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One law for the

rich... and one for the poor

LIBEL IS worth £500,000, a life is worth £10,000. So says the law.

Two legal cases gripped public attention last week. They showed the deep class divide in British justice.

By Tony Cross

The multi-millionaire ex-deputy chairman of the Tory Party, Jeffrey Archer, was awarded the highest ever damages in British legal history. The *Daily Star* was judged to have done half a million pounds worth of harm to his reputation.

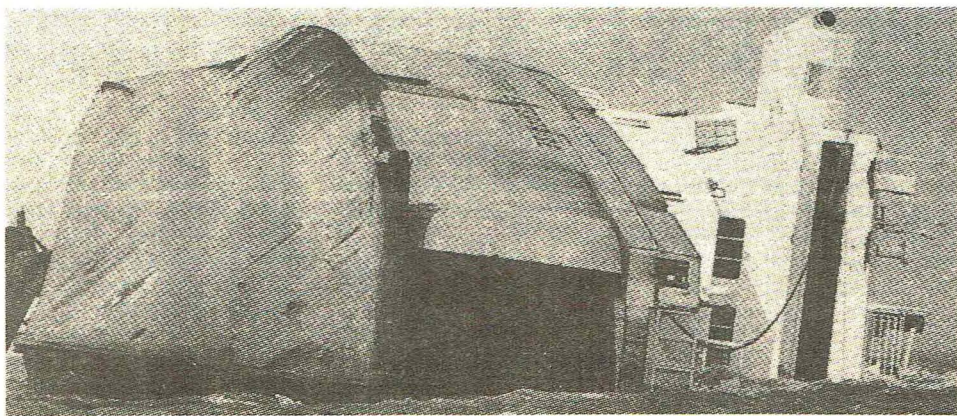
But parents who lost a child when the *Herald of Free Enterprise* sank, will get as little as £10,000. A child is not a 'breadwinner'. So ship-owners are only legally obliged to pay £3,500. That's the profit and loss mentality of the bosses' law.

(Sue Haney on the Zeebrugge enquiry, see page 2)

Ferry-owners, P&O have 'generously' agreed to pay more. But not one of the Zeebrugge victims is likely to receive more than a fifth of what Archer got.

P&O will carry on raking in the millions. The compensation will be little more than 'operating costs' to them, after a year of record profits. They haven't even been forced to make their ferries safe. That was ruled out on 'commercial grounds'. In other words, it would cost too much!

"Yes, P&O would take a drop in revenue of approximately 25 per cent per ship... a drop in profit of £25-30 million," says Sue Haney, who has been fighting for justice for the Zeebrugge victims. "So what? My brother, who worked on the *Herald*, died along with 187 other



The *Herald of Free Enterprise* lying outside Zeebrugge harbour.

people. That is the price of 'Free Enterprise' today." The law was kinder to Jeffrey Archer than it was to Sue Haney and others like her. Mr. Justice Caulfield in his summing up revealed his own class outlook very clearly.

Profitable

The 73-year old judge even admitted to 12 "mistakes or inaccuracies" in his closing remarks. But Archer walked away from court with £500,000 to dis-

tribute as he sees fit.

If Archer hadn't already been stinking rich, he couldn't have afforded to start a libel case in the first place. His costs were £670,000.

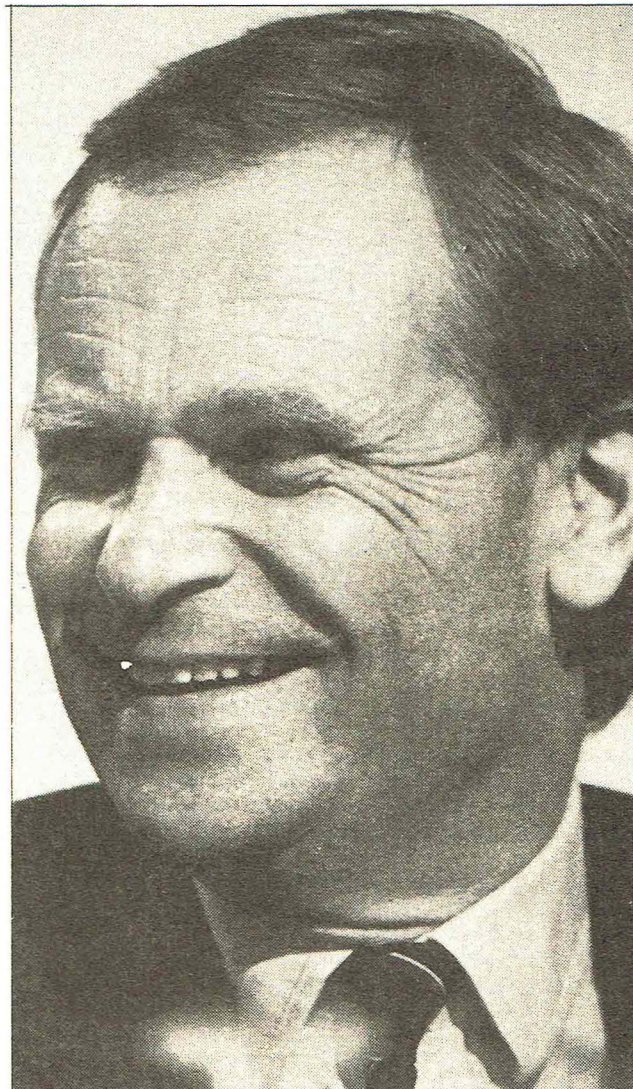
Those of us who don't have his money, can't get legal aid to fight a libel case. And those of us with no high-flying career would be judged to have a character important enough to be defamed.

Last Sunday, the Archers had a garden party. Champagne flowed. Mrs Archer

was reported to be radiant and all the other nice things Mr Justice Caulfield said about her.

The visitors' list was like a roll-call of enemies of the working class—Michael Edwardes, Norman Lamont, David Owen... One guest was the man who appoints Britain's judges, the Lord Chancellor, Sir Michael Havers.

The victims of *Free Enterprise* don't have such powerful friends. And they don't have so much to celebrate, either!



Jeffrey Archer wins £500,000 damages while Zeebrugge victims get £10,000

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Not so booming Britain

THE RECENTLY announced May trade figures explode the myth continually fostered by the Tories, that they have turned Britain back into a powerful force in the world economy. 'Booming Britain' is already threatening to go bust.

The 'rosy days' of the recent relative growth in production and investment, fuelled by a consumer credit boom and the U-turn in the Tories' public spending controls, are about to come to an abrupt end.

Conveniently for Thatcher and Lawson, these May figures were delayed until well after the June election. The major problems they indicate for British capitalism, would not have fitted in with the electoral propaganda about steadily rising prosperity.

The March budget predicted that Britain would move into deficit on its trade payments with the rest of the world by some £2.5 billion. This would result from the consumer boom sucking in manufactured imports, and from the decline in oil revenues.

But the Tories boasted that this deficit could easily be handled, and would soon disappear as their 'free market' economy expanded manufacturing and service exports.

Up to the election it seemed they were right. Far from moving into deficit, there was a surplus of £760 million in April. The devaluation of sterling against other currencies, which the once tightly monetarist Tories have presided over, appeared to have succeeded in making British exports more competitive abroad.

Now the real position of the economy has been uncovered. The May figures reveal a £1.2 billion deficit on trade in goods (including oil) in just one month. A surplus was achieved on 'invisibles' like banking, tourism and shipping of £600 million, but the resulting monthly payments deficit was still a near record £600 million.

If that was repeated for every month of the year, the annual deficit would reach £7 billion, three times the budget forecast. It probably will not be as big as that, as oil export prices have crept up to \$20 a barrel. Although in the next few years North Sea oil's contribution to the economy will decline. And since 1979 almost alone, it has saved Thatcher from the full force of the industrial devastation she has wreaked.

The May figures show clearly that British capitalism is not paying its way. In order to meet its overseas creditors, the government and the City will be compelled to reverse the 'credit' boom, by raising interest rates and/or further devalue sterling.

The result could be rising inflation, as the increased cost of imported semi-manufactured and consumer goods forces up domestic prices. Inflation is already running at 4.2 per cent, faster than all Britain's major competitors. Raw material prices are also rising (over 30 per cent in the last year).

And rising interest rates will choke off the limited improvement in investment and production over the last four 'boom' years. As it is manufacturing investment is still below the 1979 level after eight years of Thatcherism.

It is evident that the Tories switch from monetarism, the credit boom and the pre-election spending bribes, have done nothing to really halt the long-term, irreversible decline of British capitalism's vital manufacturing base. Since 1980 imports have grown 52.5 per cent, but exports by only 25.8 (16.9 excluding oil). While manufacturing output has still not reached its 1970-74 level, under the old Heath Tory government. On this basis, no economy could 'boom' for long.

With all the tell-tale signs of a coming world economic downturn, the prospects for British capitalism are still bleaker. As all the major capitalist economies move into stagnant production, world trade is threatened by a major trade war. The American Congress has passed a trade bill to force countries with 'excessive' surpluses with the US to reduce them by 10 per cent, or face automatic retaliation. That threatens Japan and West Germany and would provoke them into action against US goods.

With the lack of competitiveness of its industry, as evidenced by the trade figures, a further decline in world trade would make it doubly difficult for relatively weak and highly trade dependant British capitalism, to avoid sinking into slump.

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Zeebrugge whitewash

THE JUDICIAL inquiry into the sinking of the *Herald of Free Enterprise* was predictable from the outset. Only the seamen were punished while the owners and government got off scot free.

Sue Haney's brother Geoff, a Militant supporter, worked on the *Herald*. He died when the ferry capsized. She gives her reaction to the results of the inquiry.

SINCE 6 MARCH, when at least 188 people died in the Zeebrugge ferry disaster, we have seen one of the most cynically orchestrated charades any government ever acted out.

The seamen who sailed for the Falklands war in the requisitioned merchant vessel *Rangatira* will remember that transverse bulkheads were fitted to ensure greater stability at sea.

Profitability

Once she returned to commercial use, those bulkheads were removed in the interests of profitability. The horrific consequences of this greed for profit were studiously avoided by the inquiry and by the government.

Mr Justice Sheen said no criminal prosecutions would be brought because no criminal offence had taken place. But the government should be in the dock. It sets out shipping guidelines in accordance with the Merchant Shipping Act 1894 via its Department of Transport.

These guidelines are not legal requirements. Its marine surveyors don't have the statutory powers of the Health and Safety Executive which can insist on health and safety requirements before it allows a company to operate.

Justice Sheen was, however, able to pass a sentence on both Captain Lewry and chief officer Sabel whose certificates were suspended for one and two years respectively. He suggested that Townsend Thoresen should dis-



Sue Haney and her mother listen to sister Carol addressing the memorial meeting for Geoff Haney

cipline the assistant bosun, Marc Stanley.

What are these men guilty of? Consistently asking for warning lights to check that stern and bow doors are closed? Requesting additional crew so that all tasks can be adequately covered when leaving port?

How can it possibly be right that an entire vessel's safety rests on the shoulders of one assistant bosun, a very courageous and honest ordinary seaman who was callously exploited by BBC television following the inquiry's results.

The horrific consequences of this greed for profit were avoided by the inquiry

Conspicuously absent from discipline were Jeffrey Devlin, manager of Townsend Thoresen and Sir Jeffrey Stirling, chairman of P&O the parent company who in the wake of the disaster talked of "the bitter irony of the Zeebrugge disaster in a year of record profits" and said: "We can take pride in the quality of our earnings." He obviously has scant regard for the quality of those lives lost four months ago.

Justice Sheen's powers, however don't extend to sentencing either the ow-

ners or the managers of Townsend Thoresen even though everyone agrees the blame lies there.

Even Tory MP Terry Dicks said: "The people of this country want to see the management of Townsend punished. And the sooner the company is closed down the better." Another Tory, Henry Bellingham accused the company of negligence "verging on the criminal....The management is obviously rotten to the core" and called for tough action.

The report recommends the fitting of lights indicating that bow and stern doors are closed, TV cameras on the bridge, self contained emergency lighting, no ship to leave its berth with bow doors open and no taking on of water as ballast in order to load the vehicles etc.

Passengers and crew will welcome these increased safety measures, many of which have been implemented.

However, on the busiest seaway in the world, none of these changes will necessarily prevent a disaster recurring should a ro-ro ferry be involved in a collision.

According to one naval expert, just one inch of water on the vast open vehicle deck could cause a roll-on ferry to roll over. Marshall Meek, vice president of the Royal Institute of Naval Architects, attacked the report for not

insisting that all ferries be fitted with watertight bulkheads.

Those of us who lost relatives, or work or travel on the ferry must ensure that the lessons learned are not forgotten.

Public relations

We see right through the public relations exercise of the government appointment of two marine consultancy firms, one of which, Three Quays Marine Services, is actually owned by P&O to "look into research on the stability of ro-ro and to examine the implications of providing bulkheads on vehicle decks."

Paul Channon, transport secretary, told the Commons on Friday afternoon that an extra £1 million will be spent looking for the answer we know already.

Yes, P&O would take a drop in revenue of approximately 25 per cent per ship according to the ferry designer for Townsend Thoresen. This would perhaps mean a drop in their profit of £25-£30 million. So what?

My brother died along with 187 other people. That is the price of 'free enterprise' today. There has never been a greater need for British shipping to be run by those who work in the industry.

By Sue Haney
(secretary Withington womens section, personal capacity)

Scots youth campaign

SCOTLAND'S CENTRAL Region has become a disaster area after the closure of Polmaise colliery. The area's 1,869 registered jobless young people have little or no chance of gaining real, full-time jobs.

Central Region Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign (YTURC) has organised a march through the major towns in the area to protest against Tory plans for compulsory YTS and the new JTS.

YTURC campaigns for full union rights and rates of pay for YTS trainees, a minimum grant of £35 per week for all school and further education students and a guaranteed real job for all youth.

Already, in days of action in Alloa, Falkirk and Stirling, dozens of young people have pledged support for the campaign including people on holiday from Berlin, Amsterdam and even Venezuela!

Starting in Alloa on Wednes-

day 29 July, the march will pass through Stirling and Denny, arriving in Falkirk for an open-air public meeting on Saturday.

The march will involve demonstrations at Job Centres, street collections and sales of Socialist Youth. We hope this local event will spark off a national fight-back against the Tories' proposals.

By Alistair Duncan
(Secretary central region YTURC)

Nye Bevan Lodge scandal

THE NYE Bevan Lodge report is a real life horror story. For over five years, old people at this residential home for the elderly run by Southwark council suffered cruelty, extortion and neglect. One man described it as a concentration camp. He had been in a Nazi concentration camp during the war.

The report was published after a year long investigation by an 'independent' three person team including former TGWU General Secretary, Moss Evans.

Mistreatment of old people is not isolated to Nye Bevan Lodge. Reports published earlier this year by Brent and Camden councils list over a dozen homes where elderly people suffered abuse.

Over 250,000 elderly people are in residential homes. Increasingly it is frailer older people, many of whom are incontinent, who are left in local author-

ity homes. Thousands of old people suffer abuse highlighted in the Nye Bevan report.

Last week on radio, Edwina Currie blamed the relatives: "Families should not put people into homes and abandon them". However, the main reason many local authority homes provide such appalling care, is because for the last eight years they have been starved of resources under a government which includes Mrs. Currie.

Breakdown

Management in the homes is increasingly breaking down. Care assistants are paid poverty wages. They are understaffed and overworked. Training in dealing with the special problems of frail elderly people is virtually non-existent.

Lectures on Victorian values by Tory ministers will not change the workhouse-type regimes under which thousands suffer. Labour

councils and local authority unions must unite in campaigning to get the billions of pounds needed to provide decent care and dignity for the elderly.

Under the Tories the situation can only deteriorate. More old people will face the prospect of spending their last few years in the type of abject misery described in the report.

Fourteen former Nye Bevan staff members now face disciplinary hearings. Some could face criminal charges. The Labour Chair of Southwark's social services at the time, resigned as a councillor on publication of the report.

Two union officials are severely criticised for their role. It is correct for unions to use their power in defence of low paid and poorly treated workers, like care assistants in old peoples' homes. However, the labour movement must totally condemn union officials abusing their power to further their own personal or clique interests,

especially when it is at the expense of old people.

Perhaps the most serious allegation in the report is that a 'cover up' of what was happening at Nye Bevan Lodge took place in 1985. The report alleges that the then Labour leader of the Council, Tony Richie, "struck a behind the scenes deal with Nupe", to suppress an earlier report on Nye Bevan Lodge.

Members of the Labour Party and Nupe in Southwark are calling for an inquiry organised by the labour movement to discover the truth. Did union officials and Labour councillors abuse their power in their own personal interest? Did they cover up what was going on?

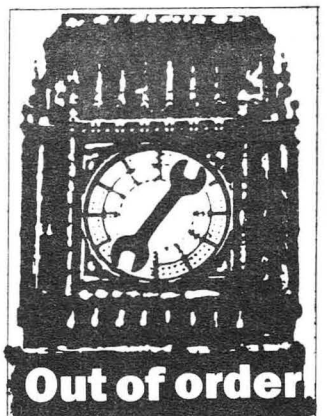
The working class has fought over generations for decent health care and dignity for elderly people. Nupe rightly prides itself on being 'the caring union.' Its members carry out some of the most difficult and unrewarding jobs. The allegation that leading union and

Party officials were involved in a cover up, if true, would be a terrible stain on the record of the labour movement, and on the name of Nye Bevan.

In view of the serious nature of the allegations over five years, it is hard to believe that more senior Nupe officials had no idea of what was going on. If they had intervened earlier the abuse of old people would have ended sooner and at least part of this scandal, especially allegations of a 'cover up', could have been avoided.

Labour and trade union activists must ensure scandals like this never occur again. All those with positions in the labour movement, including union officials and Labour councillors, must be democratically elected by and fully accountable to rank and file members.

By a Militant reporter.



ARMS SALES to the murderous Pinochet regime in Chile are "normal diplomatic relations" according to Tory Foreign Office minister David Mellor.

He was replying to a Commons debate initiated by Pat Wall Labour MP for Bradford North on this month's visit by Chilean Admiral Toribio Merino to the foreign office, organised in secret via Israel, a route often used by Colonel North to hide his journeys.

Merino, a founder member of the Chilean junta was directly involved in the disappearance of hundreds of civilians and used his warships as torture chambers. Chilean air force chief General Mathei made a rushed visit here in June, in case Labour won the election and stopped the arms deals. Britain is Chile's main arms supplier.

Pat pointed out that the coup against the democratically elected Allende government, slaughtering 30,000 people, smashing unions and workers' parties and pushing through Thatcherite policies, had been backed by British big business.

Now the regime faces massive opposition, the armed forces' leaders and the Tories were trying to elbow Pinochet aside but ensure a safe right of centre civilian replacement.

The Tories claimed that diplomatic relations with the junta allowed them to express concerns about human rights abuses while of course, selling them arms to carry them out.

Who really cares for the elderly?

LIZ STAVELEY a nurse on a geriatric ward, describes some of the daily pressures of caring for the old.

THE RAPIDLY increasing demand for long term care of the elderly, and financial attacks by the Tory government, make health service workers' jobs impossible.

We face a constant dilemma—catering for patients' physical needs and caring for them psychologically. If priority is given to psychological care an in-

continent patient may be left unattended. But if we concentrate on their physical needs, patients can become restive even aggressive, or just wander off.

Old people become confused and this causes some to wander off the ward. Nurses are responsible for patients' safety, and when there aren't enough staff to provide occupational and recreational activities, sometimes there can be no alternative to locking doors and sedating some patients.

And that is not what care should be about.

Incontinence is very distressing for an elderly patient, and a problem for nurses. But if wards were well designed, if continence aids are freely available and a decent laundry service provided, it could be managed. And with a high staff to patient ratio, their dignity could be preserved.

But staffing levels are reduced to a skeleton service. Recruiting staff is a

major problem, because of the progressive run down of services for the elderly. It offers hard work with poor conditions and little prestige or job satisfaction.

Workhouses

Many geriatric wards are in old workhouses which weren't designed for individual comfort. And the conversions were not carried out with the privacy of the patient in mind.

How can we create a

homely atmosphere with dormitories of 25 beds, inadequate toilet and bathing facilities and a large impersonal common room?

The patients we look after have themselves worked all their lives, they deserve the very best of care. That needs a massive injection of capital for new buildings and facilities. And for the first time it must give those of us who provide direct care a say in how finances should be allocated.



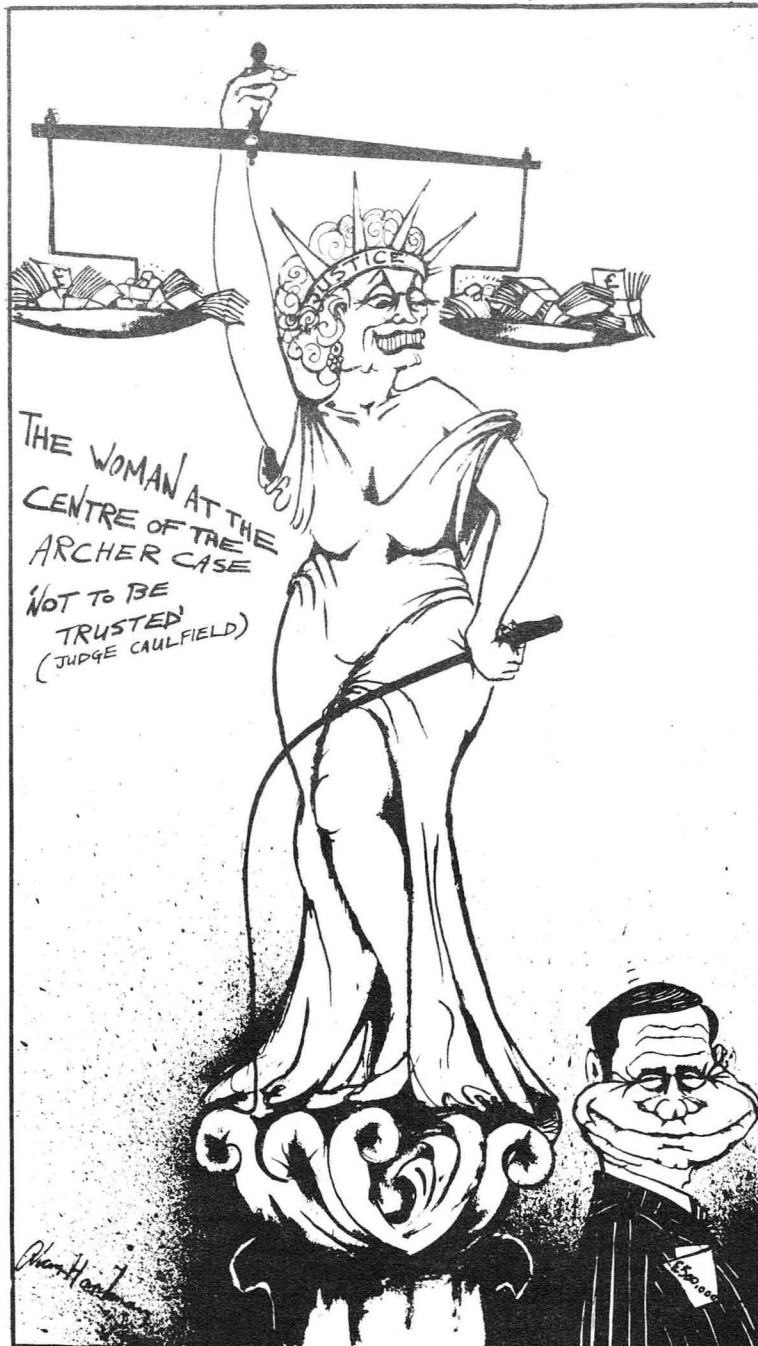
Outside Islwyn Labour Party's last meeting.

A message for Neil Kinnock

AROUND 50 people lobbied the general committee meeting of Islwyn Labour Party, Neil Kinnock's constituency, last week, protesting at the inquiry into the links between LPYS member John Fletcher and Militant.

Party leaders are watering down their policies, and want to stifle opposition particularly from workers who support Marxist ideas.

John's father, Ed Fletcher, 41 years a party activist, told the *South Wales Echo* that although he didn't always think John was in the right: "Nye Bevan, Michael Foot and Neil Kinnock were radical young men. Neil used to sell that other factional newspaper the *Tribune*—perhaps if they were young today they would be facing similar inquiries."



Justice for Trevor Monerville

ON NEW Years Day, 19 year old Trevor Monerville a black teenager from Hackney was taken into custody at Stoke Newington police station. His father searched for him for five days, paying several visits to Stoke Newington where the police denied any knowledge of him.

Trevor was eventually discovered at Brixton prison covered literally from head to toe in cuts and bruises and with a blood clot on the brain which partially paralysed one side of his body.

The Police Complaints Authority report on Trevor is now weeks overdue. The Trevor Monerville campaign committee believe the PCA are sitting on the report hoping the campaign will die down.

The campaign will be holding a public meeting on Tuesday 4 August at Hackney Town Hall. The local LPYS will be helping with the campaign's street meeting in Ridley Road market in Dalston this Saturday.

Keep Labour socialist

MPs pay themselves £80 a week extra..

COVENTRY MP, Dave Nellist, got one of the House of Commons' most hostile ever receptions last week. It was because he dared to oppose MPs awarding themselves a £4,000 per year pay rise.

Dave touched sensitive feelings on both sides of the House. Throughout his speech, he was interrupted and barracked by MPs of all parties.

As a matter of fact, the rise will make little difference to some Tory MPs, incredible as it may seem to low-paid workers. The MP for Hove, for example, has £114 million worth of shares in his family's business—Sainsbury's. When Dave pointed out that they probably gave him a weekly income higher than his £20,000 per year parliamentary salary, another Tory accused him of besmirching Sainsbury's name!

All the same, the govern-

ment could find plenty of slightly less well-heeled Tories to pack the debating chamber through the midnight hour. Only a hanging debate can attract more of them, as Chris Mullin MP remarked.

But if the Tories were outraged by Dave's exposure of MPs' luxurious lifestyles, many Labour MPs seemed no less indignant. Dave was heckled by none other than the chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party, ex left-winger, Stan Orme.

Worker's wage

Since being elected, Dave Nellist and Terry Fields have donated the difference between their salary and the wage of a skilled worker to the labour movement.

During the last parliament, Labour officials actually wrote to them suggesting that they were breaking Party rules by doing this.

Now new MPs, Pat Wall and Ronnie Campbell, are doing the same. No one dares criticise this practise now, but many Labour MPs violently object to any suggestion that they might take it up themselves. The morning after the debate, one paper reported that senior Labour MPs resented being 'lectured' by Dave Nellist.

Ex-left, David Blunkett, who voted for the rise, advised Dave that he should have "...hidden some of his light under a slightly larger bushel!"

The demand that workers' representatives should live on workers' wages is an essential political demand. It is a means of combatting the seduction of workers' leaders into the camp of the capitalists.

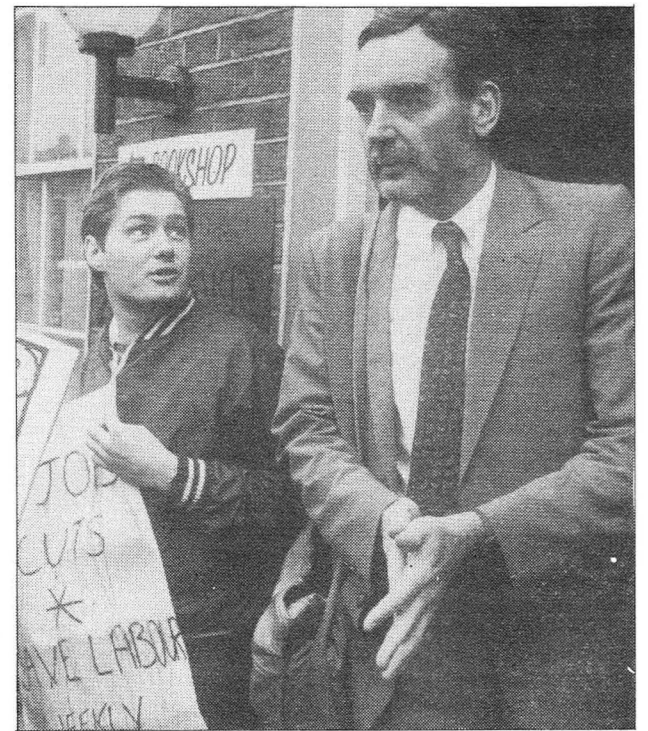
It also raises the authority of the whole labour movement. During his speech, Dave Nellist read two of the many letters he has received congratulating him on his stand.

"I certainly don't begrudge MPs a decent wage," read one, "but I do agree with what you said about trying to live at a level similar to that of many of your constituents so that you can really understand their problems."

"I applaud your attitude..." read another, "all the more when I think that unlike a great many MPs you undoubtedly have to live on what the nation pays you. I do so also as a life-long Conservative, conscious all too well that many MPs in my party are well-off and still demand the new increase! They shock me as a pensioner."

When it came to the vote, a mass turn-out of 407 MPs voted to pour more pounds into their own pockets. Only 34 dared to vote against, 20 of them Labour.

By Tony Cross



Hard to believe? Tom Sawyer, NUPE representative, going into the NEC meeting where he argued for the ending of the Party's redundancy agreement because it is too generous. He claimed that if his members saw it, they would throw up their hands in horror and say 'who negotiated this?'

..and Labour's MPs could end party's cash crisis

SINCE THE MPs' pay rise has been passed, Dave Nellist has proposed that Labour MPs donate five per cent of their salaries to the Party.

This is his response to claims that *Labour Weekly*, *Socialist Youth* and *New Socialist* must close and 40 jobs must go at Labour's national headquarters because of its financial situation.

Lead balloon

At the National Executive, the right-wing were not even prepared to discuss ways of raising the money. Dave Nellist's letter was not even read out. Dennis Skinner's proposal that MPs pay £1-2,000 each went down like a lead balloon. David Blunkett hid his light under a bushel by being absent when the vote came to be taken.

The closure proposals have caused a furore. 40 constituency parties (CLPs) had written in to protest, as had 120 MPs and 40 peers.

General Secretary, Larry Whitty, admitted that the

banks are not "banging on the door" for the Party's overdraft to be paid off. But the NEC agreed to make savings of £600,000 this year and a further 20 per cent next year.

The proposed re-organisation at headquarters will concentrate more power in the General Secretary's hands. The real reason for the proposals is political not organisational.

Now, the Party's own staff are accusing top officials of "chaotic financial control" and declared they have no confidence in Whitty. They demand the cuts are justified before the whole labour movement.

The papers have won a short reprieve and have up to 11 September to come up with alternatives to closure. CLPs have an added opportunity to send letters of protest and in particular to point out that *Socialist Youth* broke even last year and that there is no financial justification for its closure.

By a Militant reporter.

More council cuts

Photo: Paul Traynor

ON FRIDAY, Environment Secretary, Nicholas Ridley, announced next year's rate support grant. Councils of all parties say they need £29 billion just to keep services at their present inadequate level and pay wage increases that have already been agreed.

The Tories are allowing local authority spending to go up by £1.5 billion less than this minimum figure, meaning that they intend to force councils to cut and cut again.

Rates should be kept to 4 per cent, says Ridley, and five councils have been added to the rate-capping list. They are Liverpool, Manchester, Hull, Ealing and Waltham Forest.

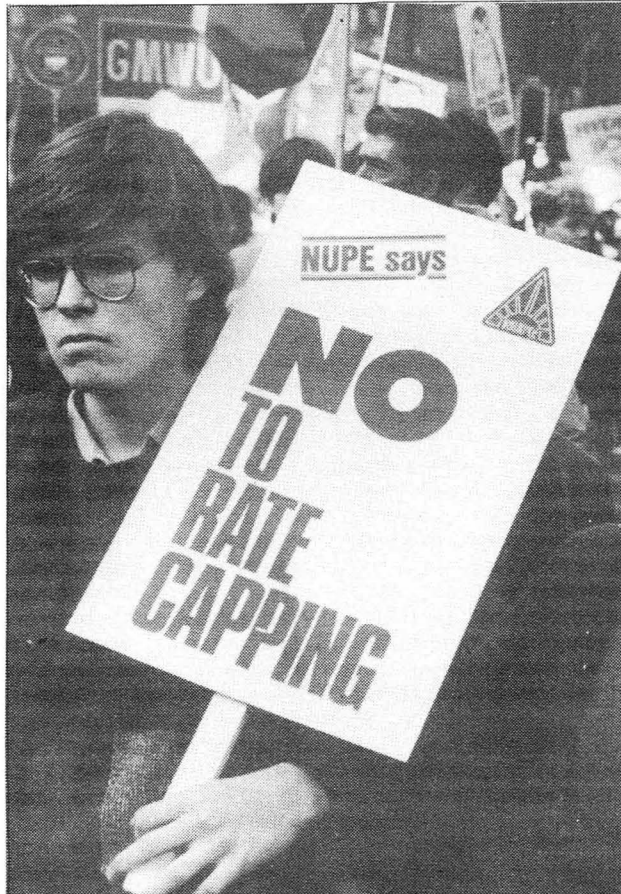
Those councils who pinned all their hopes on 'creative accountancy' and the return of a Labour government are in deep trouble this year. Reports below show the mounting problems facing local authorities and how two London councils are responding to them.

Lewisham

LEWISHAM LABOUR council's right wing leader, Dave Sullivan, has released his notes showing his thinking on the council's £31.2 million budget deficit.

"How does the future look?" he asks and replies: "Bloody awful." Well, that's a fighting start!

He writes off deficit budgeting because of "the experience of the steelworkers, miners, GCHQ, the Malvinas(!),



Lambeth and Liverpool." It wouldn't have much chance of success, he says.

Lewisham roared defiance at the Tories in 1985. But weeks later, Labour councillors tamely allowed the Tories to set the rate for them at a council meeting, thus helping to isolate Lambeth and Liverpool.

Sullivan favours a 'dented shield', which means he admits, "rent increases, increases in charges, slowing down recruitment, only unavoidable growth, library closures and cuts causing minimal impact etc." If

this is a dented shield, what, we may ask, is abject surrender?

The council are now trying to rush through measures like a £5 rent rise and various cuts. They obviously have no intention of putting up any serious campaign of resistance.

The only call Sullivan makes on the labour movement is to stop giving councillors a "hard time", and to tell voters the consequence of voting Tory (in other words it's all the workers' fault.) He finishes up. "Don't blame me! I voted Labour."

Well, so did most of the people who will suffer from a cuts package. If the Labour council does not fight, then it will be up to the unions and tenants' associations to lead the movement against the Tories.

By Roger Shives
(Deptford Labour Party)

Brent

BRENT COUNCIL is facing a £7 million budget deficit this year. City of London financiers have blocked its creative accountancy measures of selling off council property and leasing it back.

Commendably, the council Labour group called a consultative meeting of Party members to discuss this crisis. But it soon became clear at the meeting that the group leadership favoured staying in power and making cuts.

They were as defeatist as the Lewisham leader about "outright defiance of the government" either through setting a deficit budget or not setting a rate at all.

Chairs and Vice-chairs of council committees have already been asked to list where cuts can be made and leader, Merle Amory, has called for a free vote on whether to have a deficit budget.

Militant supporters in the area will be fighting for the council not to make cuts and to set a deficit budget.

By John Dolan
(Brent East Labour Party)

'Is it a crime to be wealthy?'

"SOME 12 months ago the House decided that, as a matter of principle, 400,000 young workers who were on £40 or £50 a week—hairdressers, those who were working in pubs, clubs, shops, restaurants and clothing establishments—were pricing themselves out of jobs.

"Yet tonight those same Tory Members are prepared to vote for an

increase which is—(interruption)—twice the amount they considered to be too much for those young workers."

When Dave Nellist made this point during the debate on MP's pay, one Tory idiot interrupted him to ask if he thought it was a crime to be wealthy. Well, it all depends at whose expense, doesn't it?

Keep Labour socialist

No Goulds for Bryan

ALL OF a sudden it seems that Bryan Gould has become the expert on how to win elections. After having praise showered on him for Labour's 'red rose' election campaign, he is urging a complete re-think of party policy.

His argument is that Tory policies, or a great many of them, must be popular as Thatcher has won three elections in a row. Labour, says Gould, must rethink its response to council house sales, privatisation, tax cuts and Tory plans for council estates and schools to opt out of local authority control.

Liability

The right-wing Labour Co-ordinating Committee, Gould's main base of support within the Party, have even argued that these Tory policies "offer a form of economic and social participation for increasing numbers of people".

So what is the electoral evidence for this analysis? Thousands of column inches have been written on the 'liability of the loony left' and the 'menace of the militants'. But a comparison between Gould's Dagenham seat and the Liverpool Broadgreen seat

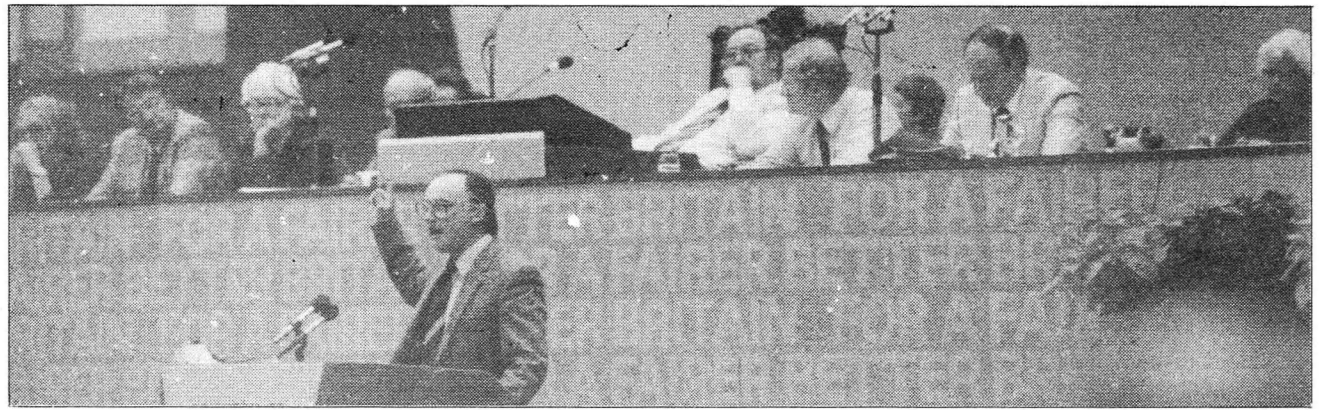
of 'extremist' Terry Fields is very instructive.

In Broadgreen, a new constituency in 1983, which would always have been Tory before that, with only a fifth of the electorate living in council houses, Terry Fields' majority almost doubled in June to 6,047, with one of the biggest swings in the country.

After losing Southampton Test in 1979, Gould became MP for Dagenham in 1983 with a majority of 2,997. This year it fell to 2,469. But in 1979 it was 10,017 and at the election before that it was 23,490! This is a constituency where half live in council houses. It ought to be far more overwhelmingly Labour than Broadgreen, and it will be in the future, but not on the basis of Gould's 'yuppie' policies, but real socialist policies to provide solutions for working-class people.

Labour lost the election not because workers were falling over themselves to buy shares, but because a clear vision of socialism and what it would mean to them and their families in practical terms was not presented.

By Tim Harris



Peter Taaffe appealing to the 1983 Labour Party conference against his expulsion.

Stop expulsion of socialists

PETER TAAFFE, editor of Militant, answering charges for which he was expelled from the Party in 1983, said: "This attack on us is a political attack, not just on Militant, but on the swing towards the left, on the demand for greater democracy within this party that we have seen over the past three or four years".

By Mike Waddington

Since 1982, 43 supporters of *Militant* have been expelled, victimised for their socialist beliefs. Now, however, the right wing have given the Party notice that they may no longer be aiming just at expulsions; it is more likely to be a full-scale purge. Political dissent is to be regarded as rocking, if not sinking, the boat.

Deputy leader Roy Hattersley has said he is "not in favour of a great round of proscriptions and purges and disciplinary actions", but added that "some of that may be necessary under the 1983 resolution where we were

specific about *Militant*".

This is not 'merely' a question of democratic rights; it is about the future of the Labour Party and socialism. The attack on *Militant* is against those who are fighting for socialism in the Party.

The media's post-election gushing praise for Labour's campaign—in sharp contrast to the treatment meted out during the campaign itself—has a two-fold purpose.

Firstly it is to protect the new right-wing leadership around Kinnock who had a complete monopoly over the (unsuccessful) campaign and now dominate the Shadow Cabinet.

Battering ram

Secondly they hope to act as a battering ram within the Party for the 'one member, one vote' so-called reform, in reality a counter-revolution to restore the divine right of MPs not to have to be accountable to reselection conferences.

The aim is to weed out the socialist left and thus revive the notion of

Labour being capitalism's 'second eleven', a reliable team purged of its socialism and socialists.

Unfortunately for the right wing, the conditions in Britain will not give them time to manoeuvre. Labour will shift to the left, as in the CPSA, where an education in Thatcher's Britain has forced civil servants to the left.

Labour has a future, but it can only be a socialist future. Peter Taaffe said in the speech quoted earlier: "We will consider ourselves as members of this Party and we will fight to get back in."

"We will be rehabilitated into this Party when those who are demanding our expulsion are in the rogues' gallery with the George Browns and other traitors to this movement...Now, as never before, socialism itself is under attack. We appeal to every active member of the Labour Party and the trade unions to join with us in the fight for socialism where it counts."

Defend socialism, become a *Militant* supporter!



Bryan Gould at the London Labour Party conference.

Photo: Andrew Ward (Report)

Secret dossiers on LP members

IN NO fewer than 42 separate cases, 56 Labour Party members and branches of the LPYS are being investigated or being referred to the National Constitutional Committee (NCC) for disciplinary action.

LOIS AUSTIN from Bexleyheath has been threatened with expulsion for convening an 'unconstitutional' meeting. As a delegate to the London Labour Party conference, she had to spend her time persuading MPs and delegates to sign letters of protest.

The LPYS in Eddisbury, Cheshire, has been suspended and the Leicester East branch has been attacked for holding an 'unconstitutional' lobby of Thatcher during the election campaign.

Four members of Glasgow Springburn Labour Party are being investigated and face legal proceedings as well. Two of them are also being investigated by the police and one by the DHSS, after complaints by Party officials concerning their conduct during the election.

Investigations have also

been launched into WENDY MILNE and SAM GIBSON by Livingston Labour Party, ROB EADIE of Acton and members of Southampton, Musselburgh and Leith Parties.

South Wales miners' leader IAN ISAAC is to appear before the NCC on 10 October, and Llanelli Labour party are proposing to investigate long-standing member Muriel Browning.

Liverpool Broadgreen Labour Party is not being allowed to hold its AGM until two of its members, ELAINE BANNISTER and JOSIE AITMAN, have been referred to the NCC and Knowsley North Labour Party has been suspended.

These are just some of the most serious examples of how Party members' time and money is being wasted in internal battles against some of the most loyal and hard-working members.

GILLINGHAM LABOUR Party is embroiled in its third witch-hunt in four years.

The latest move follows a visit to Gillingham by

David Steel, who got hold of a copy of *Militant* and shouted: "I thought you had been expelled!" The local Liberal candidate went one better and urged Gillingham Labour Party to 'expel the militants'.

Labour's Southern Regional Council asked the agent for a report on the Steel incident so they could carry out an investigation and take appropriate action. The Gillingham Party's executive has endorsed this report without even all its members being permitted to see whose names are on it.

A campaign to defeat this attack has begun. A public meeting of 55 people listened to Ted Grant and David Turner, now threatened with expulsion. A magnificent £268.48 was raised.

Rush resolutions of protest to Southern Regional Labour Party, Owen House, Heathside Crescent, Woking, Surrey GU22 7AG, and Gillingham Labour Party, 122A Twydall Lane, Gillingham, Kent. Please send copies to D Turner, 74, Chalfont Drive, Rainham, Kent.

Votes for sale

LABOUR PARTY members thinking of voting for 'one member, one vote' in the selection of MPs, may think again after the decision of an important sub-committee last week.

The Appeals and Mediation Committee ruled that "whoever pays for a person's membership is irrelevant." It was deciding on the case of a party branch in Redcar, where a block of applications had been received along with subs allegedly not paid by the applicants themselves.

When this was reported to the full National Executive, Tony Benn remarked that it would lead to corruption under one member, one vote. The prospect opens up of selection procedures becoming a competition to see who can pay for the most members.

A move to refer the decision back was lost, but another committee has been instructed to look into the matter.

The NEC will discuss the one member, one vote issue on 15 September along with the notorious proposals to reorganise the Labour Party Young Socialists.

Become a Militant supporter



Name

Address

Socialist summer camp

Why we need theory

DURING THE election, Labour canvassers often heard the comment: "Oh sorry, mate, I'm not political." Nothing could be further from the truth.

By Dave Kaplan

Every waking hour of a worker's life is full of political questions: "Will I still be in a job tomorrow?"; "Where will I get the money to pay the next bill?"; "How can I afford to clothe my kids decently?"

These political questions can only be answered by workers themselves, through understanding how society develops. By learning the lessons of their own organisation and struggles, workers are better prepared to fight for a decent living.

Controversy

The Workers' Education Group Socialist Summer Camp is drawing near. From August 8th to 15th, you can hear some of the best speakers in the labour movement.

Jeremy Birch, a frequent contributor to *Militant*, will debate with a member of the Labour Friends of Israel on "The Middle East—socialism or capitalist turmoil?"

"Black liberation and the struggle for socialism" will be taken up by Phil Frampton, a Labour Party member in Manchester, and Daryl Telles, secretary



If you enjoyed last year's Albert Hall rally, you won't want to miss summer camp.

of the Vauxhall LP Black Section.

Ted Grant will be speaking in an important meeting on perspectives for socialism in Britain. There will be plenty of controversy in the debate organised with the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, on the issues facing the Labour Party after the election defeat.

International rallies have also been organised. After the Labour government's victory in Australia, how much closer are workers to achieving socialism? After massive repression and another National Party victory in South Africa, what

are the perspectives for socialist revolution? These questions will be answered by Marxists from both these countries.

There will be courses during the camp on: racism and how to fight it; the history and future developments of Britain's trade unions; international revolutions in Asia and Latin America; and issues facing women and youth.

Entertainment

We hope that a wide variety of entertainment will cater for all tastes at the camp. Ian Saville, the

Marxist Magician, will try to do a disappearing trick on Paul Daniels, there's the A39 Theatre Group, for those not into Shakespeare, and a local jazz band, if you're fed up with Duran Duran.

Lezli-Ann Barratt, director and writer of "Business as usual", will speak on the making of the film and the dispute on which it is based.

And what would a Summer camp be without a 7-a-side football tournament? Make sure your team gets in training. All would-be masterminds will be pleased to know there

will also be a quiz.

You can either buy ready made meals from the dining marquee, or make use of the camp shop.

Deposits for the camp should still be sent in. Exeter University Labour Club have sent in £80 to cover part of the expenses of four people.

Finally, our weather forecaster reminds us that Gloucestershire has been one of the driest and sunniest parts of the country over the past two weeks of rain! So there should be nothing to stop you from a great cheap political holiday. Book up today!



LOCAL SELLERS had nothing to lose when they started *Militant* sales at Sudbury market in Suffolk; it had not been done before. They were rewarded not only with 14 sales but one person agreed to take 5 copies a week to sell.

Well over 100 extra copies of *Militant* were sold after the recent feature on London docklands. And activists in local tenants' associations have asked to be put in touch with the people we interviewed.

Supporters in Tottenham are adding two or three new readers weekly to their regulars on Broadwater Farm. On public sales try and make a big impact like the 23 sellers who sold 30 papers in a very short time in Selly Oak. They say it produced a great atmosphere.



Ted Grant will speak on perspectives for Britain.

What's happening!

ON SUNDAY and Monday, 9 and 10 August, the sessions will cover *An introduction to socialism, Youth and the struggle for socialism, Marxist economics and The Russian revolution.*

On Tuesday and Wednesday, sessions will cover *Marxist classics for beginners, The trade unions, Marxist economics and Stalinism.*

Thursday and Friday's sessions concentrate on *Women and the struggle for socialism, The third world in revolt, Will the USA go socialist and Racism, fascism and how to fight them.*

All ages welcome!

THE CRECHE facilities are brilliant this year. There's swimming every day, and a nearby sports centre open for 5-13 year olds. Let us know if you are bringing children to the camp, so we can make the necessary arrangements. Trips will be organised to the local iron mines, as well as to the Dean Forest Railway in Lydney.



WORLD SOCIALIST BOOKS have a wide selection of books for the courses.

Introduction to socialism

Socialism made easy—Connolly (25p)
Socialism utopian or scientific—Engels (50p)

Marxist classics

The communist manifesto—Marx and Engels (45p)
The communist manifesto today—Trotsky.

The state and revolution—Lenin (55p)
Left wing communism—an infantile disorder—Lenin (55p)

The unions

Marxism and the trade unions—Trotsky (£1.50)

Women and the struggle for socialism

Origin of the family, private property and the state—Engels (85p)
The charter for women workers (50p)

Marxist economics

Wage labour and capital—Marx (45p)
Marxist study guide on economics (50p)

The Russian revolution

In defence of October—Trotsky
Revolution betrayed—Trotsky (£5.75)

The third world

The coming world revolution—Grant (30p)

Marxist study guide on the colonial revolution (40p)

The USA

Perspectives for the USA (£1)

Racism and fascism

Fascism what it is and how to fight it—Trotsky (80p)

Full booklist available from World Socialist Books Postage Add 25 per cent to orders under £5, 10 per cent under £10, over £10 post free. Order from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB

LEFT and RIGHT

Here comes the judge

IF YOU ever find yourself in court, as defendant, plaintiff or juror, try to avoid Judge Michael Argyle, public school and Cambridge educated and a member of the Kennel Club. He'll treat you like a dog.

He suggested judges should be able to impose the death sentence on anyone carrying out an offence carrying a sentence of 15 years or more. He threatened to fine a juror who spoke briefly to a witness £2000. He set free a blackmailer and told his victim he should have taken up ju-jitsu.

He has freed a rapist because he

came from Derby because "that is my part of the world." But he won't be at all lenient if you are black or Asian. He claimed at a recent meeting that there were up to five million illegal immigrants in Britain. When asked for proof of his ludicrous claim, he said he didn't have the figures, "but just go to Bradford."

The only trouble is, even if you do avoid Argyle, the judiciary is stacked high with such class biased racist judges.

Converted?

IS JOHN Golding, the general secretary of the National Commu-

nications Union seeing the error of his ways? He complained to a radio interviewer recently that British Telecom did not "give a damn for the public; they're only concerned about profit and the top 200 companies."

Top 200 companies? Where have we heard that before? And haven't some members of his union put forward a cure for this problem? Is Brother Golding a secret *Militant* reader?

Space oddity

WHO RUNS Labour Party conferences? Labour's last NEC discussed who would get space for exhibitions and bookstalls at this autumn's conference. The executive turned down the Campaign group's request for a stall. But Merck, Sharpe and Dohme, a pharmaceutical firm who refuse to rec-

ognise unions are allowed in.

The shopworkers' union USDAW and the party oppose seven day working but 'Sort out Sunday', a pressure group who want Sunday trading get a stall. Labour opposes nuclear power. Conference has called for alternative jobs for nuclear power workers and for research into safe alternative renewable power sources. But British Nuclear Fuels Ltd., the National Nuclear Corporation, and the nuclear waste disposal firm, NIREX have all got space to peddle their ideas.

The official conference diary refuses to advertise the very successful *Militant* meeting at conference. It does advertise a fringe meeting on 'share ownership'. The organisers? The Stock Exchange. Rumour has it that they're getting a block vote next year.

Life on the fishing line

ORGANISING A trade union is not easy these days. Mass unemployment pushes the balance of forces towards the bosses. Many jobs now are low paid, temporary and/or part time.

Right wing union leaders often use these changes in British industry to justify abandoning the ideas of solidarity or ditching policies such as public ownership. But their own unions need to

play a much fuller role in organising the low paid.

The determination is there. Last week's *Militant* showed the conditions which low waged women workers faced in a chicken factory and a component firm. This week we look at work in the fish industry and how one young worker is fighting back.

WE MET Debbie during the election campaign in Cleethorpes. She works on the night shift at a Grimsby fish factory for £77 a week.

The union in the factory is nearly non-existent and shop stewards accept what ever management offers. For the workers, that means nothing.

Grimsby's fishing industry is going down hill fast and other factories have laid off workers recently. Business consultants move from one factory to the next, making them more 'efficient'.

Efficiency in their eyes is higher profits and fewer workers. More sackings seem on the cards but the unions seem incapable of doing anything about it.

This town was once a thriving and famous fishing port but lack of investment and world market trends destroyed it slowly but surely.

Stolen jobs

Grimsby docks used to be full of small fishing boats and trawlers but it is now empty. The bosses won't see their own high living standards cut back so they now rob the workers of their jobs as well as the wealth they have created.

Fish are now imported into Grimsby which is ridiculously wasteful. Jobs have gone, and as the unions failed to recruit the fishermen so the jobs which remain are casual as they always have been.

Debbie told us that the factory lines are being shut down and she doesn't expect hers to last. She goes

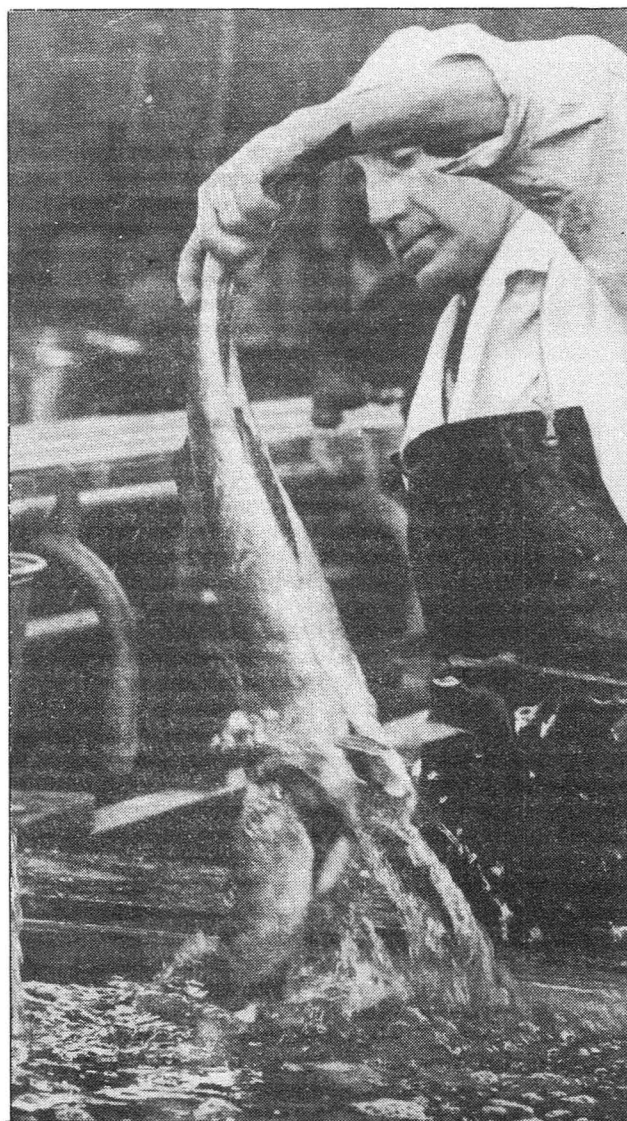
By Pat McEwan
(secretary Cleethorpes women's section, personal capacity)

in at 6pm, and works till 2, with a couple of 20 minute breaks. There is no canteen and the heating goes off at 10. The one small heater on the wall has been broken for months. It is freezing cold.

When she finishes at 2, she has to get on her bike. There are no facilities to get women home. Debbie had set up house with her boy friend but he worked day shift, so they never saw one another. They couldn't afford to go out at weekends as they had a high mortgage. The stress and strain destroyed their happiness and they broke up; it's a common story for many young couples.

Debbie wants to fight back. The union, though, meets at 2.30 in the morning when most people are tired; it should meet before the shift to get more people involved. But Debbie says that *Militant* gives her hope. She wants the labour movement to take up a socialist programme that will give workers the energy and the sense of purpose to fight back.

During the election she helped to canvass for Pat Wall in Bradford North. She finished work at 2am. When she got home an

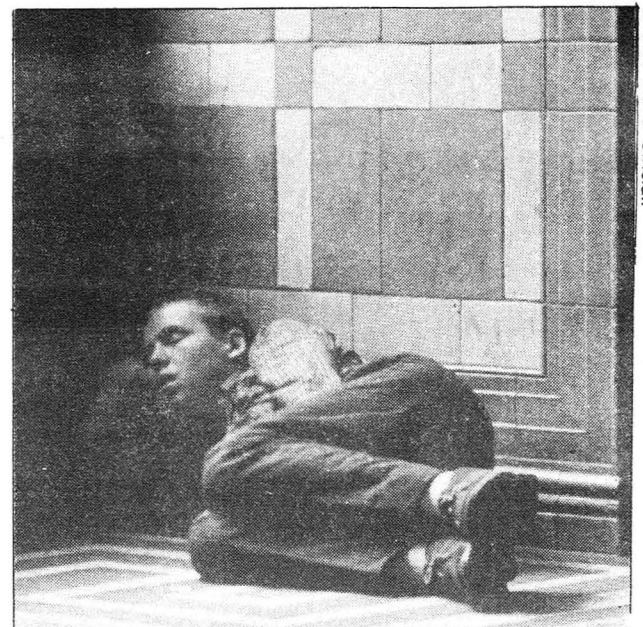


hour later she stayed up so she wouldn't miss us when we called to pick her up at 7 in the morning.

Debbie was prepared to do that because she saw that Pat Wall wasn't going to Parliament to line his pockets and get a nice

career. He was going to fight for people like her.

I'm sure Debbie wouldn't be the only one who would show that commitment and fight, even against all the odds, if all the leaders inspired workers with socialism.



Sleeping rough in Euston.

Homeless in London

ONE MORNING recently Florence, aged 15, went missing. It made the six o' clock news. She roughed it for two nights before being reunited with her anxious parents.

By Graham Lewis

It's not an unusual story, except that you saw it on TV. Florence's father was director of the multinational Peugeot, so the Met combed the parks and streets. If Mark Thatcher was lost again, they'd have got the helicopters out.

But if Dad isn't rich, could you so quickly trace your missing child? A friend told me that his sister left home; she was 15 too. The police told her parents to write to the local papers in a few days time. "She could be anywhere. We'll send her particulars to London."

Ironically his sister had gone into a London cop shop to find a place for the night but they gave her an address without asking her name. Homelessness is now accepted as part of London life. Most don't have Florence's £300,000 Knightsbridge flat to go back to.

Under Queen Elizabeth Hall, at ten at night, you can see 70 people waiting for the soup run from St Mungo's. It smells like something I used to clean aircraft with in a previous job.

Derek was a soldier in the British, 'Rhodesian' and Omani armies who has trouble with his pensions. He fought all capitalism's dirtiest battles, but they're not so keen to fight his. John's been there three weeks. It's not so bad in summer, except the stalls get full.

As long as there are no 'incidents' the police keep away but when some punks damaged a Rolls Royce they all got kicked about a bit. "Tons of Money" is playing at the National Theatre next door.

There are more young people sleeping rough in London than ever, drawn by exaggerated stories of good living in the capital.

Few councils deal with this problem. But there is a dire need for direct access accommodation, furnished bedsits with adequate maintenance, and other public furnished accommodation for single mobile people.

There should be training for staff in the entitlement of the homeless and a campaign to scrap the restrictions under the 1985 Homeless Act and the board and lodgings regulations.

Most of all it needs a campaign to defend councils and expand their housing programmes to build a million homes a year. Ending London's housing crisis will need a fight for socialism.

Fighting Fund

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 London	5704		9400
2 Northern	2240		4600
3 East Midlands	1530		3250
4 Scotland West	1631		3500
5 Scotland East	1287		2800
6 Eastern	1101		3050
7 Wales	1689		4850
8 Yorkshire	2921		8450
9 West Midlands	1574		4850
10 South West	596		1900
11 Merseyside	2038		7500
12 South East	588		2250
13 Manchester	961		4050
14 Southern	685		3100
15 National	17,330		6950
Total	41,873		70,000

Keep the cash flowing

MILITANT DOES not have the same opportunities as Jeffrey Archer to make a quick half million. But unlike him we do have a bright political future provided you keep the cash coming in for a workers' paper.

We've only a few days to go before the end of the quarter and we've already raised more than in the first quarter of the year, but we still need over £25,000 to hit the target.

Supporters across the country have shown how to raise money. Public meetings in West London (£357), Manchester (£140), Basildon (£144) and the Potteries (£39) have helped.

Thousands can be

raised by going to readers with the new appeal sheets. Point out that now's the time to prepare for the fightback against Thatcher—give us a donation to help our paper expand. Streatham comrades collected £123 last weekend like that.

Donations

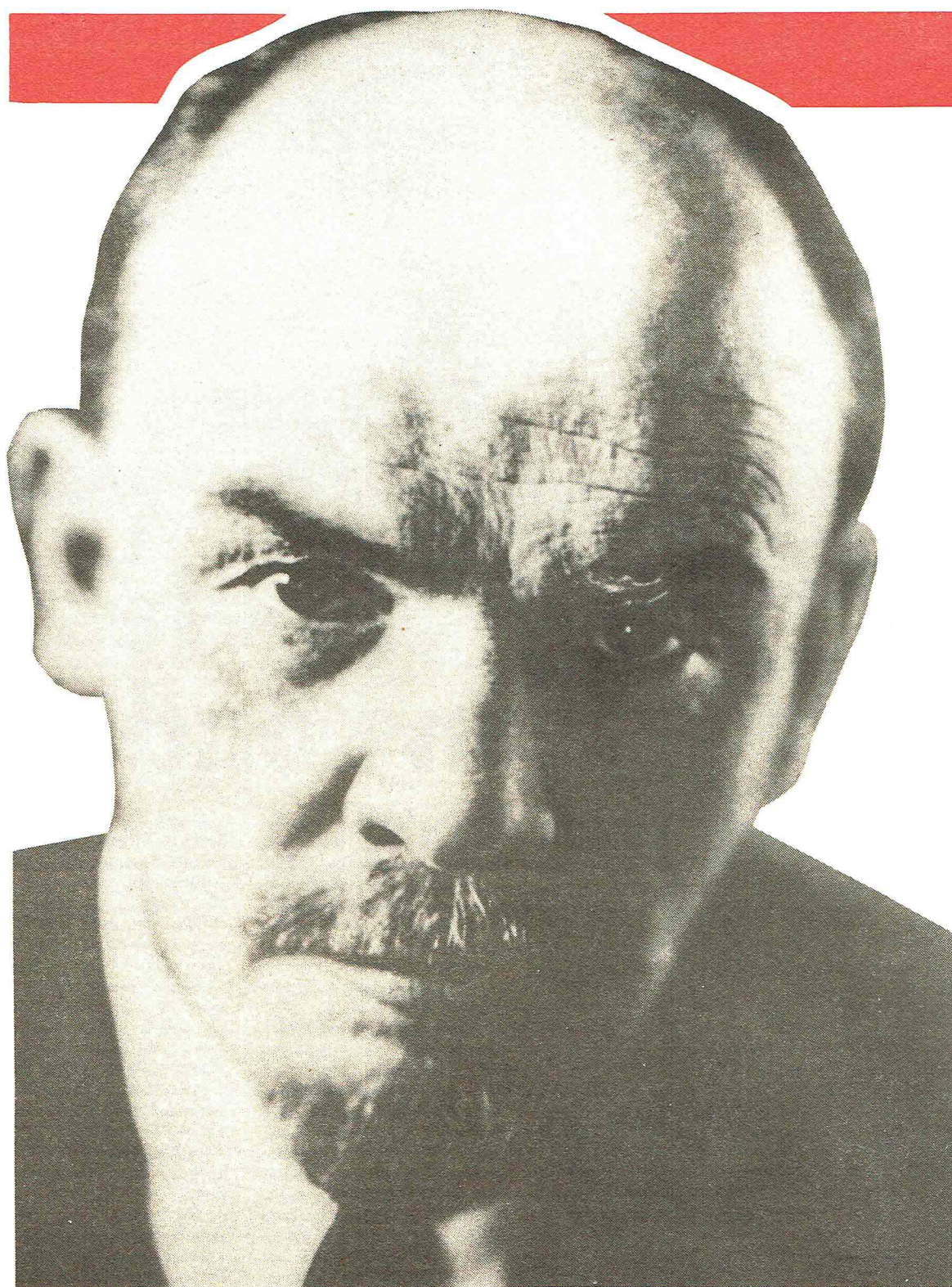
If every reader was approached for a donation, we'd easily achieve the £70,000. Three sellers in the Black Country got £13.70 asking for the £1 solidarity price. £200 has come in from NALGO conference. Last week's paper greatly understated how much we collected at TGWU and

NUM conferences; the real figures are £784 and £78 respectively!

Now summer's here (maybe) outdoor activities can make money. Elliot Harold from Edinburgh raised £16 from a cycle ride and £20 came in from a Bermondsey barbecue. How about some seasonal ideas from your area?

But the key is to ask. Our newest supporters have shown their commitment. A O'Connell from West London has pledged £25. Thanks also to Tariq Kalil (Edinburgh) £3, Ian Hogg (Paisley LPYS) £20 and many more. Rush your cash to us by first post on Wednesday 5 August and beat the deadline.

Photo: Dave Sinclair

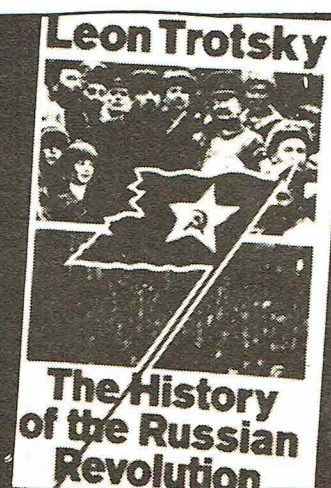


"The fact of the matter is that it was not an ordinary demonstration; it was something considerably more than a demonstration, but less than a revolution. It was an outburst of revolution and counter-revolution together, a sharp, sometimes sudden elimination of the middle elements, while the proletarian and bourgeois elements made a stormy appearance."

Lenin on the July Days.

Trotsky's classic
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JUL

Petrograd on

1987 IS the seventieth anniversary of the Russian revolution history of the working class.

February 1917 saw a massive movement which toppled the Provisional Government. Lenin returned from exile and denounced the coalition government and compromising socialists, or 'moderates' as the press today. He drew up a programme for his party, the Bolsheviks, and called for a break with the 'Provisional' government and the capitalists.

These events were described in issues of Militant earlier. This issue explains the events which came to be known as the July Days, when the city teetered on the brink of another revolution.

THE PROVISIONAL government had solved none of the country's problems.

The war dragged on, meaning slaughter at the front and starvation at home. Workers in the cities were aggravated by food shortages on the one hand, while profiteers made fortunes from arms production and the black market on the other.

In the villages, peasants were beginning to get impatient with airy promises that the land would be redistributed leading to no official action.

The soldiers were demanding an end to the war with more and more urgency. The bulk of them were peasant conscripts. Not only did they wish to avoid death at the front, but by now they also wished to return to their villages for the harvest, lest their crops rot in the field.

Meanwhile, the capitalists regarded the intervention of the masses into history with hatred. They sabotaged the economy in order to discredit the revolution and organised a creeping lock-out.

The February revolution had exploded independently of even the socialist parties and had succeeded in destroying Tsarism. But, above the heads of the masses, the Menshevik and Socialist Revolutionary leaders formed a coalition government with liberal princes and capitalists in the leading positions.

February also saw the revival of the soviets, councils elected by workers, soldiers and peasants in city wards, towns and villages and then at regional and national level. They were a focus of workers' democracy, which had more authority with the masses than the Provisional government.

The Mensheviks and SRs had the majority in them. The masses had confidence in these leaders whom the Tsar's regime had denounced as dangerous revolutionaries and in some cases gaoled or exiled.

But the compromisers, as the Bolsheviks called them, had accepted the dictates of the Kadets, who controlled the provisional government. The government and Soviet leaders seemed paralysed by the contending class forces the revolution had aroused and the masses became increasingly frustrated with the compromiser leaders.

The workers of Petrograd were the quickest to draw the political conclusions from their frustration and their politicisation infected

the soldiers posted in the city. The centralised Tsarist state had meant that the capital had a decisive social weight in Russian society. A large proportion of the working class was concentrated in the city too. So rotten was the Tsarist regime, that insurrection in Petrograd alone had been enough to finish it off. The provinces had followed Petrograd with little trouble.

So, when the compromisers betrayed their hopes before their very eyes, the Petrograd workers and soldiers moved quickly towards the slogans of Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

The Bolsheviks understood that they could not win the Menshevik and SR workers and peasants simply by issuing an ultimatum to them to drop their established party allegiances. Just as today workers support mass parties, like the Labour Party because of the tradition they represent, so most Russian workers and peasants looked to these reformist leaders.

Soviet power

So the Bolsheviks' slogans demanded of these parties' leaders that they do the job their supporters expected them to do.

Their key demands were that the socialists break with the Kadets and take political power into their own hands. The compromisers could easily have done this by declaring the executive of the Soviet the government of the country. The Bolshevik slogans "Down with the ten capitalist ministers!" and "All power to the soviets!" became increasingly popular amongst the masses.

Already in June, the Bolsheviks had called a demonstration to coincide with the first all-Russian soviet congress. They had been under special pressure from the soldiers who opposed the government's plans for a new military offensive.

The compromisers had an overwhelming majority at the congress. It demanded that the Bolsheviks call off their demonstration. But it had been forced to call an official Soviet demonstration for the following Sunday, under the blandest possible slogans.

It was a huge success...for the Bolsheviks! 400,000 attended, but to the compromisers' horror, their banners bore the Bolsheviks' 'extremist' slogans. Despite this, the government continued on its rightward course. On 18

70th Anniversary of the Russian revolution

THE JULY DAYS

the brink of revolution

the richest experience in the

Tsar's dictatorship. In April, the arrest of capitalist politicians could undoubtedly call them to account, which meant a complete end to the July Days.

This year. This week, TONY Cliff's 'July Days', when the capital

started the new offensive in June.

The June demonstrations showed the Bolsheviks were the leading political force in Petrograd. But the same was not yet true for the rest of the country.

Millions of soldiers at the front and peasants in the provinces had only just heard of them, and that through the usually vitriolic reports of the capitalist press and the compromisers, a situation familiar to Militant supporters today. They still had confidence in their leaders, even though they often put forward the Bolsheviks' demands of "bread, peace and land".

Lenin understood that soon these illusions would turn into their opposite. But pressure was mounting in Petrograd for immediate action against Kerensky's government.

Ultra-left sectarians imagine that revolutionaries merely have to find the most left point on the political spectrum and occupy it. But a serious workers' party has to weigh all the political, strategic and tactical considerations in a situation in order to achieve victory.

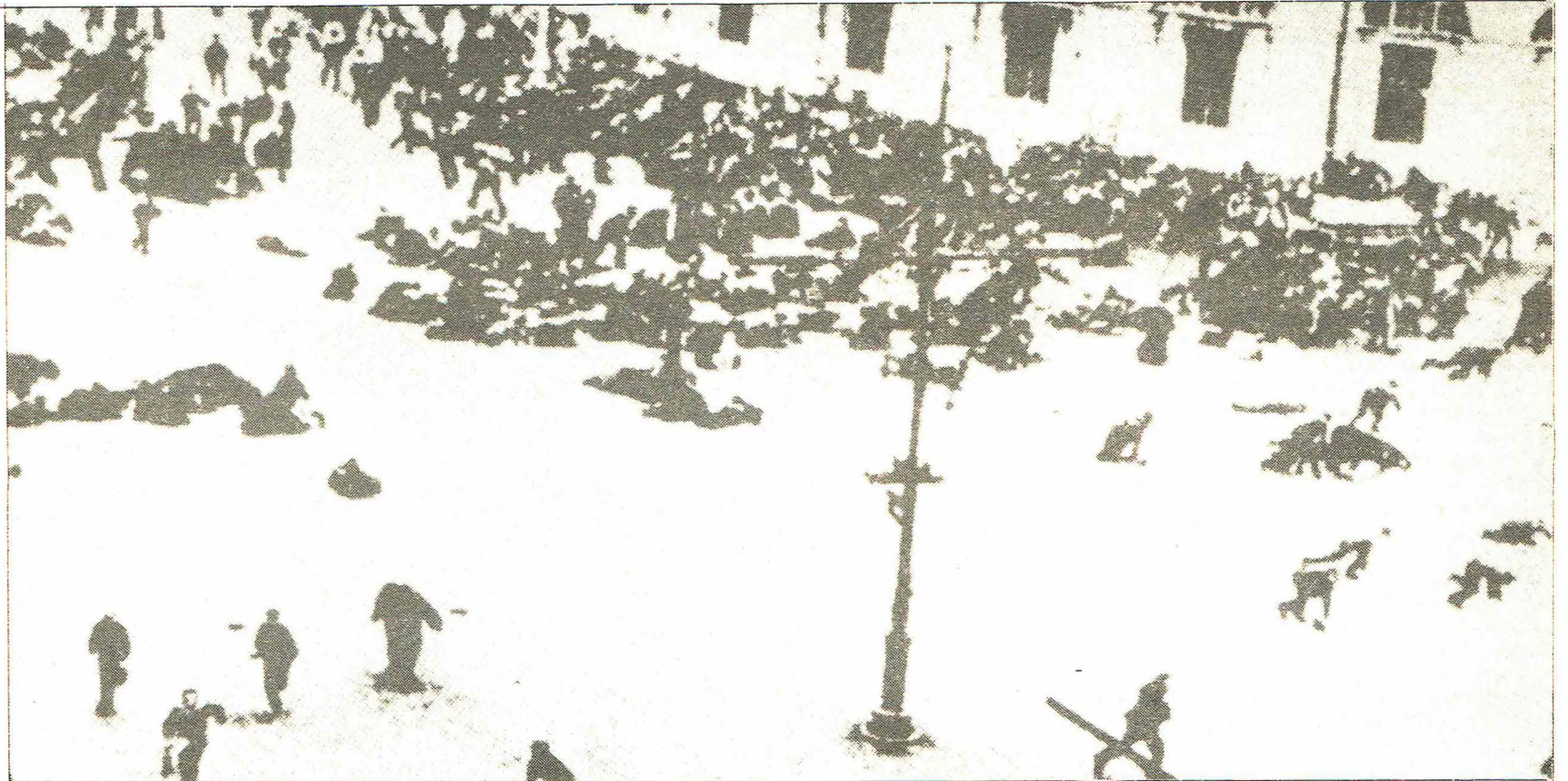
The Bolsheviks could have taken power in Petrograd in June or July. But the rest of the country would not have followed suit. There would have been a repeat of the Paris Commune of 1871. There the workers in the French capital had taken power briefly, but were eventually butchered into submission by the Prussian army in collaboration with the French capitalist class.

One of the reasons for this tragic defeat was the Commune's isolation from the rest of France, which allowed the reactionaries to regroup outside the city.

In Russia there was the added danger that many front-line soldiers at that stage believed that their comrades' refusal to go to the front jeopardised their chances of going home. So the Bolsheviks had to restrain the Petrograd masses from a showdown with the government.

This was not the most popular policy, especially with many of the soldiers who imagined that the possession of guns gave them an easy solution to all problems. They imagined that a further revolution could be accomplished as easily as February's.

Even sections of the Party, the rawest recruits and those closest to the impatient masses, were affected by the prevailing mood.



Demonstrators scatter from sniper fire.

and were less than enthusiastic in putting the Party's position over.

On 2 July, the Kadets threw the government into crisis. Using some timid concessions to Ukrainian nationalism as a pretext, the four Kadet ministers resigned. In reality, they knew that the offensive was collapsing and decided to let the compromisers deal with the consequences on their own.

At the same time a company of machine-gunners were due to leave for the front. On hearing that the coalition had been destroyed, and with it the compromisers' excuses for their political inaction, the gunners' regiment sent delegates round factories and regiments calling for an armed demonstration.

At a standstill

By 7.0 p.m. the factories were at a standstill and a massive demonstration had assembled. Unlike in the early days of the revolution, middle-class well-wishers were absent. "Today only the common slaves of capital were marching" said one participant. The Liberal, Nabokov, saw only "insane, dumb, beastlike faces".

The Bolsheviks were faced with an accomplished fact. They tried to restrain the masses, but to no avail. The Party's Petrograd Committee, which was meeting at the time, had to reconsider the position. Just as irresponsible as advocating a mistaken course of action, would have been abandoning the masses to their fate once they had taken that course.

Marxists cannot always chose

the ground on which to fight. Sometimes workers feel forced to take action regardless of whether their leaders feel it is tactically advisable, as the Yorkshire miners' leaders have recently found out. If battle becomes inevitable, Marxists must still advocate the best tactics and strategy. If these prove correct, the masses will suffer fewer setbacks and draw correct conclusions from their experiences, as has been the case in the course of the struggles in Liverpool.

By now, reactionaries were provoking skirmishes with the demonstrators which they hoped would come to a bloody head. The Committee, along with representatives of the Central Committee, issued an appeal for a peaceful demonstration which would present its demands to the Soviet executive, and joined the march.

The demonstrations continued for a second day, this time joined by 10,000 from the Kronstadt naval fortress. Inevitably, provocateurs fired on the demonstration. In the evening, two Cossack squadrons sparked off a small battle which claimed 13 lives.

When they finally faced the Soviet leaders, the workers got nothing but empty phrases. "Take the power, you son of a bitch, when they give it to you", one worker shouted at a 'socialist' minister.

At the height of the demonstrations, the rich had rushed to the stations, desperate to get out of town. As the movement began to subside, workers found in the better-off areas were attacked and beaten as the reactionaries regained confidence.

The Bolshevik Central Com-

mittee called on workers and soldiers to end the demonstration and this time their call was heeded. At five o'clock in the morning, the Soviet's leaders were 'saved' from the workers lobbying them by officers and soldiers led by a well-known Menshevik lieutenant.

Vital lesson

Workers and soldiers were disoriented by the lack of results from this massive movement. Why was it not possible to repeat February's success with the same ease? The July Days were a temporary blow to their morale.

The rightists on the other hand were tremendously emboldened. The compromisers had been terrified by the masses and had proved that they would not act against capitalism. The reaction raised its head. The Bolsheviks were particularly viciously attacked. They were accused of organising an attempted insurrection, the exact opposite of the truth.

Despite the painful consequences, in some senses the July Days were an essential experience for the Bolshevik Party and the advanced workers.

Afterwards Lenin pointed out that if the compromise leaders had put the slogan "All power to the Soviets" into action, Russian society would have been transformed peacefully. In the July Days, Petrograd's workers and soldiers tried to force the Mensheviks and SRs to adopt a common programme with the Bolsheviks. "Many still cherished the illusion that everything could be obtained by words and demonstrations," remarked

A Guide to names:

SOME OF the terms used here may be unfamiliar to new readers. We explain some below:

Kadets: Constitutional Democrats. The main capitalist party which under the Tsar had demanded some political reforms. Well-known members: Miliukov, Nabokov.

Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs): A non-Marxist party which started as a terrorist group. Its programme demanded some land reform and most of its support was among the peasants. Well-known members: Kerensky.

Mensheviks: The right wing of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. They believed the revolution was 'bourgeois-democratic' and not socialist. They therefore encouraged the Kadets to take the leading positions.

Bolsheviks: The revolutionary wing of the RSDLP who had formed a separate party under Lenin. They led the October revolution. Leading members mentioned: Lenin, Trotsky.

Trotsky. The partial defeat taught them that the Bolshevik leaders had been right in warning that the task was not so easy as it had seemed at first. They learned that the reformist leaders had to be replaced. Similarly, after industrial struggles today like the miners strike, workers turn to activity in the unions and the Labour Party.

For a final showdown with the capitalists, the Petrograd workers were forced to conclude, a general staff was necessary and that general staff was the Bolshevik Party. Even out of a setback the Party won a deeper loyalty from and authority over the masses.

Trotsky later pointed out that the most difficult task of the October revolution was not the seizure of power, but enduring the struggles and privations necessary to hold onto it.

Here too, the July Days and their aftermath were an essential lesson "...At that time our workers and soldiers would not have fought and died for Petrograd," Lenin said. Subsequent events were to teach them that power could be won and kept only by their own efforts and self-sacrifice tied to the leadership of Lenin's and Trotsky's party.

"As a technical trial," the Kadet leader Miliukov wrote, "the experience was for them (the Bolsheviks) undoubtedly of extraordinary value...It was evident that when the time came for repeating the experiment, they would carry it more systematically and consciously."

The Bolsheviks did absorb the lessons of the July Days and they were invaluable for the victory in October.

The impact of 'glasnost'

Storms ahead for East European Stalinism

When East German police attacked a young crowd listening to a pop concert across the Berlin wall, there were cries of 'Gorbachev! Gorbachev!'—a symptom of the impact the Russian Communist Party leader has had in eastern Europe.

Like the Soviet Union itself, the countries of eastern Europe, under the dead hand of parasitic ruling bureaucracies, face economic stagnation. None have matched the growth of earlier years when they reaped the benefits of planned, nationalised economies. These still represent an advance over capitalism, but now the ruling elites have become an absolute fetter on the further development of society.

Gorbachev has been forced to attempt 'reforms' to break the stranglehold of the state and party officials who live in luxury, while the workers face shortages of necessities and living standards well below those of western Europe.

He has understood that the discontent building up amongst the workers will explode in a political revolution if nothing is done. Like other Russian leaders before him he is defending the bureaucracy as a whole by curbing the 'excesses' of its individual components.

He aims to free industry and commerce from the rigid, unchecked, centralised control which leads to bottlenecks, delays and shoddy quality, with a drive against corruption among officials, a requirement for enterprises to achieve a profit, bonuses for success and penalties for failure, more openness (glasnost) in the press and TV, and the election, under strict bureaucratic control, of factory managers and party officials.

This may achieve a brief surge in economic growth, but will do nothing to change a totalitarian system run from above by officials who have a vested interest in its continuation.

Indeed these measures will cause as many problems as they solve, as local managers use their greater autonomy to get rich through corruption and embezzlement.

Russian workers, on the other hand, will gain nothing. Many are already taking wage cuts because their factory has failed to meet new quality standards. Their 'democratic' rights will be a sham, with no right to organise genuine trade unions or parties.

The bureaucracy will never give up its privileges and power nor countenance the one thing which alone can rebuild the economy—the democratic control and management of industry and society by the workers, with genuine elections and freedom of expression and assembly.

Even so, some of Gorbachev's ideas have struck a chord amongst workers in eastern Europe, who are looking for a way out of the totalitarian strait-jacket of their own regimes.

There has been a mixed reaction from the bureaucrats, from Ceausescu in Romania, who has refused to have anything to do with Gorbachev's 'reforms', to Kadar in Hungary who claims to have already implemented them. And yet these are the two countries with the gravest economic crises in eastern Europe.

"Romania has so many problems" an unnamed official told the *Financial Times* "that it is hardly the time to start to experiment". The economy is in a de-



Warsaw pact leaders at summit in East Berlin.

perate state. Last winter there was virtually no energy for heating homes and workplaces or even cooking. Only 40 watt light bulbs were allowed and TV is still restricted to two hours a day.

Many foods have been unavailable and huge queues form for the meagre supplies there are.

The regime, dominated by Ceausescu, his wife, son and numerous relations and place-men, is brutally repressive. The Hungarian-speaking minority in Transylvania suffers national oppression as well.

Strikes have been ruthlessly put down. It is an offence even to own a typewriter without a licence. Ceausescu justly fears that any tinkering with 'reforms' would lead to an explosion from the workers and even from within the bureaucracy against the nepotism and grotesque personality cult of the 'conducator' (leader).

The regime next most hostile to Gorbachev is that of East Germany. The bureaucracy argues that as the most successful east European economy, with productivity 30 per cent higher than in Russia and the highest living standards of the eastern bloc, it has no need for reform.

"If your neighbour puts up new wallpaper in his flat, you don't have to change your wallpaper" said Kurt Hager, Minister for Ideology.

In response a pop group composed a song with a reference to "my friend who papers the wall". East German workers, especially the young, see the contrast with West German living standards and the restricted conditions in which they live. Hence the bureaucracy's fear of any dabbling in 'reform'.

"Those who flirt with the banner of freedom under the motto of more openness will be shown the limits" warned Margot Honecker, Minister for Education and party leader's wife.

In Czechoslovakia the present leaders came to power after the crushing by Russian tanks of Dubcek's 'reform' movement of 1968. Many of the measures Gorbachev is proposing are the same as those introduced then.

Party leader Husak is now reluctantly paying lip service to ideas which he has been denouncing for 19 years. He shares Gorbachev's view that change is unavoidable, but knows from his own experience the danger of even quite limited 'reforms' like Dubcek's whetting workers' appetite for wholesale changes in society.

Like the Soviet Union, the regimes of Eastern Europe face stagnation and massive opposition from below.

A similar fear of arousing the workers is evident in Poland. Jaruzelski has pledged full support for Gorbachev-style measures, but cannot risk too much talk about 'democracy' for fear of encouraging a resurgence of support for genuinely democratic trade unions which threatened the whole bureaucracy in 1980.

Less inhibited is the Bulgarian bureaucracy which has already gone further than Gorbachev, by setting up 'commercial banks' which will operate under 'market conditions'. "If an enterprise collapses," says party leader Zhivkov "the bank will collapse too. Whoever does not work well will go bankrupt and that will be that".

In reality, however, the economy will remain firmly under the bureaucracy's control and the banks' 'independence' will be a sham.

The regime's official 'trade

union' has even recently recognised a strike when workers walked out against a management which cut their wages and then threatened to remove the machinery from the factory. This was a warning shot from the top bureaucrats to its more conservative layers.

Even isolated, backward Albania, whose leaders have remained loyal to orthodox Stalinism, are flirting with 'reform'. The party leaders have openly talked of "clumsy and incompetent officials". They have introduced bonuses for those who exceed the plan, "especially for those who create inventions, rationalise, or achieve tangible gains for the economy".

It is Hungary, however, which provides the best illustration of what Gorbachevism means in practice, and shows its limits.

They have allowed more than one candidate to stand in elections, though they are all nominated by the bureaucracy and the elections are still a sham. There is greater freedom for limited 'private enterprise'. Wages and prices are more free to respond to 'the market'.

This does not mean a return to capitalism, since the bureaucracy still retains overall control at the top, but for a minority of traders, middle-men and bureaucrats, there has been a rise in living standards and there is a superficial impression of prosperity in the streets.

The economy, however, is in deep crisis. Dabbling with 'capitalist' solutions has brought about 'capitalist' problems. Hungary now has zero economic growth and a deficit of over eight billion dollars, the highest per capita debt in eastern Europe.

10,000 steel workers are to lose their jobs over two years. 10,000 people are officially 'seeking work', 400 employment offices have been established and 1,000

have started work on a new public works scheme that pays £13-50 a week for rubbish collection or sewage pipe cleaning!

Now the regime is bringing in an austerity package, introducing VAT, income tax, wage controls and higher prices, to make the workers pay for the crisis.

Economists are predicting worse to come. According to Reszo Nyers, the 'father' of Hungary's 'reform' programme, "we must acknowledge the economic fact that structural unemployment is inevitable, even under socialism." The Industry Minister, Laszlo Kapolyi, has announced that 73,000 jobs are expected to disappear by 1990 as a result of 'structural modifications'.

The bureaucracy has all the problems caused by unchecked, centralised control from the top, compounded by problems caused by using 'capitalist' methods.

They are forced to vacillate between decentralisation to free the economy from some of the stranglehold of bureaucracy and then recentralisation to ensure that their overall grip on society is not loosened.

The system is in a dead-end. Only the complete overthrow of the bureaucratic ruling castes by the workers can establish the four principles which Lenin laid down as the basis for a democratic workers' state.

These are the election of all officials, subject to the right of recall, no official to be paid more than the average wage of a skilled worker, no standing army but an armed people and no bureaucracy but the rotation of administration by the whole people.

Only on that basis can economic growth be achieved and the workers of eastern Europe be liberated from the chains of bureaucracy and totalitarian dictatorship.

By Pat Craven



Gorbachev meets the people in Prague 1987.



Russian troops in Prague 1968.

Gulf war crisis

US intervention threatens escalation

THE WAR between Iran and Iraq has now entered an entirely new phase, with a possible massive escalation, involving direct military intervention by the United States.

By John Pickard

The 're-flagging' of Kuwaiti oil tankers with the Stars and Stripes is specifically directed against Iran, a provocation carrying the threat of Libya-style air attacks against Iranian bases at the mouth of the Gulf. It is an attempt to put military pressure on Iran which looks increasingly capable of winning the seven-year war.

Iran's oil terminal at Kharg Island has been under attack from Iraq for several years and Iran has retaliated by attacking ships from Iraq and its allies, including Kuwait. Since 1981, over 300 ships have been attacked and a third of them destroyed, with the loss of 200 merchant sailors.

Since the re-flagging and the United Nations Security Council resolution calling for a general cease-fire, Iraq may for a time hold back on its attacks on Iranian tankers, creating a de facto truce at sea that Iran would accept. But this is unlikely to last because there is no cease-fire on land and the war which has already cost up to a million lives is grinding on, more and more to Iraq's disadvantage.

The remorseless military pressure of Iran—less well armed but with a population and an economy three times bigger than its enemy—has brought Iraq to the point where the 'best' it could now achieve is a cease-fire forced

on Iran by outside intervention. It cannot hope to win, and looks increasingly in danger of collapse, despite massive financial support from other Arab states and the purchase of vast quantities of arms.

It is as a result of the decisive strategic shift against him that Iraq's Saddam Hussein wants to see the war 'internationalised' by the intervention of the USA, France and Britain. It has even been suggested that the 'accidental' Iraqi attack on the USS Stark was engineered deliberately to draw the USA into the conflict.

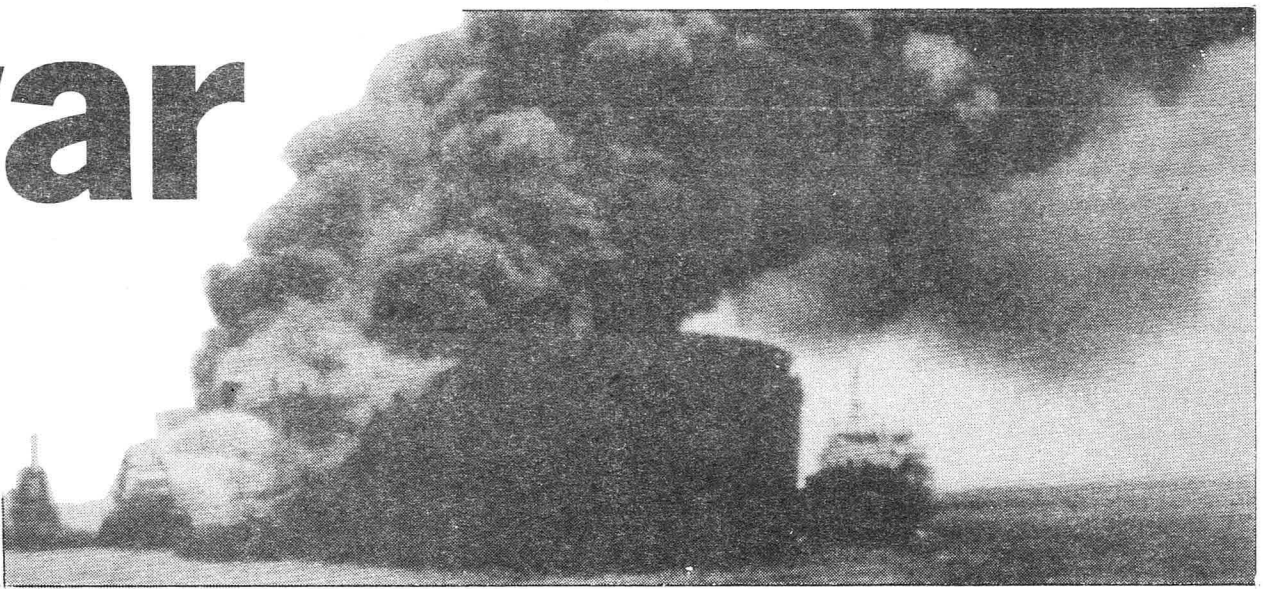
After a brief respite, therefore, Iraqi attacks on Iranian shipping are likely to recommence. These could provoke a response from Iran, which in turn could introduce the direct military involvement of imperialism in the Gulf.

Fear

The willing involvement of American imperialism, and the break in diplomatic relations between Iran on one side and Britain and France on the other, reflect imperialism's fear of an Iraqi defeat.

There is enormous discontent and war-weariness in both countries, but the continued fervour of the Iranian revolution and military successes make these problems more manageable in Tehran than in Baghdad.

An Iraqi collapse, or a revolutionary explosion that overthrew Saddam Hussein, is a recurrent nightmare for all the imperialist powers and the Arab rulers. Either would mean an Iranian victory and the spread of revolu-



Mine damage to the reflagged tanker Bridgeton last week made a mockery of the US naval presence 'protecting' it, as warships took shelter behind the tanker in case there were more mines about! Intent on confronting Iran's missile bases, the US Navy had failed to take any precautions against mines. The picture above shows a Saudi tanker hit by a missile earlier this year.



tion throughout the Gulf States, with incalculable repercussions for the whole Middle East.

Already this year there have been at least half a dozen bombings in Kuwait, ominously linked with the sizeable local Shiite population. The fortunes of the Kuwaiti regime, more so than any of the other Arab states, are inextricably linked to those of Iraq.

Also significant is the fact that the Russian bureaucracy has exactly the same fear of an Iranian victory as has imperialism. They, no less than the USA and the conservative Arab states, are afraid of the revolutionary consequences of an Iraqi defeat, overthrowing the status quo in the Gulf.

For that reason Moscow has been the biggest military backer of Iraq, and was the first to offer Kuwait the use of Russian oil tankers, under the implicit protection of the Red Navy. This was an offer Kuwait was happy to take up and use as leverage to persuade Reagan to re-flag other tankers.

Russia has also opened up high level diplomatic contacts with Oman, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia for the first time, and has offered to discuss 'security' in the Gulf with the USA. Notwithstanding the mutual suspicion between imperialism and the Moscow bureaucracy, their interests in the Gulf coincide.

Sail or be sacked

LABOUR MP Dave Nellist has revealed that the multinational oil company, Texaco, threatens to dismiss British sailors refusing to serve in the Gulf.

He quoted a letter sent to seamen on 2 July by Mr J.F. Gaffney, general manager of Texaco, which says:

"Under NMB conditions an officer has a right to refuse to serve on a vessel in a War Zone... In these circumstances the Company would have to consider dismissing those employees who were preventing it meeting its contractual commitments, and engaging other personnel..."

Dave Nellist commented: "Clearly the drive for profits of this company puts the lives of seafarers at a lower order of importance than a few extra dollars per barrel of oil. Texaco should immediately withdraw this threat and respect the wishes of seafarers."

Bangladesh

General strike threat to regime

IN A further demonstration of the mounting opposition to General Ershad's regime in Bangladesh, an alliance of opposition organisations have organised a 54 hour general strike. This follows a 32 hour general strike only a week ago, itself the longest since martial law was lifted last year and marks a growing crisis for Ershad.

Hundreds of opposition militants burned down an army recruitment centre in the capital, Dhaka, where the strike had overwhelming support. Riot police fired teargas and arrested at least 80 people.

Opposition has focussed on the Zilla Parishad Bill, which would enable military personnel to have representation in the district administrations, but the main aim of the general strike is

now to force President Ershad from power.

The present strike is significant in that the pressure of the masses has forced the two major opposition groupings, led by the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, to act together. The two groups split last year over the question of whether or not to take part in parliamentary elections.

Clearly the unstable, crisis-ridden capitalist system in Bangladesh cannot even live with the easing of martial law which occurred last year. Hence Ershad's moves back in that direction with the Zilla Parishad Bill, and the shooting and wounding of dozens of strikers.

By Tim Harris

"I'd die to free South Africa"

"MY WHOLE life was one big robbery and now they were robbing me again". So Theophilus Mzukwa, in a recent political trial in Cape Town, summed up the frustration that led him to joining MK, the military wing of the ANC.

The details he gave in his defence were a stark indictment of apartheid and capitalism. When he was 13 the death of his father, an 'illegal' migrant worker, forced his mother to 'support' the whole family on the R60 (£20) per month as a domestic worker. To earn this pitiful sum "she would be absent from dawn to dusk... She would only see her children over weekends."

In 1976, during the schools boycott spreading from Soweto, he first experienced the armed bodies of men who 'protect democracy' and free enterprise for the bosses:

"It was the first time I had seen a dead person who had been killed by a



The Soweto struggles of 1976 politicised a generation.

gun. I thought I was dreaming then. I became so frustrated because it was clear that something insane was happening in our country."

Aged 19, he left school to support his mother, and after a number of jobs where he suffered low pay and racist taunts was employed

as a boiler cleaner at Athlone power station:

"When you got off the boiler nobody could recognise you because you were full of dust from head to toe... There would be dust in your nose, in your mouth, in your eyes and everywhere. It made you sick. But what could I do?"

He got TB, but was refused a lighter job and then sacked without compensation, wages or leave pay.

Like a slave

To get his wages he was sent back and forth between an office in Cape Town and the power station about 20 times: "On the last day I became so furious I refused to leave without my money. The whites looked at me as if I was a criminal".

Concluding his evidence, he gave his verdict on capitalism and the apartheid state:

"After all these experiences I came to the conclusion that it is better for me to fight to change South Africa and die in the process rather than continuing to live like a slave. I was tired of being kicked around... I was tired of being robbed. I could see the same thing happening to my brothers and sisters. Better to fight for freedom than to live like a slave."

Theophilus learnt from an early age the meaning of capitalism. Increasingly workers and youth are learning the next important lesson: that only the methods of working class struggle against the bosses and the state, preparing for mass armed insurrection, will guarantee its end. Individual armed actions, no matter how dedicated those who carry them out, cannot succeed.

Forward to a mass ANC on a socialist programme!

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.

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 Hepscott 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.

Cassette tape debate. Richard Venton (Merseyside Militant spokesman) and John Blevin (features editor Morning Star). 'Way forward after the election' (10 July). £1.75 (inc. p&p) from M Cock, 309 High St, Rochester, Kent, ME1 1VU.

Tom and Gaynor Foley —congratulations from all Bootle comrades on the birth of Catherine Ellen, in a very eventful week.

Congratulations to Joana and Kevin on the birth of baby Sean. From Nottingham Militant supporters.

Militant meetings

Blackburn every Wednesday. The Trades Club, 8.30pm.

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

East Lewisham LPYS Disco. Saturday 15 August 8-12pm. Labour club, Limes Grove, Lewisham SE13. Tickets—waged £2, unwaged £1.

Despair of unemployment

Dear Comrades,
Once upon a time there were jobs. A whole nation of jobs were there to be forked out. You could get them here, there and everywhere. But there were greedy people called the Tories. They came to power and took them

away and put nearly 5 million people on the dole.
My name is Kathy and I am 17. I stayed on at school for another year. It was a waste of time and a scheme was all that was left for me when I had spent nearly 12 years at school. So therefore I went to the

careers to see whether they could help me. There was a man called Mr Smith, he was so helpful that I had to return everyday just to remind him who I was.
I am in a band called 'Hey Marshal' Had I not been in a band I would have left Liverpool and

gone south where supposedly there are jobs. But when you do go south you would know no one and be really lonely.
A depressed youth
Kathy

Letters

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

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

Security firm exploitation

Dear Comrades. This cutting from the *Bristol Journal* freesheet on 16 July makes interesting reading:
"Our Bristol office only wants people who will work seven days or nights a week. Most of us are on less than £2 an hour. Our boss thinks we must put our wives and kids second and never go sick. On top of this we have now been told

that there is no pay rise this year, yet the company we work for has just received increases from all the companies they have on their books...We all feel that security officers should at least be on £2 an hour...From 67 security officers in Bristol".
Yours fraternally
Dave Stattock
Bristol

Families in crisis

Dear Comrades,
I read with interest the article on child abuse. I am a nursery nurse working in a Family Centre. We are a preventative service to offer support to the family. I often talk to parents who cannot cope. No jobs, lack of decent education because of cuts. Mostly pressure in the family because

of lack of finance.
They lack self-esteem, there is no future so no motivation. I certainly do not condone child abuse but we really must offer more help to these families.
Yours fraternally
Sylvia Hugton

Poorest hit hardest

Dear Comrades,
The *Economist* (4-10 July) carried an article "Teaching the poor to be workers" which can be summed up by two of the sentences in the article.

The first, following a paragraph pointing to the need for council tenants to take more responsibility for their council estates and likening the estates to ghettos stated the average tenants attitude to be "why go to work, when most of your neighbours do not". The article then went on to give figures of the number of council tenants out of work or receiving supplementary benefit.

The article goes on to discuss the idea of an American "workfare" scheme. The idea is supposedly to teach the unemployed how to work, but not only the unemployed! Single parents come in for particular attention.

The *Economist* gave a pointer to just how much single parents are despised by the Tories. "A government which wants to resto-



Maternity benefits have already come under attack in the Fowler Review. Now the Tories are turning on single parents. Photo: Dave Sinclair

re some element of stigma to single-parenthood might eventually be tempted to oblige even teenage

mothers to work, or to look for work, in exchange for benefit".
Yours fraternally

Dave Pollock
Scarborough

'Newer Realism'

Dear Comrades,
Whilst reading through a Nalگو agenda for a forthcoming meeting I came across a report of a joint NUJ-Nalگو conference on privatisation held in London last February.

The report began with the opening speeches from various NUJ and Nalگو representatives and an address from one Christopher Price who commented that the unions had already lost the battle against privatisation because of a failure to take the media seriously enough and a lack of power over the media. And that remark came at the beginning of the conference—talk about setting the mood!

Yours fraternally
Ian Leech
Nalگو steward

Question on devolution

Dear Comrades,
I would be grateful if you would clarify the attitude of socialists to separate assemblies in Scotland and Wales. There was an obvious contradiction in issue 855. The article by Alan McCombes says that the programme of the Labour movement should incorporate the demand for a Scottish Assembly.

However, the article by Alec Thraves says "in reality, devolution will be pushed by the (Labour) leadership not in the interests of the working class, but as an extra gravy train with more jobs for the boys in a new regional bureaucracy".

It is clearly contradictory to advocate an assembly in Scotland without support-

ing a similar chamber for the Welsh. If a Scottish assembly came into existence, this would result in a new ferment of nationalism in Wales. This cannot be dismissed by saying such an assembly would mean "more jobs for the boys".

Yours fraternally
David Milsom
Sheffield

Don't get sick—we're full!

Dear Comrades,
Geordies needing hospital treatment in the early part of last week wouldn't have received much joy at the city's Royal Victoria Infirmary as no-one was being admitted.
Admissions began again on Friday though as a lot of patients had died. As the hospital morgue was full patients who had recently died were either left on the wards

until there was room (hardly comforting for those still living) or sent to other morgues in the area.

The Tories' disrespect and callous treatment of workers during life is bad enough, this example shows that in death it's no better either.

Yours fraternally
Sandra Thompson
Wallsend Labour Party

Distant sales

Dear Comrades,
On a weekly paper sale outside the local steel works, a visiting worker from Nigeria asked to buy the paper. He explained it was for a friend in Nigeria, who had requested that he look out for the *Militant* and that he send a copy back to Nigeria. Good news obviously travels far!
Yours fraternally
Steven McPhee
Strathclyde

'Marxist' greetings

SOCIALISTS AND trade unionists in Zimbabwe were imprisoned for criticising Mugabe for his pro-capitalist policies. The following letter which appeared in the Zimbabwean *Herald* on 18 June speaks for itself.

PM hails Thatcher victory

Herald Reporter
THE Prime Minister, Cde Mugabe, has congratulated his British counterpart, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, on winning the elections in her country last week.

In his message, Cde Mugabe, said: "As you and your party celebrate this historic electoral victory, the Government and people of Zimbabwe join me in wishing you yet another successful term of office.

"We happily note the excellent bilateral relations which exist between Zimbabwe and the United Kingdom and express the hope that they will continue to grow from strength to strength."

THE REVOLUTION BETRAYED

WHAT IS THE SOVIET UNION AND WHERE IS IT GOING?

LEON TROTSKY

Summer bargains from World Socialist Books: Trotsky *Revolution Betrayed* now £4.50 (usually £5.75). Dobbs *Teamster Rebellion* now £4 (usually £4.95). Please add 50p postage for each title. From WSB, 3/13 Hepscott Rd, London E9 5HB.

Which way forward for the TGWU?

Following the general election the Tories are planning a further round of attacks on the trade unions and their members. The poll tax, health, education, more anti-union legislation, all are in the pipeline.

By Ian Parker

In these circumstances the recent biennial conference of the TGWU took on even greater importance. The labour movement traditionally looks to Britain's biggest union for a lead and ordinary T&G members, seeing the Tory attacks, will expect their union to defend them.

What are the issues which face T&G members? How do these issues relate to the decisions of conference and how will they be carried out?

Low pay, nuclear power, temporary and part-time labour, agency labour, deregulation of public transport, privatisation of local authority services affect every section of the membership. The role of the leadership in ensuring the strategy for the next two years is put into practice is crucial.

At the moment the union is conducting the Link Up campaign against low pay, which is aimed at recruiting temporary and part-time workers as well as those in full time work on low pay.

The alarming decline in the membership, a drop of nearly one million since 1979, has compelled the leadership to actively campaign amongst this section of workers. They are in sweat-shop conditions with few or no rights, often earning a pittance.

In many recent disputes such workers, often young and female, have fought for union recognition and rights in disputes lasting many months in order to achieve decent pay and conditions.

Opposition to the slave labour YTS schemes is T&G policy, but it also recognises YTS is here for the foreseeable future and 100 per cent closed shops, guaranteed jobs, union rates of pay are the main ways of helping youth who are and will be conscripted.

It is vital the youth on these schemes are unionised, as has begun in the North East and North West, in many instances they are the first to move into struggle. Youth are the life-blood of the union and should be encouraged to participate fully in the day to day running of the T&G.

Every region should have a youth forum where young workers can discuss what affects them, what campaigns can be undertaken and to convince youth in general to join the union and get active.

In many areas T&G members in the Labour Party Young Socialists have played a leading role in achieving this. Every young member should be looking at how to improve youth involvement.

At an organisational level measures such as increased representation at the youth conference, the right to debate and send resolutions to the biennial delegate conference and the election of a national youth officer would encourage youth activity.

The overwhelming majority of



resolutions to the BDC were on the basis of the election of a Labour government. There were great expectations amongst the rank and file during the election, indeed many members worked actively for a Labour victory.

The lessons of the election defeat must not be ignored by T&G members. The bold socialist campaign conducted in Liverpool and some other areas produced large swings to Labour. Where policies had been watered down and no campaign waged the electorate generally didn't want to know.

Labour

Traditionally the T&G, through the bloc vote, has played a leading role in the Labour Party, particularly at Party conference. The T&G is seen as a left wing union and since the 1960s its "progressive" stance has been reflected in debates on nuclear disarmament, the 35 hour week, election of the leader and reselection of MPs.

However, since the general election there have been attempts to shift the union to the right. The now right wing controlled General Executive Committee has carried support for one member one vote in the Labour Party, for example.

Ron Todd, the general secretary, was quite rightly supported by the left as the successor to Moss Evans. At the moment he is being pressurised by the right and is showing signs of drifting away from the left and its policies.

He backed one member one vote at the biennial and came out in favour of maintaining nuclear power for the moment (see last issue of *Militant*). The general trend in the labour movement of

the left moving to the right is mirrored in the T&G.

With a lack of perspective and failure to understand the stage through which society is passing it is inevitable that even good lefts can be thrown into confusion and demoralised by temporary setbacks.

As the battles take place on the industrial front the actions of Todd and the T&G left will have enormous influence. Because of this it is important to look more closely at the left in the T&G.

As with the AUEW under Hugh Scanlon the broad left has felt it sufficient to get individuals elected to key positions and sit on them. So to, for a whole period, in the T&G. And the rightward shift in the AUEW after Scanlon is also seen in the T&G.

At the last GEC elections the left lost control, with the President, Walter Greendale, one of the most experienced left wingers, losing his seat, along with a few others.

Although there had been a vicious campaign against Greendale and the left by the gutter press prior to the elections (with some help from inside the union), virtually no campaign took place. The same mistakes made in the AUEW of using the broad left as just an election machine backfired again.

The need for an open, democratic broad left, along the lines of that in the CPSA, where the Broad Left has recently won control, is needed more than ever. Over a number of years the CPSA Broad Left has built up a reputation amongst union members as a campaigning body with clearly stated policies which fights for decent pay and conditions.

There is constant involvement

of ordinary members of the union and therefore the Broad Left reflects accurately the feelings of the rank and file. This, and its bold presentation of policies has enabled it to overcome vicious attacks by government, press and right wing.

There have been battles within the Broad Left but they were never used as an excuse for becoming a narrow "word of mouth" organisation with union members only selectively invited. On the contrary, the patient explanation and campaigning to the union members exposed the open strike-breaking role of the BL84 grouping which had split from the Broad Left and now openly allies itself with the right wing.

Left victory vital for coming industrial struggles

Whilst Marxists in the T&G will work with others on the left, accepting majority decisions, it remains vital to draw the lessons of other broad lefts and campaign for the left in the T&G to open up, involving as many ordinary members as possible.

Ron Todd still has to be supported as one of the few left general secretaries. But it has to be recognised that at the moment his isolation on the GEC and the pressure of the right wing in the union and wider labour movement is having an effect.

One of the lessons of that was put bluntly by a delegate at the

BDC: "When the right wing are in control they stick the boot in. The left are too soft, it's about time we took them on." It will be events that determine the shift in the tops of the unions, not bureaucratic manoeuvre or just individual sincerity.

The National Broad Left in the NUM was built out of the miners' strike and is an indication of the new trend in the unions. The rank and file in the NUM recognised that in order to guard against further damaging splits in the union and to mobilise at rank and file level, a democratic, campaigning body had to be built.

The best left leaders, even those who have been part of some of the more bureaucratic, secretive broad lefts are increasingly recognising this is the way forward. It is an unavoidable fact that if the pressure from the ranks is off then the leaders come under pressure to compromise and conciliate at the members' expense and can shift to the right.

Over the next few months the left in the T&G has a crucial role to play. Elections for the GEC are coming up as well as the many attacks referred to earlier. If the right wing are to be defeated we have to learn the lessons of how bold open campaigns, whether in the general election or in trade union activities, are the only way to defend the working class.

The opportunities are brilliant. The campaign for the GEC elections could be used to set up an active broad left structure in each region. These bodies would then be used to go out into the workplaces and talk to T&G members and convince them of the policies of the left. Only by all the left coming together on these lines can we be sure to defeat the right wing.

Industrial Reports

The CPSA fights back

Limited period appointments dispute

CPSA MEMBERS in the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) have been taking industrial action since May over management's decision to employ staff on Limited Period Appointments (LPAs)

The government intend to retrain every member of staff in DHSS local offices in order to implement their attacks on claimants benefits as outlined in the 1986 Social Security act (commonly known as the Fowler Reviews).

Even this government recognises that complete retraining cannot be achieved on current staffing levels. Their master plan therefore is to employ a few thousand staff on short term contracts of between six and twelve months, make sure all existing staff are retrained, then when benefits are being cut to start destroying thousands of jobs.

Jobs

LPAs will be the first jobs to go—but soon followed by permanent jobs. Unfortunately LPAs, on worse terms and conditions than ordinary staff, are being used to cut jobs and benefits—at a time when the unions are demanding thousands of extra jobs to go with a proper benefits system to pay claimants on their needs rather than gov-

ernment costs. Widespread industrial action has already taken place over the LPA issue.

Since May over 50 DHSS local offices have taken industrial action over LPAs. It has varied from one-day walk outs to 'tit for tat' strike action and all out strike.

The 'tit for tat' action involves bringing two members out on strike indefinitely for every LPA employed. Whilst it is having an effect on management we recognise that it will not be sufficient on its own.

Three offices were, or still are, on all-out strike. They are Barrow, Peterlee, and Hull East. Aberdare has gone back to work and may come out again if needed. As management force LPAs into offices more will be taking industrial action. CPSA is demanding all existing LPA staff be given proper, permanent jobs. Virtually every LPA has joined the union, because they know their best chance of a permanent jobs rests in the strength of the union.

The current industrial action is having an effect on management. We must press on with the strike action, escalating wherever possible. Ultimately it may have to lead to an all-out strike in the DHSS as the only way to defend jobs and benefits.

The labour movement

must give full moral, financial and industrial support to CPSA's campaign. It is one which our class can identify with and support. It is just and we can win.

By John Regan
(CPSA DHSS North Eastern Regional Secretary)

Hull

CPSA pickets at Oriol House, DHSS office in Hull talked to Ray Duffill.

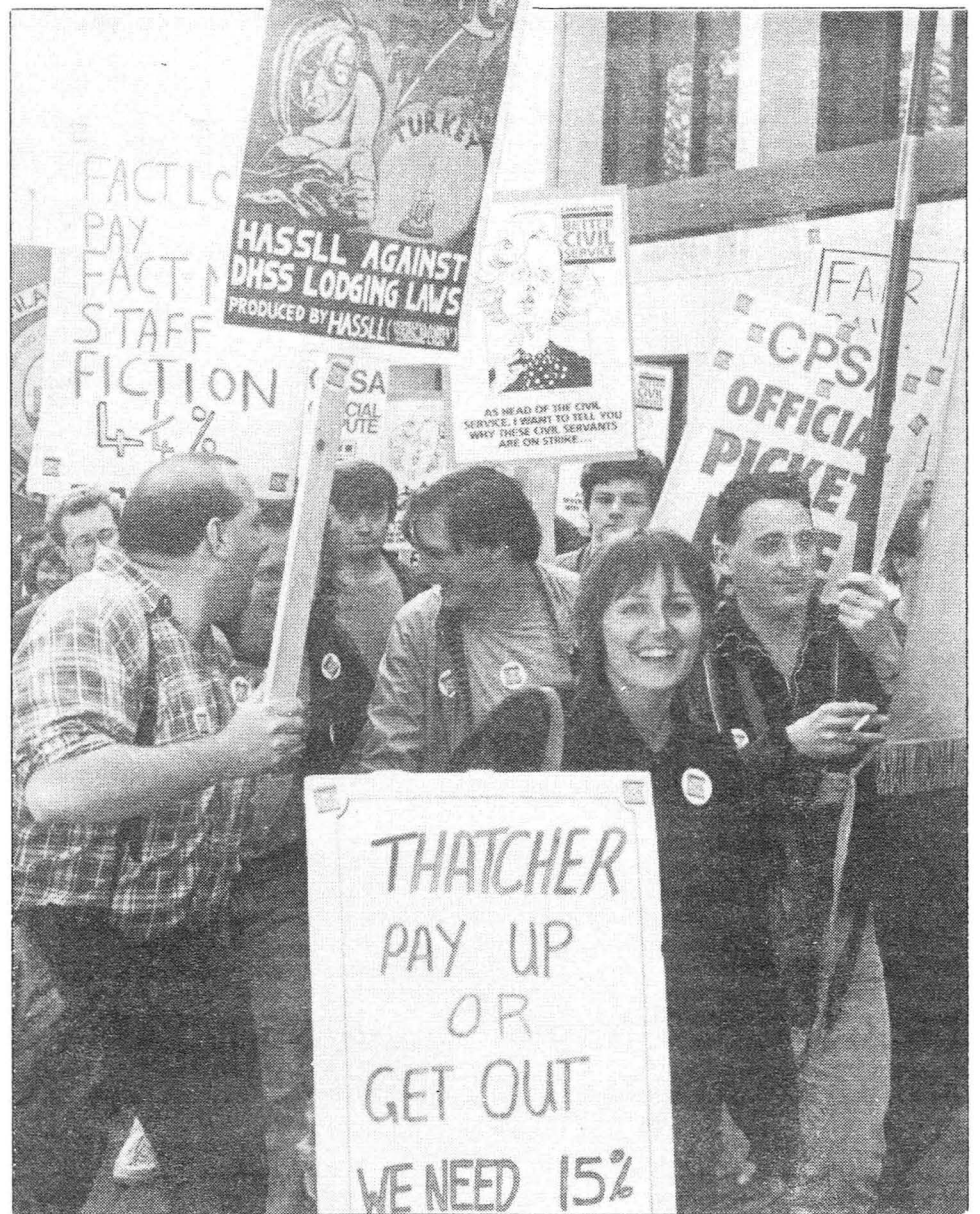
What has been the response from the members to attempts to introduce LPAs?

The response was 100 per cent solid when we first came out. After four weeks only a dozen members have returned to work. The Society members (SCPS) are working and providing an emergency payments service to claimants.

They are refusing to do any work normally done by the strikers and are committed to ballot their members on strike action if they are forced to do this work.

The Society (SCPS) have also levied their members £2 a head, which raises £130 a week. On top of this an average £10 a day is raised in a bucket collection at the office doors.

50 to 80 other offices in the country are taking action of one kind or another against the introduction of



Demo during pay campaign.

LPA. However, the action is not cohesive enough nationally. I'd like to see senior officials calling a national press conference to let those taking action realise they are not isolated.

This would educate other members about the LPA system and how it will affect their area and their office. This would lay the basis for a national campaign.

Walsall

FOR THE past month CPSA members in Walsall West DHSS CPSA office have been taking industrial action against the use of LPAs to implement the Fowler Review.

Walsall DHSS have seen the workload treble due to Thatcher's unemployment policies but DHSS management have refused to increase staffing levels to cope and give claimants a

prompt, efficient service. Yet when it comes to implementing cuts they are perfectly ready to take on extra staff.

So for the past four weeks Walsall West has been pulling out around seven members for every LPA. Consequently the office has been closing to the public by 11.30am.

Now the action has spread to Walsall East DHSS office. Last week 18 CPSA members were on strike after the introduction of four LPAs, this week two of the five supplementary benefit sections will be closed.

Andy Price, CPSA chair, Walsall East, told us: "I was really surprised by the attitude of the membership when they voted overwhelmingly for action."

It's the first time for ages that a call for action has come from the floor. We

had no recommendation either way as we weren't sure that members would want action so soon after the ballot defeat on all-out pay strike."

The mood of Walsall West office has hardened too. The CPSA told us that regional management offered to make two LPAs permanent and give unlimited overtime to clear the backlog of work—but on condition that CPSA accepted three more LPAs!

This was rejected at a meeting—the members wanted LPAs made permanent to work on supplementary benefit caseload without any strings. The office is already two workers below even the DHSS' own agreed staffing level.

By Nigel Wheatley,
(unemployed Astms member, Walsall)

Bloomsbury DHSS victory

ON WEDNESDAY 22 July management sent in a clerical officer to an executive officer's work at Bloomsbury DHSS, a man who had worked through a previous strike at the office.

The previous day management had wanted to discuss job flexibility "in the future". They obviously believe in keeping discussion to a minimum.

Since the national ballot on all-out strike was lost they had announced the arrival of five regional reserves in the office, the first in 14 months, without prior consultation.

Despite lengthy consultations with the staff rep they wouldn't withdraw this individual. The branch executive called a meeting which voted two to one for action.

The union negotiators offered a delay in the start of the action to give management a further chance to change their position. The two managers said they were going out to lunch til

after the deadline!

This shocked even some of those who had voted against striking. After the union had bent over backwards to discuss the case management pressed ahead.

The NEC agreed to a negotiating team of branch members as they had no confidence in the BL'84 led regional leadership, whose role in the last three years has been to repeatedly fail to defend rights and conditions.

This team, solidly supported by the direct action of the members, forced the management to climb down on work being covered by other grades. Regional reserves will not be introduced before a Whitley meeting on Wednesday.

Thames TV turned up and the membership told them straight that the root cause of the dispute was government job cuts.

CPSA branch secretary Tony James talked to Graham Lewis.

CPSA activist Kevin McGrath, assistant secretary of the Company House Branch explains the situation in his branch following the defeat of the all-out strike ballot.

After initial dejection we realised that our branch vote had held up well—208 for, 161 against. Three years ago I was one of 24 voting for strike action, now there are 161 of us. And that is a basis to build on, not the end of the action.

Nightmare

Even sections who voted against the strike know it's going to be a nightmare now. For us locally the hard work has been worthwhile. We are confident of our members and the vote showed when you give a lead you get the support. Most disappointing was the

70,000 who didn't vote.

Our problems don't begin and end on pay. With regional pay, merit pay, new technology and privatisation on the agenda we could soon be fighting for jobs as well as pay.

Management will use regional and merit pay awards to soften us up, to create a divided union, creating an 'us and them' attitude and patronising a layer of office crawlers (in effect victimisation of activists).

In Company's House there have been attempts at privatisation before. But management backed off. We could be a very lucrative section of the civil service for the bosses. New management have been brought in recently to do a job of work on us.

In September the staff inspectors are due in and we could face job losses. When they visited the business statistics office in New-

port a few years ago 20 jobs were axed. The mood of the membership will be different if it comes to redundancies.

Our workplace has been forced to develop a tradition of struggle. We have organised a series of walk-outs, forcing management to back off.

New activists

In one instance the threat of sacking hung over a man whose only crime was having cystic fibrosis. On another occasion we walked out over a person being suspended for 'gazetting' Boots the Chemist chain (which would give the impression Boots was going bankrupt) and the share price fell. To make a mistake now means you get sent home.

We are patiently building for the future. Usually we have to cajole people to take branch committee

positions. Now there are three nominations for one BC position which has become vacant. A new layer of activists are pushing for positions in order to fight back against the escalation of attacks on our members.

Kevin Roddy was the executive member who covered Wales during the ballot campaign. Even some of those who didn't vote to strike were impressed by someone who they saw as a fighter, who does not merely spend his time in London and sell us out.

CPSA members are looking for a way forward. With leaders like Kevin Roddy and an active Broad Left, built from workplace participation. Our union will not be defeated by this ballot result but will prepare for the next stage of the struggle. CPSA members must join the Broad Left now.

Broad Left builds from ballot

Industrial Reports

Yorkshire miners still prepared

Interview with a Yorkshire miner at Stillingfleet pit following the victimisation of branch secretary Ted Scott.

Can you tell us why Ted was sacked?

It was for adhering to the NUM/management Yorkshire agreement that coal would not be cut on overtime. The pit manager ordered the men to cut coal at weekends. But Ted stood firm and instructed the men not to do so.

What was the response of management?

They said that if coal was not cut the men wouldn't be paid as this was the only overtime work available.

The men decided to down tools and go home. They were so angry they were going to remove safety cover. But Ted acted responsibly and ensured the cover was provided.

What happened the following Monday?

Ted, the branch treasurer and acting president were all suspended under the new code and ordered to appear at a disciplinary hearing. At this hearing the treasurer and president were reinstated. But Ted was sacked under the trumped-up charge of "gross industrial misconduct".

What was the mood of the men? To say the least it was very angry and they wanted immediate strike action. They see it not only as a grave injustice but as an attack on the whole union.

Unfortunately at a meeting held in the pit canteen it was revealed that the Yorkshire leadership was asking us to stay in work so as not to prejudice Ted's appeal.

After a stormy meeting the men agreed to abide by this decision so as not to appear split in management's eyes.

What do you think will be the result of Ted's appeal?

I and a lot of the other miners think he will remain sacked. Although there is some confusion the mood amongst the lads is buzzing. If Ted isn't reinstated, the men at Stillingfleet and other sites in the Selby complex want all-out action.

A lot of the men have lost their illusions in the Area leadership over this and are saying they will force them into backing us. If Ted is sacked they must call an immediate Area stoppage. An attack on one is an attack on all.



Several hundred people marched in Liverpool on 25 July in support of the Moat House Hotel strikers.

Photo: Tina Carroll

Abbey meat packers

180 MEMBERS of Usdaw (including 45 women workers) at the Abbey Meat Packers plant on the outskirts of Belfast have been locked out since the 8th June.

This is the second lock-out in 18 months, and the last one continued for 9 months! The Usdaw members at this plant—the workforce is 50 per cent Protestant and 50 per cent Catholic—have fought a tenacious battle over many years against a succession of bosses in order to establish a viable trade union organisation.

Their tradition of struggle is well known. In October 1975, having just returned to work after a strike over wages and conditions, one of their members was shot by a sectarian gunman on the way to work. The entire workforce came out on strike and remained out for nearly a month until they received assurances from the UVF and the IRA that they would be left alone.

Bill Webster spoke to Paddy Lillis, Usdaw Branch Secretary and Chairman of the Strike Committee.

"This is an official dispute between Usdaw and the company. The German owners (Agnatrad-

ing Group) locked us out because we refused to work overtime whilst working a 2 and 3 day week which began last August. Our argument was if overtime was necessary then so too was the need for 5 day production.

"Another factor which forced their hand was our unanimous refusal to accept an annual wage increase of £3.50 for the highest paid and £1.70 for the lowest paid workers. Abbey Meats had the biggest throughput for beef in Northern Ireland in 1986. Their "declared" profits were £8m. Even a £20 per week increase (which we were not asking for) would still leave them with over £7.5m profit!

Determined

"This company is trying to smash Usdaw at this plant—they won't succeed! They have stated that the shop stewards and a hard-core of 40 union activists will not be taken back after this dispute is over. On the 16th July they told us that we had all been dismissed.

"At every stage the bosses have refused to negotiate with the shop stewards and union officials. Our members are standing absolutely firm and are determined to see

this through. You have seen the mood of the pickets this morning—the men make the tea in the caravan, not the women! 170 members are rostered on picket duty. We have the support of the local community, the tenants, small shop-keepers and pub owners.

"Our picket line is honoured by other unions. For example the UCW will not deliver mail. We got an emergency resolution passed at the recent ICTU in Cork giving us full support—the delegates also contributed hundreds of pounds to our appeal. Our demands for an end to this dispute are quite straightforward.

"We want a decent pay rise, an end to short-time working, everyone back to work with continuity of service and our grievances heard in a fair manner. We would appeal to the supporters of the *Militant* in Britain and Ireland to come to our support. We urgently need financial assistance and messages of solidarity."

Please send donations and support to Paddy Lillis, Usdaw Branch Secretary, 70 Longlands Park, Whitehouse, Newtonabbey, BT367NG, Northern Ireland.



Pickets at Kilnhurst colliery during the S. Yorkshire strike.

Scottish bus workers

On Friday 17 July Scottish bus (SBG) drivers began their industrial action in defence of wages and conditions.

Union representatives met management on the same day to continue talks which have been going on since February. Management proposed a new deal on pay and conditions which meant a reduction of £35 per week for each driver in the SBG.

Deregulation

This is a direct result of deregulation. The Tories say it is for the good of the public but it has only led to worse conditions for the workers in the bus industry.

On Friday the union asked management to look at a proposed deal which the union had put forward. Management totally rejected the offer, saying they

were not in a position to answer our claim.

The union found this incredible as it had been the same negotiator since February. They union then told management the result of a Scottish ballot on their offer made over nine weeks ago.

It had been overwhelmingly rejected at local branch meetings. The ballot showed 82 per cent in favour of industrial action for an increased offer.

The union pointed out that by refusing to continue talks management were putting the public at risk on the main holiday weekend in the West of Scotland.

A Mr Whittle, a director of the SBG, said that the talks had "reached a sterile stage" and saw no point in continuing.

Because of the holiday weekend the union only called out four companies and selected depots in other areas. Management,

as usual, were totally unprepared for the fact that the members were prepared to fight with the result that thousands of holidaymakers were left stranded.

On Tuesday 21 July the union were asked to meet to avert an all-out stoppage called for Wednesday and Thursday, but again talks broke down and the strike went ahead with all 5,500 members on SBG coming out until Monday.

Unanimous

All members were asked to return to work until a full delegate meeting on Wednesday 29 July which will decide what action to take next.

Clydeside Scottish held a mass meeting on Sunday to let the membership know what had been happening at all of these talks and also to tell them that the shop steward from the Greenock

depot had been dismissed for alleged "industrial misconduct".

The meeting unanimously decided that no member of Clydeside Scottish would return to work until the dismissed shop steward was reinstated. The meeting also decided to picket other depots to get the support of everyone in the SBG.

During the dispute the support from members of the public has been terrific. Drivers from SBG's main competitor in the West of Scotland have also lent their support.

Buses hired from Strathclyde Buses Ltd to take striking members to a lobby of the Thursday meeting were driven by their shop stewards who refused to take any wages.

The drivers and conductors are determined not to pay for Maggie's deregulation out of their already low pay.

Gateshead council strike

FOR THREE weeks incinerator workers from the Transport and Cleansing Department have been on strike against the right-wing Labour Gateshead Council. The dispute was started over the sacking of a driver who refused to be transferred to another vehicle, but management's motives go deeper than that. They deliberately instigated the strike and workers fear it to be the first step towards defeating the unions in order to privatise.

Police attack on pickets

ON FRIDAY 17 July, reports Bob Harker, several pickets were injured and two arrested when police attacked women strikers outside the gates of HFW Plastics in Gateshead.

Workers were horrified to see police dragging the 6 "official" pickets out of the road by the hair, neck, arms and legs. *Militant* supporter Kevin Henderson is now wearing a surgical col-

The council is spending an estimated £20,000 per week to break the strike. On top of this, management, together with council leaders have consciously delayed an appeal until after this weekend when the council goes into recess for four weeks. They intend to prolong the strike until September by which time they hope the strike will have crumbled. But as one worker told us: "If management want a fight we'll give them one."

lar after being punched by a police officer. Among others attacked were Sandy Black and Carol Horne, SOGAT official Dave Griffiths, and Bob himself.

The following morning 200 workers marched through Gateshead in protest at the police action. We hope to print a fuller report on this dispute in a future issue of the paper.

Militant

Inside...
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We expose the plight of youth in Rochdale £5 for 39 hours work

THE RECENT General Election result meant a further widening of the gulf between rich and poor in Britain. Whilst £8m was added to the Stock Exchange the day after the election, a generation of youth have been forced onto the scrapheap by the Tories.

From Rochdale, we report on a horrific and up to now untold story of the plight of young people on YTS, living in lodgings.

They work 39 hours a week, and have only £5 to spend!

“Norman Tebbit said to get on our bikes and look for work. Where can I get a bike for £5?”

Their landlady, Mrs Cathy Morgan, contacted *Militant* to expose this scandal. The rent the YTSers pay is £44 each per week. The Social only pay £37 towards it, so £7 has to come out of their £27 pay to make it up. With a tenner for food and £7.50 bus fares they're left with £4.5.

The only way the kids have survived is because the landlady has been feeding and clothing them. None of them can return home as they left due to personal and family problems in the first place. If they received a wage increase it would be taken off them to pay towards their rent

because rent benefit would be cut.

The chance of a young person getting a flat are a million to one. Even if they did, the government has stopped grants for furniture. If they pack their YTS courses in, under the new Tory proposals they would have their dole stopped. The three young people in the house, Tonie Joyle, Christopher Scale and Sharon Barnell have only one option—to carry on working for £5 a week.

Rochdale has an estimated 200 young people on YTS living in board and lodging accommodation. Chris bitterly summed up their miserable plight: “Norman Tebbit said to get on our bikes and look for work. Where can I buy a bike for £5?”

As if this wasn't bad enough, conditions in the house are terrible. Mrs Morgan has been waiting for repairs for 5 years.

The Labour and Trade Union movement must fight for:

- ★ Trade Union recruitment of all those on government schemes.
- ★ Trade Union rates of pay, and monitoring of training.
- ★ A genuine choice for every 16 year old: to continue in education, or proper training, or a proper job, with decent grants or pay.
- ★ End the threat to benefits for turning down a place on YTS or JTS.
- ★ Cheap rented accommodation for young people.

The youth of Rochdale aren't an isolated example. In Thatcher's Britain stories similar to this could be repeated again and again. Her government and her rotten profits-before-people system has to be dumped. Young people like Tonie, Chris and Sharon will make sure it is.



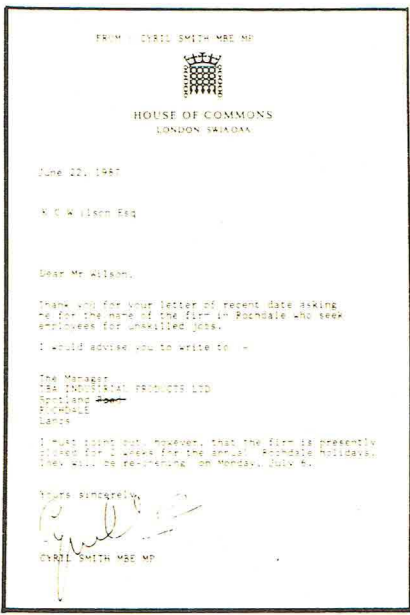
YTS trainees outside Mrs Morgan's house.

False claim by Cyril Smith

WHILST THE conditions facing young people in Thatcher's “booming” Britain are getting worse, they are still accused of being workshy by the Tories and their friends in the Press, ever keen to make cheap political capital.

The Liberal MP for Rochdale Cyril Smith does not seem to be immune from this. He recently claimed on *Question Time* that a firm in his constituency could not fill unskilled vacancies which paid £160 per week. This claim was followed up and the firm denied that any such jobs existed. The personnel manager said he was “highly embarrassed” by Mr Smith's claims!

Big Cyril's concern for the unemployed youth of Rochdale didn't prevent him from voting for a hefty 22 percent pay rise for MP's.



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What we stand for

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

- and small business people.
- Opposition to the capitalist Common Market, the EEC. For a socialist United States of Europe as a step towards a World Socialist Federation.
- Workers' management of the nationalised industries. These should be run on the basis of one-third of the places on the management board coming from the unions in the industry, one-third from the TUC representing the working class as a whole, and one-third from the government.
- Opposition to the Tory government's anti-union

- laws and reversal of attacks on the trade unions.
- Massive cuts in arms spending. Support for unilateral nuclear disarmament, but with the recognition that only a socialist change of society in Britain and internationally can eliminate the danger of a nuclear holocaust.
- Nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies, including the banks and insurance companies which control 80 per cent to 85 per cent of the economy. This should be through an Enabling Bill in Parliament with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need.