it on."

And Howard Wadsworth from Yorkshire pointed out "British Coal don't want flexible working at all pits, only the super-pits." He said

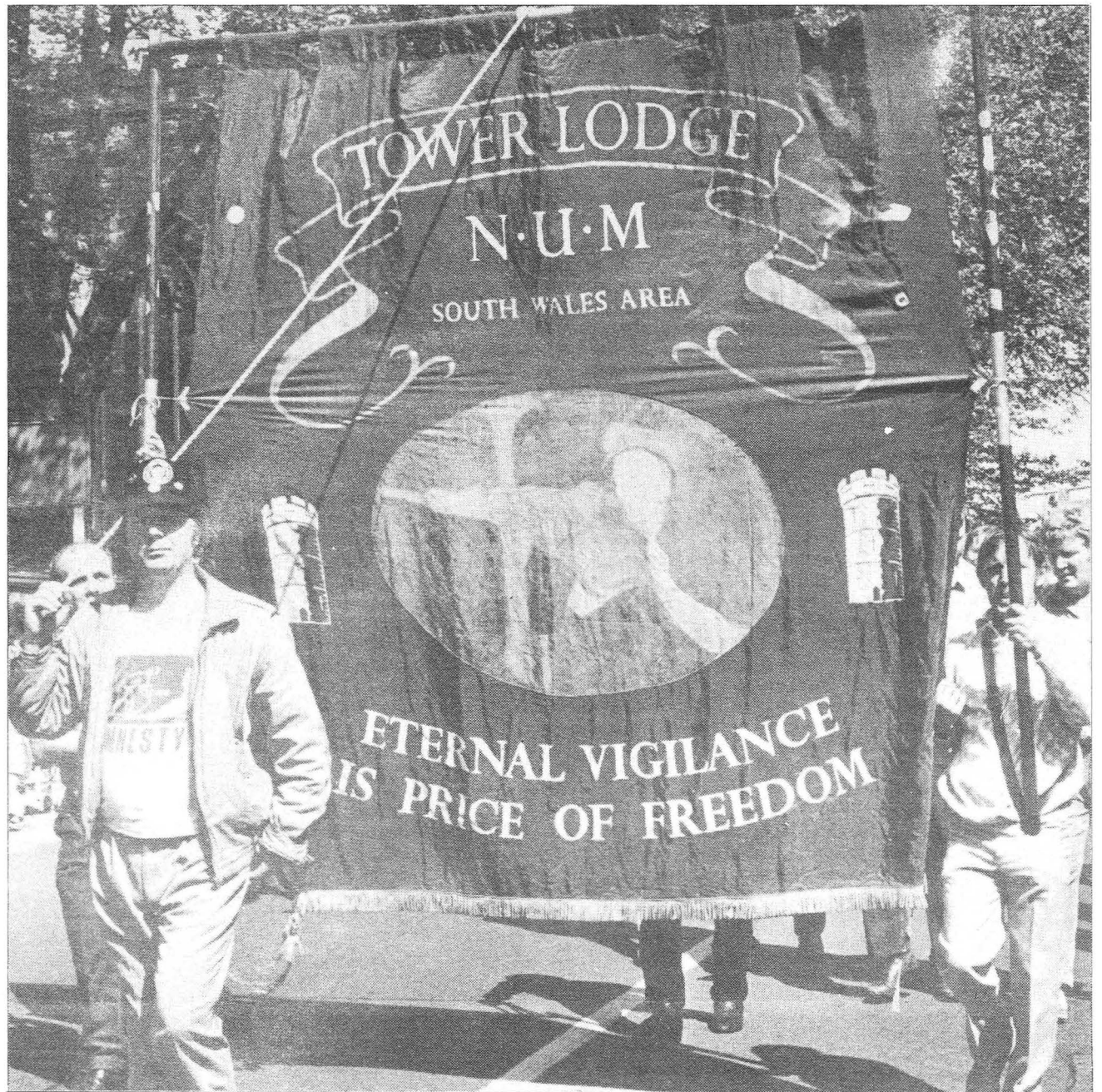
'Flexible work'

"They want flexible working at those pits which will stay open. The rest will stay shut."

Summing up the debate, Scargill pointed out that the NUM is in favour of Margam and Seaford, it is flexible working they oppose. He then stressed that British Coal wouldn't give specific details of closures resulting from flexible working. Instead all they would say was that those pits producing at over £42 a tonne would be shut.

British Coal see a static coal market for the next 10 years. Flexible working would increase output by 20 per cent. Therefore they must be planning to shut 31 pits and shed 40,000 jobs.

The acceptance of flexible working would cost many



Yorkshire miners' gala

more jobs and collieries than it would actually create. In a rousing finish Arthur Scargill stated: "They've gone so far and no further. There is no alternative, this union stands and fights."

Conference then voted by 49 votes to 22 to reject any form of flexible working and to call a ballot on the issue.

A resolution calling for a substantial wage rise and the consolidation of incentive earnings into basic grade rates was passed unanimously.

The management's new draconian disciplinary code was also unanimously rejected by support for an emergency resolution calling

for industrial action against it.

The mover pointed out that miners could now be sacked for alleged incidents unrelated to their employment and that men can only be represented at meetings with colliery managers by union men approved by that individual manager.

Sacked miners

An emergency resolution calling for a ballot over a series of one-day strikes for the sacked miners was passed. The resolution also demanded the launching of an extra-parliamentary campaign to emphasise the case

for support of victimised miners.

A resolution calling for a ballot on strike action against pit closures was also unanimously passed. Moving the resolution, Stan Pearce from Durham, affirmed: "We either fight back or slowly bleed to death."

Overall the conference maintained the NUM as a fighting left wing union. The burning anger and determination of the rank and file to fight back was shown.

However, some of the Area leaderships are clearly out of touch with their own rank and file. Misreading the situation totally, for all their rhetoric, they believe sur-

render to management is unavoidable.

But if the decisions of conference are campaigned upon and translated into action the NUM will be able to roll back British Coal's attacks.

This will also require the building of a mass rank and file Broad Left both nationally and locally. An excellent 25 miners attended the Broad Left meeting on Tuesday dinner time. But this is only the start. Broad Lefts need to be built in all areas.

Militant sellers were prominent throughout the week, selling 22 papers raising £77 for the fighting fund.

Defend North Derbyshire pits

EXACTLY ONE week to the day after the Tories were re-elected workers at three North Derbyshire pits received news "unofficially" that their pits were to be closed.

By a Renishaw Park miner

Renishaw Park, Ireland and Arkwright are the latest casualties of the 'non-existent' hit list that NUM president, Arthur Scargill told his members about before the 84-85 strike.

The same night British Coal dismissed the closures on both television and in the local press as pure speculation.

A meeting between British Coal and NUM representatives to

discuss the collieries' futures was scheduled to take place on 1 July at 1pm and finish at 3.30pm.

However at 3.25pm on the day of the meeting all workers at one of the collieries, Renishaw Park, received a photocopied letter which stated that in the meeting, which was still in progress, it had been decided that Renishaw Park would cease all developments and work the unit which has just been developed, after which the pit would close.

Copies of this letter had been seen at the colliery a full five days before the meeting took place, consequently all the efforts made by the union to gather information to contest the closing rumours were a complete waste of time, as British Coal/Maggie had already

decided they would shut the colliery.

Every pit has plans which detail 'future work and development. I have personally seen these plans for Renishaw Park, which has enough reserves to keep all its present workforce in full employment for over 10 years.

British Coal's argument that Renishaw Park would continue to lose money if it were to remain open are a complete fallacy. This year's loss has been caused entirely by bad geological conditions on its one current working unit, R12.

This unit has been dogged by poor conditions since its start, with the face men having to work in extremely dangerous and uncomfortable surroundings, in

an attempt to get the unit through its bad patch.

However, due to the Board's ludicrous bonus scheme, these men who are working twice as hard and risking their lives more than normally are forced to take £15-100 pay cut despite the extra effort they are making.

Low wages

Absenteeism, claim British Coal, has also been a major factor for the pit's bad showing. Perhaps the fact that face workers were actually earning more money on the club than they were for risking their lives on R12, may have been to blame too?

British Coal's area director said to union representatives at the

meeting that the pits would run for a further 15 to 18 months but if the workforce "rock the boat" by opting to go into the colliery review procedure then the pit would shut within six months!

The way I remember it the colliery review procedure was some of the corn thrown down by British Coal during the strike to reassure miners of their future, ie if you've got the reserves lads rest assured they will be mined to exhaustion.

This holding the gun of closure to the union's head indicates that British Coal may be somewhat embarrassed when the review board reveals that there are 10 and a half years' workable coal at Renishaw Park.

Industrial Reports

Life in the Civil Service

THE MOOD among civil servants in their industrial action is a product of an accumulation of anger at deteriorating conditions and at being in the front line of claimants' anger at Tory cuts.

Kevin Miles spoke to JIM THOMPSON and LYNDIA MURPHY, secretary and branch executive member of Ashington DHSS CPSA branch about the situation facing their members in Northumberland.

One week in Ashington social security office reveals some of the underlying reasons for the anger of civil servants.

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday:

Three fairly normal days. A few satisfied customers, a few doors slammed, a few muttered threats and a few doubts cast on the parentage of the staff.

Thursday:

A group of people arrived in the office and set about intimidating staff. They allowed their children to use the public area as a toilet (and that was not just puddles on the floor).

Friday:

A female clerk was attacked in the private interview room during what should have been a routine interview. There are no screens for protection. Both the clerk and the receptionist, who went to her aid, consider themselves very fortunate not to have been seriously injured.

Dirty work

When it comes to explaining why benefit is not payable, it will not be the Tory ministers responsible who face the abuse. It will be the clerical staff in the local offices. For doing the government's dirty work the pay ranges from £380 to £450 per calendar month for clerical staff.

And just look at these buildings—our members have to work in a slum. We're working in huts that were built during the war for the Bevin Boys. They've all got asbestos roofs. We've found birds nesting in some of the rooms. Recently when there was a leak in the heating system they couldn't even trace where the pipes went to.

Our branch voted by 31 votes to 22 for the strike. A lot of the SCPS members here are far from happy with their union. Many of them would rather be in the CPSA.

When we take action we find the claimants are very sympathetic. I've only heard one voice ever raised against us.

Merseyside mass picket victory

A THOUSAND strong mass picket last Monday and Tuesday in support of striking building workers at a site in Cantrell Farm on Merseyside, where a contractor, Odgen's are demolishing flats for Knowsley council, forced the police to withdraw and stopped scabs going in.

By Roger Bannister

Despite the fact that this project is funded under the government's urban programme, designed to aid the environment and employment in urban areas, Odgen's are recruiting the bulk of their labour on

the site from out of the Merseyside area, ignoring the massive unemployment in excess of 50 per cent in Cantrell Farm itself.

Three weeks ago the site steward requested that the national building trade agreement, in respect of working in bad weather be upheld. This agreement provides that workers should remain on site until 2pm and then be sent home if there is no improvement in the weather, receiving payment for the six hours' work.

A worker was sent home and informed on return to work the next day that he had "Dismissed himself."

The trade union members imme-

diately struck and the company recruited labour from off Merseyside to replace them. The site is picketed daily. On 6 July there was a turnout of approximately 250 workers, many employed by the local council, expressing solidarity in response to this picket. One car load of workers from Bradford refused to work and joined the TGWU on the spot.

The mystery surrounds the reason for the right wing Labour council in Knowsley giving this contract to Odgen's. Some years ago Odgen's demolished flats for the council on the Tower Hill Estate, a job which achieved national notoriety when debris from

the explosion caused serious damage to nearby pensioners' bungalows, leading to emergency accommodation having to be provided.

It is essential that the daily pickets receive full support and that pressure is also exerted on Knowsley council to terminate Odgen's contract, since a contract compliance policy, requiring contractors to uphold national agreements is enforced.

Management has been forced to offer to take back all the workers except TGWU convenor Mike Heard but the strikers are not prepared to accept this victimisation.

An uncertain T&G conference

"When Thatcher came to power in 1979 she said she was going to put Britain back on its feet. I didn't realise she meant it literally!" said delegate Colin Sowter in the debate on privatisation of public transport at last week's Biennial Delegate Conference of the Transport and General Workers Union.

By Ian Parker

Opposition to this policy, along with a strategy to fight back was passed overwhelmingly. At the beginning of the week, after initially refusing to accept the standing orders committee report conference changed existing policy, passing composite 11B calling for a statutory minimum wage of no less than two thirds the national average.

Delegates arguing for this pointed out that it wouldn't contradict free collective bargaining, which is still T&G policy, but would act as a safety net to raise the level of pay for the millions of working people on poverty wages.

This equally applies to the school leavers and unemployed youth being forced on to YTS. Conference recognised that these schemes were no solution to real jobs for youth but only served to undermine the jobs, pay and conditions of everyone.

Although there was opposition to YTS the only effective opposition given a Tory government was seen to be 100 per cent membership deals, trade union rates of pay and permanent jobs through union recruitment.

The recruitment of temporary and part-time workers is a major T&G campaign. Along with the issue of agency labour it provided one of the major debates of the week. Agencies provide the union with



TGWU general secretary and leading right winger, Welsh regional secretary George Wright. The right wing is making a bid to undermine the T&G's left wing stance. Photo: Militant

a large number of members and so conference had to be careful not to disassociate itself from T&G members forced to work for them.

It was felt that it should be left up to individual trade groups and factories etc to recruit or not, at the same time the union's Link-up campaign was re-emphasised.

On nuclear energy whilst accepting the argument for the closure of nuclear power plants, conference decided to hold back on any firm decision until the TUC report on the nuclear industry is complete.

The need for a policy of alternative employment and the use of alternative sources of power needs to be carefully explained, with a major campaign to the workers in the power industry in order to allay any fears they have of the union contributing to mass redundancies if nuclear power is to be phased out in the future.

Wednesday was the day

of Kinnock's "do or die" speech for union support on one member one vote in the selection of Labour MPs. Amid a huge media hype telling delegates which way to vote there was a mixed response.

There was a desire for a Labour government but not all delegates thought that changing the constitution of the Labour Party was the way to achieve it. This had been graphically illustrated in the debate on the general election.

Reselection

He got an ovation but because of loyalty to the Party rather than agreement with what he said. Indeed, his 45 minute speech dealt only briefly with one member one vote, despite its public preeminence.

These feelings were seen in the debate the following day. Ron Todd spoke in favour of OMOV. Although the T&G had campaigned for mandatory res-

election and the election of the leader, now, he argued, was the time for a "widening of the franchise".

He qualified this by saying that although he felt it would increase party democracy, the influence and participation of the unions in the Labour Party had to be maintained and strengthened.

The balance of the debate was in favour of OMOV, nevertheless composite 40, which called for maintenance of the status quo (ie. rejection of OMOV) was only defeated by 35 votes. The emotive plea of "Unite behind the leader of the party" just managed to tip the scales.

Resolution 399, calling for OMOV, was passed by 446 to 331, a majority of 115, with many of the delegates who voted for composite 40 also voting for 399 defending the status quo! The TGWU delegation to the Labour Party should ask themselves whether this is a clear mandate to

change the Labour Party constitution.

Once again the Executive reaffirmed its opposition to witch-hunts, bans and proscriptions. This was carried overwhelmingly. Although the decision maintains the T&G's policy of opposition this must be translated into concrete actions by the representatives of the union to the Labour Party, both at conference and on the LP national executive.

Over £700 was raised at the Militant Readers Meeting, where delegates heard Bill Mullins explain the way forward for Labour after the election. Mark Newman from the South African Labour Education Project explained what action the T&G could take in support of the South African workers. One hundred papers were sold and a number of delegates expressed a desire to find out more about the ideas of Militant.

Industrial Reports

Bosses make bank staff pay for debt crisis

WORKERS IN Midland Bank, especially those in the Clydesdale and Northern subsidiaries were stunned this week by a series of announcements by their employers and union leaders.

By a Bifu member

Sir Kit McMahon the ex-deputy Governor of the Bank of England now Chairman of Midland Bank, announced on 7 July a package of proposals only describable as the actions of an extremely alarmed man, who's position puts his finger firmly on the pulse of international capitalism.

The package which relegates Midland to bottom position amongst the major banks and was dubbed an act of desperation by the financial press, includes a £700m share issue and the selling off of their entire Scottish and Irish operations.

Why such drastic measures? The answer is simple. Midland is desperately trying to 'save up' for the inevitable non-repayment of the £4.3bn they lent in the 1970s to approximately 30 countries now in financial crisis.

The dramatic increase in the provision for non-repayment of loans by £916bn paid for by the asset stripping and share issue is being done for three main reasons; firstly to avoid massive balance sheet deficits over the next few years; secondly, to enable Midland to net a tax relief of £263m and thirdly to enable Midland to dump their Scottish and Irish operations without having to admit they're doing so because the economies are irrecoverable under capitalism.

By the end of the week both the existing management of Midland and the new management of Clydesdale and Northern Banks, the National Australia Bank had been to the financial press to say, as *Militant Finance Worker* had predicted in the latest

edition that the Branch Rationalisation Programme was only the start.

Sir Kit McMahon said that not only would the 3000 redundancies already planned go ahead along with compulsory redeployment of staff and the closing of branches but that he hoped to be able to sack more than 300 staff in the 21 regional head offices, forcing the remaining staff from all over the country to move to London's Docklands!

Yet BIFU issued a statement saying it was cautiously optimistic about the takeover, even though redundancies were to go ahead unchallenged. At the same time the national leadership of the union, in the middle of a pay campaign (which will come as a surprise to Midland workers reading), are balloting the membership on what sort of industrial action they should be balloted on.

Vote on ballot

Hopefully, the result of this will be a ballot on industrial action, an opportunity for the majority of staff already unionised and those who would undoubtedly join with us if a strong lead was given, to fire a warning shot at management over the redundancies and pave the way for a resistance to staff cuts and low pay.

Even if there is a majority for a ballot on strike action the union leadership has decided not to recommend a yes vote, a decision bitterly opposed by Broad Left supporters on the NEC. Against this background rank and file BIFU members in Midland Bank have drawn up the following demands:

- ★ No redundancies
- ★ Compensation for those who agree to move due to Branch downgrading
- ★ Minimum wage of £120 a week
- ★ Nationalisation of the banks and finance houses
- ★ Election of all full-time union officials.

Postal workers fight back

Liverpool

THE FIGHT to defend conditions in the Post Office is on. Liverpool Amalgamated branch made it clear at a mass meeting on Sunday that any attempt to force through new work conditions under the revised revision procedures (RRP) will be met with action.

RRP would mean reductions in the workforce and the casualisation of jobs. UCW members from Liverpool and branches around the north-west spoke to *Militant*.

THIS PROBLEM goes back a couple of years. Our union agreed to accept RRP on a trial basis only back in 1985 as part of a business efficiency deal.

The first office to try out

RRP was Leeds. It became clear that it was a major threat to our conditions and the Leeds branch had to go on strike in order to stop its implementation.

Leeds got marvellous support from other UCW branches around the country and eventually forced the Post Office to climb down. Our executive should have used that victory to stop RRP completely. Instead they fudged the issue.

Now the Post Office are trying to re-introduce it in Liverpool. At this year's UCW conference RRP was

rejected and the union executive was mandated to ballot for industrial action wherever the Post Office tries to force through revisions which have not been agreed.

Executive

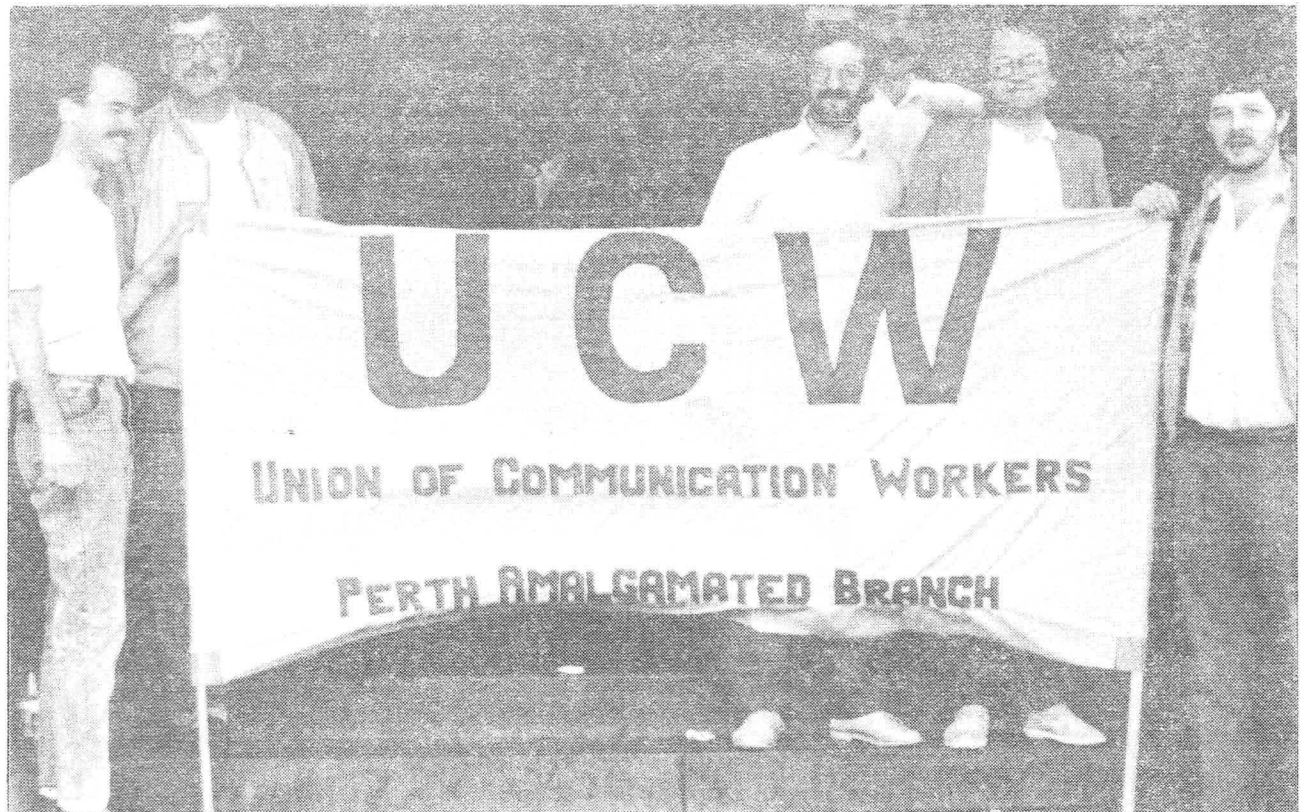
Unfortunately the executive is ignoring the conference decision and is putting pressure on branches to accept RRP. Alan Tuffin, the union general secretary, was invited to the mass meeting but could not make it.

The mass meeting passed

a resolution, with only five against, which is very critical of the executive committee. The resolution also committed us to ballot for industrial action if the Post Office does try to force RRP on us in Liverpool.

We are confident of getting support from other branches in the north west. The ball is now with the Post Office. Any rationalisation of working conditions must be at no cost to the members. If PO management try it on they will get a bloody nose.

By Mick Whale



Post Office workers at mass meeting in Liverpool.

Photo: Tina Carroll

Nottingham

A STRIKE in response to management provocation flared at Nottingham's head Post Office on Tuesday 7 July. Management wanted to casualise the head Post Office and ultimately want a casual outdoor workforce.

The bonus has been driven down, fluctuating between 93p and £4 a week over the last month when £15 to £20 was promised. As a result staff turnover has increased.

A union audit showed the need for an extra 3,500

hours a week over 80 jobs. At the moment the national growth of traffic agreement, which says the first delivery should be completed by 9.30am can only be done if staff take more than one bag out, using their own vehicles, which is illegal.

To provoke the situation and test the union response management brought the branch organiser from the second floor down to the third floor to tie a final bag whilst staff who normally did this and were available were not allowed to do so.

The organiser was suspended and when the shift went into the canteen

management told them to leave the building or they would call the police. Pickets went on and Wednesday's mass meeting agreed to stay out. The other Nottingham offices came out in support.

Demands

The union demanded: no victimisation; the lifting of the suspension; associate grades (part timers) to get first choice of permanent jobs. They pledged to defend all union and non-union staff who were out. Management demanded the right to have as many casuals as they wanted.

A return to work was

narrowly agreed at Thursday's mass meeting but there is still a lot of bitterness. The suspension was lifted and no disciplinary measures are to be taken against the union organiser. There is to be no victimisation and management are to look into bonus payments.

The staff are to work "sufficiently", which leaves open whether they will work as management directs or whether staff will follow the growth of traffic agreement, get the extra full time jobs and receive the promised bonus.

By Gary Freeman

Howards strikers have bosses on the run

AFTER FIVE weeks on strike the 200 sacked workers at Howard's of Ashton can now see chinks in management's defences. Successful picketing, solidarity action by the sister factories and lobbying of major customers like Marks and Spencer is beginning to pay dividends. The company has at last been forced to open negotiations with the union.

The strike action came as a

result of management attempts to cut wages by 15 per cent to £87 a week. But the company have made their intentions clear; "to bring the Ashton factory into line with other factories of the parent company." This means a further reduction to £77 a week.

Since the court ruling in the case against Ferodo, fought by John Tocher of the AEU, management can no longer impose a new,

worse pay and conditions contract. The loophole used by Howard's and an increasing number of employers around the country is to force the workers into strike action, sack them, then re-employ on the new conditions. Only the strength of the union stands between management and victory.

By their own admission management are 'losing a packet' over

the dispute, but they refused to accept a union compromise deal for a return to work. Instead they are gambling on the strikers being starved back to work.

Judging by the mood on the picket line and in the mass meetings this is a forlorn hope. As one picket said, "This weather is magic, but rain or shine we'll stay out till we win."

The desperation in manage-

ment's ranks can be seen by their actions in sacking or demoting some of their own managers and in their statements that the strike action will put other jobs in jeopardy. Even the YTS trainees have had their contracts terminated despite the fact that it costs the company nothing to keep them employed.

By Gordon Ross

Militant

NUM conference report

See page 13

The battle for Labour democracy

See page 5

Women and socialism

See page 7

Tolpuddle martyrs' march

Fight to defend union rights

153 YEARS ago the Tolpuddle Martyrs were transported to Australia for organising a trade union.

Thatcher's crusade for Victorian values aims to drive union rights back to those dark days.

In 1987:

★ eleven civil servants at GCHQ face disciplinary charges for supporting their unions' national industrial action;

★ the Tories want to extend the ban on union membership at GCHQ to 600 other civil servants in Whitehall;

★ the government has imposed pay settlements on teachers and civil servants which they and their unions overwhelmingly rejected;

★ the Tories have threatened to obstruct the payment of civil servants' union dues if they go on strike and want a no-strike deal with teachers' unions;

★ miners and printers stay sacked for standing by their unions and some have served prison sentences for this 'crime';

★ British Coal wants the right to punish workers for 'offences', even if they have been committed outside work and have not been proved in a court of law;

★ the next batch of Tory anti-union laws will abolish the closed shop, force unions to keep black-legs as members and set up a commission to encourage lawsuits against unions.

By Robin Clapp
Bristol South Labour Party

The Tories are ready to go to any lengths to defend their class. The unions stand in their way so they use the law and the state to try to bludgeon them into submission.

Many workers are asking how the Tory union-busters can be fought. Swish advertising campaigns and discussions with Tory ministers are not the answer.

When the Tolpuddle Martyrs were transported the unions were a weak force still in the process of being born. This did not sap their determination and self-sacrifice.

Today the labour movement is a mighty force, despite the Tories' attacks. The Labour and trade union leaders must return to the spirit of Tolpuddle and mobilise that force to defend union rights.

**No to no-strike deals!
Full support for all unions forced to defy anti-union laws!**

Fight for a Labour government committed to reinstate victimised workers and repeal anti-union legislation!

Then and now the bosses use the law to break the unions. Top: the Tolpuddle Martyrs. Bottom: arrest on the picket line at Wapping.



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Make cheques payable to *Militant*.

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.