

Militant

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KEEP LABOUR
SOCIALIST

New campaign
'Workers for Socialism'
—see page 5

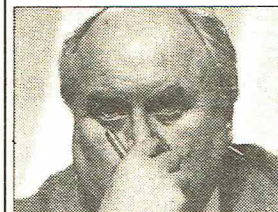
Message to the TUC...

Fight for low-paid workers

Inside

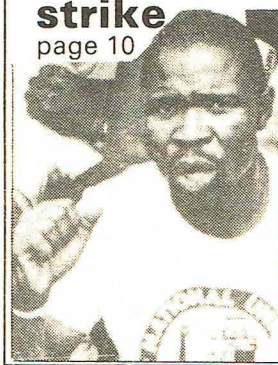
New TUC
leadership
not 'new
realism'

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End of the
historic
S.African
miners'
strike

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THE LEADERS of millions of workers meet this week at the Trades Union Congress (TUC). They are at the head of powerful organisations which are a vital defence for the victims of Thatcherism.

They will discuss how to recruit the growing band of low-paid workers, especially in services, who are at present outside the ranks of the trade union movement.

Many of these workers are part-time. Thousands of them are women. Probably the majority are young. They are all ripped off by greedy bosses.

TUC delegates could start recruiting these workers in the smart hotels they are staying in. RUSSELL HUGHES wrote to *Militant* about his experiences working in a hotel and told us what he thinks the unions should do for workers like him.

"My job, kitchen porter, was tedious and demanding. When I started, I worked a split shift. That's 9 am to 2 pm and then 5 pm to 9 pm.

"When we were busy, all hell would be let loose. Endless streams of plates would appear and four of us would be filling the plate washer system.

"Some workers would be filling the pigbins while others loaded plates onto the conveyor belt. The steam and the heat from the stoves was unbearable.

"The conveyor belt plate washer often broke down and we would have to wash up everything by hand.

"Added to this, I was always being called away from my normal work to

fill in because there were not enough staff.

"For all this, I picked up between £60 and £70 per week. I was laid off a few months back, and in a way I'm glad now.

"Union membership was small, limited to full-time staff. But most were like me, casual workers. This meant an atmosphere of fear among the staff and no rights in the workplace. Staff were scared to take on the management.

"What I get a bit peeved off about is that we're paying subs into the union each month, but we're not getting value for money from the officials whose wages we're paying.

Unity is strength

"There should be more campaigns to expose what employers are getting away with. Many workers are suffering worse conditions than I did.

"The unions have to prove to workers in places like this that unity is strength. They should organise casual workers and campaign for them to be given proper jobs. And it must be made clear that anyone victimised for union activities will get full national backing from the unions."

Some union leaders think they can recruit these workers by offering them discount insurance or by signing no-strike deals with employers above their heads.

What service workers really need are militant campaigns to improve their wages and conditions and all the strength of the labour movement behind them when they get organised.

Militant demands...

- ★ Unionise the unorganised!
- ★ £120 for 35 hours for all!
- ★ Trade union rates for part-time workers!
- ★ Permanent jobs for casual workers!



Demonstration held in Liverpool in support of the Moat House hotel strikers, sacked for joining a union. The Labour Party Young Socialists are organising a national campaign in support of these workers. See page 3.

Militant

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Labour Party democracy

THE ACCOUNTABILITY of MPs to Party members will be one of the key issues at the Labour Party conference. The National Executive Committee has completed its consultation on methods of selecting and reselecting parliamentary candidates, and will shortly be deciding what to recommend to conference.

But it is clear that most Party activists are unhappy with the leadership's attempt to bounce them into a fundamental change to their democratic right to select and reselect MPs. Only nine per cent of replies from local parties and unions back Neil Kinnock's favoured system of a local electoral college.

40 per cent favour a straight one-member-one-vote (OMOV) system without any of the complexity of Kinnock's electoral college.

But, despite the intense campaign by the leadership and the Tory press in favour of OMOV, and the feeling that probably it will be pushed through anyway, 36 per cent still want to keep the present system of selection by the elected delegates to the local constituency general management committees (GMCs).

This is not just a dry organisational question, but a vital part of the political debate about Labour's future. Those most keen to free MPs from their accountability to their constituency parties are also wanting to ditch Labour's socialist heritage. For some this is seen as a step towards a 'realignment' of the 'anti-Tory' forces in an electoral pact with the Liberals and what is left of the SDP.

To achieve the kind of shift to the right on policy which this would involve, they want to be free to defy the inevitable hostility from within the Party ranks. That means freeing MPs from the fear of deselection which makes them accountable to the active Party members.

But because of the overwhelming support for the principal of reselection, Labour's new right dare not openly support a return to the 'job for life' which MPs enjoyed previously, but have taken up OMOV. They hope that a wider franchise will enable sitting MPs to use their access to the media to appeal over the heads of the activists to inactive members, who will be more swayed by the Tory-biased media coverage of politics.

The essence of the present system is that the body which selects the MP meets every month and can monitor whether he or she is sticking to the policies and commitments pledged at the selection meeting.

Without this, right-wing MPs could ignore the demands of the GMC, arguing that they were selected not by the GMC but by the amorphous 'members', who will not meet again as a body for as much as five years, at the next reselection. This would be a even greater danger if the idea of a postal ballot were adopted.

Some of the right, however, have been sensitive to the complaints that a OMOV would weaken the organic link with the unions, which remains one of the Party's greatest strengths. Under the present system, through their GMC delegates, the trade unions are able to maintain their involvement in the party which they created.

It was in an attempt to win the all-important backing of the trade union leadership for the watering down of mandatory reselection, that Neil Kinnock pushed the idea of a constituency 'electoral college', in which union delegates will be guaranteed a proportion of the votes in the reselection. But even now, just four weeks before the conference, the complicated mechanism for squaring this with OMOV has still not been finalised.

No wonder then that in the consultation Kinnock was so humiliatingly rebuffed. His position may still be forced through the conference by the union block votes, but the Party leadership is storing up deep bitterness among local Party workers.

The present system is not perfect. There needs to be more direct involvement of the membership of the affiliated unions in the Party, through workplace branches, and meetings to hear candidates seeking nomination.

But it is still the best system on offer for maintaining the sovereignty of the membership and making MPs the servants of the workers who put them in Parliament, and not a self-perpetuating elite who merely use their local parties as a stepping stone to a well-paid career.

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Police violence at carnival



AFTER TWO days of carnival in the streets of Notting Hill, the scene changed dramatically at 9.30 on Monday evening. There had been increasing police activity in the Portobello Road/All Saints Road area; then a scuffle broke out in the crowd, involving no more than five people.

Within five minutes, riot police with steel helmets, batons and shields began to charge into the crowd. As young people not involved in the scuffle were pushed forward with riot shields they began to retaliate.

The situation then escalated. Within 15-20 minutes a police helicopter with a searchlight hovered overhead and the area was blocked off so that nobody could get out.

It seemed that the police were using the carnival as a testing ground for their riot control techniques.

Over the weekend a magnificent £670 was raised at the carnival selling stickers for a socialist South Africa.

Philippines crisis

LAST WEDNESDAY'S general strike, and the attempted coup that followed, the most serious up till now, reflect a new phase in the unfolding of the Philippine revolution.

By George Collins

The strike, in protest against the 18 per cent rise in fuel prices announced by the Aquino administration, followed days of spontaneous action by sections of transport workers and clashes with security forces.

Called by the radical KMU trade union federation, it was supported by every other labour organisation, including the pro-government TUCP. Massive opposition to the policies of this government of the rich, its failure to deliver reforms, its imposition of new burdens on the masses, is building up among the working class.

Cory Aquino had stressed that the decision to increase fuel prices was "unanimous and irrevocable", and placed the military on alert. The workers refused to back down—and Mrs Aquino promptly reversed her position, halving the price rise to 10 per cent at the last minute in the hope of appeasing the movement.

Even this was not enough, and only encouraged the workers to press on. Wednesday saw a massive turnout. The 'jeepneys' (taxi-buses which are the main form of public transport) were at a standstill in Metro Manila and all the main cities. The workers in most of the big multinational companies were out.

The strike was solid even in the Bataan Export Processing Zone (see *Militant* 26 June) which is under virtual military occupa-

**General strike...
Attempted coup...
Tottering economy...**

tion. "Cory Aquino—puppet of the Americans", read one slogan on a demonstration of thousands in Manila.

Police opened fire on strikers. In Manila, even Catholic nuns joined the demonstration, and were sprayed with fire hoses, chased and clubbed by the police.

The President's U-turn gave her the worst of both worlds—failing to appease the workers, she succeeded in enraging the right with her retreat. On Thursday, our Manila correspondent reports, police continued the harassment, arresting the leader of the Jeepney drivers' federation and raiding the KMU headquarters.

Contempt

This attack was overtaken by the coup, led by Colonel Honasan, a key lieutenant of right-wing boss Enrile, deposed from government for his role in an earlier coup attempt.

The cause of the military's contempt for Aquino is her 'unreliability', from the landowners' and capitalists' viewpoint, in pursuing the war against the peasant-based NPA guerrillas, who are fighting for land.

Aquino has moved on from slogans of 'love', 'peace' and 'people's power' to all-out support for the civil war against the NPA. But the military, humiliated by their inability to win the war, have no confidence in her administration.

The chasm in society continues to deepen, with stepped-up guerrilla struggle, mounting anger among the military and the increasing reliance of the government on right-wing death squads as auxiliaries to the state forces.

Against this background, last week's strike reflects the deepening disillusionment among Aquino's urban basis of support. Presiding over a tottering capitalist economy, she has satisfied none of the hopes of the workers and youth. The strike is a clear signal that the workers' patience is not endless.

The armed suppression of Honasan's coup—essentially a calculation by armed forces chief Ramos, not Aquino—stands in contrast to the amiable treatment of previous coup leaders. The movement of the working class, quite literally, forced the regime to act.

After appealing for 'calm', our correspondent reports, the government panicked and called for 'everybody out on the streets'. Crowds of workers and youth shouted 'advance, advance!' to Aquino's soldiers as they faced the rebels.

Clearly, the more thinking element of the ruling class, prodded by US imperialism, understood that a military takeover would have destabilised the cities, added momentum to the guerrilla war, and brought an NPA victory nearer.

These events, at the same time, demonstrate the

impotence of the Aquino administration, a pretty facade on a brutal capitalist system, with no solid base of support in society. She depends completely on the still-intact reactionary state machine created by ex-dictator Marcos.

Following last Wednesday's strike her position is weaker than ever, and her usefulness to the ruling class more limited. An officer mocked her vacillation between the opposing class forces: "Mrs Aquino can be very firm, up to the moment she changes her mind".

Feebleness

Only one factor saves her for the time being—the ruling class have no alternative at this stage. Reaction continues to lurk in the wings, encouraged by the failures of the regime, its feebleness, and its steady alienation of working-class support.

As we go to press Honasan and hundreds of his followers remain at large to continue their intrigue against the government.

But in the long run there is no way forward for the capitalist class. Land reform will founder on the vested interests of the landowning class. Economic catastrophe will plunge the urban masses deeper into misery, constantly refuelling the fires of struggle.

The war on the land will continue. With Marxist leadership, the struggle of the working people to end capitalism and landlordism can be carried through in the next period, and the democratic rule of the working class established. Last week's crisis is a portent of bigger convulsions to come.

☆ A full analysis of the outlook for the workers' struggle in the Philippines will appear in next week's issue of *Militant*.

Stop the Labour Party sackings

WITH ONLY four weeks to Labour Party Conference, the crisis over finance and staffing at Labour's head office is hotting up.

By a Militant reporter

On 22 July, Labour General Secretary, Larry Whitty, presented the National Executive Committee with a forecast of a £711,000 deficit in the Party's 1988 budget. He called for drastic action to wipe this out and achieve a £400,000 surplus.

This turnaround of £1.1 million would mean 20 per cent cuts at Party HQ and 15 per cent in the regions, according to Whitty. Specifically, he prescribed the loss of 40 jobs (out of 160) at HQ, and the closure of *Labour Weekly*, *New Socialist* and the LPYS paper, *Socialist Youth*, even though it broke even last year.

Job cuts on this scale would mean compulsory redundancies. Whitty's redundancy list includes Andy Bevan, the Party Youth Officer, who is also convenor of the staff's Joint Trade Union Committee (JTUC).

Redundancies

In the past the NEC has opposed staff redundancy, underpinned by an agreement which makes any sackings extremely expensive for the Party. Whitty wanted to terminate this agreement but, faced with a determined lobby of Party staff, the NEC on 22 July drew back from this.

It still withdrew its 'no redundancy' pledge and appointed a panel of four to negotiate with staff unions on the proposed redundancies. It consists of Charlie Turnock (NUR), Eddie Haig (TGWU), Gordon Colling (NGA), and Larry Whitty (ex-G&M).

Most HQ staff are organised by the JTUC, covering TGWU, SOGAT and APEX. The JTUC's first move, on receiving Whitty's sackings plans, was to launch a staff bulletin and a campaign levy, and then to circulate their case to constituency Labour parties and affiliates.

Since then dozens of CLPs have written to Whitty every week, urging him to drop the redundancies. NGA reps at *Labour Weekly*'s typesetters have protested to their union at the decision to close the journal, and sent a copy to Gordon Colling.

The staff refused to open negotiations until Whitty tabled a detailed draft

budget. When they received this on 17 August, it projected a deficit of £311,000—£400,000 less than was reported to the NEC.

Staff reps have since put forward proposals for non-staff savings and increased income to achieve a £400,000 surplus in 1988. The panel has accepted a number of these proposals and there is already an agreed budget surplus of nearly £250,000 for 1988.

The staff are pressing for further revisions, crucially on Whitty's pessimistic membership estimates. Even if Party membership stands still at 297,000 in 1987 and 1988, Whitty is £180,000 short on his membership income projections, according to his staff.

Meanwhile Trades Unionists for Labour have called for a big workplace membership drive in 1988, and the HQ staff seem to be keen to respond.

The financial fig leaf for redundancies has fallen away, but the panel still insists that their mandate for redundancies stands. If Whitty's object is 'restructuring', the staff are open to change and a lower staffing level, but not to redundancy or victimisation. Since the general election 26 vacancies have arisen. The JTUC says these should remain unfilled or be filled by internal redeployment.

The NEC meets on 23 September, just four days before Conference, but a special NEC has been called for 15 September. Staff negotiators are now pressing Whitty to extend the special NEC to consider the changed financial picture and to withdraw the threat of redundancies.

For details of the JTUC case, or to send messages of support, contact: Andy Bevan, James Tait or Ian Haworth,

150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT
Tel: (01) 703 0833.

SDP Conference sensation...



Fleas fight over dead dog

Support the Moat House strikers

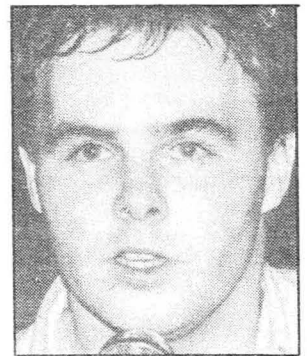
THE LABOUR Party Young Socialists (LPYS) National Committee at its meeting on 28 August received an appeal for help from the Liverpool Moat House Hotel strikers. The management sacked 62 of them in April for joining the TGWU.

Two weeks later, TGWU steward, Andy Wilcock, addressed the LPYS National Conference.

Now the National Committee is calling on all LPYS branches to contact the local

TGWU to organise a lobby of Moat House hotels all over the country on 19 September (For a list of them see *Militant* 7 August)

19 September also marks the opening of the TGWU's week of action around the 'link up' campaign, to unionise part-time workers. The union has produced a special 'link up' leaflet aimed at Moat House employees which can be used.



Andy Wilcock addressing YS conference.

Those in peril on the sea

"IT SURPRISES me that marine casualties are not more frequent and serious. It is probably only a matter of time...owners need to adopt the lowest (cheapest) standards to compete. Safety costs money. Ships and men can easily be replaced. In terms of safety it is survival of the unfittest."

With these words Captain Terry Scarrott, a member of the Honourable Company of Mariners, condemned in a newspaper article the widespread disregard by shipping owners for the safety of seafarers. In the wake of the Zeebrugge disaster, his evidence should spur the maritime unions to act.

Captain Scarrott cites the example of flawed design in the general bulk carrier, the OBO (oil-bulk-ore). For commercial expediency such ships are designed to carry all types of bulk cargo.

When loaded with high-density cargoes, alternative holds have to be left empty. This can lead to hull stresses with a minimal safety margin. Scarrott

says: "A study of unexplained ship losses shows several of this type loaded with high-density cargo, and last heard of in typhoon/hurricane waters."

The flag of convenience ships "can operate as the owners please. Such regulations as exist are loosely checked and seldom enforced." Examples are given of masters who could not understand basic collision regulations—and a first mate who had to be taught how to plot radar targets in dense fog.

Safety suffers

The conclusion of the article is that "crew numbers on the average freighter have halved in recent years. With very little change in operating requirements it is obvious that efficiency and safety have suffered from such drastic cuts."

Joe Anderson, chairman of the suspended National Union of Seamen (NUS) National Ports Committee confirmed to *Militant* the frightening

accuracy of the article. "We've seen the union decline from 100,000 to 20,000. We were told that de-manning would secure jobs, but all that a loss of jobs means is a loss of safety. The rank and file of the NUS have been campaigning on ship safety for years. Maybe the run-down in the fleet has prompted some of the skippers to speak out."

"The way the assistant bosun of the Herald of Free Enterprise was made to shoulder the blame was a disgrace. The system was to blame. But whilst we welcome calls for warning lights and cameras, the basic problem is one of ship design and safety. Adequate back-up systems are also vital. The Sinita was lost because they only had one look-out."

"The flag of convenience ships are 'free enterprise' at a price—safety. We've set sail in conditions that would frighten Noah in his Ark! It is seafarers and their families who lose out. The Derbyshire was lost with all hands but neither the company nor the builders will accept responsibility and the families have still not received compensation."

"I believe the way forward is for the International Transport Workers' Federation to organise a campaign on ship safety. At the moment it's a bit of a toothless tiger. We should have a rank and file international conference of dock and seafarer representatives, to enforce minimum safety standards and black ships that don't come up to them."



Pride of Free Enterprise, sister ship of the tragic Herald.

By Richard Knights

Wapping profits at workers' expense

RUPERT MURDOCH reaped the benefit of destroying printworkers' livelihoods this year, as News International's profits increased ten times over.

They rocketed to £111.5 million, compared to 1985/6 profits of £11.7 million.

The business unionists of the

EETPU leadership claimed that those who crossed the picket lines at Wapping would do well out of Murdoch's successful business. But now the chairman of the stodge staff council there has left the company, accusing the management of "renegeing on vir-

tually all undertakings made to the workforce".

Stephen Seaman was involved with the Southampton area officer of the EETPU in recruiting a scab workforce for Murdoch's fortress. Now he is fleeing Fortess Wapping complaining: "Industrial rela-

tions have become progressively Victorian and those people promoted to positions of responsibility, increasingly primitive".

This is the reality of class collaboration. Ruthless employers like Murdoch feel no loyalty even to strike

breakers.

But disgracefully a motion from the print union, SOGAT, on the EETPU's role at Wapping, has been ruled out of order at this week's TUC.

By a printworker

Students face year of struggle

IN THE next two weeks, millions will register at a further education (FE) college for part-time courses, full-time courses, day release or YTS block release.

Militant asked Collette Williams (below), the

Further Education Labour Students (FELS) member on the National Union Students Executive, how the re-election of the Thatcher Government will affect the future of youth entering further education:



IT WILL have given the Tories the green light to go ahead with their plans to reorganise the FE sector. Their strategy is to create a low-wage economy by attacking youth wages first. The two-year YTS and the proposed JTS as a replacement for apprenticeships are a major plank of this strategy. During the first six years of the Tory Government, 80,000 apprenticeships were lost—many now replaced by YTS.



The Tories now want to go one step further to force school leavers on to YTS by withdrawing their right to claim benefit and force under-25-year-olds to 'work for their dole' on a JTS. From 1 April 1988 100,000 under-25s will lose £5.50 benefit.

At the moment many FE students who wish to go on to higher education or seek qualifications for work are only able to study part-time so that they can claim benefit. The new rules mean that part-time students will be forced to give up their studies and go on to a YTS.

With the introduction of two-year YTS and other government-run schemes, the FE colleges have been used to accommodate more and more courses run by the Manpower Services Commission (MSC). 25 per cent of work-related courses have been taken out of the control of the local authorities and placed into the hands of the MSC. The emphasis is being placed on industrial related courses.

The most recent move by the government was a ruling by the Secretary of State to increase the representation of local businesses on to the Board of Governors. The Tories are turning the colleges into nothing more than centres for training up cheap labour to benefit the pockets of big business.

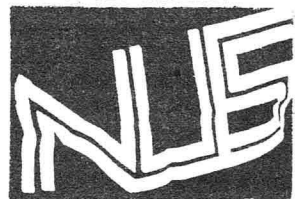
FELS are not opposed to training, but we are opposed to the exploitation of young people for the benefit of profits. We have been campaigning successfully for NUS to take up the



Students marching through London in support of a living grant.

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

question of YTS. The union now support the demands of trade union rates of pay and health and safety rights for all YTS trainees, and for a guaranteed job for YTS trainees at the end of the scheme.



Through pressure from FELS, the Further Education National Committee (FENC) of NUS organised its first public initiative around these demands at a successful demonstration in Manchester earlier this year. Following from this, a Lobby of the CBI, the bosses' conference, has been called for by FENC at the Scottish Exhibition Centre in Glasgow on 4 November.

However if youth are to have a genuine choice between further education and training, then the struggle to defeat YTS conscription and win real jobs and training for youth must be linked to the fight to win a £35 a week minimum grant.

One of the most immediate threats is the budget crisis facing the local authorities. As 60-70 per cent of council spending is on schools and colleges, any cuts will undoubtedly be felt first in the FE sector.

New 'code of conduct'

LAST YEAR we set up a Socialist Society in our college which had a regular attendance of 20-30. It was successful because we linked political discussion with activity. We led several successful campaigns last year, such as one on YTS through which we built good links with the college trade unions.

This year the Tories are attempting to prevent any protest from the students to their plans for the FE sector by attacking the right of students to organise. A code of conduct has to be adopted by the college authorities.

In my college there has been no consultation on this code with either the student union or college trade unions. In some colleges, the new code has given the principal the right to veto invited speakers and insists on three weeks notice for an outside speaker addressing a meeting in the college.

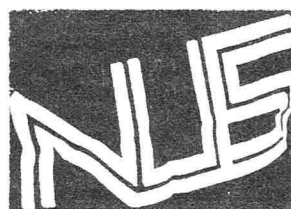
This is a deliberate attack on political groups in the colleges and must be fought by the unions. If it is not, it will be used at a future stage against the student union and college trade unions.
Peter Lowe, Student Union and Socialist Society, Halesowen College (in personal capacity)

Student loans will also be a cloud over the heads of those students who are looking to go on to higher education and will add to the discontent felt by the youth in the colleges already.

The scale of the Tories attacks mean that it is going to take more than student action to force the Tories to back down. It is not just education under attack, but the entire public sector, the National Health Service, public transport etc.

A united campaign of all students, 1.2 million of whom are organised within NUS, linked to the public

sector workers fighting to defend jobs and services, could force the Government to back down.



In Spain, under the leadership of the Marxist led Sindicato de Estudiantes, the students were mobilised against the proposals of the Socialist government to limit access to higher education. They linked this

struggle with the labour and trade union movement.

As a result the students not only forced the Government to back down but carried on to win massive reforms such as free state education for the first time in Spanish history, and a 70 per cent increase in the grant over two years.

The first step students should take is to organise Labour Clubs in the colleges which can take up the immediate campaigns of the students and link them to the local labour and trade union movement. But only a united national campaign can defeat the Tories, which is why FELS was set up by FE students in the Labour Party Young Socialists to campaign for the above strategy to be adopted by both NUS and the National Organisation of Labour Students.

I was elected on this programme and I am fighting for NUS to take up campaigns based on this strategy. I see my role on the NUS Executive as voicing the views of FE students and linking the needs of the FE sector with those in the Higher Education sector.

However I can only play this role if there is an active layer of students in the colleges campaigning on the FELS programme. I would appeal to all students to join FELS and help in the fight for a socialist NUS and an end to the Tory attacks on education.

Closures opposed

LAST YEAR at Southgate College we built a Labour Club from scratch, reaching regular attendances of 20. Some meetings had a bigger attendance than the Student Union meetings. We built links with the college unions through the campaigns that the Labour Club led, such as a campaign against a £20 fee imposed on students registering at our college, and a campaign against sexual harassment.

Before the general election, engineering students told me as a representative of the Labour Club, that their courses were threatened with closure. We called for a general meeting which 150 attended, the biggest meeting ever, where the students voted overwhelmingly to oppose the course closures. The college unions supported our campaign and the authorities were forced to back down.

I joined FELS to campaign for NUS to take up the fight to defend further education nationally linked to the labour and trade union movement. The attacks that we were faced with last year in Southgate were a tea party compared to the battles that lie ahead next term.
Nancy Taaffe, Southgate College Student Union (in personal capacity)

In MY college we have many YTS trainees. Last April in building for the Manchester YTS Lobby, we organised a YTS Rally in our college. We were given support from the teachers' union to speak at all the YTS courses in the college about joining a union to fight for better pay and conditions.

The demand for a £35 a week minimum grant is vital because it would undermine the wages paid on YTS. It would also put a stop to the Tories' plans to make YTS compulsory. Who would want to go on a YTS when they could study what they want at college for a minimum of £35 a week?

It will take a massive campaign linked to the labour and trade union movement to force the Tories to back down over their proposals. It is not enough to have simply a moral campaign of appealing to the better nature of the 'nice' Tories, which is unfortunately the approach of the NUS leadership.

Paul Crowson, FE Full time President at Chesterfield College.

WORKERS FOR SOCIALISM



Traditions set down by Keir Hardie

SOCIALIST IDEAS are the foundation on which the modern labour movement is built. The Labour leadership should use parliament as the pioneers of Labour did, as a platform from which to put the case for socialism.

The following resolution was moved in parliament by Keir Hardy, the first independent Labour MP, in 1901: 'That considering the increasing burden which the private ownership of land and capital is imposing upon the industrious and useful classes of the community, the poverty and destitution and general moral and physical deterioration resulting from a competitive system of wealth production which aims primarily at profit making, the alarming growth of trusts and syndicates able by reason of their great wealth to influence governments and plunge peaceful Nations into war to serve their interests, this House is of the opinion that such a condition of affairs constitute a menace to the well being of the Realm, and calls for legislation designed to remedy the same by inaugurating a



Keir Hardie.

Socialist Commonwealth founded upon the common ownership of land and capital, production for use and not for profit, and equality of opportunity for every citizen.

Clause 4, Part 4 of Labour's constitution reads: 'To secure for the workers by hand or by brain, the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service'.

New campaign to keep Labour socialist

A NEW CAMPAIGN is being launched to oppose the moves to the right within the Labour Party, to defend the democratic principles of mandatory reselection and to defend the ideas of socialism enshrined within Clause 4 Part 4 of the Labour Party Constitution.

By Dave Campbell
Organising Secretary,
Workers for Socialism

Labour's socialist principles are under attack from the very leaders who should be defending them. The right of local Labour parties to reselect MPs, a vital democratic gain won by the rank and file, is threatened. The most resolute fighters for socialist ideas face witch-hunts and expulsion from the Party for daring to oppose the leadership.

The right-wing are even discussing making electoral pacts with the Liberals.

Reselection

The Workers for Socialism campaign believes that the Labour Party should be proud of its socialist roots and that its leadership and public representatives must be committed to implementing socialist policies. It therefore opposes any watering down of the principle of automatic reselection of MPs or any attack on the authority of annual conference.

The attack on reselection aims to allow MPs a free hand to ignore the socialist aspirations of the rank and file. Ever since the formation of the Labour Party, the battle for ideas has centred around Clause 4 Part 4. Adopted in response to the success of the Russian revolution in 1918, the Clause has always been

the target for right wing attacks.

The right wing's 'new' arguments are the same ones that have been used before. But socialist policies are many times more urgent than when Hugh Gaitskill tried to remove Clause 4.

Yet despite pending economic crisis and despite masterminding the Party's second worst election result since 1931, the right wing are now preparing a major retreat from Labour's socialist aims.

'There is no need to be apologetic about the extension of public ownership or the establishment of workers' control'—Neil Kinnock 1974.

A survey by the trade unions in March showed that two thirds of people prefer public ownership to privatisation (see panel). Neil Kinnock has been taken in by the barrage of press lies and now claims nationalisation, rather than the way nationalised industries are managed, is unpopular. Some right wingers, such as Stuart Bell, have even called for further privatisation.

Their intentions are clear — to abandon all mention of socialism within the policies of the Labour Party. But

socialism is a crying necessity for those suffering the effects of the crisis of capitalism.

Even Neil Kinnock understood this in 1974: "There is no need to be apologetic about the extension of public ownership or the establishment of workers' control. They are now pre-requisites of the economic survival of Britain... There is no alternative in the capitalist system—it is a failure".

Workers for Socialism is being launched to campaign through a series of rallies and public meetings in defence of labour movement democracy and socialism. It will hammer home the implications of the right wing's proposals and build support for Labour's socialist ideals. Rallies are already being organised in key cities and at Labour Party Conference on 17 September.

★ No to all witch hunts and expulsions
★ Defend democracy and accountability within the party.
★ Support Workers for Socialism.

Raise the campaign in your union, Labour Party or LPYS branch to get their backing. Sponsors or organisations wanting speakers should contact: Dave Campbell (Organising Secretary), 256A, Halley Rd., London E12 6UA.

Right's old hat ideas



Hugh Gaitskill.

LABOUR'S RIGHT wing are following a well beaten path. Hugh Gaitskill, backed by Shirley Williams and others, spoke against Clause 4 at the 1959 Party Conference. He claimed: 'there is the changing character of the Labour force. There are fewer miners, more engineers; fewer farm workers, more shop assistants; fewer manual workers, more clerical workers; fewer railwaymen, more research workers;...capitalism has significantly changed...it is most unlikely that we shall ever again suffer from the great booms and slumps of the pre war period... the relatively prosperous younger married couples who, having moved from older houses in solid Labour areas to new attractive housing estates then lost their Labour loyalty and voted Conservative...we have to show we are a modern, 20th century party... nor should we impose too much heavy political doctrine—particularly on young people'. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

Livingston

No expulsions in Scotland!

"I AM NOT political, son, but it's terrible what the Labour Party are doing to those two young people."

By a Militant reporter

This was typical of the comments of people in the Craighill housing scheme in Livingston where *Militant* supporters have been campaigning to stop the expulsion of Sam Gibson and Wendy Milne for selling *Militant*.

If successful, these will be the first expulsions in Scotland. One right-winger has already bragged that they will show it's not just in England they can expel people from the Labour Party.

Robin Cook MP and his local party cannot get enough Labour Party members to attend a monthly constituency meeting. Yet they take up enormous time trying to expel two of their most active

members. What a telling picture of their priorities!

Let Cook and the right-wing be warned! This attack will not weaken *Militant's* support in Livingston. Instead it will increase it as last week's campaign has shown. We collected over 400 signatures, sold 90 papers, raised £15 fighting fund and signed six people to join the Labour Party.

We are going round the movement and local community groups and getting a great response. 3,000 leaflets were distributed on one housing scheme explaining Sam and Wendy's record and the hypocrisy of the attacks on them.

For example, Robin Cook recently wrote an article in *Marxism Today*, the journal of the Communist Party which stood 19 candidates against Labour in the last general election. *Militant* called on all workers to campaign for a

The price of witch-hunts

THE PRICE of witch-hunts to Labour is financial as well as political.

The specially created 'Star Chamber', the National Constitutional Committee, has already cost £42,000 of Party members' subs in 1985, and £50,000 in 1986.

Witch-hunting is an extremely infla-

tionary business, it seems. Other expenses of the Party's Organisation Department went up from £75,000 in 1985 to a staggering £249,000 in 1986. This rise was mainly because of the costs of the enquiry into Liverpool District Labour Party. Fares and hotel bills of committee members had to be

paid when they attended hearings in the city.

Party members will be enraged to hear that the leadership have discussed raising their subs and closing Party journals in order to pay for the witch-hunters' destructive work.



Lobbying against expulsions: witch-hunts have cost Labour £200,000 so far.

Labour victory. Nobody is suggesting taking action against Cook, why *Militant* supporters?

Livingston CLP are rightly opposed to the government's suppression of

Spycatcher. But they are trying to ban ordinary Party members from selling their paper on the streets and expressing their socialist views. What hypocrisy!

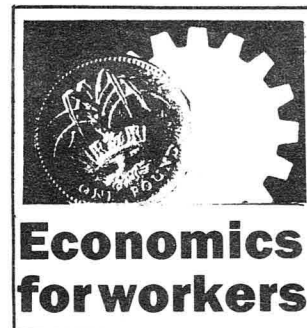
The dispute has already

figured prominently in the local press. We are challenging Cook to debate on one of the local housing schemes and let local people decide who is right and wrong.

WORKERS FOR SOCIALISM PRE-LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE RALLY

Sunday evening, 27 September, at Brighton Youth Centre. Speakers include: John MacCreadie deputy general Secretary CPSA, Eric Heffer MP, Pat Wall MP, Terry Fields MP.

Lies, damned lies, and Lawson's statistics



IT IS crucial for socialists to understand the workings of the economy. But they are often difficult to follow, particularly because of the way academics and Tory ministers present them. After all, they have a vested interest in concealing the truth about capitalist robbery from workers!

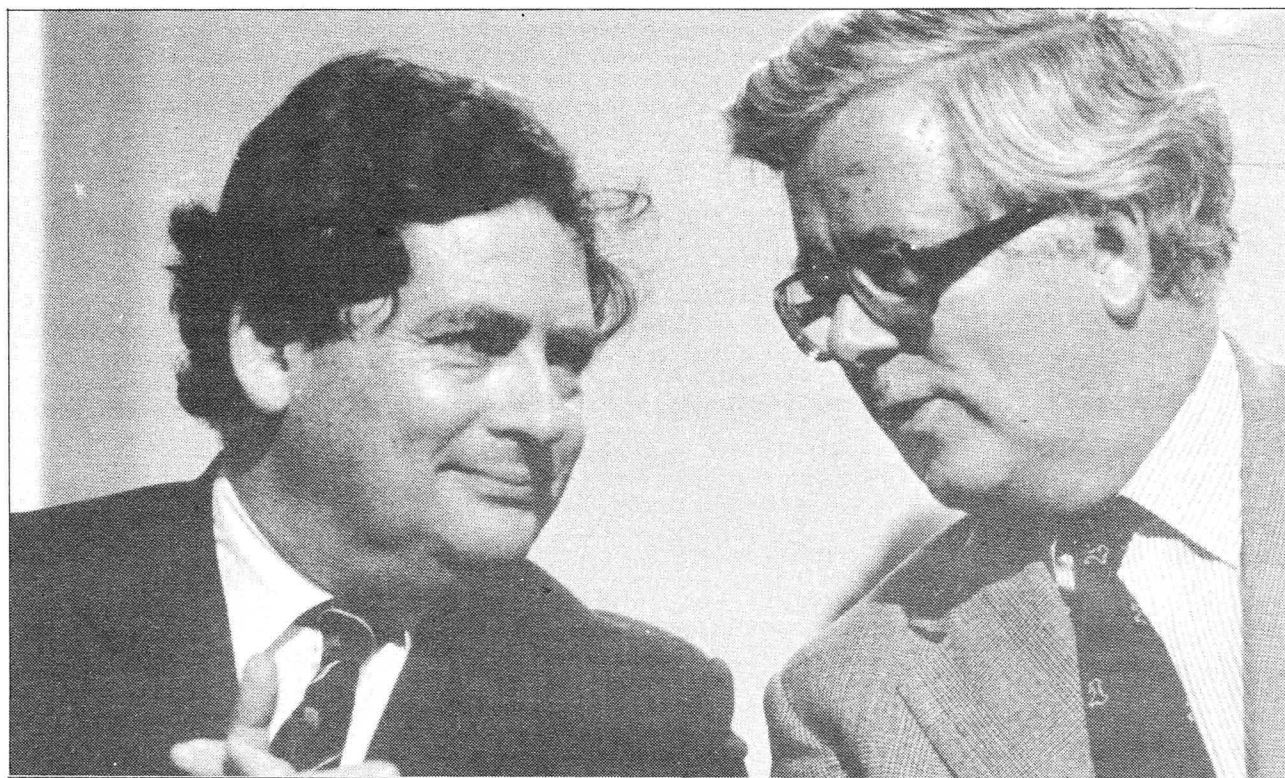
Militant will be running a series of articles on economics at regular intervals, so as our readers have the chance to study the subject from the workers' point of view. BOB McKEE starts the series with an exposure of some of the myths the Tories are putting round at the moment:

The Tory government is bragging about the prediction that during this year the UK economy is expected to grow by 3.25 per cent. The British economy has achieved a growth rate of 2.6 per cent over the last five years, and they claim this proves that Thatcherite policies are working. British capitalism has been revitalised and a new era of prosperity is opening up, they say.

Hogwash

These smug boasts are nothing but hogwash. As usual, they have massaged the statistics.

If, instead of taking the period 1982-86, the recession years of 1980-81 were included in any com-



Chancellor "fiddle-figures" Lawson with fellow Tory Geoffrey Howe.

parison, then the UK's growth rate would be only 1.4 per cent per year. This is little better than the growth rate in the mid-'70s and considerably lower than the 1960s (see table).

One irony of the capitalist world at present is that major economies like the USA, Japan and West Germany are doing so badly that Britain is likely to achieve higher growth in production than them this year.

But, the truth is that for comparable periods, the UK economy has continued to lag behind its rivals. And when growth in manufac-

turing output alone is compared, the situation is even worse.

Between 1973 and 1985, UK manufacturing output fell absolutely by an average of 0.5 per cent per year. The average for every other capitalist competitor rose! You have to compare 1987's faster growth in manufacturing to that long-term record.

Even now, in summer 1987, manufacturing output is still below peak production achieved eight years ago in 1979.

So much for the Tory boom! Such as it is, it has

International growth rates Real Gross Domestic Product as per cent change in annual rates

	UK	Europe	US	Japan
1964-73	3.0	4.5	3.7	8.9
1973-79	1.3	2.4	2.6	3.6
1979-86	1.4	1.7	2.0	3.8

been founded on North Sea oil production and finance and service industries, this year's manufacturing growth was only possible through a sharp decline in sterling's value making British exports cheaper and imports dearer. But in the last six months, the value of

sterling has begun to rise and the surge in output is already tapering off.

Despite all Tory Chancellor Lawson's claims about stopping inflation, it has been above average throughout the Thatcher era and still is. Lawson pressed for the recent rise in interest

rates to stem the flood of money credit by making it more expensive to borrow. He fears a new bout of price rises which could make British exports even more expensive in world markets.

And the UK's trading position with its main rivals continues to deteriorate fast. In 1986 the balance of payments deficit reached £1.1 billion. The last three months' figures show a deficit and 1987's figure will easily exceed last year's.

Decline

Nothing fundamental has changed for British capitalism under Thatcher. It has continued to decline relative to competitors. Moreover that decline has accelerated since 1979. Under the Tories Britain became a net importer of industrial goods for the first time ever. The manufacturing trade deficit reached a staggering £13 billion in 1986. It can no longer be staunchly by an annual surplus on oil, which has declined to £4 billion, or financial services, which can only muster a surplus of about £7 billion.

The UK's share of world trade has not grown despite sharp cuts in the pound's value over the last three years, and when the world economy enters a new downturn in the next year or so, the British economy will have no shield of oil revenues or strong high-tech industries to protect it from the ravages of the world economy in slump.

LEFT and RIGHT

Restricted parking

WHAT WOULD you do if you had trouble parking your car (assuming you've got one, that is) near your place of work?

You'd probably take public transport. But nothing could induce London solicitor, Rod MacClancy, to rub shoulders with the commuters on the bus or the tube.

Happily he found a way to avoid such purgatory. He bought a small Belgravia flat for a massive £55,000...just to get the resident's parking permit.

Wish you were here

MOST LABOUR supporters are glad to see the end of the Social Democratic Party and hope it will mean the end of the careers of the traitors who formed it.

Not so witch-hunting MP, Austin Mitchell, and his friends in the Fabian Society. In a column in News on Sunday, Mitchell writes: "Why not say to the SDP 'come on home'? Only Labour can build social democracy."

Because they're political scabs, might be the answer the Labour rank and file would give. But the Fabians don't see it that way. They are desperate that SDP members rejoin them in the fight against the left. So they are organising fringe meetings at the SDP and Liberal party conferences with Mitchell speaking.

And these people question Mili-

tant supporters' loyalty to Labour!

Slick Silk's pool

SOMEONE ELSE many Labour Party members were glad to see the back of was Robert Kilroy-Silk.

The more you find out about Silk, the more you dislike him. Last Sunday, he told the Observer about his swimming pool. Heated by an electric pump to 80F, it makes his summer heating bills as high as the winter ones.

Parliamentary colleagues warned him to "be careful about it", he says, and he was always "aware of its sensitive and controversial nature". But such considerations could not deter this man of principle from indulging himself in an extra bit of luxury.

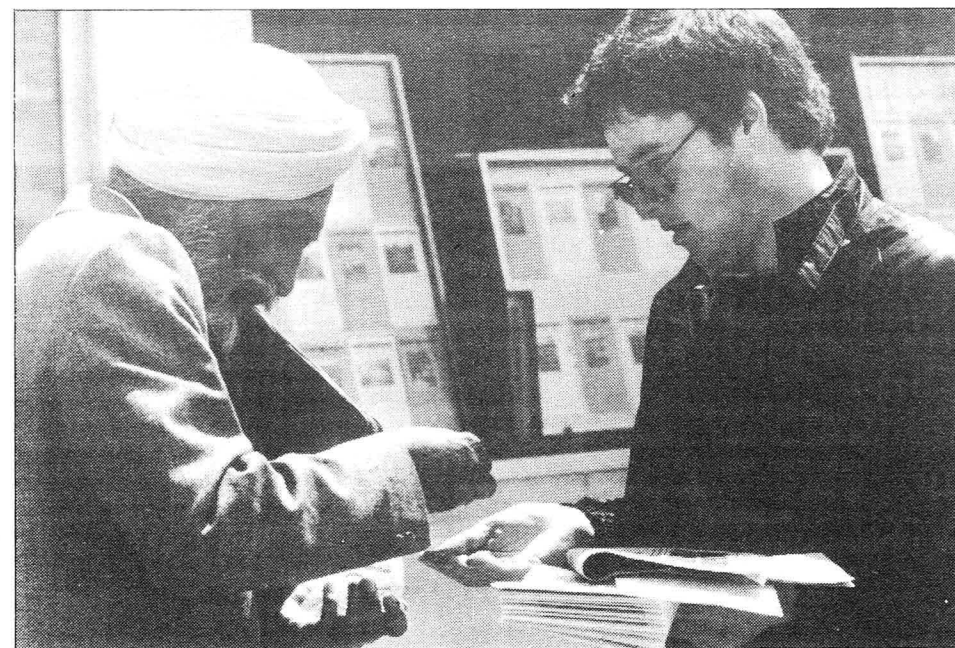
And anyway, "There's more than one member of the present shadow cabinet that's swum in this pool".

Glasnost bargains

WE REPRINT the following advertisement from the Wall Street Journal:

"Representative on location in Russia.

We will represent your interests to the highest levels of the Soviet Government. Hurry! Beat the Competition and take quick advantage of Glasnost, the once-in-the-lifetime new opening to the world's largest sellers' market. Act now while there's still time."



Buying Militant in Southall; join our sales drive.



MILITANT IS launching the biggest sales drive in its history!

The campaign will kick off at the time of Labour Party conference, when our sales always go up. It is a time when workers are discussing Labour's policies and Militant's

ideas get extra publicity.

Reports from around the country prove how much potential there is. During a regular Saturday morning sale in Port Talbot, two sellers were approached by a young man who asked what they were selling and what it meant.

"He said that although he was unemployed, he thought he was doing well under the Tories (i.e. his bedsit rent was being paid)," they tell us. "He seemed quite amazed when we explained our ideas and realised that under the Tories he actually had nothing. Then

he asked for a paper and from his dole money he took £10 and said that he would like to donate it to our fighting fund and wanted to find out more about Militant and socialist ideas."

In Cleethorpes the long summer holidays haven't been wasted. Sellers went to a caravan holiday camp. "We sold 11 without trying!" they told us.

Any other holiday successes? Write in and tell us your plans for the sales drive and don't forget to order extra papers!

By Ruth Campbell

Liverpool council budget crisis

No caving in to Tories!

Shabby charade

JUST OVER 100 days since the new-look Labour council took over in Liverpool, the *Liverpool Echo*, not noted for its support of the previous '47' Labour councillors who were removed from office by the courts, has praised the new Labour group for "a promising start".

As the date for setting a budget draws nearer and a £40 million gap has to be bridged, it is becoming clearer that the new leadership is not prepared to conduct a campaign like that of the 47 to win extra resources for the city.

Indeed in the last few weeks, Harry Rimmer, the council leader, has suggested rent increases and/or

'redetermination', which would mean handing over control of the budget to the Tory government. To bridge the £40m gap, a rent increase of £13 a week would be necessary, or 5,000 redundancies, or a mixture of both.

So despite being elected on the policies of the 47, the majority of right-wing councillors are preparing to capitulate to the Tories, arguing that there is no alternative and citing Manchester's retreat as proving the need for hard-headed economies in the budget.

Yet after their interim rent increase, in Manchester last week, unreported in the press, Labour lost two by-elections, in Northen-

den to the Tories and in Gorton South, a safe Labour seat, to the Liberals. With Labour's slim majority in Liverpool, any attacks on the working class will meet similar electoral reverses.

Resolutions

Many Party members are incensed that the new Group has still not called a full meeting of Party members to discuss the budget. Indeed many first heard of Rimmer's plans for redetermination in the *Echo*.

Under the previous council, numerous Party aggregate meetings were called to discuss the

council's budget. It is now crucial that resolutions are sent through the ward and constituency parties and union branches demanding such a meeting to launch a fight, alongside the trade unions and other rate-capped councils, to win extra resources for Liverpool.

47 councillors who face possible bankruptcy for their stand in defence of jobs and services, and the majority of Party members who support them, will not let the new set of councillors trample on the fighting traditions of Labour in Liverpool.

By Martin Lee

THE COUNCIL'S Labour leadership are going through a mock consultation with some Party members in an attempt to muster support for their 'redetermination' policy of shabby capitulation to Nicholas Ridley.

Clique

At a 'campaigning meeting', of about 30 secretaries and chairmen of ward parties, to which no trade union representatives had been invited, all Harry Rimmer could suggest to win extra resources for Liverpool was to "throw ourselves at the mercy of the Secretary of State".

The suspended Liverpool District Labour Party was falsely accused of calling meetings at short notice, by word of mouth and with no agenda being presented before the meeting. Yet the right wing clique are now doing exactly that.

Housing cuts threat

UNDERHAND ATTEMPTS to review five Housing Priority Areas under the Urban Regeneration Strategy (URS) have been blocked after protests within the Labour Group.

At the Housing Committee on 27 August, a recommendation from the Chair would have meant 'committed' expenditure on schemes not yet on site would be reviewed. People who had been promised housing would simply be told the money was no longer available.

Liberals

These are contracts the Liberals froze in their six-week period of office. On winning the election, the Labour Group lifted this freeze.

Members of the 47 disqualified councillors have expressed outrage at this attempt to dismantle Labour's housing policy which was the cornerstone of Labour's electoral victory in May.

Support the 47

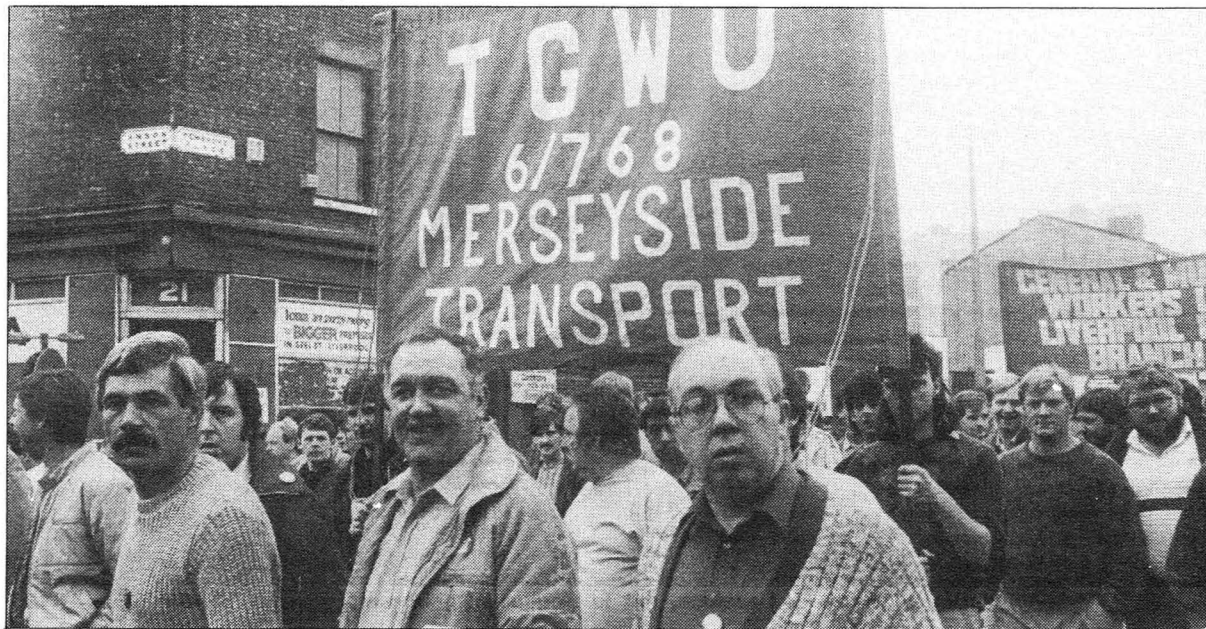
THE LIVERPOOL 47 Defence Fund is getting growing support from trade unionists.

"Recent experience in Manchester indicated that NALGO members have a choice, either co-operating with cutbacks or uniting with Labour councils to fight the Tory attacks. The 47 chose the latter and now they deserve the full support of NALGO members" says Roger Bannister, Branch Secretary of Knowsley NALGO.

"We have raised about £400 through weekly collections at the depot", says Steve Sullivan, GMBATU Branch 200: "If you don't support people who have defended you, you will be crushed. We were about to be privatised. The previous council stopped this. They consolidated our earnings, gave us a 35-hour week and gave us security. Now it is our duty to defend them".

And Pat Wethers of the EETPU adds: "We've had three levies of £10 per head from members of the four unions in the depot. If this was reflected throughout the council workforce there'd be a surplus. We've got a speaker from the 47 coming to the depot to raise more through deductions at source. We owe it to councillors who turned the tide on jobs".

Rush donations, standing orders and requests for speakers, and make cheques payable to the Liverpool 47 Defence Fund, c/o MTCURC, Hardman St. Liverpool. Standing orders to A/c no 502 111 95 at the Co-operative Bank, Liverpool Branch. Phone Alex Dodswell on 051 709 4398 or 051 427 3071.



TGWU and GMBATU members marching in support of the previous Labour city council.

Trade unionists angered

THE STRIKE by thirty Liverpool City Council Parks Department drivers is continuing. All burials have been stopped. Last Wednesday all drivers received a letter from council management threatening them with 'summary dismissal' for 'gross misconduct'.

The GMBATU Branch Five pickets interviewed by *Militant* were disgusted at the council's tactics. One worker said: "We might have had our disagreements with the last council on a few occasions, but they would never have acted like this". Three pickets have filled in Labour Party application forms.

Alan Dean, council deputy leader, has attacked the strikers on the radio, saying that if burials are not resumed, they will find people who will do the work. Any attempt to strike-break will bring out the

rest of the Branch Five membership, and other GMBATU council workers have pledged their support.

Branch Five have suggested a disputes panel or independent arbitration as a way out, but these compromises have been rejected by the council.

Contemptuous

Many activists see this dispute as part of a strategy by right-wing Labour councillors to attack those sections most closely involved with the policies of the last Labour council—Sam Bond, Merseyside Area Students Organisation and now Branch Five.

THE NEW regime on Liverpool City Council are not just facing problems with GMBATU drivers.

That dispute is symptomatic of the attitude which seems to be developing in the council leadership.

At a meeting of TGWU councillors, Alan Dean, council deputy leader and a TGWU member at Ford's, was quite contemptuous in his attitude. He blamed all present problems on the previous 47 disqualified councillors.

The council have written a letter asking trade unionists to deal with management, not with councillors. A TGWU official told the meeting that while the union did not expect councillors to be dictated to, they would not accept that the unions could not approach councillors.

It was also made clear that the TGWU would be against redetermination, which would central government deciding the budget and getting rid of their jobs.

Fighting Fund

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 Wales	676	<div style="width: 15%;"></div>	4850
2 South East	298	<div style="width: 6%;"></div>	2250
3 Eastern	374	<div style="width: 8%;"></div>	3050
4 London	916	<div style="width: 30%;"></div>	9400
5 East Midlands	231	<div style="width: 5%;"></div>	3250
6 Northern	300	<div style="width: 7%;"></div>	4600
7 Yorkshire	481	<div style="width: 11%;"></div>	8450
8 Southern	141	<div style="width: 3%;"></div>	3100
9 Manchester/Lancs	166	<div style="width: 4%;"></div>	4050
10 Scotland East	63	<div style="width: 1%;"></div>	2800
11 Scotland West	71	<div style="width: 1%;"></div>	3500
12 South West	35	<div style="width: 1%;"></div>	1900
13 West Midlands	76	<div style="width: 1%;"></div>	4850
14 Merseyside	100	<div style="width: 2%;"></div>	7500
15 National	1215	<div style="width: 16%;"></div>	4750
Total	5,143	<div style="width: 11%;"></div>	70,000

Give us the cash we need

A GLANCE at last week's papers illustrates that millions of the world's population are not preoccupied with Madonna concerts and the Rome athletics, but where their next meal is coming from, will they have a job tomorrow, will they even stay alive to see tomorrow!

In S Korea a government spokesman reassures the capitalists internationally that the number of new strikes is now less than the number being settled! In the Philippines the capitalist government of Cory Aquino teeters on the brink of collapse following the latest bloody coup attempt.

Even tourists hoping to escape from the daily grind to the sun-drenched

beaches of Spain have seen a dark cloud on the horizon as overworked and underpaid air traffic controllers take industrial action.

To make sense of these developments and to chart a way forward for the working class movement, we need a workers' paper based on the ideas and methods of Marxism. Our weekly paper represents just such a beginning, but to expand our analysis and coverage, we need extra funds.

So send us the cash we need now—a fiver or a tenner, or more is what we urgently require.

And we are asking supporters to map out a plan for fundraising this quarter. List the Labour

Party and trade union meetings where collections can be taken. Get to the schools and colleges at the start of the new term with rattling tins, stickers and appeal sheets.

Freshers' fairs also provide a golden opportunity for sales of literature and posters; so get a supply of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg posters.

Contributors this week include Bill Brett, Southampton, £10; Macclesfield supporter £100; Julie Donovan, Bermondsey, £50. Pontycymer meeting £27.19; Dawn Primavera MP 50p; sponsored slim by Michelle, Wearside, £5.50; sale of old comics, Oxford, £31.75; Tim Neave, CPSA, £10 and Dave Moscrop, ASTMS, £5.



1 9 8 7

THE MIGHTY British trade union movement approaches the Trade Union Congress in Blackpool with the familiar cries from the Tory press that it is 'dying', 'outdated' and 'irrelevant', and must now recognise its weakness in the wake of a third Tory victory. The union leaders who pinned all their hopes upon a Labour victory, have been left flapping in the wind.

The trade unions are on the receiving end of the same old lectures about their declining fortunes. But as *Militant* has pointed out numerous times the decline in union membership is almost exclusively due to the loss of jobs in manufacturing industry. Even the anti-union *Sunday Times* was forced to comment recently: "The drastic fall in union membership was caused primarily by a rise in unemployment in areas of traditional union strength, such as mining, engineering and transport. There is little evidence that people have been voluntarily leaving unions for any other reason".

But the labour and trade union leaders are now desperately tacking to the right in the wake of the Tory victory. Kinnock, Gould and the union leaders, in particular John Edmonds of the General & Municipal Workers Union (G&M), are attempting to explain away the election defeat by the unpopularity of the policies to an upwardly mobile electorate. With the supposed decline of the working class and organised labour, old fashioned socialism is apparently unpopular.

Edmonds told the *Financial Times*: "What Neil Kinnock and Bryan Gould are doing is saying to people that you haven't got to concern yourself with only whether a policy...is actually going to work...You really have got at every stage to just check yourself and say, has this got voter appeal?" Socialism is reduced to what the leaders subjectively consider is 'popular', not what the movement believes is necessary to solve the problems of working people.

The union leaders have drawn all the wrong conclusions from the election defeat. From this wrong analysis they are now preparing to turn in the wrong direction. After the Tories' victory in 1983 many of the trade union leaders turned to New Realism with a vengeance. Within months their attempts to talk 'sense' with the Tories and bosses saw its answer in the 1981-85 miners' strike.

The leadership is obsessed with the 'unpopularity' of their unions. In the first section of the TUC agenda the Union of Communication Workers has submitted an amazing amendment. To an already direly pessimistic motion from NUPE, with a sentence stating that "unions are often misrepresented as bullying, threatening and undemocratic", it adds the words "selfish" and "sectionalist".

It was this attitude and the desire not to be too associated with 'unpopular' unions by the Labour leaders, which led to the non-existent profile of the trade union leadership in the general election campaign.

If the image of trade unionism is in any way tarnished, it is due to the failure of the union leaders to

By Bill Boyle

right and soft left, to come to the head of the struggles of their members and to stave off job losses and attacks on wages and conditions.

However, despite the decisions and deliberations of this TUC, struggle is the only answer to the problems of low pay, privatisation and Tory attacks. And combativity is already on the increase.

The capitalist press has pointed out recently that the Tory government's official figures for strikes are cooked downwards. It is the received wisdom that strikes have been at an all time 50 year low (until recently). An Institute of Manpower Studies survey recently, found however, that in one firm alone official figures recorded only one dispute in 1981 while the company's records showed 82; 7 the following year while the company recorded 104 and 6 the year after when the company showed 114. The effect on days lost was to under-record in the three years by 4,163, 3,711 and 1,207 respectively.

It may be the case that with mass unemployment and concern about whether they can actually win, workers are much more wary of striking. But what has characterised the past year alone are the number of long and bitter struggles with the bosses, most of them led by local shop stewards and leaders. Mostly the trade union national leadership, at best, has tried to dampen down the struggle or at worst played a strike breaking role. The Silent-night and Caterpillar disputes show this.

How has the leadership of the trade union movement stood up to the test being put before them? A brief review of the year reveals an industrial battlefield upon which the leaderships have been singularly absent. Even the largest battle of all, the political battle around the last general election showed them to be woefully inadequate. In a report for the executive of Trades Unionists For a Labour Victory most local co-ordinators praised Labour's campaign, but one asked: "Up to the election—what campaign? Only during the election were there signs of a campaign becoming visible." Another said the unions: "Didn't get our act together early enough to properly organise." "Despite the fact that we knew the election was coming we were caught napping," complained yet another.

Despite being desperate for the election of the Labour government the union leaders were incapable of politically organising their members to ensure it. Although the answer to their failure lies not in organisational problems, but the inability of the trade union and labour leaders to

New leaf not new

put forward a programme to inspire ordinary workers to vote Thatcher out. Only where a bold socialist alternative to the Tories was put forward was there a noticeable surge in support for Labour, and in Liverpool particularly.

The union leaders now find themselves in a cul-de-sac of their own making. Over the last couple of years their rallying call to any activists wanting to fight privatisation, redundancies, victimisations or any other attack by the bosses was: "Wait until the return of a Labour government."

One delegate at the NUPE Conference summed it up in this way: "The services in my hospital where they won—if that's the word, won—the in house tender, lost their bonuses which meant that in fact they took a pay cut of 10%. One of our stewards, a domestic, now takes home £72 to keep his wife and baby...I want to be able to go back to my members and tell them that our union leadership will be waging a national campaign involving all grades of hospital staff. But we have not had a proper national campaign."

Miners' vote

In that single speech can be felt the frustration of thousands who would be prepared to fight the Tories were they given a lead. Now in the post election period, while the TUC sits in Blackpool, battles are breaking out spontaneously over privatisation of the buses in London and in Scotland. The miners have recorded an overwhelming vote for industrial action, and the postal workers are threatening a ballot on strike action.

Yet Norman Willis, leader of the British trade union movement, can tell the 1986 Institute of Personnel Management Conference: "I have no doubt that increasingly members will be looking to their unions to provide progress without strikes and without pickets—quite simply, with the minimum of hassle especially



Pickets from Wapping lobby last year's TUC over the EETPU leaders' strike-brea



Arthur Scargill.

self-induced hassle". "It is my personal experience," he went on, "that when you carry a joke too far it is likely to become policy". That is the cynical attitude of TUC officialdom towards the desire of workers to struggle for their basic conditions.

The major struggle of the last year was the News International dispute. That dispute with its year long picket line and pitched battles with the police, showed the militant traditions of the workforce who, despite inept national leadership, were prepared to fight to the very bitter end until they were left high, dry and abandoned. This dispute showed the complete vacuum of leadership from top to bottom of the labour movement.

The National Communications Union, led by the arch witch-hunter John Golding, engaged in its first ever national strike. This despite the protestations of Golding to the Board of British Telecom that he was a 'moderate' and did not want to lead strikes. This confirms that in the future even right wing leaders will be compelled to lead struggles forced upon their members by the crisis of British capitalism.

Golding had defeated Phil Holt, a *Militant* supporter, in the ballot for General Secretary. Merely months later he was forced to lead the strike and a few

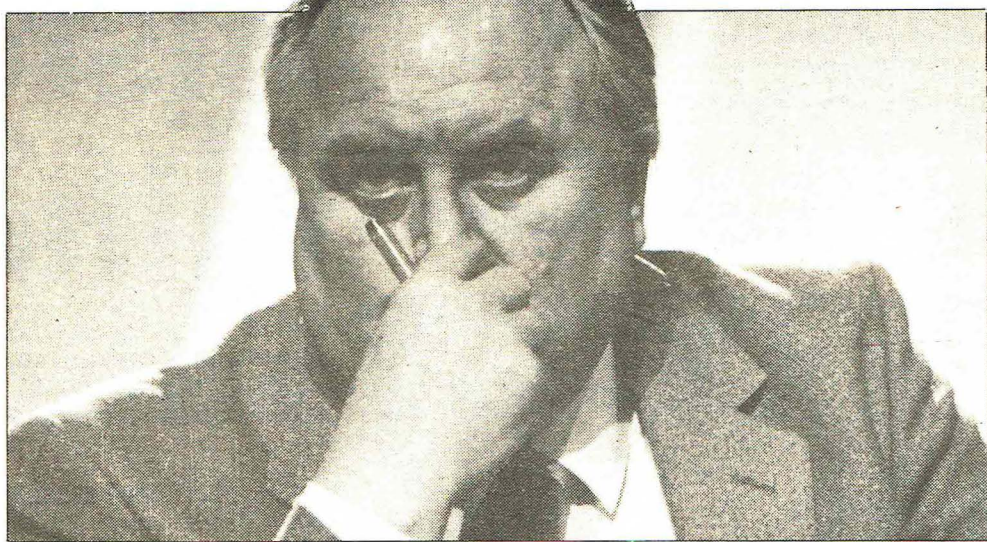
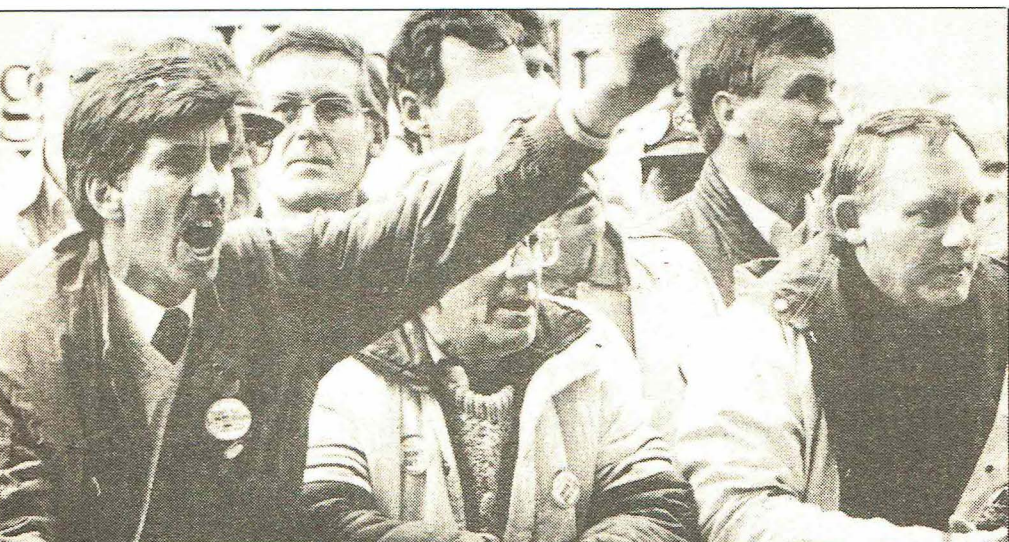
months after that found his job swinging by a thread as the conference almost sacked him.

The ideas of Golding, Willis and the TUC majority of New Realism, of harmony between the exploited and the exploiters, will be shattered in the coming months.

The disputes which will arise at Congress over the single union, no strike deals are at the heart of New Realism. The theory of single union representation in a workplace or whole industry is basically sound. But not when accompanied by agreements with employers, such as Hammond of the EETPU and Laird of the AEU support, which trade off basic trade union rights in order to add more members to the union's roll.

Theoretically it is sensible for single unions to organise in new areas, just as the Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunication & Plumbing Union (EETPU) call for one big industry structured union is eminently sensible. But the \$64,000 question is this—how will such a union be organised?

Eric Hammond's Big Union would be along the lines of the present undemocratically run EETPU. Only within an ordered, industry based and fundamentally democratic re-organisation of the TUC could real single union



Norman Willis, advocate of New Realism.

Membership realism

Tuc Unions—membership

The 20 largest unions

	1986	1985	Change	Change %
TGWU	1,377,944	1,434,005	-56,061	-3.9
AEU	857,559	974,904	-117,345	-12.0
GMB	814,084	839,920	-25,836	-3.1
Nalgo	750,430	752,131	-1,701	-0.2
Nupe	657,633	663,776	-6,143	-0.9
Astms	390,000	390,000	—	—
Usdaw	381,984	385,455	-3,471	-1.0
EETPU	336,155	347,635	-11,480	-3.3
Ucatt	249,485	248,693	+792	+0.3
Tass	241,000	251,254	-10,254	-4.1
Cohse	212,312	212,980	-668	-0.3
Sogat	199,594	205,916	-6,322	-3.1
UCW	191,959	194,244	-2,285	-1.2
NUT	184,455	207,651	-23,196	-11.3
Bifu	158,746	157,468	+1,278	+0.8
NCU	155,643	161,315	-5,672	-3.5
CPSA	150,514	146,537	+3,977	+2.7
NGA	125,587	126,074	-487	-0.4
NUR	125,000	130,261	-5,261	-4.0
NAS/UWT	123,945	127,612	-3,667	-2.9
Total TUC	9,243,297	9,585,529	-342,432	-3.6

Union membership as per cent of working population:

	Union members (in millions)	Density
1920	8,348	45.2%
1923	5,429	30.3%
1933	4,329	22.6%
1948	9,363	45.2%
1969	10,479	45.3%
1978	13,112	54.2%
1979	13,289	53.6%
1980	12,947	50.0%
1982	11,593	47.8%
1984	10,994	45.0%
1986	9,243	44.0%

and big investor alike tremble in anticipation. They also know that the only main obstacle in their path is the trade union movement—the organised working class.

The employers feel emboldened by the huge Tory majority and are preparing new onslaughts on jobs in every sector from engineering to transport; the health service and local government. Massive programmes of privatisation threaten hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Union strength

Let them be warned. A survey carried out for the Department of Employment by two academics confirms that Britain's unions are in "remarkable financial health". It also reveals that the teaching unions and the Inland Revenue Staff Federation have emerged from recent disputes actually healthier than they went in. The CPSA increased its membership too during the recent pay battle.

These facts show that workers will join an organisation which they see is working to better their pay and conditions. Members do not join tame staff associations, they want unions which respond to their needs.

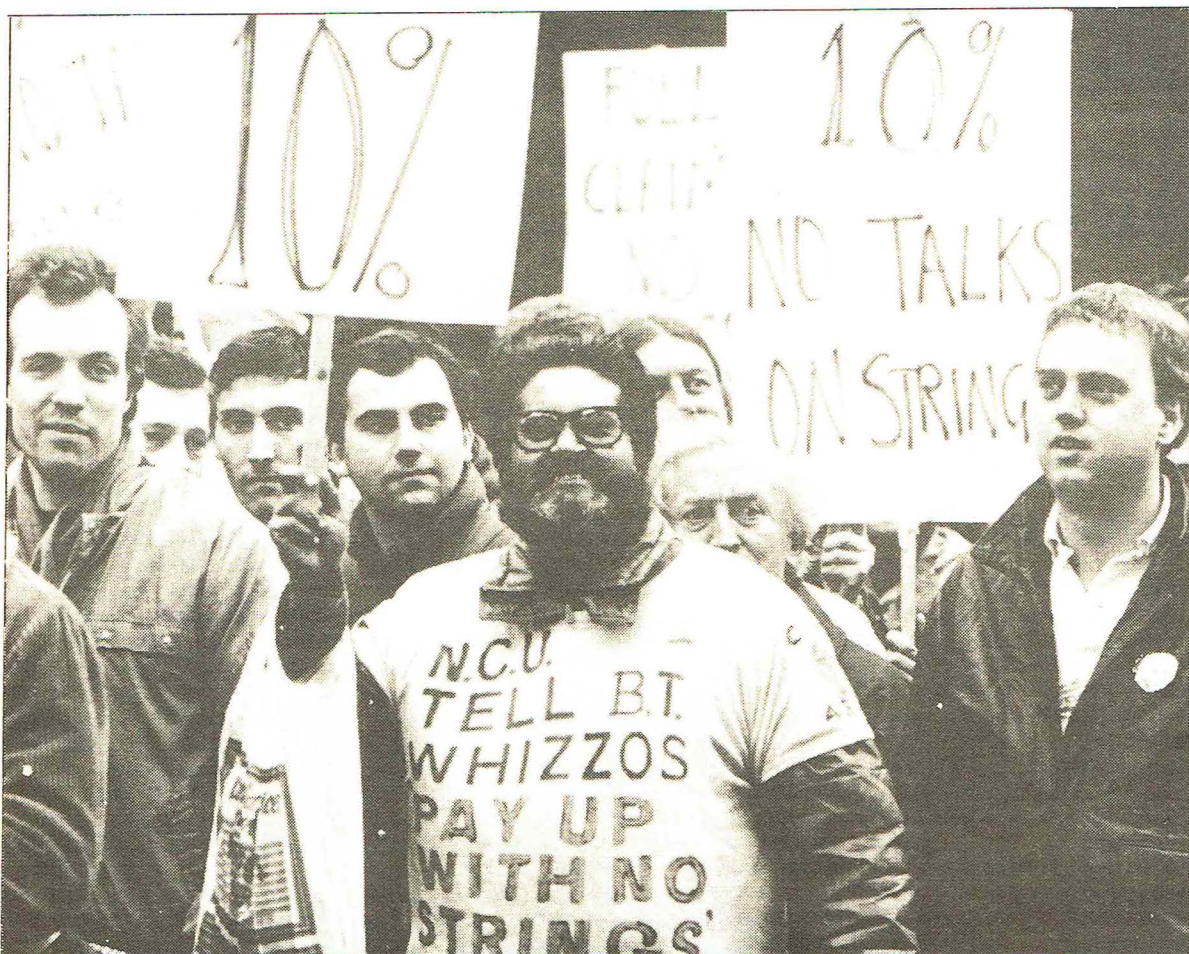
It is now that the TUC should be girding its loins for the next round with the Tories. The task facing socialists in the unions is to wrestle control from the bureaucracy and wield it democratically in the members' interests.

The possibilities now opening up for a transformation of the

unions are enormous. In engineering the workforce is in ferment over attempts by their leaders in the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions to give up decades of gains won through struggle. Privatisation, which will be a major debate at the TUC threatens civil servants, bus workers, water workers, health workers, rail and underground workers to mention only a few. No sector or industry will be spared the Tories' ravages as they struggle to keep capitalism afloat.

There exists now at the head of the British trade union movement possibly the worst leadership for over fifty years. They represent a barrier to the needs to struggle of millions of members. The building of strong mass democratic Broad Lefts in every union is an absolute priority for all socialists, and the building up of the Broad Left Organising Committee. Against the doom and gloom of the pessimists on the left as well as the right, must be counterposed the optimistic programme of Marxism.

One small step has been taken with the election of John Macrae as Deputy General Secretary of CPSA and the election of a Broad Left leadership of the union. This shows what can be done in every union if the programme of socialism is boldly put forward. The basis is being created for the transformation of the unions into fighting bodies pursuing the defence of workers' interests through struggle, and campaigning for the socialist reorganisation of society.



NCU strikers who took on British Telecom earlier this year.

representation be offered to workers that would be in their interest.

Any such union would have to be fully democratic, with full-time officials paid the average wage of the workers they represent and subject to accountability. Neither Willis nor Hammond would agree with those proposals. They represent a fundamental threat to their interests.

Right bloc

But more lies behind Hammond's proposals, probably a desire to escape from the 'left' clutches of the TUC into a new union bloc with other right led unions perhaps like the AEU.

The single union issue is

included in Norman Willis' proposals to the Congress. His proposals, briefly, are: that the TUC should control 'Designated Organising Areas' where there are disputes about which unions should organise, especially the New Towns which are predominantly non-union; a range of membership services, based on the American model, including union credit cards; and that the TUC should lead union organisation and recruitment campaigns and concentrate less on attempting to formulate policy which no-one listens to anyway.

Some of his other proposals are not fundamentally incorrect but they represent a basic shift away from the view of the TUC as a political leadership of the orga-

nised trade union movement, to a view of the TUC and unions as 'company' unions at peace with capitalism and attempting, within that framework, to organise benefits for their members. Ironically, they will be opposed by the union general secretaries because they encroach on their own unions' boundaries and give more power to the TUC than they would like.

Yet as the TUC leaders recommit themselves to New Realism and industrial harmony the bosses are preparing for battle. They know that the economic bubble is about to burst. The first indications of that have already flickered across the visual display units of the stock exchange in the last few weeks making the small

Japanese city workers' go on hunger strike



Japanese binmen on 10-day hunger strike.

ONE THOUSAND four hundred and fifty binmen, clerical workers and other local government staff went on strike on 7 August in Takarazuka, near Osaka, in Japan. All the workers belong to the Takarazuka City Workers' Union.

On 4 August ten binmen went on hunger strike and were joined by 30 other local government workers inside the municipal building.

The struggle is against plans by the council (dominated by the conservative Liberal Democratic Party) to privatise the city's waste incineration unit and make 26 workers redundant.

Militant correspondents spoke to two union organisers, Sadao Takemoto and Nobuo Otsuki. They explained that this action was one of many similar actions throughout Japan in the last three years.

The LDP government was pushing through plans to 'rationalise' the public sector, including local government. This means priva-

tising jobs, school meals, nurseries etc.

All the unions concerned are affiliated to the All-Japan Prefectural and Municipal Workers' Union, with 1,270,000 members.

The binmen are low-paid, and many have been in their jobs for 20 to 30 years. They say they are striking not only for themselves, but to halt a deterioration in services to the community.

In Japan strikes by public sector workers are illegal. But the workers are being left no alternative to struggle. As we entered the hallway where the hunger strike was taking place, the "Internationale" was blaring from a set of speakers. Clearly, Japanese workers will join in the struggles of the working class internationally in the period that is opening up.

Please send messages of support to: Takarazuka City Workers' Union, 1-1 Toyo-cho Takarazuka-shi, Hyogo, Japan.

S Korea-struggle reaches new level



PROTESTING STUDENTS at Sejong University, Seoul, (above) who have kept up their action since 10 June. Now the crisis in South Korea is being driven to new levels with the flood-tide of workers joining the students in struggle.

Over 500 factories were on strike on any given day last week; a Labour Ministry official expressed satisfaction

when, first time, the number of disputes settled on one day was more than the number of new disputes breaking out. 105 were settled, while 59 fresh disputes broke out!

At the same time the movement was turning increasingly political, with the workers particularly enraged by the first death of a worker at the hands of the riot police.

Historic S African mine strike ends

On 29 August, after 20 days of the greatest industrial confrontation in South Africa's history, the SA NUM leaders called off the mineworkers' strike. Paul Storey, member

of the Editorial Board of *Inqaba Ya Basebenzi* (journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the African National Congress), asks—could the mineworkers have won?

ONLY DAYS after mass meetings had unanimously rejected an offer by the Chamber of Mines because it refused to budge on the central pay claim, the union gave in to these terms and called the 340,000 strikers back to work.

NUM general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa described the decision as "a tactical manoeuvre sideways" and claimed the bosses had been taught "a lesson they will never forget". But millions of workers and youth have felt this as a severe setback, indeed a defeat.

Launched in 1982, the NUM has been built into a mighty force for struggle by the most enslaved and most militant section of black workers. NUM is the main power in COSATU, which links over 750,000 workers.

Least illusions

Of all SA workers, mine-workers have least illusions about their enemy. Because gold mining is the spine of SA capitalism, these workers face most sharply the ruthless combination of the monopolies, headed by the Anglo American Corporation, and the apartheid state.

Forced to work and live in barbarous conditions, separated from their families, policed by security guards with tear gas and armoured cars, mine-workers knew that a serious strike would likely mean war.

In the first years, the NUM leadership wisely held back from strike action. Time was needed to marshal the forces. The union used the limited legality as a shield for preparations, while gaining what they could at the bargaining table.

But it became evident, particularly in 1985 and 1986, that the leadership was limiting itself to such tactics, and not vigorously using the opportunities for building solidarity with other sections of workers and revolutionary township youth. Nonetheless, the zeal of the mineworkers to take on the bosses and the state has inspired the whole class.

This year, with the gold price buoyant and over half the industry organised, NUM members were determined to put their strength to the test. With most black mineworkers earning substantially less than the 'minimum living level', the union congress resolved on a 55 per cent pay claim. Demands for increased leave, danger pay and death compensation were added.

Despite massive profits the Chamber refused the union's claim, and imposed 'rises' of between 15 and 23 per cent. The strike began with the workers vowing to accept no less than 30 per cent across-the-board.

All classes saw the strike

as essentially political—an attempt to change the relations of power between the workers and the bosses. For this reason, the bosses were prepared to make concessions on secondary issues but not on the symbolically decisive pay claim.

The allegedly 'liberal' Anglo American recognises that union organisation on the mines is inevitable. But they see the danger of union power becoming the hub of the revolutionary struggle of the black working class to rid itself of apartheid and capitalism.

They want to tame the NUM to accept the existing relations of power, to rely on 'goodwill' from the employers (with a degree of trade union 'pressure'), instead of combining with the rest of the workers and youth in the fight for power.

The mine strike came at a crucial point. South Africa has been engulfed in a tidal wave of industrial struggles without parallel, involving 700,000-800,000 workers in metal, chemicals, transport, food, the post office, municipalities and even farming, as well as the mines. In townships countrywide, the spirit of the black youth was lifted by the prospect of joining with this industrial movement.

COSATU could have rallied these forces round the mineworkers, linking this to the (so far uncoordinated) National Minimum Living Wage Campaign and to armed defence against vigilantes and state attacks. All the ingredients were present to build towards general strike action on wages and other demands, arousing millions of still unorganised workers.

By turning the mine-workers towards systematically preparing on these lines, the NUM leaders could have overcome many of the difficulties facing the strike. The lack of a strike fund could be answered by the hundreds of thousands in the townships ready to feed, and if necessary accommodate, mine-workers.

Time wasted

But only on the 18th day did COSATU publicly promise solidarity action—and even then it was only vaguely described as "action that will materialise as the situation develops"! Precious time was wasted, and momentum lost, which prevented an effective campaign to deter unemployed workers from taking sacked miners' jobs.

The NUM leaders, not wishing to acknowledge the political stakes involved, insisted the dispute was 'only' about wages. They too readily pinned hopes on the employers making a wage concession when faced with the costs of the action. Undoubtedly this

strike marks one of the greatest demonstrations ever of the fighting potential of the SA working class. But was this enough?

When the *Wall Street Journal* (11 August) asked comrade Ramaphosa about the possibility that strikers would be fired, he said: "How do you fire 300,000 workers and hope to replace them within the rest of 1987? It's not possible. Even if it were possible it would mean that the mines would remain totally out of production for over six months." This complacency was unfounded.

Some 44,000 were sacked in the three weeks of the strike—only the opening moves by employers who contemplated going to the end in breaking the strike. The NUM leaders' initial blunder of telling strikers to return to their rural homes, although largely ignored, was not openly corrected. So sacked workers boarded buses and left the mines. Scabs were brought in without effective resistance.

Tactics of legality had no answer to all this, or to the arrests, the deaths and more than 300 seriously injured by mine security and police. At the end, the employers were taking interdicts so that the army could be called to drive strikers from the hostels.

Cyril Ramaphosa lamented: "I thought we knew how tough the industry was. We did not." Having failed to prepare for an all-out battle, the leadership hurriedly called the strike off.

The NUM and COSATU leadership should acknowledge their strategy was flawed. Because working-class solidarity was not mobilised on the widest scale, the Chamber of Mines enjoyed a big advantage. They could dig in, knowing that to concede a few per cent on wages was the 'worst' option they faced.

Of course, not every struggle can lead directly to 'final victory'. The point was to use the herculean efforts of the mineworkers to achieve a step forward in the battle for power, a change in consciousness of the relation of class forces.

To have wrung even a tiny concession on wages from the Chamber would have sent to the whole black working class a signal of its potential, and so ad-

vanced the morale of every section. The ruling class and the regime would have suffered a setback.

But to have a real prospect of winning such a concession, it was necessary to confront the Chamber with a far 'worse' alternative than a wage increase—a general mobilisation, building towards a general strike, with incalculable economic and political repercussions for the ruling class.

That is what the NUM and COSATU leaders failed to do, because unfortunately they did not grasp that a serious struggle for concessions and reforms can be effective now only if conducted in the framework of consciously building the forces for revolution.

NUM members associated with the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC think that the leadership should call a special conference of the union, to draw the lessons of the strike, and go forward in unity.

Preparations

Preparations should begin for the next battles on the mines. The 80,000 strikers not yet in the union should be recruited immediately. The disbanded shaft stewards' councils should be reinstated, to take the lead in building the necessary self-defence organs on every mine, links with the township youth and COSATU locals in all areas.

This defeat does not mean the union is broken. But millions of workers and youth will be disappointed. The centrepiece has been removed from the present industrial movement. The bosses everywhere are likely to harden, and strike struggles become even more hard-bitten.

By the leadership openly discussing and correcting its strategy the damage can be minimised, morale restored, and the attention of the whole class focused on preparing for future advances.

The bosses and the state are mistaken if they think the NUM or COSATU can be tamed. These organisations have been built for struggle. The South African working class will never reconcile itself to apartheid or to capitalism.

Ivin Malaza

LATEST DONATIONS include: £100 from Irish labour activists, £1,051.99 from Spain, £292.23 from Germany, £178.58 from Cyprus, £535.75 from Italy, £510.43 from the USA,

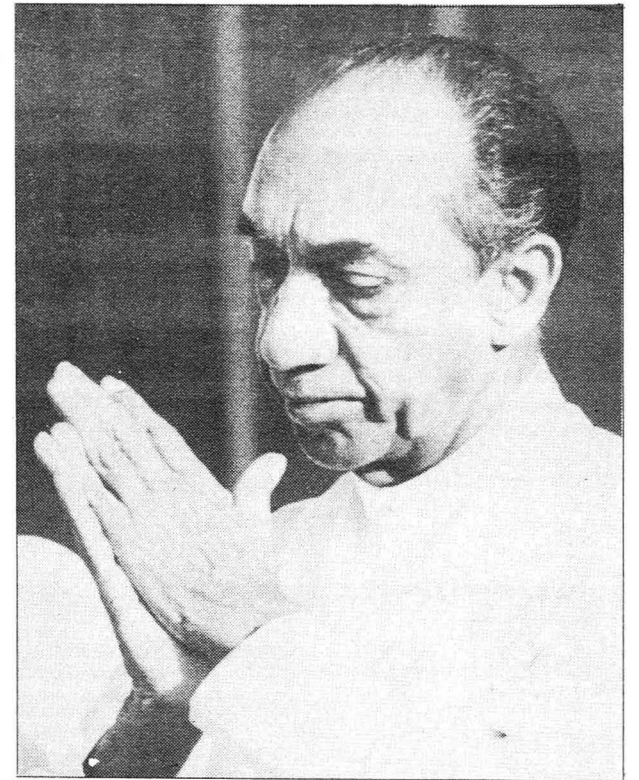
£21.89 from Greece, and £38 from Liverpool Council's Static Security Force.

Further donations to continue the work of Ivin Malaza, murdered for his role as a workers' leader in South Africa, and help support his family should be sent to: Cllr L. Faulkes, 143B Amhurst Road, London E8 2AW.

Assassination attempt on Sri Lankan president

Workers' unity to end communal violence

LAST MONTH'S assassination attempt on President JR Jayawardene and his United National Party (UNP) parliamentary group once again underlined the volatility of Sri Lankan society and the whole of the Indian sub-continent.



By Mukesh Moorthy

In the space of a few weeks we have seen a wave of riots among the majority Sinhalese population group against the Indo-Lanka agreement (see *Militant* 21 August) destroying hundreds of millions of dollars of property; the killing of scores of Sinhalese rioters by troops; an assassination attempt by a Sinhalese Sri Lankan naval guard on India's Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi; and this latest assassination attempt which narrowly missed JR but did succeed in killing a UNP MP (the second in four weeks) and wounding 16 others.

The Finance Minister has called for an overhaul of the country's security forces, which have been swelled by rapid recruitment of unemployed (mainly rural) youth in the last two years to fight in the war against the Tamil guerillas in the north. There have even been suggestions of appealing for the British SAS to be sent in to protect the President and other government MP's!

These events have been sparked off by the presence of the Indian army in the areas inhabited by the Tamil minority, to disarm the Tamil guerillas and police the peace agreement. In fact, the war in the north and east has subsided since the agreement, with the mass of the Tamils welcoming the end of the military repression of the Sri Lankan army.

But the Indo-Lanka accord, while making significant concessions to the Tamils in terms of an autonomous Tamil 'homeland', is viewed with hostility by large sections of the Sinhala masses (particularly the middle classes, lumpens and the peasantry). Sinhala nationalists and chauvinists feel that the accord has reduced Sri Lanka to a vassal state of India, policed by Indian troops and encircled by Indian warships.

Communalism

It is ironical that Jayawardene, who led a demonstration of Buddhist monks and chauvinists in 1956 to successfully break the federal agreement between then Prime minister Bandaranaike and Tamil leaders, has been forced to accept a more humiliating version of the same agreement 30 years later! Now he is faced with the monstrous forces of Sinhala communalism that he himself helped to create.

But JR has no choice. Despite the assassination attempt Jayawardene has stated that he will implement the accord. Indeed there is absolutely no alternative for the Sri Lankan ruling class. Abrogation of the accord would be tantamount to declaring war on India, whose troops are already on the island, and could flatten the Sri Lankan army within hours.

The economy is on the brink of collapse. The Sri Lankan ruling class are desperate to buy poli-



Above: President JR Jayawardene—forced to accept a humiliating agreement. Below: Nurses and hospital workers of the Janraja Health Workers' Union, supporting the marxist NSSP (New Socialist Party), march in support of the doctors' strike. Their banners are made of paper; as police waded in to tear them up, new posters can be instantly produced.

tical stability, attract foreign investment and aid, and maintain the unity of the island.

Therefore, despite the mad rantings of Sinhala communalism, Jayawardene will be forced to press on with the deal.

All that the assassination attempt has achieved is to give Jayawardene the opportunity to arouse sympathy from the population, and a pretext to clamp down further on the opposition. This once again shows the blind alley of the methods of individual terrorism.

Illusions in terrorism and guerrillaism among the youth are very largely the result of disillusionment with the left parties, following their treacherous role in the coalition government formed in 1970 with the capitalist SLFP.

In 1971, the adventurist Sinhala youth insurrection of the JVP in the south was bloodily crushed by this government with Indian and foreign assistance. Some 15,000 youth were butchered. In the north, we have seen the guerilla struggle of the Tamil youth who displayed unbounded heroism and devotion to their cause, but have nevertheless fallen far short of their objectives.

These experiences demonstrate that an armed minority, isolated from the mass movement, cannot substitute itself for the workers' class struggle against capitalist rule.

Despite these failures there has tragically been a revival in guerilla trends among the Sinhala youth, due to the failure of the left parties—the SLMP, CP and LSSP—to lead a struggle against the UNP government.

The accord will open up important opportunities for the left parties in the north as well as the south, as class and economic issues surface.

On the Tamil question, the left parties have correctly stood against communalism, but have wrongly tried to solve it through support for the Jayawardene regime, Indian 'peace-keeping' and 'mediation'. This has enabled the illegalised JVP to grow among the frustrated middle class, the lumpens, peasant youth and students, and even within the armed forces.

The JVP has been accused of carrying out the assassination attempt on the President and organising armed raids against the government. This petit-bourgeois organisation has taken an ex-

treme Sinhala chauvinist, anti-Tamil position, and has viciously attacked the left parties.

It has also employed anti-capitalist rhetoric and the prospect of armed struggle against the government as the means of attracting Sinhala youth.

The Indo-Lanka accord has put into question the role of the Indian army both among the Sinhala and Tamil masses. There can be no disguising the fact that this army has intervened to disarm the Tamil militants, and will in the future move against any opposition from amongst the Tamils as well as in the south to defend JR's government from the Sinhala workers and peasants.

JR himself has joked that there are two Indian warships off Colombo harbour to rescue him when necessary!

The accord will open up important opportunities for the left parties. In the north the possibility arises of open work among the Tamil masses, as divisions in the nationalist movement prepare class splits. In the south there exists massive opposition to the Indian army while the class and economic issues will inevitably surface.

The recent doctors' strike, supported by all the hospital unions, foreshadows the industrial struggles that will develop over wages and conditions, especially since the government will no

longer be able to use the war in the north as a diversion.

The JVP will continue to exploit Sinhala nationalism and anti-government feeling. Communal divisions can only be defeated if the left parties take a clear working class stand, showing the Sinhala and Tamil masses a socialist way forward.

Mass struggle

There must be no support to the bourgeois governments of India and Sri Lanka, and total opposition to the intervention of foreign military forces in Sri Lanka.

A broad-based working class struggle, winning the support of the peasantry, taking up the demands of the national minorities, engaging in the methods of mass struggle, could not only bring down the Jayawardene government, but usher in genuine liberation to the masses of Sinhala and Tamil workers and peasants.

The struggle of the Sri Lankan masses is now completely intertwined with that of their Indian brothers and sisters. The Indian presence underlines the fact that a socialist Sri Lanka could only survive on the basis of the revolution being spread through a class appeal to the Indian troops and to the workers and peasants of India.

Help!

Dear Comrades,
Watching the TV adverts for personal loans, insurance and pensions, it is interesting to note we are advised to ask our financial advisor or broker for details of the various plans.
It would be interesting to know how many of the 4 million unemployed or the millions on low wages have a financial advisor!
Yours fraternally
Graham Cunnell
Scarborough

Tragic waste of lives

Dear Comrades,
I'm sure everyone will have been sickened by the tragic waste of lives in Hungerford last week.
No doubt many people will be asking what turns a human being into a monster and how a repetition of the incident can be prevented. Well it certainly won't be prevented by a tightening up of the gun laws.
It may sound like an easy answer for a socialist to lay the blame at the door of capitalism. But that is actually the case. It doesn't just affect working class men and women in obvious ways—jobs, living standards—but also in more subtle ways. It distorts and twists the minds of the whole population. Michael Ryan's obsession with arms was merely a reflection of a society which glorifies war and rates money higher than life.

Socialism might not immediately wipe out mental illness. But by destroying the most important cause and providing the necessary resources, mental illness could be treated seriously with a view to eliminating it.
Yours fraternally
Ben Rayner
Reading

Animal experimentation for profit

Dear Comrades,
Companies exploit animals as well as human labour. All companies use animals in experiments. Millions of animals suffer and die in laboratory experiments. They are burned, blinded, scalded, poisoned and infected with diseases. They are shocked, irradiated and gassed, in most cases with no relief from pain, only death.
Past cases show that the experiments are doubly absurd. For vivisection is not only irrelevant to real advances in health but results are often dangerously misleading. Open, Eraldin and Flosint are cases of all animal-tested drugs which had to be with-

drawn because they caused suffering and death in humans.
Important advances continue to be made using methods which are more humane and directly applicable to people, for example using computers and cell cultures. Yet every hour of every day another 20,000 animals die in the world's laboratories. This cannot be stopped by bombing leading stores which sell fur coats. It can only be changed by changing the capitalist system.
Yours fraternally
Jo Segal
Folkestone LPYS

Fight back

Dear Comrades,
Six months ago a member of Stafford Labour Party managed to get a job at GEC computer services in Stafford after being unemployed for two and a half years. Recently, after starting work at 8.30am, he was called into the director's office and handed a letter. It stated that he was "unable to meet our standard as an Application Pro-

grammer". The director then told him to leave the premises and by 9.30am he was on his way home.
Instances like this where big business treats workers with scant regard are a day to day occurrence for ordinary people and make me more determined to change society.
Yours fraternally
Marc Vince
Stafford LPYS

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

Service with a smile!



FTAT leadership have plans to revitalise the union.

Dear Comrades,
According to reports in the press FTAT the furniture workers' union has joined the list of unions who think they need a new image. Doubtless they were hurt by being described as 'introspective' and 'less than dynamic' by the *Financial Times*. However

the leadership have come up with a package to show there is still life in Britain's oldest union.
First of all members will be eligible to a 10 per cent discount on funerals. In addition all members will receive a free toothbrush and a message telling them 'at last an employee benefit that

will bring a smile to every FTAT member's face!' I wonder if they thought of improving their image by fighting for their members' jobs and conditions?
Yours fraternally
David Fryatt
Tower Hamlets

Only rich conservative babies allowed here

No sleep lost over the poorer people

WHAT a pathetic picture Carol Stibbs of Brotton pointed in your letters page last Friday in response to a health report in Cleveland.
She whined on and on about various areas within Cleveland and divided them into the haves and have nots.
But what annoyed me particularly is the wasted sympathy she expressed for pregnant women on supplementary benefit.
I can't for the life of me understand women who can't adequately feed and clothe themselves, yet persist in bringing children into the world and expect the State to keep them as well.
If I thought £80 (the current fixed grant to pregnant women) was not enough to

equip a child then I would think twice before I started a family.
Meanwhile the people Mrs Thatcher reduces taxes for are the sort of people (North and South) who have got off their backsides and worked for their possessions and comforts in life.
What's wrong with that Carol Stibbs? I don't lose sleep over poorer neighbours because everyone in life can, if they really want to, make something of it and not expect Government handouts. Unemployment is no excuse for suicide — there's always work for those who really want it.
MRS S J HOWE
Fairfield,
Stockton.

Dear Comrades,
This letter (see above) is from a local paper in reply to an earlier letter about the inadequacies of the maternity grant. I think it gives an interesting insight into the minds (?) of Conservative supporters. I mean what can you do with people like that?
Yours fraternally
Andrew Shepherd
Middlesbrough

Food for thought

Dear Comrades,
The Guardian (26/8/87) carries a front page report claiming scientists reckon that the larger we get (ie fatter) the more we risk losing brain capacity. Looking at the recent photo of Robert Maxwell in *Militant*, this is easy to believe!
The report goes on to say that the best food for brain power is fresh salmon, crab and shellfish ie food only

the bourgeoisie can afford to eat. Where I live in South Sefton, more people die from curable diseases than any other part of the country and Merseyside is a fitness and health 'black-spot'.
This is no doubt related to poverty and the working class being unable to afford a healthy diet.
Yours fraternally
Tony McNulty
Bootle LPYS

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.

Dave and Carralyn Worrall announce the birth of a baby girl, Yvonne Catherine, born 18/8/87. Another classfighter joins the ranks.

Labour Party Campaign Group Supporters (UCATT)
A meeting to discuss the socialist policies needed and the way to defend and extend democratic accountability both within the Labour Party and UCATT is being held on 5 September 1987 at 12.30 Merseyside Trade Union Club, 24 Hardman St, Liverpool L1. The main speakers will be Eric Heffer MP and Kenny Stewart EMP. There will be plenty of time for discussion from the floor.
All UCATT members welcome.

Found at Summer Camp—a camera—write with description to WEG. Got a social coming up? We've got plastic cups, plates, bowls and beer glasses at wholesale prices. Contact WEG PO Box 332, London E15.

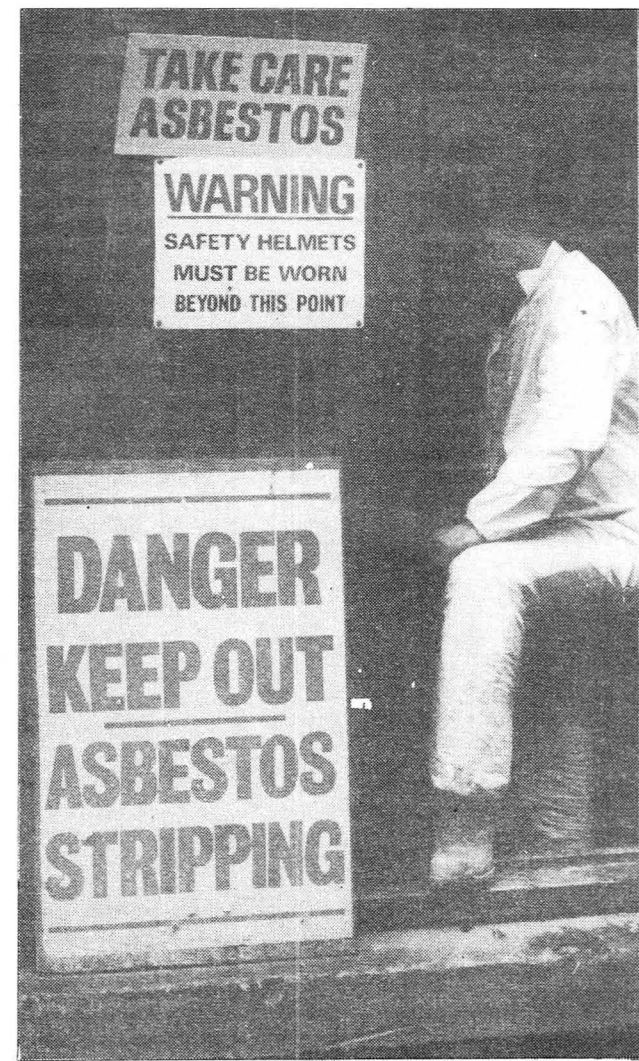
Cassette tape debate. Richard Venton (Merseyside *Militant* spokesman) and John Blevin (features editor *Morning Star*). 'Way forward after the election' (10 July). £1.75 (inc. p&p) from M Cock, 309 High St, Rochester, Kent, ME1 1VU.

- Militant meetings**
- Southampton Marxist discussion group. Wednesdays 12.30pm. 7 Goodwin Close, Millbrook, Southampton. Creche provided. Thursdays 7.30pm. Tel 786879 for details.
 - Defend jobs and services. Wednesday 9 Sept, 7.30pm Heworth Community Centre, Gateshead. Speaker: Tony Mulhearn.
 - Thursday 10 Sept, 7.30pm Richardson Dees High School, Wallsend. Speaker: Tony Mulhearn.
 - East Kilbride YS 'No to YTS conscription'. Speaker Terry Fields, MP. Thurs 10 Sept 7.30. Murray Hall. East Kilbride.

Asbestos not sole cancer threat

Dear Comrades,
The article in issue 861 (pg13) on asbestos quite correctly points out the threat to millions of workers' health from the use of this lethal material.
Yet recent research in the USA suggests that some asbestos substitutes and other insulation products also present the threat of lung cancer. Philip Enterline, and epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh, has produced evidence to show, for example, that mineral-wool factory workers have an increased lung-cancer risk. While the research is at an early stage, scientists are also concerned about ceramic and glass fibre products.
As Mr Enterline says, "If the question is 'Do other (insulation) fibres besides asbestos cause cancer?' the answer is yes." The World

Health Organisation has just launched a study to investigate the threat to thousands of workers in the booming insulation industry. It is believed that "the cancer-producing potential of any fibre is a function of its size rather than its chemistry. The most suspect fibres are thin, long and durable." (*Wall Street Journal* 14/5/87).
The more research done by scientists, the clearer it becomes that the drive for profits internationally is resulting in the deaths of millions of workers. The labour movement in Britain must demand full and comprehensive research into the effects of these products and the removal of any product found to be unsafe.
Yours fraternally
Martin Cock
Medway



Research reveals that asbestos substitutes can also be lethal.

East Kilbride: New town-Old problems

THATCHER TOLD Scottish Tory Party conference this year that East Kilbride was an example of successful capitalism, a sign that their economic policies were working in Scotland.

Behind this 'success' lie serious problems. These include a low-wage non-union work-

ALL THESE problems are made worse by much of the town's life being controlled by an unelected, unaccountable and secretive Development Corporation.

All East Kilbride's district and regional councillors are Labour; the general election gave Labour a 12,000 majority. But most of the housing, industrial

and economic policy is controlled by a Tory majority Development Corporation appointed and directed by government ministers.

So for years no new public sector houses have been built, rents have been pushed up (almost £10 a month increase this year), services have been privatised and the town 'sold' in glossy publications as a

force, an ever increasing housing waiting list, one in five on or below supplementary benefit level, rising youth unemployment and lack of amenities for young people.

Small-scale riots have taken place in parts of the town over the last year, showing a simmering social unrest.

low-wage non-union

press or public allowed in. The Corporation are very high handed towards their workforce and tenants. The Joint Shop Stewards' Committee has no direct access to discuss their grievances - and tenants groups find the Corporation inaccessible and uncooperative. All its meetings are held in private with no

press or public allowed in.

Labour should have no truck with this Tory puppet; the party should campaign for its abolition and for all its assets, services and powers to be handed over to democratically elected and accountable local councils.



No cheap docile workers

IN 1986 THE Development Corporation commissioned a labour study to help sell East Kilbride to prospective businessmen. The study boasted that East Kilbride had a largely (80%) non-unionised, low-waged workforce. This was put in to attract businesses hoping for cheap docile workers.

The study was flawed in that it excluded the totally organised local government and civil service establishments as well as the unionised Rolls Royce plant but it shows the other side of the 'success story'.

Almost 30 per cent of East Kilbride households are low income. Workers in the many non-union workplaces find them to be sweat shops where decent pay and conditions are just a dream.

We spoke to workers at one such factory, Inchmore Fashions.

"They pay a very low basic and then bonus depending on how much you produce, so you have to work really hard for a decent wage.

"But the bonus system is biased. You can do your quota, say Monday to Wednesday and break your back to earn bonus. But when Thursday or Friday comes, the company often don't have enough work, so you can't even make your quota and lose some of the bonus you sweated for before.

"There are no creche facilities, so a lot of women scrimp and save for child-minders, as there are not enough nurseries. There's no canteen, just an eating area to eat your 'piece'. There is no nurse or medical room. If someone has an accident you have to look for a car to take you to hospital.

"A lot of women work here and a lot of single parents, so it's pretty tough on the basic. But no one wants to go on the buroo (the dole) so we just have to stick it. Anyone who tried to start a union would be put out pretty quick."

Non-union

Probably the most notorious non-union workplace is Motorola, an American company which uses short-term contracts so workers keep quiet hoping to get a permanent job. Very few do.

This is the new technology industry the Tories boast of. But Jim Whyte a former Motorola worker who is now unemployed says: "In East Kilbride you know the pay will be bad and that you won't be able to join a union. Look at

Motorola. I worked there for a year until I got paid off. Some boom town when even computer firms pay people off. Some future."

The labour movement must mount a serious coordinated campaign to organise workers in these companies, around the demand of a statutory minimum wage of £120 a week and security of employment. That would attract workers to the union.

East Kilbride workers are far from docile; they have militant traditions. Workers remember the great support during the miners' strike and the Caterpillar occupation. And there were long successful struggles here at BSR in the '60s and more recently at Crown Agents. The town is ready for a revival of that tradition.

Nothing for the young

YOUNG PEOPLE in East Kilbride find that 'success' has passed them by. Nearly one in five under 18s are out of work and a similar number are on the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) or a similar stopgap measure.

21 year old Susan McNeil said "I've had three jobs since I left school. One was a crappy YTS where I just ran errands for the workers. The others were long hours and low pay. I was doing 40 hours in a shop for £50."

The town's 'second generation' have few proper lei-

sure facilities. The only youth centre is in the town centre away from the housing schemes and there is only one disco for under 18s every week.

Rowdiness

18-year-old Ian Hamilton commented: "The councillors say there are hundreds of things for the young unemployed but that is only true if you like sport. I don't, so I just sit about the town centre all day. Sometimes I get a carry-out and get drunk to forget about

signing on every week."

Day and night, scores of young people hang around the town centre and bus station, many of them drinking cheap alcohol. Police complaints about rowdiness led the District Council to impose a ban on entry to discos after 11.30 pm. This led the one under 18s disco on Saturdays to close. Now only those who pretend to be 18 can go to a Saturday disco.

Young people need to organise to demand a fairer deal. The local Labour Party Young Socialists have al-

ways campaigned for better facilities. Stephen Piper, secretary of East Kilbride LPYS said: "Young people should join the LPYS and fight for cafes and proper youth clubs in the schemes, for proper discos and entertainment as well as for decent paid jobs for young people."

Susan McNeil summed it up: "It's time people saw Thatcher and her kind will do nothing and it's up to us to make sure the Labour Party does."



Rolls Royce workers ready to fight

ROLLS ROYCE, East Kilbride's biggest manufacturing employer, with over 2000 jobs, is the hub of Scotland's largest new town. *Militant* spoke to a worker about privatisation:

The workers originally felt outrage at privatisation but that has been replaced with fear and doubt. We are very worried about our future and that of our families. I think that more than anything influenced workers in their fight.

Most unions fought the moves and the workforce fought a great campaign culminating in a march through the town. We got tremendous support locally.

Why are you afraid of redundancies in a successful factory like Rolls Royce?

There's already been a circular going around management proposing closing down the factory and moving it to integrate into the Derby plant. And you only have to look at British Telecom to see the effect privatisation has had. Workers have had redundancies while the bosses make massive profits.

Caterpillar was a tremendously profitable factory, but 1200 workers were robbed of a future. What is there to make us think they'll treat us any better?

Do you think privatisation can help the

plant?

Not at all. In less than six months we've seen management try to enforce changes in work practice at Rolls Royce in Bristol that has led some of our brothers and sisters to take strike action. Our branch is 100 per cent behind them.

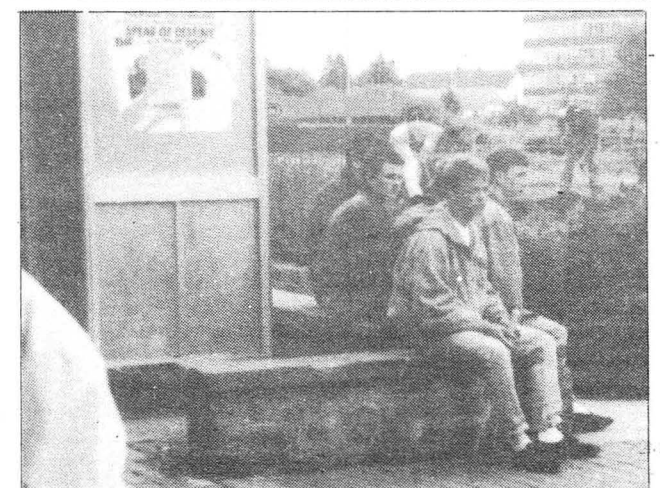
We fear the same; we fear redundancies—and rumours are rife. Some of our workers get rebates because of low pay so we should be demanding a decent livable wage and better conditions. Instead we are forced to defend what little we have.

Workers at Rolls Royce are right to be wary. Whatever decisions are taken the plant's future does not look rosy; it is little comfort to them when share prices jump dramatically.

The workers won't accept changes in work practices to increase their own exploitation, or redundancies or closure, without staging a fight in the best traditions of Clydeside.

Since this interview, Rolls Royce have announced 250 redundancies in East Kilbride.

Feature by East Kilbride *Militant* supporters. Photos: (Top) Rolls Royce workers. (Left) Shopping in the town centre. (Below) Young people in town.



Industrial Reports

Is this 'business unionism'?

IN AN incredible development in Milton Keynes, the General Municipal and Boilermakers Union is joining forces with a private company, Municipal Cleansing Services, in a bid to get the new refuse collection and street cleansing contract for the borough, in competition with the Council's own Direct Labour Organisation.

The union feels that because the balance of power in the authority is held by the Liberal-SDP Alliance the contract is unlikely to be returned to the DLO. The present holders of the contract are likely to be kicked out by the Labour/Alliance majority because of links with South Africa.

Competing

A single-union recognition agreement has been struck with the GMB. The union declined a seat on the board! District official, Tom Ross, is negotiating pay and conditions and a profit-sharing deal.

The GMB will be competing against, among others, the Council's DLO when tenders are considered in November. Is this the new image of trade unionism which John Edmonds is campaigning for?

By Tim Harris

Telecom workers face downgrading

BRITISH TELECOM'S engineering employees have just received their 4.75 per cent rise which is the second instalment of the 1986/87 two year pay deal. With it in their pay packets they found the massive sum of 0.8 per cent. This was the blood money paid out by BT for agreement by the National Communications Union (Engineering Section) to phase one of the job regrading exercise attached to the two year fiasco.

This first phase consisted of agreeing a framework on which local district negotiations were to be conducted. The second phase is the actual agreement of new job mixes and the grades appropriate to them.

In the proposals seen so far in London, very few details of how the job regrading is to be achieved have appeared. However, what has raised its ugly head is the beginning of a colossal downgrading exercise, despite the fact that within the text of the agreement it states that it is not to be used as such.

It also states in the agreement that all staff whose present jobs are downgraded at the completion of the initial negotiations are guaranteed their wages and conditions of service will remain unchanged whilst they remain in BT's employ.

However as the agreement is continuous, new job mixes and grading may be required. There are no safeguards within the agree-

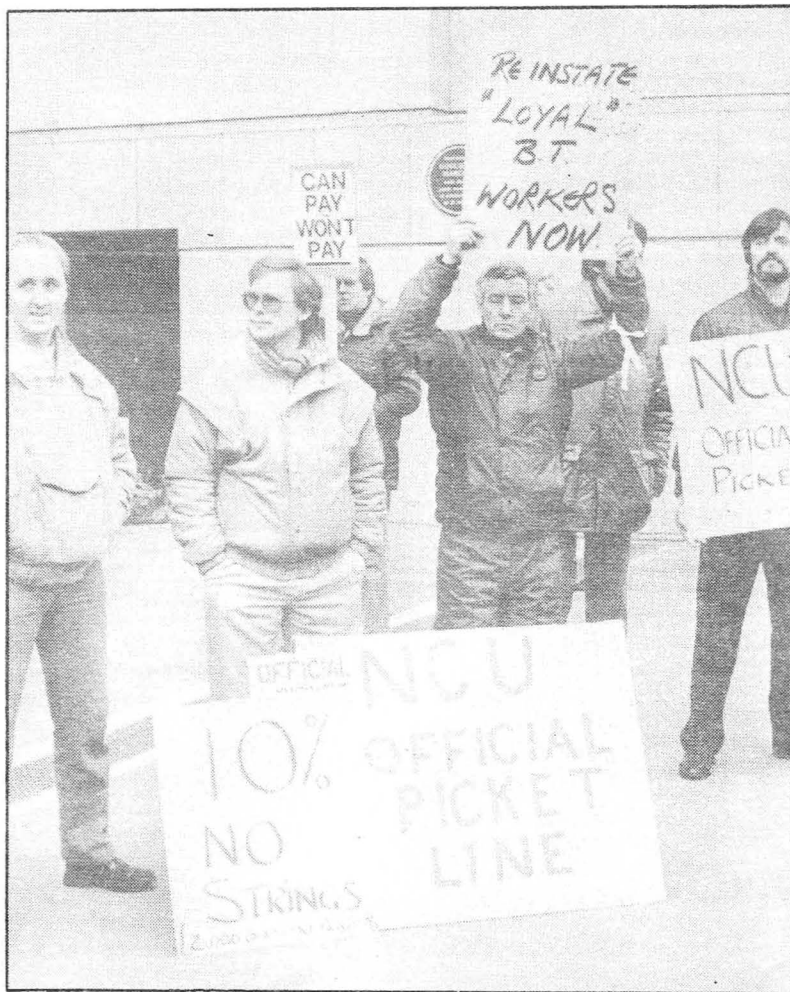
ment to protect the personal rights of people whose jobs may be affected in this way. It will mean people who have spent five years at college to obtain promotion, being downgraded to their previous grade and working alongside new, lower paid recruits to BT, carrying out exactly the same work.

There are no safeguards to protect members' promotional outlets, leaving people stuck in dead-end jobs. The aim of the exercise is total flexibility for BT to use staff in any capacity to increase profits. This flexibility and an end to demarcation is shaping BT up for a massive job cutting programme.

The union must learn from this disastrous agreement. In the future we must resist all attempts to impose two year deals upon us and ensure all pay offers are free from strings. The rank and file NCU members were out on strike for up to four weeks for 10 per cent and no strings and any future negotiations of terms and conditions must be separate from pay.

Concessions given by the union to management must be paid for in hours, thus allowing us to obtain a shorter working week, longer holidays and increased job security for our members, whilst creating jobs for the unemployed.

By Bob Glover
(NCU Westminster Branch, personal capacity)



The message from Telecom workers was clear: No strings.

Teachers HQ threat

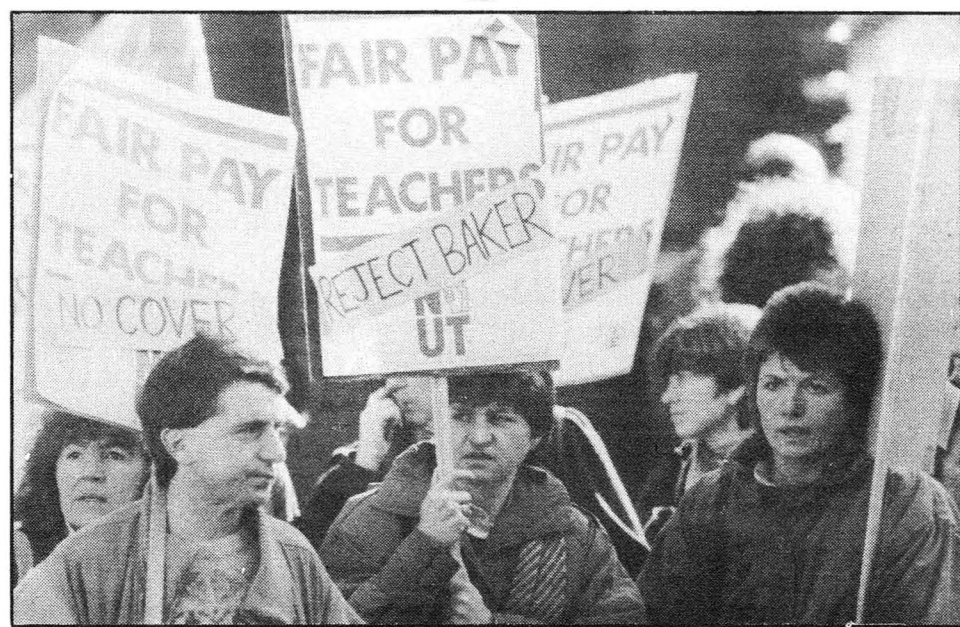
THE NATIONAL Union of Teachers is facing a crisis. The union has lost over 50,000 members since 1985, mainly because the pay dispute was not brought to a head, and a recent report points to a deficit of £4 million by 1990. Now staff at the head office face redundancy and there is a threat to the autonomy of local associations.

Staff at the Hamilton House headquarters are aware that 18 months ago a budget working group was introduced to produce options for solving the crisis in consultation with staff. Despite detailed counter-proposals from the staff union Astms, a policy document was agreed without consultation on 20 July. 47 redundancies, later moderated to 42 were proposed.

Imposed

All posts were renamed and a new pay scale imposed. It is unclear which jobs will go and how the new system will replace the old.

It is no surprise that staff turnover is increasing. Remaining staff have agreed not to cover for colleagues that have left, despite efforts to increase their workload. Ironically, whilst redundancies are being imposed, the new offensive on the government is to flood the Department



Teachers have fought the Tories. Now head office staff are under threat.

of Education with masses of grievance procedures from teachers.

Retired officers of the union are being employed on generous expenses to organise this campaign. Divisional Officer, Bill Walsh, has vetoed a proposal to circulate all NUT associations with details of the dispute before the July meeting.

There is no doubt that the root problem has been the handling of the long-running dispute with the government. Lack of confidence in the leadership has directly led to resignations from the NUT.

Lack of progress with the

campaign has adversely affected recruitment. The financial implications of this coupled to the costs of sustaining members on strike have been a massive drain on resources.

Attack

In a direct attack on the left in the union, especially in London, local associations will be forced to take a back seat to regional officials in negotiations with management. Associations will also be restricted in raising a levy on top of subscriptions to support local offices or buy office equipment.

It has even been suggested that the union conference is only held every two years.

Teachers must protest at these moves and force the leadership to publish their proposals in full for consultation. Members must also oppose the clause in the rule book guaranteeing full strike pay which restricts the number and duration of strikes. Only a bold campaign can unite teachers against the government attacks and reverse the disastrous fall of membership.

By an NUT member

Bribery at Moat House

THE MOAT House Group cannot cry poverty in answer to the demand for reinstatement by the sacked Liverpool strikers. They have just spent £150 million buying eight Globana Holiday hotels in West Germany and 16 Crest hotels in Holland, Belgium and West Germany. Pre-tax profits for the first six months of 1987 were £9.1 million compared with £6.3 million previously.

But they are so worried by the boycott campaign that they have sent out a letter to all the strikers offering them £500 plus £100 for every year of service to abandon the dispute. A mass meeting angrily rejected this bribery. The fight is still the same—for reinstatement.

The strikers have been heartened by the tremendous support they have received from all over the country. Many union branches have written informing them of boycott action.

The Westward Central branch of the NCU who have withdrawn from the Exeter Moat House said, "We hope that our small protest will hearten those TGWU members involved by showing them that trade union membership is worthwhile and is worth fighting for."

Nalco's Southern District has boycotted all Moat House hotels as has the North West TUC. The Moat House strike should be used in the TGWU "Link up" campaign to highlight the battle of young workers for union rights.

By Richard Knights.

NUPE lobby

THE NUPE Broad Left has called a lobby against the pay deal of the Nupe National Local Government Committee and the Nupe National Executive on Wednesday 16 September.

Assemble at 9.30 am outside the Great Northern Hotel, Kings Cross to lobby the National Local Government Committee; and at 2.30pm outside Congress House, Great Russell Street to lobby the National Executive.

All Nupe members are urged to attend.

Industrial Reports

Build the miners Broad Left



Ian Isaac

National Miners Broad Left

10.30 am, Saturday 26 September. Sheffield (venue to be confirmed). Details from: Miners Broad Left, c/o 39 Gold Street, Barnsley, South Yorks. Tel. 0226 200 605

- ★ Defeat the Tyrant's Charter!
- ★ Oppose "Flexible Working"!

THE THIRD National Miners Broad Left conference is being held at a time when the rank and file in the British mining industry have demonstrated their capacity to fight back against the impositions of British Coal and their paymasters in government.

The 77 per cent majority vote giving the National Union a firm mandate against the so-called "disciplinary code", more aptly called the Tyrant's Charter, is a signal that miners are saying "Enough is enough". The conference will be a forum for socialist-minded NUM members to discuss, amongst other issues, lessons of the recent strikes in Frickley and Selby over the disciplinary code.

In reality it is British Coal's hidden agenda to attempt to victimise local activists and undermine the "culture of militancy", a phrase Sir Robert Haslam recently used.

In the August edition of Coal News he states that, "The number of strikes per person employed in the coal industry is 35 times the number in the economy as a whole".

In reality this is the legacy of the miners' strike.

By Ian Isaac

National Secretary,
Miners Broad Left

Higher production with coal output at 87.7 million tonnes disguises the longer hours at the coalface, the harassment from management to achieve higher production from less faces, and the introduction of heavy-duty equipment at the remaining 112 collieries. Only 17 of these were strike-free in the last financial year.

The NUM faces a further battle over the introduction of "flexible working". Discussions with "New realist" officials of the NUM gave British Coal the green light to try to implement the Wheeler Plan in future new pits and developments.

There are those who argue that we should accept the concept of six day production because part of the Wheeler Plan has been forced through in some pits

by management.

The plan has its main theme in six or seven day production and continental shift work. To negotiate with the Board on these subjects without a national ballot is to ignore the feelings of underground workers in particular.

Claim

The NUM has achieved its first ballot result in favour of industrial action for 10 years. Following on from this ballot will be another on "flexible working".

Other issues facing NUM members include the wage claim due to be lodged at the end of October. For the last two years British Coal have used the collaboration of the UDM as a lever to impose a wage rise on the NUM membership.

With a united rank and file, a claim for a substantial pay rise together with a shorter working week of four days can be our answer to the introduction of new technology in the industry.

Output per man shift (OMS) has increased to 3.29 tonnes in 1986/87 - an increase of 21 per cent over the previous year. Our pay shouldn't depend on bonus which now accounts for 25 per cent of manual wages paid in British mining.

Given the right direction of leadership miners can win back decent levels of pay on the rates and reduce the number of hours worked per shift, per week, underground and on the surface.

This will also help push back the attempt to privatise our industry. The Broad Left Miners Conference will bring together miners from all areas to give the understanding and confidence necessary to defend our union through the next period.

Every NUM member, TUC affiliated union member in mining, or miners' support group member who shares the concern of the NUM Broad Left for a fighting socialist programme for our industry should attend this important conference.

London Broad Left

£300m stolen from coal industry

IF SUCCESSFUL the latest Tory onslaught will have frightening results. Local authority workers face job losses, and attacks on wages and conditions. The threat of privatisation is now rearing its ugly head not just here but in electricity, water and other industries.

Tenants face the privatisation of their estates along with massive rent rises - 220 per cent in Camden for example. On top of all this the Poll Tax proposals represent another attack on working class budgets.

All of which makes it vital to pull together the trade unions, Labour Parties and tenants organisations.

To this end Broad Left supporters in the London trade union movement have organised a BLOC conference to plan out the fight back. Get your shop stewards committee, branch, trades council, Labour Party or LPYS to send a delegation.

London BLOC Conference.

The Crisis in the Public Services and the Fight Against Privatisation. 10.30 am to 5 pm, Saturday 24 October. York Hall, Old Ford Road, Bethnal Green, E2.

Delegates should apply for credentials to BLOC, c/o 106 Draper House, Walworth Road, SE7. Credentials are £3 for delegates and £1.50 for visitors.

Please inform if you require creche facilities.

IN APRIL 1986 British Coal, under threat of cheap imported coal were forced to agree to sell its coal to the Central Electricity Generating Board for £3 per ton cheaper than the previous year.

This cost our industry £300 million over the year. But did the CEGB benefit by £300 million? Not a chance! Although their

accounts will show an extra £300 million, the government then taxed the CEGB to the tune of the same amount.

It was in full knowledge of this that I raised a question at a local consultative committee meeting. Surely before British Coal makes any more demands on our membership in its drive for profitability it should first

stop allowing the industry to be robbed of vast sums of money, which puts the lie to the argument that by producing more and more coal our members are providing job security.

Manipulated

Other factors determine the security of our jobs, including the £/\$ exchange

rates, the manipulated European coal markets and the CEGB plans for the use of coal.

Sir Robert Haslam should stop attacking our union and start demanding an integrated energy policy for Britain. He should also demand that the EEC stop the importation of coal produced through the use of child and slave labour and a

return of the £300 million robbed from our industry.

If Haslam achieved any of these our industry would be in a much healthier position and it would not have cost our members a penny off their pay or a minute on their day.

By Charlie Bell
Murton Lodge
(personal capacity).

Industrial notes

THE WORKFORCE of 650 at GEC Traction in Preston have been on strike since 23 August in a dispute over the company's attempt to fundamentally alter working practices. Management are attempting to replace piece work which the workforce rely on for 35 per cent of their wages.

Workers could lose £16 per week as a result. The bosses also want to introduce full flexible working and cashless payments and are dangling a £50 carrot to get agreement on the latter.

These conditions and a 4.5 per cent pay increase were rejected by 99 per cent on a show of hands. The vote for all-out strike action was supported almost unanimously as well. In the ballots which took place in all seven unions at the plant the average vote in favour of striking was 70 per cent.

Convenor Keith Cardwell told *Militant* that the mood of the workforce was excellent with a determination to stay out until victory has been won. Support has come in from trade unionists at British Aerospace, Liverpool Transport and other GEC plants.

Support/donations should be sent

to the GEC strike committee, c/o TGWU offices, Water Lane, West Strand, Preston, Lancs.

Meanwhile, also in the North West, a threat by Inland Revenue management to downgrade 80 temporary tax officers to administrative assistant has been met by a wave of anger from IRSF members.

Over 1000 attended mass meetings in Merseyside alone, and other areas commenced an overtime ban. Strike action would have followed if management had not withdrawn the 29 letters of downgrading already issued.

The IRSF are demanding that the promotions be made permanent as originally promised and unless this is done quickly members will be demanding further action.

Last week we reported from Wakefield hospitals on a planned strike in defence of disciplined Nupe branch secretary, George Rusling. The one day stoppage was a tremendous success with over 600 workers out. This represented 80 per cent support, more than even during the pay dispute in 1982. We will carry a fuller report next week on a strike with many lessons for the movement.



GEC workers in dispute in 1984.

Photo: John Smith.

Militant

Inside

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Nottinghamshire mineworkers' gala Defeat British Coal's offensive

Overtime ban now

MINERS ALL over Britain have voted by a massive majority for industrial action against British Coal's new disciplinary procedure.

77.5 per cent of miners voted for industrial action. This shows that they have seen through all the lies that the code is nothing new.

There has been a seething anger developing in the industry. Local disputes have been a constant feature of the last two years. Now the new disciplinary code, nicknamed the "Tyrant's Charter" has served to focus the attention of all miners on a fight back.

Sackings

As the Nottinghamshire Miners Gala congregates on Saturday, confusion must be rife in the ranks of the Union of Democratic Miners (UDM).

After all, their "leadership" have accepted the disciplinary code. Their solicitor in his letter to the *Independent* doesn't know what the NUM are so excited about. Maybe he should ask UDM and NUM members at Bilsthorpe pit who went on strike after the sacking of two NACODS members and a UDM official.

UDM members can be sure the courts will come down on the same side as they always have if they go to court or to an industrial tribunal—on the side of the Tories and British Coal.

Rank and file activists must now be pushing for a campaign of leaflets and meetings with speakers from the Executive to come into Notts, again and again, to expose the UDM as the company union it is and destroy it once and for all.

The UDM's acceptance of the "Tyrant's Charter" and of "flexible working" gives us an ideal opportunity to do this.

Barry Lewis, East Midlands chair of the National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign spoke to *Militant* about the Nottinghamshire Gala and the campaign to get sacked miners reinstated:

"There are 29 sacked men in Notts—some single, some married, with about 31 children affected. Men like Kev Parkin at Linby who won his case at a tribunal but has still not got his job back. In the two years since the strike a faceman has lost possibly £20,000 in wages.

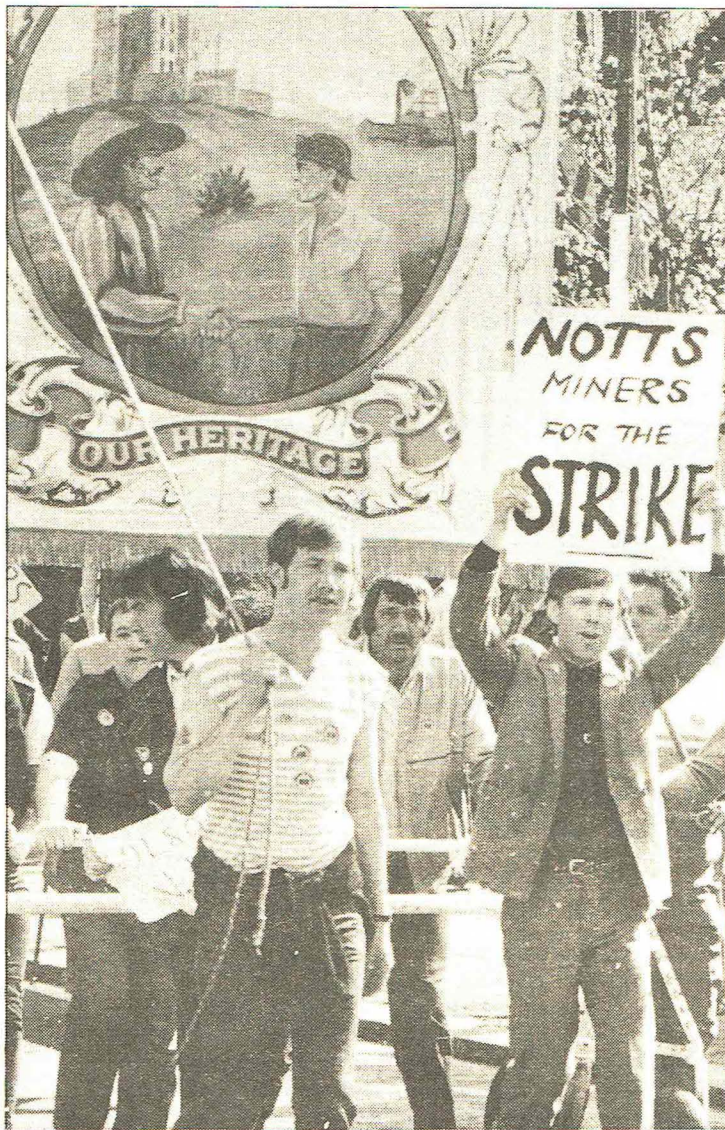
"My personal interest stems from being on strike and arrested myself. I spent 17 hours in a cell and was told the charges carried a six month sentence, which would have meant the sack. In court, the magistrate threw the case out because of the flimsy evidence of four City of London policemen, but I could easily have been one of the sacked lads.

"We organised the first gala last year because we wanted to show that the NUM existed in Notts.

"Our campaign's called 'Justice for Mineworkers' but in the future I think we might have to change the name to 'Justice for Workers'. Disputes like Wapping and Silentnight show how other workers are being sacked and disciplined for union activities."

The Gala assembles at 10.30 am, Chesterfield Road, Mansfield, March 11.00 am. Donations to Terry Deer, treasurer, JFM, 20 Broxtowe Drive, Hucknall, Notts.

By Chris Ridge



Cowboys

MUCH PUBLICITY has been given recently to British Coal's so-called operating profit of £369 million, £41 million in deep mines.

Why then all the attacks on miner's wages and conditions if a nationalised industry is making a profit?

The attempts to impose "flexible working" and the refusal to pay decent wages are part of British Coal's drive to ensure rich pickings for their friends in the City.

There has already been an increase in private contractors in the coal industry. Cementation, a company with an international turnover of nearly £17 million in 1985 stated in its report for that year that "The board considers that there is scope for further development of the company's activity in the British coal industry." This activity generated a profit of £1.2 million in 1985, a figure which has doubtless grown since.

Another company, Amco, have gained many contracts in Yorkshire and Scotland. It is a tinpot outfit which claimed exemption from publishing its full accounts in 1985 under the Companies Act of that year.

At Monktonhall this company is very reluctant to issue work wear, refuses to issue tools for tradesmen and isn't yet used to communicating with the trade unions.

In other words, this should be experience enough to warn us against allowing the return of the brutal, private coal owners of the past.

★ **No to 'tyrants' charter'**
★ **No to 'flexible working'**

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Make cheques payable to *Militant*.

What we stand for

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