

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

ISSUE 647
22 April 1983

20p

Stop privatisation!

interview with Liverpool
Council shop stewards
page 13

Tory plans beaten in
Bury p.6

BL Cowley stays out
p.16

£25 for 60 hours

Youth Training Swindle

David Carnegin is a YOP trainee. He is being 'temporarily employed' in a works canteen.

He starts work at 4 am and finishes at 4 pm. Sometimes he has to put in an hour's overtime.

And he still gets the standard £25 a week YOP pay for this 60 hour week! This is the reality of the Tories' cheap labour schemes.

As part of David's YOP scheme, he did 13 weeks at college and then joined a small contractor which services a canteen for the Northern Electricity Board, as a 'trainee chef'. Said David, "I peel potatoes, clean vegetables, sometimes I work in the serving area. I'm just a general dogsbody."

"Apparently when I do overtime I can claim another

30p off social security. I don't bother. By the time I've bought a stamp for a letter to send off the details to them, and then paid the bus fare to collect it, it's just not worth it.

"The only reason I'm going through with it is that if the recession does leave off at least I'll have some training and experience with which to find a job."

Faced with conditions like youth today? Now the Tories' sham training schemes have been widened. The new Youth Training

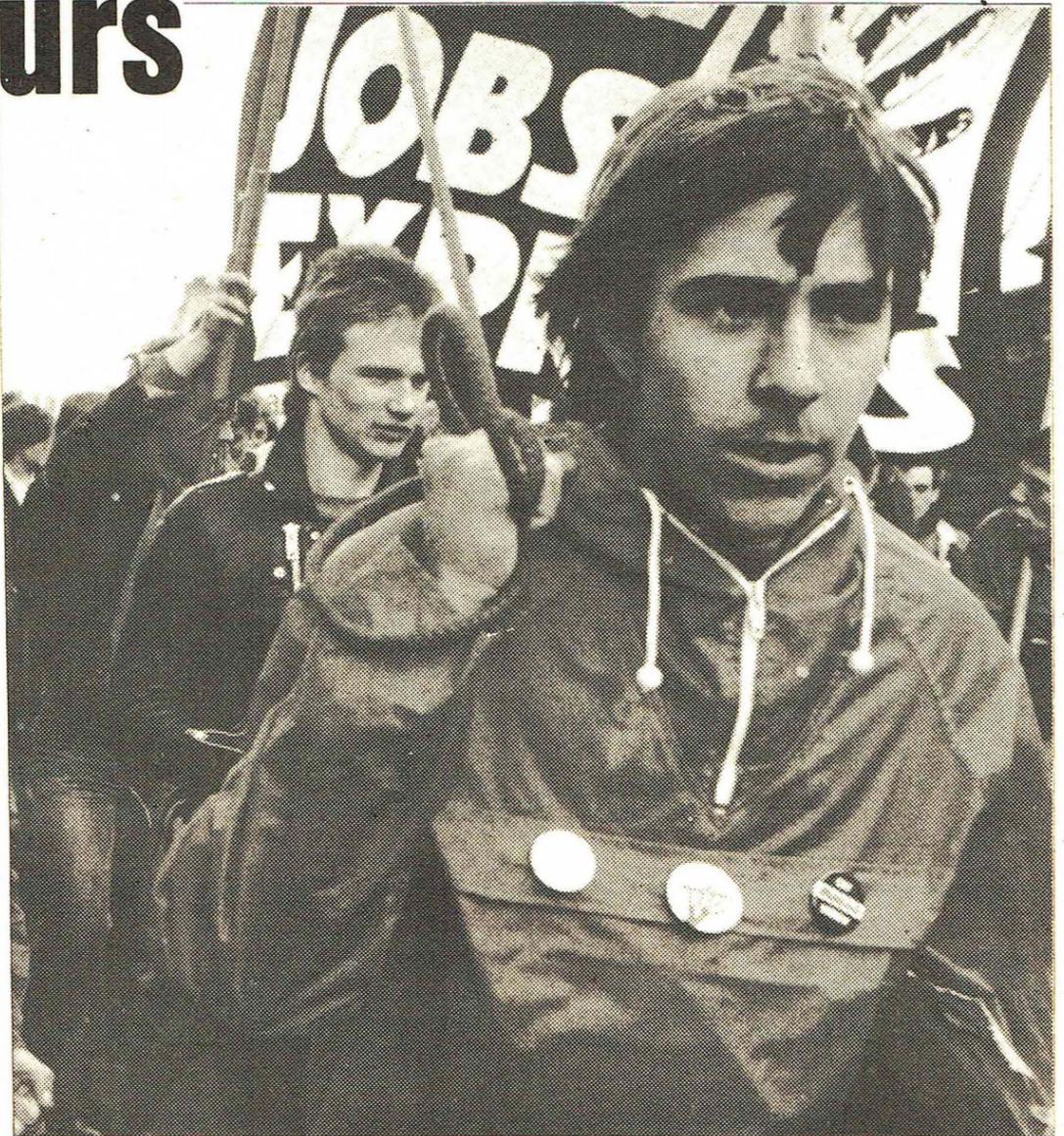
Scheme is advertised as a "£1 million training scheme to help put British business back on its feet."

this, not surprisingly David joined the LPYS. Last month he went along to Wallsend LPYS on the Tuesday and by the Friday night was in Bridlington discussing the socialist way forward with two thousand other LPYS delegates and visitors.

The Tories always prattle on about 'freedom of choice'. But what are the choices facing working class youth today?

Kevin, a Staffordshire Young Socialist thought he'd struck lucky. An apprentice miner, he was offered an escape from the dirt and darkness of the pit when a friend offered him a job in upholstery. He handed in his notice but then disaster—the

CONTINUED ON
BACK PAGE



People's March for Jobs '83 starts Saturday 23 April. There are six marches converging on London

Steel: New walkouts

Strikes are again spreading through the South Yorkshire steel plants. As we go to press workers have come out at the Aldwarke and Templeborough plants in Rotherham and the strike looks set to escalate to other plants.

The strikes are in solidarity with steel craftsmen, mainly members of the AUEW.

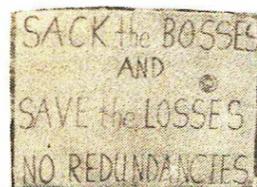
In the recent strikes by ISTC members, craftsmen would not cross ISTC picket lines. In the dispute the ISTC won the right to negotiate manning levels and shift patterns and staved off some compulsory redundancies. However, the agreement was not extended to the craftsmen by management, so they remained out.

Now the dispute has been made official by the AUEW. ISTC officials have instructed their members not to cross the craftsmen's picket line.

British Steel management have taken provocative action, but it has backfired on them.

They have been saying the craftsmen's strike is not official—it's pretty rich that management should be tell-

ing workers how the union is run!



If they bothered to look in

the AUEW rule book they would see that when a district makes it official it's official! Staff (members of the management association SIMA) have been instructed to do the craftsmen's work, as well as that of the labourers. This has infuriated the labourers, in UCATT, who aren't crossing picket lines.

The mood is now very determined. As one craftsman told me, "now we're out we'll not go back till we get what we came out for."

By Chris Weldon

(ISTC Tinsley Park, personal capacity)

A *Militant* steel meeting will be held in Sheffield on Saturday 7 March (see page 4). This follows a very successful meeting of miners earlier this month where miners discussed the problems of the industry and the way forward at a meeting in the same city.

The only future for youth...return a Labour government on socialist policies.

General strike in Southern Ireland

See article opposite



(Above) 120,000 marched in Dublin demo during strike

Photo: Viv Seal

Militant Thatcher's dream, our nightmare

Thatcher's praise last week for Victorian values shows how bankrupt Tory policies have become.

It ranks amongst the most reactionary statements to emerge from a Tory leader this century and reflects the change that has come over the ruling class. Now that they can no longer offer a better future, they promise to return to an illusory glorious past.

Thatcher's talk of a wonderful Victorian age, full of 'eternal' values is as far from the historical truth as her economic policies have been from giving Britain prosperity and growth.

But look at the world that the Tories feel nostalgic for and you can see the logic. Only a tiny minority had the vote. Trade unions were on the edge of legality for much of the period. Fear and insecurity dominated most people's lives. With mass poverty and unemployment, and no social security, people were scared of losing their job.

Health and safety conditions were primitive. Nothing could get in the way of profit. Engels recalls that when he first visited Manchester in the 1840's, it was like seeing the victims of a war. Everywhere were people with injuries, mutilation and disease.

Thatcher's talk that people became capitalists by thrift and careful housekeep-

ing is economic nonsense. It was upon the broken backs of the working class of Britain and the colonies that the capitalists made their money.

In last week's interview, Thatcher said, "You were taught to work jolly hard" in Victorian Britain. Who taught who and how? What she actually means is that if ordinary people did not work, they starved.

The 1834 Poor Law Act was the sole 'social security' provision throughout the Victorian period, not being abolished until the twentieth century. Workers were denied relief if they did not accept the lowest possible outside wage. To get relief they had to go to the workhouse, where husbands, wives and children were separated.

Less than one-third of working class people in London had permanent jobs, and the bottom third were wholly unemployed, according to Mayhew's survey, *London Labour and London Poor*. In those days, the bosses had a brutal frankness about the workers' task.

In the 1867 book, *Songs for English Workingmen To Sing*, is the exhortation:

"Work, boys work, and be contented,
So long as you've enough to buy a meal."

Sounds just like the Tories today with their "be lucky

you've got a job"!

Thatcher's talk of Tories protecting the family is mumbo-jumbo. In Victorian Britain, families were hit hardest.

Most suffered from one or more children dying at an early age. Infant mortality rates, at 152 per 1,000 births, were twelve times what they are nowadays.

A return to "good wholesome values"? It is a ruling class myth. In Victorian London, an estimated one in every sixty houses was a brothel.

Victorian hypocritical smokescreen

Hypocrisy was the hall mark of the Victorian ruling class and Thatcher follows it when she talks of restoring the values of family life. In her case, what she means is transferring the care of the sick, disabled and old, away from the community and on to the backs of individual families, especially women.

The rich though will be alright. They will have private medicine to support them. A drive towards more inequality to produce more profit lies at the heart of modern-day Tory thinking. Under the pretence of creating incentive, all it does is give greater benefit for the parasitic few, at the expense of the majority.

When she came to office, Thatcher defined freedom as "letting our children grow

tall, and some taller than others".

Until recently no-one realised she meant this literally. Class inequality in the nineteenth century actually was a matter of inches. A survey in the 1870s found that 11-12 year olds, who went to public schools, were on average five inches taller than boys from industrial schools.

Thatcher's response to reminders of mass poverty mirrors that of the capitalists in the nineteenth century.

She says people then had "a very strong sense of duty". Contemporary accounts tell a different story.

Engels recalls in the 1840's: "I went once into Manchester with a bourgeois and spoke to him of the bad, unwholesome method of building, the frightful condition of the working people's quarters and asserted that I had never seen so ill-built a city. The man listened quietly, to the end, and said at the corner where we parted: 'And yet there is a great deal of money made here, good morning sir.'" (*Conditions of the Working Class in England*)

Thatcher's response to questions about such shocking conditions is that later there was "a tremendous improvement in the standard of living". But any improvements there were came about because of the fear the bosses had of the workers. It was only struggle which won any rights, in the nineteenth century, or now.

Limited reforms from above were introduced to head off revolt from below.

The welfare state only emerged from shifts in the class balance of forces, not from any "sense of duty".

In the nineteenth century there was no unemployment benefit, no pension, no child care, no free hospital treatment, until 1870 no national education and until 1884 no public housing.

Social welfare is the mark of a caring society. To Thatcher and the ruling class nowadays it gets in the way of restoring profit. It is waste to be rooted out.

Last week she thundered: "The State can only take things from people. If people take responsibility for the work they do, for working harder, for living within their income, for looking after themselves and their families, then there might be fewer people who need the help of the State".

Some of these "fewer people" are old. Thatcher said that life would be better for the old if we returned to Victorian values.

Hardly. In the first place, far fewer would actually be alive. In the last half of the nineteenth century only 2.5% of the population lived to be 70—that is less than one-third of present society. Secondly, except for the rich, most of those who did survive, lived in misery and fear of disease.

Surveys, by Booth in London, and Rowntree in York, found 40% of the population living in direst poverty. Epidemics spread like wild fire.

A letter to the *Morning Chronicle*, 15 April 1850, reported that in Merthyr and Dowlais 3,260 people had

been hit by cholera and the number of houses was only 7,500. "The streets were black with funerals" the paper reported. Health care was primitive.

Last week Thatcher praised the fact that charities built the hospitals in the nineteenth century. Is that how the Tories see the future of the National Health Service? Private medicine and hospitals for the rich and a crumbling charity service for the rest of us?

Thatcher has quite clearly marked out the yesterday she aspires to take us towards. The last four years are only the shape of things to come. Unless the Tories are stopped, they will totally destroy the welfare state.

They will respond to opposition by increased repression. New attacks will be made upon the trade union movement.

Behind Thatcher's Victorian nostalgia, is a deliberate attempt to drive down living standards. The talk of 'eternal' values is a smokescreen to hide an attempt to restore profit to a dying system. It is as hypocritical today as it was in the nineteenth century.

Nowdays the capitalist system can offer us nothing but more misery. It is vital that the labour movement recognises this and breaks with a decrepid, archaic system. All the ruling class of the capitalists can promise us is a return to the nineteenth century. Only a clear socialist alternative, based upon the takeover of big business, can defend the welfare state, expand it and take all of society forward.

Thousands support General Strike

"The boys who done the £7 million hoist in London last week were angels compared to Dukes and company". (Alan Dukes, Minister for Finance).

With this statement Ben Kearney, president of the Dublin Council of Trade Unions summed up the anger of the working class to the double taxation of their pay packets with tax and insurance deduction increases.

The half-day general strike on 13 April in the South of Ireland saw over 180,000 workers take to the streets to attend rallies and demonstrations in protest.

In Dublin alone 120,000 people took to the streets. Other rallies saw tens of thousands of workers demonstrating for tax reform in Cork, Galway, Limerick, Athlone, Waterford, Sligo and other centres throughout the country. A total of 25 demonstrations were staged.

In Letterkenny, Co. Donegal, 5,000 marched. The total population of Letterkenny is 8,000. Factories in the town shut down. Groups of workers came in from small villages 40 and 50 miles away. And from the countryside. In support,

**Reports by
Martin Walsh
and
Anton McCabe**

(Dublin Labour Youth, personal capacity)

some of the local shopkeepers shut down. The determination could be felt in the air. There was enthusiasm for the speech of *Militant* supporter Anne Wilkinson, Chairman of the local trades council and local Labour candidate. She called for the trade union movement to instruct its members, employed as wages clerks, not to make any of the extra deductions imposed in the budget: and to mobilise to support them. She called for the unions to force Labour out of coalition and to be a strong socialist voice for workers. No other speaker got as good a response.

These huge strikes are an expression of working class anger at the grossly unfair nature of the Irish tax system. Over £1.2 billion is owed in taxes by big business, the self-employed and large farmers. This is more than the entire budget deficit for the current year. Yet 43p in every pound earned by workers above personal tax allowances is taken by the state.

"This government (Fine Gael/Labour) and its predecessor (Fianna Fail) are put in there to defend wealth, privilege and property". This statement from Matt Merrigan, district secretary ATGWU, showed clearly how Labour's involvement in a Fine Gael dominated government means Labour attacking the living standards of the working class.

A striking aspect of the Dublin demonstration was the number of banners carried calling for the Labour Party to withdraw from coalition.

Labour must break from coalition with the Tory Fine Gael Party and campaign on class issues with socialist policies. The 13 April protests prove there would be a ready audience for socialism.

LPYS builds for YCND Festival

The YCND festival being organised in Brockwell Park, London on 7 May will undoubtedly attract many thousands of youth, reflecting the growing concern that exists over the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The LPYS has long been to the forefront of the fight for unilateral nuclear disarmament within the labour movement and this year's LPYS conference unanimously passed a statement calling for a national mobilisation in support of the YCND festival.

Already the LPYS nationally have written to YCND asking for a speaker at the festival together with facilities for an LPYS recruitment stall. On top of this the London LPYS are to produce 10,000 leaflets for distribution on the day.

LPYS branches throughout the country should also, by now, have begun to build up their own local campaigns in support of the festival. Every area should make immediate plans, if this has not already been done, to organise a public meeting on disarmament for the first week in May. Local leaflets should be produced in every area and local LPYS contingents organised to intervene in the march and

festival itself. Local YCND branches should be contacted without delay with regards to transport arrangements etc.

By building for a major turnout of LPYS members on 7 May then we will be able to ensure that as many youth at the festival as possible are won to the fight, not just for disarmament, but also to the fight for socialism in Britain and internationally which is the only real guarantee of genuine disarmament and peace.

By Nick Toms

(LPYS National Committee)

Threatened with deportation

Sonny Sandhu, a TGWU shop steward and member of Liverpool Toxteth Labour Party, spoke to a reporter at LPYS conference

Last April a relative of mine, Ranjit Singh, came over from the Punjab to stay with some of our relations in Britain. At Heathrow Airport he was grilled for eight hours or more, why was he coming over, who were his parents, how many brothers and sisters did he have, what was he going to do here, and so on.

He told Immigration he

was here on a visit, so after eight hours he was given a one-month visa. Eventually we managed to get a fuller visa, and the Home Office sent off the passport saying Ranjit should have no access to public funds, to work, or to further education and his visit should not exceed one year.

My mother who doesn't speak very good English thought this meant that he had the right to stay for twelve months. We didn't realise that the passport was only stamped until 5 August 1982. We only found this out in the last few months when Home Office officials called saying he'd overstayed his visit and that the letter from the Home Office meant nothing, only the date stamp was relevant!

They would have to arrest him and he would appear in court on Monday. The letter was given to the duty solicitor who represented Ranjit stating that Bob Parry, a local Labour MP was prepared to act as guarantor as the case was a total misunderstanding and Ranjit had always intended to leave before the year was up.

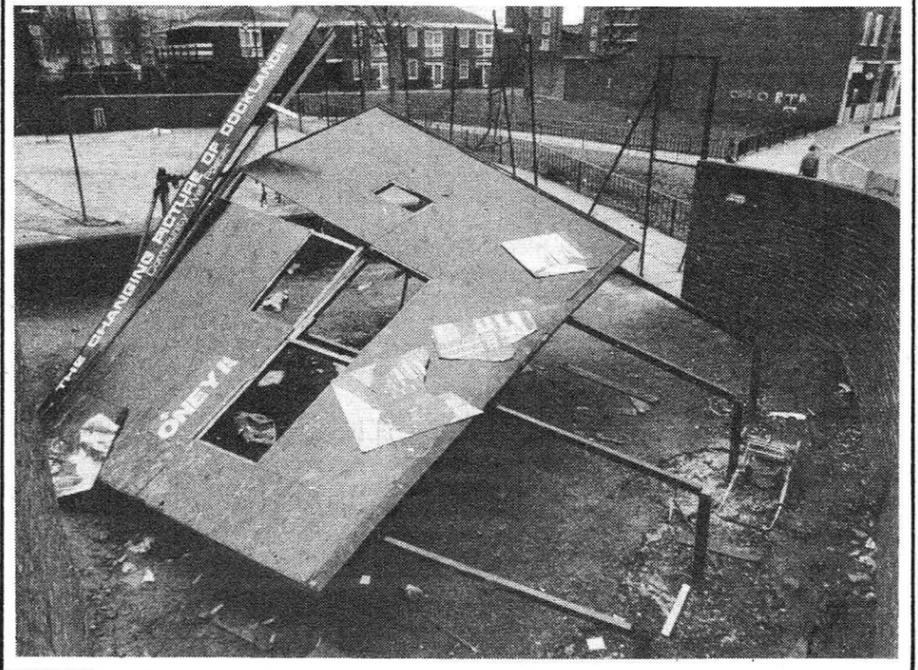
The judge, though, asked for securities for £1,000 cash from two different individuals, on bail with a curfew from nine at night to eight in the morning and signing on at the police station every day. They wouldn't take a cheque even from Bob Parry. The clerk of the court told him, "I don't care who you are."

I was prepared to raise



BEFORE: A Docklands Community Project (with all the necessary licences and planning consent), criticising the policies pursued by the London Docklands Development Corporation. Luxury development is encouraged while all council housing originally designated for the area has been scrapped.

AFTER: Apparently Community posters are too dangerous. This poster was not vandalised by local youth. It was vandalised by contractors allegedly sent in by the District Surveyor. The photo mural was smashed, leaving the remains—sharp pieces of steel and jagged wooden splinters balanced across some disused swings in an exposed position next to a children's playground. They did this to make it safe!



COVENTRY SOUTH-EAST Good response for Labour

"You can't live on promises, the rich are getting richer and we've got nothing, how can I be sure Labour will be any different?" These were the comments of one unemployed Coventry worker when the Labour Party canvassers called at his door last weekend, (16 and 17 April). And this bloke should know. After 25 years at Rolls Royce, the firm which takes full-page ads in *The Times*, he had been made redundant.

The teams of canvassers found many similar responses. In one area, Cheylesmore, which has become part of Coventry South-East due to boundary changes, more than 50 Labour Party and LPYS members canvassed nearly 3,500 houses. No election result can be predicted with complete confidence these days but on the returns from this ward Labour stands to

win 45% of the votes in the May 5 council elections.

In the rest of the responses the "Don't knows" outnumbered the votes against Labour by 3 to 2. With potential support like this Labour can use the local elections as a stepping stone to forcing a general election and winning it.

The opposition parties in Coventry shouldn't be too down-hearted, though. We did find a number of Tory voters, in large houses with burglar alarms, and one or more cars in the drive. These people are not exactly a majority in Coventry. It can be confirmed that the chairman of the local SDP, (the Slowly Disappearing Party), is to vote SDP. It would be an exaggeration to say he will be the only one, but it wouldn't be too far off. (See page 4 for Coventry paper sales report.)

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target 9th April
Eastern	2979		2700
East Midlands	2137		2850
Humberside	1140		1500
London East	3296		3300
London West	1369		1650
London South	2426		2500
Manchester & Lancs	2636		3000
Merseyside	2494		3100
Northern	2756		3750
Scotland East	1358		1850
Scotland West	1647		2800
Southern	3069		4000
South West	1412		2000
Wales East	894		1500
Wales West	2055		2000
West Midlands	2989		2800
Yorkshire	2533		3700
Others	5666		5000
Total received	42,855		50000

ads

NEW RATE
CLASSIFIED: 10p per word,
minimum 10 words.
SEMI-DISPLAY: £2 per 2 col-
umn centimetres.
All advertisement copy should
reach this office by SATURDAY.

MILITANT MEETINGS

MAIDSTONE Militant Marxist Discussion Group. 'War and Peace'. Thursday 12 May, 8.00 pm, at Wheelers Arms, Perry Street, Maidstone. Speaker Chris Jones.

HALIFAX Marxist Discussion Group. Fortnightly Wednesdays, beginning 6 April at 7.30 pm at AEU Club, St James Street, Halifax (near bus station). For more information phone Phil Crossley, Halifax 822814.

MAIDSTONE MILITANT SUPPORTERS: Maidstone Marxist Economics Day School. Speakers Mick Brooks and John Edwards, at Wheelers Arms, Perry St, on Sunday May 8th, 10.30am to 5.00pm.

NORTH EAST Marxist Discussion Groups:
Benton: Details Ged Grebby, 0632 662374.

Wallsend: Contact Ed Waugh, 0632 341284.
North Shields and Whitley Bay: Contact Robin Jamieson, 0632 523441.

RAYLEIGH Speaker: Keith Dickinson (Militant Editorial Board). At Room 5, Civic Suite, Rayleigh Council Offices, Rayleigh High Street (opposite the church). On Monday 25 April, 8 pm. All welcome.

APEX CONFERENCE MILITANT READERS' MEETING. Hear: Keith Dickinson (Militant Editorial Board, expelled from Labour Party), on Sunday 24 April at 7.00 pm at Library, Vernon Road, Scarborough (just 5 minutes walk from Conference Centre)

BLACKWOOD Marxist Discussion Group. Telephone Blackwood 220051.

POPLAR Marxist Discussion Group. 'Which Way for Britain?' Sunday 24 April at 8.00 pm. Ring 515 1718 for details.

CARLISLE: Marxist Discussion Group held fortnightly. For further information contact: Ian Campbell on Carlisle 21068.

CLASSIFIED

WEST YORKS MILITANT SUPPORTERS DRAW
1st. 1530 Sharon Mcdermott
2nd. 2872 Kirstie Maclean
3rd. 3336 Jim Evans
4th. 2850 Mumtaz
5th. 2318 J Dobson
6th. 3209 O Davies
7th. 2354 R Woods
8th. 1154 M Brierley

NEW MILITANT LEAFLET
Out now! It's an election year special. Advertise your local readers' meeting with this new leaflet. Free, from 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

MILITANT PAMPHLETS

'Capitalist Crisis or Socialist Plan', by Andrew Glyn, £1.20
'Marxist View of History', articles by Lenin, Marx, Trotsky, 50p
'General Strike', articles by Trotsky, Taaffe, Grant, £1.20
All prices include p&p. Orders to Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

STICK WITH MILITANT
Yellow advertising stickers
1,000 for £11; 500 for £5.60; 200 for £2.30.
Send cash with order, cheques payable to Militant. From Militant Circulation, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Left Book Club books. Over 80 available. Offers to Box No 69, Militant. Proceeds to Fighting Fund.

WEST NOTTINGHAM LPYS
Public Meeting: Socialism or War? Speakers: Willie Griffin (National Chairman LPYS), Alan Simpson (Nottingham for Nuclear Disarmament). Thursday 28 April 7.30pm, Venue: International Community Centre 61B Mansfield Rd Nottingham.

On the centenary of Marx's death, 14 March 1983, Peter Taaffe spoke in Swansea on the relevance of Marxism today, and of Militant in the labour movement. Tape cassette available £2.25. Orders to D L Davies, 10 Page Street, Swansea. Profit to Militant Fighting Fund.

WRITE OFF THE TORIES WITH US

Militant biros with slogan: "Read Militant, Tories out, Labour to power on a socialist programme." Normal price 20p (plus 20p p&p). Bulk orders: 10 at £1.30 (post free).

NEW POSTER
Historic 'Murmansk poster featuring Bolsheviks' appeal to British troops who invaded Russia after the revolution. 25p each (+ 15p p&p) or 20 for £3 (including p&p). Available from E Phillips, 66 Sprindale Road, Broadstone, Poole.

SNOWDONIA: Bed and Breakfast in comfortable cottage. £4.50 nightly, £28 weekly. Telephone Llanberis 870062.

Building the Militant

Recently the proposed IRIS system (a computer-based information system on political risk for international capital) was wound up before it began. They didn't have sufficient custom to pay for the expensive equipment.

But that hasn't stopped former Prime Minister Edward Heath being paid £50,000 for his services as an international advisor. Other international figures were paid £2,000 per meeting! This one example shows how absolutely terrified of the proletariat some sections of the capitalist class must be. The working class relies on an information system not quite so expensively run! But we have one tremendous advantage the capitalists will never be able to match: our class is always in touch with reality.

As we pointed out last week, in the article on *Militant's* post-bag, we get letters from thousands of workers and their families in the course of each year. Many of the best articles that appear are not written by journalists from London offices, but by ordinary people describing how the bosses' system hits them in their daily lives.

**£50,000 by
9 July**

We do need money though: our target for 9 July is £50,000 again. We don't get the millions that the military and police the world over spend on their computers, but we certainly need thousands each week to pay our bills.

Helping us get near our target last week was a magnificent anonymous donation of £4,000. Only by such sacrifices can a Marxist paper be built.

We are also proud that readers spare us the change from a pound or fifty-pence piece, because we know what sacrifice that often means. Anyone adding up, week by week, the sums coming into the *Militant's* offices will see that the overwhelming majority are of small but valuable amounts.

**LAST
WEEK:
£12,226**

So to every reader, and we believe there are thousands, who could afford to donate the change for your next copy of *Militant* please don't wait to be asked! For every thousand readers who donate 30p weekly, we stand to benefit to the tune of over £15,000 in a full year!

Amongst the donations received last week were: £2 from H Dowsett (Sittingbourne), £10 M Allen (Manchester), and £4 from M Fenton (Pontefract), J Morgan (Cumbria), and L Nilsson (Sweden). In addition a North London postal worker sent us £50 from his bonus, cash that he could obviously have used in other ways. Workers know the value of *Militant*. Last week two miners' lodges in South Wales, St John's and Blaengwrach, expressed their "thanks for help in the strike", and enclosed donations.

One final word to readers who are delegates to trade union conferences this summer: if you are prepared to support socialist ideas in the conference hall—why not attend the *Militant* meeting at the conference? As well as contributing to the discussion, you can also contribute financially towards building a daily *Militant*!

Our new chart will be appearing next week, and will no doubt be a lot "white" to start with. But with your help in direct donations, in taking part in fund-raising schemes for us, from home-grown vegetables to sponsored haircuts, and in purchasing tickets for the Militant Supporters' Association's Summer Draw (more details next week), we will soon have the chart properly blackened!

By Steve Cawley



Paper sellers on the march to save Croxteth School in Liverpool

Sales on the streets

Last Saturday morning teams of LPYS members covered up to 10 different 'sales pitches'. Comrades leafleted, sold papers and signed up people interested in joining the Labour Party and LPYS.

With this success under our belt we converged on another 'pitch', Coventry City Football Ground. During the previous week Jimmy Hill had offered to stand down as chairman of the club if someone else could be found to inject new funds. Modestly, the LPYS do not claim credit for this.

We sold about 25 papers before the match by shouting slogans about what we stand for. This did not go unnoticed and the police asked several questions of comrades. In one incident two comrades were questioned at length and accused of "begging" for using using tins to

put their paper money in. The two officers, on motorcycles, radioed for advice on whether the law was being broken. The advice was inconclusive and the comrades were allowed to go.

The whole weekend of street activity and canvassing and a good social was a great success. 200 *Militants* and *Socialist Youths* were sold. Unfortunately two comrades missed the Saturday activity to attend a meeting of the divisional council of ASTMS. But they were able to report several papers sold plus the decision of the meeting to order 80 copies of the meeting to order 80 copies of *Socialist Youth* per month. Not a bad 'sale' in one afternoon.

By Pete McNally
(Coventry North-East CLP)

Militant Steelworkers' national meeting
'The attacks on the steel industry and the fight back'
Main Hall, Centre Against Unemployment
Bridge Street, Sheffield
(behind Bridge St bus stand)
Saturday 7 May, 11 am-5 pm

"Of course we are going to win. We wouldn't be here if we thought otherwise".

So one of the workers, a chef, occupying the Timex Milton of Craigie plant in Dundee stressed the confidence of the workforce to win their battle to save jobs.

The plant was occupied on 8 April, on the eve of the 'fast week', a holiday week in Dundee. AUEW deputy convenor John Kydd explained the shop stewards led the occupation, as the rest of the workforce went on holiday; "This occupation is unique in the sense it can only get bigger as the workers return from holiday. The workers as a whole support the occupation."

This was borne out on Monday when the workers returned from holiday with over 450 of the workforce (out of 600: 100 workers are already in occupation) registering their support. As Milton steward Fergie Alexander said, "We believe this number will grow as many of the workers who turned up on Monday couldn't register because of the size of the queues outside the gates. The next move is now up to management—we will not end the occupation until they withdraw the redundancy threat."

Although there had been 1,700 voluntary redundancies at the Dundee plants, management then began to threaten compulsory redundancies. The workers realised this would mean the closure of the plant, as the Timex Corporation want to switch production to the Far East and to France, where the Mitterrand government has promised massive subsidies to this multinational that already has multi-million pound profits.

Closure of Timex would mark the end of skilled jobs in Dundee. The only other major industry in the area is the Kestral shipyard, but that is a heavy industry with no long term future. "The only alternative we have is the dole," said John Kydd. Already in Dundee, the workers bitterly commented, there are many skilled



John Kydd (second left) with stewards in the machine room at the occupied Timex plant in Dundee.

Keep Timex ticking

THIS FACTORY IS UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT!

workers either working behind pub bars or in the local authority parks department.

The plant has been transformed into a fortress of defiance. Placards pinned to the perimeter fence spell out the workers' determination: "Keep Timex ticking", "Gissa Job"—visitors are greeted by the slogan "Under new management" painted over the main entrance.

The occupiers are working a shift system of attendance with regular perimeter patrols. The main area of activity is the canteen, where workers with their families sit and discuss, or play bowls and pool with equipment donated to them by local Labour Clubs.

Asked what it was like to be in control, one steward remarked: "No different really—we used to run the

shop anyway. The management hadn't a clue".

The only reminder of the 'old regime' is the automatic time-hooter which regularly gives a forlorn bleat, which before marked the workers' on-and-off time on the machines.

It is no accident whole families are taking part in the occupation. Grant Robertson, a shop steward, said, "Whole families work here and if it closed it would mean them all going on the dole in one stroke. Take

John Kydd for example, his daughter and son work here too."

Workers outside the plant understand how the closure would have a devastating effect on employment too, and have given great support to the struggle. Besides large trade union donations and money from the Labour council (see last week's *Militant*) there have been raffles and collections in local Labour and Trades clubs. Steward Jim Kemlo said, "People have come up to the

gates and given us money—even one pensioner came up and gave us £2 and a bag of shopping."

The notice board in the canteen has many letters of support pinned to it, from NALGO, other AUEW branches, Labour Parties, and MPs. There is even a letter from Thatcher expressing "concern" about the closure, although many workers after reading it walk away muttering "lip-service".

The workers are confident

STOP PRESS:

Management issued redundancy notices to 197 workers on Tuesday saying they must accept or be sacked. The workers are ignoring this threat and the occupation continues.

they can win and are certainly in a strong position, controlling the high technology machinery that the bosses want to transfer to France. As John Kydd stated, "There is no way we will be moving out of occupation until we secure our jobs."

They are now taking the campaign out to the wider labour movement for support. They have produced 150,000 leaflets for distribution explaining their case and are prepared to send speakers to labour movement meetings. Contact G Sampson, 32 Elgin Terrace, Dundee (or phone 0382 818452) for speakers and send donations to J Kydd, 81 Brownhill Road, Dundee.

By Eddie Donaghy

(Scottish Labour Party Executive, personal capacity)

Glasgow tenants take action

By Denis Doran

Last week a fire badly damaged flats in Scarrel Drive, a hard-to-let in Castlemilk, Glasgow.

The whole Close was covered by smoke from the fire. Joanne and her sister escaped by a top floor balcony to another flat: Janette threw her two children—one 6 months old and the other four years—out of the window of her first floor flat, following behind them. Firemen using breathing apparatus rescued the other tenants.

Yet incredibly the council will not rehouse them and instead want them to move back into the flats.

Joanne explained, "We didn't want to return to the flats because we felt that the fire was started deliberately and that something could happen again." There have been other incidents prior to



Tenants by their tents outside the Housing Department.

Photo: Militant

this involving gangs, with cars being damaged etc.

After the fire the Homeless Persons Unit inspected the flats and decided they were habitable—but the tenants refused to move back into them. Indeed, the night after the fire, one flat was broken into and vandalised. The tenants also asked an architect to inspect the Close and his advice was to have the wiring and plumbing checked before anyone

moved in.

It was only after discussions with the police, who admitted the danger of moving back, that the council decided to put the tenants in temporary accommodation.

However, this turned out to be a night here, a night there in short-stay hostels. Joanne said, "One place my sister and I went to, we were refused entry because we didn't have an authorisation—the housing

office had bugged that up. The next night we were sent to a place that was being renovated: it was deserted!"

But the Housing Department insist the tenants must move back into Scarrel Drive before they will even consider a discussion about rehousing. Unable to gain any satisfaction from the council the tenants' Action Committee—which has grown to about 60 members—decided to oc-

cupy the Housing Office last Thursday. Joanne said, "We weren't going to move until the Housing Manager found us suitable accommodation—we were willing to take any house in Castlemilk apart from Scarrel Drive. But they just called the police." In three separate sittings, 48 people were arrested.

Backed by the local community, the tenants decided to camp on a patch of ground outside the Housing Office. At first there was one old green tent tied to a tree. Then more tents arrived. Then came a caravan, gratefully accepted and now used by the tenants as headquarters.

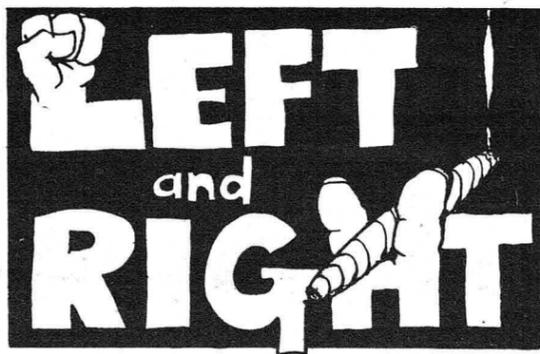
One of the tenants, Mary, said, "The support has been great. People have given us all sorts—hot soup, tea and coffee have been arriving throughout the nights. A baker has given us loaves and Templetons, the local supermarket, have told us to

take goods to the value of £3 or £4. The Direct Works Department have also been helping.

"The community now see we have got to stick together to get something done, and we fully intend to stay here for years if need be until we get rehoused."

Joanne added, "But this campaign needs to be broadened out because it's becoming a real entrenched fight between us and the Housing Department. It's got to be about housing in general, how long you have to wait for repairs, for transfers, all those sort of things."

The tenants will continue to fight for decent housing and it is perhaps a sign of the solidarity of this campaign that Jannette has been offered a home for herself and her children but has refused—until all the other people have been re-housed.



Secret police and nuclear waste

A very strange tale was reported in the local Derby newspaper, the *Trader*, 13 April. It concerned keen train spotter Peter Cartledge, nuclear power, and the security services.

Cartledge told the *Trader*: "I was motoring down Raynesway when I spotted a very unusual mixed freight train, carrying a strange-looking container. I stopped to take some pictures but within minutes the police appeared telling me to put my camera away and move on.

"The next day nearly midnight, a knock came at the door, and two men identifying themselves as government security agents insisted on questioning me. It was like something out of *The Professionals*. From what I could gather, I'd photographed a nuclear consignment, all very hush-hush".

After an hour Mr Cartledge was able to convince the security people that he was just a train spotter, but there was one final demonstration of their power. Cartledge got his film back from his normal processors, but the shots of the wagons were not there. "All the slides from the film were perfect, except of the four wagons. It's very odd because they were in the middle of the roll, and my camera was working perfectly".

"Wit, Wisdom and Whisky"

According to the ISTC steel union newspaper, *Banner*, March 1983, it was "wit, wisdom and whisky" (not necessarily in that order) when union leader Bill Sirs, Ian McGregor and others met up to celebrate Burns night.

Steel workers, who have lost thousands of jobs since MacGregor took over have got no reason to join in any kind of celebration with that butcher. But clearly that is not an attitude shared by the union leadership. The *Banner* ended its article, headlined "wit, wisdom and whisky", by stating "the spirit of the Bard was well in evidence when management and unions, suppliers and customers joined together in harmony".

Obscene coffee book?

Thames Valley Police reached a new all-time low in "law enforcement" when officers from the Drug Squad raided Acorn bookshop in Reading this month. Seven boxes of books were seized under a warrant issued under the Obscene Publications Act. These included books by such "obscene" authors as Aldous Huxley and William Burroughs! Along with the books seized, which will now be forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecutions, were two books on coffee and one about tobacco and the Third World!

Monetarism no bar

It is tough being a monetarist. You just never know who is going to resent your policies next. The *Observer* recently recorded the sad tale of Leon Brittan's wedding reception. Tipped to be the Tories' next Chancellor of the Exchequer, Brittan had arranged to hold the reception in the house of his brother, the economist Sam Brittan.

Let the *Observer* tell what happened next: "The butler hired for the occasion said to Sam, 'Excuse me, are you the Mr Brittan of the *Financial Times*, who is a supporter of Milton Friedman?' Mr Brittan confirmed his identity and beliefs. 'Then', said the butler, 'you're as bad as Hitler, I'm off'. He departed, leaving Mr Brittan's wedding guests to pour their own drinks."

What a disaster. Such unruly behaviour from the servant classes. Where do 'they' learn such ideas? No wonder Thatcher, Brittan and all want to take us back to the deferential world of *Upstairs Downstairs*.

Fifty years ago

With all the pundits predicting, post-Gandhi, a revival of the British film industry, it is worth recalling who profited when the cinema really was a mass entertainment industry. In early 1933, the Provincial Cinematographic Theatres Ltd reported record profits from the previous year. Revenue was up £23,042 to £508,648 and dividends were upped to 15%. But their workforce only got a pittance. The 3,000 girls employed by them only got 32p for a full week's work. A further 1,600 chocolate sellers, who worked a 36-hour week, got not pay at all. They existed off commission, 4p in the pound, which sometimes gave them the princely sum of 25p a week.

What the Army's foreign postings taught me

My first posting abroad was to Ireland. I was just 18 and had been in the Army for only a few months.

We were based in Tyrone and Fermanagh. I was only there for two months but during that time my sergeant major and five non-commissioned officers were killed by bombs. When we left more experienced soldiers commented how good it was none of us troopers were killed.

The blokes in my regiment did not love the loyalists nor hate the Catholics. It was more a case of a plague on all the paramilitaries.

Our next posting was Hong Kong. When all is said and done, this was a holiday for 18 months. In Belfast there had been 14 of us to a room, the size of the average council flat, stinking in sweat and dripping shirts.

In Hong Kong I had my first and only servant. Wages were so low that, for the price of a couple of beers a week, my room of eight could afford a "boy" (he was about 50) to clean for us.

Holiday in Hong Kong

What a difference. A huge room for eight in a hot country with little to do but clean our weapons and stay fit and our own servant to clean our room, our shoes and our boots.

When the day finished, a little after twelve, we would head for Wan Chai. There we could and did indulge in everything—all forms of prostitution, drugs, booze, gambling were available cheap.

Slowly but surely, after these excesses, I started to compare other aspects of life in Hong Kong. 'On the peak' were luxury hotels and massive buildings owned by multi-national companies, started by emigre Scots, grown rich on opium. Young children would fight to open taxi doors offering us every and anything.

What work was there for these 'British' subjects? Only exploitation in the sweat shops, drugs, pimping and prostitution.

In the 'New Territories' outside the main city, conditions were terrible—no running water, and a big cesspit in the middle of the village; a house was four sticks and a roof. How these people coped in the monsoons and typhoons is a tribute to them. They owe nothing to capitalism which, when they get to the towns, will churn them into profit fodder, industrial or social.

Class war in Germany

My last posting really showed the class divide. On exercise in Germany in the snow and the cold, it was the two to four in the morning guard duty, and off again at dawn. We came to HQ having had a rotten dinner of "everything stew" but after all, this was supposed to be war-time conditions.

What did we find? The officers having a dinner with polished cutlery and waiter service, a mobile officers' mess. My old man told me the same thing happened to him in World War II and his dad experienced worse in "the war to end wars".

One episode showed the need for trade unions to organise rank and file soldiers. It was the miners' strike and election of 1974.

Everyone was worried that if Heath won, he might get us flown back to break the strike. All my mates had a relation or friend from the pits. Would we allow ourselves to be used against our relations, family and class allies?

But Heath lost. So for a week or so we hung on.

And then I heard junior officers calling Labour's prime minister, Harold Wilson, a "Communist" (among other things) and asking why somebody didn't do something. These men will now be in their 30s rising to middle positions of command.

The danger to an elected



Britain's Chief of General Staff in 1977, Sir Roland Gibbs, meeting Portuguese army chief. Would British generals contemplate a coup?

Labour government prepared to take on the capitalist class is obvious. They would have been prepared to stage a coup to save capitalism.

It is essential to break the power of officers over other ranks. The thug element in the so-called elite squads will always follow the officers, but the great masses of the other ranks can be won to socialism. The LPYS demand for unionisation of the armed forces is a vital

first step.

On my 21st birthday after four years I left the army and shortly afterwards joined the Labour Party. My experience in the Army had shown me how necessary socialism is.

By Bob Law

(Bermondsey CLP, final part of two-part article, first part appeared last week)

Bury beats privatisation

Local council workers in Bury, fighting the proposed privatisation of the bins service for two years, achieved a tremendous victory when the council public services committee voted on 12 April not to privatise.

This will be a morale booster for all fighting Tory cuts—especially in the north west where the Wirral council have just privatised the bins service and there are similar moves in Liverpool (see page 13).

The victory is all the more remarkable when it is considered that Bury council has always been Tory controlled and that one of their proudest boasts is having one of the smallest workforces per head of population in the Greater Manchester area.

The Tories claim they have not gone for privatisation because the savings offered by the unions were only £26,000 short of the lowest tender from a private contractor so it was not worth privatising.

The truth is that it is a climb down in the face of the union campaign against privatisation. Some of the leading lights of the Tory group were following national political dogma and were prepared to privatise come hell or high-water!

After all the unions held a one-day strike on 2 March with an almost 100% response from the membership, the dispute began to swing in our favour. A whole new layer of activists was thrown up and together

we formed a Joint Shop Stewards Committee which effectively became the body for running the dispute.

These new stewards were feeding information and publicity directly into the work places, and resolve hardened to take indefinite strike action and occupy the bin yard if the council opted for privatisation.

Also the campaign was turned outwards to the people in Bury. The town was showered with leaflets and posters, we spoke to people, took a petition around and held public meetings. We even hired a van, decked it out with posters and toured the whole district with a megaphone warning about privatisation.

With the support from

local workers, the Labour Party and even the local Liberal/SDP Alliance eventually coming out against privatisation, the pressure on the Tories in this run-up to the local elections was enormous. With the whole district against them, they made a "tactical climb-down".

Our victory is one which can be repeated everywhere. We must now campaign for a Labour council opposed to privatisation and a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

By Dave Greenhalgh

(Bury NALGO)

BRADFORD

Reports by Dave Robinson, Keith Narey and Kevin Ramage. Photos: Denis Doran (Militant).



Labour's manifesto

Bradford Labour's election manifesto reflects growing anger against Tory attacks.

It begins by spelling out the political position of the District Labour Party.

"No longer can we see local government in the traditional role of providing essential services.

"We have to fight to

preserve these against a Tory government controlling local government finance from Whitehall.

"The next Labour Council will re-direct resources and challenge the government. We will spend what Bradford needs."

With that in mind, a campaign is to be launched to bring together trade unionists, tenants, rate-payers and the people of

Bradford. It needs to work in conjunction with Labour Councils the length and breadth of the country.

With this support we commit ourselves to freezing rents and rates and a refusal to implement cuts in services.

The Council is currently controlled by an alliance of Tories, Liberals and SDP.

They have blitzed the education service, landing

By Gary Armitage
(Bradford Metropolitan & District Councillor, Toller Ward)

Bradford at the bottom of the national league, with ramshackle schools and a low level of nursery provision.

Labour will re-instate the two staff at the unemployed centre whose contracts the Council has not renewed. We will expand the Direct Works department, to recruit some of the 30,000 unemployed in the city.

Bradford has a housing waiting list of 7,900. 4,000 council dwellings are so badly maintained they are uninhabitable. Yet the controlling Council group built only 67 houses last year.

We will fight for a £90 minimum wage and a women's committee to see we get the nurseries so urgently needed on our vast council estates.

This programme must be hammered home at meetings, on the doorstep and social occasions, in order to bring the full weight of public support behind Labour in our campaign to win these moderate but vital demands.



Pat Wall, Labour's Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Bradford North, fights for the old and young, black and white

Eight-storey extortion

TENANTS of eight-storey blocks of flats in Bradford are being charged extortionate prices for inefficient heating.

The communal heating systems are supposed to provide hot water and central heating for 800-1,000 dwellings, the majority being in Bradford North.

Charges were £8.97 per week for a two-bedroomed flat, or £465 per annum. This compares with £270 per annum for tenants on metered systems which includes all utilities, lighting, cooking etc.

The tenants complained to the council but for over ten years the complaints, both about price and and inefficiency, have been ignored.

When the Pensioners' Trade Union Action Committee wrote to the local MP Ben Ford, they were told that he couldn't do anything as it was not in his constituency.

Bradford Trades Council took up the issue and Pat Wall in his role as prospective parliamentary candidate for Bradford North helped to organise a campaign against these charges.

A committee was formed of tenants from the flats, and a deputation saw the full council in February.

A motion by two Labour councillors to immediately reduce the charges to the same level as other council accommodation was referred to the housing committee.

The successful lobby of the Council was the result of public meetings held in

all the affected areas, and the same was done for the committee meeting.

A crowded room greeted the councillors and a lively debate took place. Finally a motion from the Labour spokesman on housing calling for an immediate reduction of 20% was defeated by the casting vote of the Tory chairman, after the Liberal councillor had voted with the Tories!

"Tories without their big boots on!" was how one tenant described the Liberals.

The whole affair will be debated at the full council on 26 April, where the original call for a 50% reduction in these charges will be repeated. We'll see if the "Mouldbreakers" have changed their tune with local elections looming!

A full leaflet and lobby will be organised to present our case to the council, with the threat of further public meetings and a possible strike of payment of the charges unless something is done.

The tenants have shown they are prepared to fight when a lead is given.

The Liberal/SDP Alliance which helped the Tories to rule Bradford for the last year has shown it cares nothing for the problems of low paid council tenants or pensioners.

Only the election of a Labour council prepared to fight for workers' interests will ease the burden of these charges and defend workers against the worst effects of Tory central government.

Four seats needed

BRADFORD'S local elections can be seen as a 'dry run' for the coming general election.

Labour needs to win 4 out of the 30 seats up for election to regain control from the unofficial coalition of Tories, Liberals, and SDP.

Many wards are organising full canvasses, together with rallies. In the marginal Bolton Ward, in Bradford North, Geoff Porter is challenging the sitting councillor, who is also the Tory

council leader.

Geoff explained why the results in Bradford were crucial for the whole labour movement. "If we can defeat the unholy alliance of Tories, Liberals and SDP on Bradford council, fighting on a programme which includes policies to defend the living standards of local people (see article by Cllr. Gary Armitage) then it will be an important step towards getting rid of the Tories at a general election."

Asian election rally

IN an historic event, 300 Indian and Pakistani workers gathered in a local election rally organised by Bradford North Labour Party.

The rally included cultural activities such as singers and a Punjabi dance group, as well as three speakers.

An Indian comrade pointed out that the event was the first time since the partition of India and Pakistan that Indians and Pakistanis, Hindus and Muslims, had sat down together in such numbers in a political meeting.

Following the first group of singers, John Lambert, the Labour candidate for the ward in the local elections, explained how in Bradford there is only a Labour or Tory choice, as the SDP had sided with the Tories on every major issue affecting local living standards.

His speech gained a warm response, with several people offering to help in canvassing for the election.

John was followed by one of the Asian workers on strike at Aire Valley Yarns

After a break, Pat Wall called on the audience to rally to Labour for the sake of the future of youth and children. "Labour stands for equality, for freedom, for opposition to racialism and hatred, but most of all Labour must stand for socialism." These last words were the most warmly applauded of all.

Bhutto commemoration

FIVE HUNDRED PAKISTANI WORKERS crowded into a school hall on Sunday 10 April to commemorate the 4th anniversary of the execution of former Pakistan Peoples Party leader, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, by the Zia military dictatorship.

Along with the crowded platform of exiled PPP leaders and renegade Labour MP (now SDP) Eddie Lyons, was Pat Wall, prospective Labour candidate for Bradford North.

Pat was warmly received by the meeting, and was applauded several times during his brief contribution, especially when he pointed out that "The Zia regime remains in power today largely thanks to the support of British and American governments. Part of our work must be to take forward the struggle for socialism in Britain, which will be an enormous contribution to the struggle of Pakistani workers to remove the capitalists and landlords that spawned the Zia regime, and mass poverty".

All the speakers paid tribute to Bhutto, and the bravery of his widow who remains imprisoned, despite needing urgent medical treatment. One speaker pointed out that the best tribute to Bhutto was "To talk about the mission of Bhutto, the mission of the PPP, that is the mission of socialism."

"We can best pay tribute to Bhutto not by platitudes, but by drawing lessons from past mistakes, in particular leaving the heart of capitalism intact. In the future we must complete the job. If we are to get democracy back it will only be guaranteed through socialism."

The same speaker added, pointing to Pat Wall—"I commend this comrade to everyone here—here is a candidate who is committed to the struggle for socialism, which is in our tradition."

LABOUR PARTY ELECTION MEETINGS

all meetings 7.30pm

MONDAY 25 April: Ravenscliffe Middle School
TUESDAY 26 April: Hutton Middle School
speakers at both meetings: Pat Wall and local candidate, Lilian Crawforth

FRIDAY 29 April: Election social at Bowling ILP club

TUESDAY 3 May Joint Bolton/Eccleshill meeting, Wellington Middle School (provisional)

HOW CAN YOU HELP LABOUR?

Mass canvass Sunday 24 April, Eccleshill Ward (and others). Phone Bill Reed (0274 633374) for details.

Volunteers needed for evening canvassing, and on polling day, ring 0274 669840

Labour Party Young Socialists RALLY

Sunday 1 May Textile Hall, Westgate 7.30pm

'What future for youth? Fight for socialism with the LPYS'

Speakers: Pat Wall (Bradford North LP PPC) John Goodby (LPYS)

Falklands one year on

THE AFTERMATH



Galtieri falls

“This is the worst crisis in Argentina since 1806...what we have seen so far is only the beginning.”

These comments were made by an Argentine politician as riots broke out in Buenos Aires, following the announcement of the surrender of the Argentine forces in the Falklands.

In the city centre buses were burned, shop windows smashed and trees uprooted, the police replying with tear gas and rubber bullets. President Galtieri was to have made a speech from the balcony of the presidential palace but, faced with the prospect of addressing a hostile, jeering crowd, he backed down.

As *Militant* explained at the time, the Argentine Junta launched their invasion of the Falkland Islands a year ago purely as a diversion to check the growth of domestic opposition. The military government has been responsible for the torture and murder of 20,000 socialist and trade union oppositionists in the years since it came to power in 1976.

Riddled with corruption and mismanagement, the Junta brought the economy to the point of near collapse, with the greatest burden, inevitably, being carried by the working class. By March 1982, the opposition movement was no longer so intimidated by the repressive apparatus of the state and

In last week's issue, Bob Wylie reviewed *Militant's* analysis of the Falklands War, which began a year ago. This week JOHN PICKARD comments on the aftermath of the war, in Argentina and Britain.

mass strikes and demonstrations were planned, with the promise of more to come.

Galtieri, therefore, gambled his own career and the future of the military government on his 'Malvinas' adventure...and lost. During the war, the government did achieve something approaching national acclaim, but that proved to be only a temporary respite.

In fact, the debacle in the Falklands has actually increased the anger and bitterness of the mass of workers. It soon became apparent that beneath the thin veneer of wartime patriotism, the tops of the armed forces had displayed the same corrupt self-interest as in peacetime.

The ordinary troops sent to the Falklands were conscripts, badly fed, often poorly equipped and usual-

ly freezing cold. While the civilian population at home had been exhorted to take collections and make donations to help the men at 'the front', little benefit filtered through the maze of military corruption to the ordinary soldiers.

Scandals began to emerge about abuses of the government-sponsored 'Patriotic Fund', and articles collected for the troops mysteriously found their way into the shops. One young Argentine, for example, donated some chocolate for the soldiers and slipped a message of support under the wrapper; the chocolate, wrapper, message and all, was bought by another civilian a few days later in a city shop.

The idea that hundreds of soldiers and sailors died for nothing, while corrupt officers made a 'killing' of

another sort, has fuelled the hatred that workers already feel for the regime. All the social and economic contradictions that were there before the war have now resurfaced, only much stronger than before.

Days after the surrender, General Galtieri was forced to step down, but his replacement by General Bignone has failed to stop the growing opposition. Within weeks of the change, strikes and demonstrations broke out with renewed vigour.

50,000 rally in Buenos Aires

In August, Buenos Aires was paralysed by an almost total transport strike, the first successful large-scale stoppage since 1976, when the generals came to power. The following month, September, saw the Peronist trade union, the CGT, organising mass rallies and protests in towns and cities around the country. 50,000 workers demonstrated in Buenos Aires alone.

In December there was an

even bigger wave of strikes and protests. On the 6th, a one-day general strike brought industry, transport and the service sector to a dead stop. This was the first general strike since 1976 and it showed the growing confidence and organisation of the workers.

The union demanded wage increases to keep up with the rate of inflation, by then running at 300 per cent a year. The Argentine economy, in a parlous state before the war, was in an even bigger mess.

Much of industry was operating below capacity. Unemployment was 13 per cent. Gross National Product, down by 6 per cent in 1981, had fallen by an even greater amount in the first half of 1982 alone. The economy was incapable of servicing its huge international debt of around \$45b. The Argentine peso was almost a joke, worth 80,000 to the dollar.

Workers putting forward political demands

The only economic policy the the armed forces top brass could bring forward was more sacrifices for the workers. Token wage increases were introduced, along with increased taxes and rationing of certain goods, including petrol and...beef.

But in the magnificent turn-out for the December one-day strike, the workers were making it clear that they were not prepared to endure hardships any longer. Their wages had already lost 30 per cent of their real value in 1982 and, they were announcing, 'enough is enough'.

As well as putting forward demands for wage rises, the workers were also making clear political demands, calling, for example, for an end to military interference in the trade unions and for information about the thousands who 'disappeared' in the last seven years.

Ten days after that strike, a monster demonstration in Buenos Aires, of up to a quarter of a million, again showed the growing strength of the opposition. The government has been up to now too impotent to prevent these protests from taking place, but those elements in the state apparatus with the most to lose by democratisation—those most clearly associated with the tortures and murders—have been and still are prepared to provoke violent clashes in order to try to put down the protests in blood.

Falklands veterans abuse their officers

On 16 December, the police waded into sections of the protest march and over 80 protesters were seriously injured. One young demonstrator was killed in cold blood by plain-clothes police who approached, leapt out of their car, and shot him.

But the protests have not been confined only to the trade unions. At a military ceremony in December, over 300 out of 2,500 Falklands veterans, conscripts, hurled insult and abuse at the



During the war the Argentine government did achieve something approaching national acclaim, but that was only a temporary respite. Hours after the surrender was announced, riots broke out on the streets of Buenos Aires.

government and their officers. Nothing more graphically illustrates the collapse of the social base of the regime and its creeping paralysis than the picture of hundreds of conscripts, supposedly 'on parade', chanting, "Down with the Military Junta", and screaming abuse at their irate pistol-waving officers.

Military junta "riding a tiger"

The majority of the officer corps have been horrified at the spectacle of the government losing its grip on society. Since the first days after the surrender, Buenos Aires has been rife with rumours of new military coups, sometimes of supposed 'hard-liners' angry at the collapse of authority, sometimes supposedly of younger officers, bitter at their humiliation in the war and angry over the corruption and incompetence of their seniors.

But the military's attitude to the opposition is like the proverbial man riding a tiger: afraid to stay on, yet afraid to step off. The government, in the thick of an enormous economic and social crisis, is teetering between a precarious return to civilian democracy, engineered by them from above, or a revolutionary explosion from the workers below.

Officers fear Nuremberg-style judgement

An outright bloody suppression of political protest now seems virtually impossible, given the humiliation and discrediting of the government in the war. But a return to democracy also has its horrors for the officer caste. What "tempers the democratic tendencies of most officers", the *Financial Times* correspondent wrote, is the "fear that political liberalisation might agitate demands for a Nuremberg-style judgement of military personnel linked to the torture, murder or disappearance of many thousands of Argentines following the 1976 coup." (20 August 1982)

As *Militant* explained during the war itself, "...if there is a military defeat or a diplomatic climbdown, then the Argentine workers will exact their revenge of the military junta which has bled them dry in recent years." (14 April 1982)

"...the Junta will be blamed for the launch of the invasion, for the casualties, for the defeat and for the enormous economic costs borne by the workers themselves. ...It may not be that long now before the Argentine working class comes to settle accounts for the bloody suppression of democratic rights and for the 20,000 socialists and trade unionists murdered since the 1976 coup." (28 May 1982)

Some officers are already reported to be secreting away dossiers on tortures and 'disappearances' as "insurance" for their own skins in case of popular retribution. Ex-president Galtieri has tried to cover his own backside by criticisms of the military commanders of the Falklands garrison. For his pains, Galtieri has been sentenced to 60 days' detention by a military legal commission.

Workers will take note of the fact that the military are all jostling for the 'not-guilty' positions, but they will draw their own conclusions in due course. The workers will want answers from all the officer caste. Who has been responsible for the tortures and deaths? Why has the Argentine foreign debt risen from \$8bn to \$45bn in six years? The workers will demand a full settling of all the accounts.

The government have only avoided a revolutionary explosion so far by making partial concessions on wages, but above all by conceding elections in October. Between now and then, the Argentine ruling class will be frantically searching for a presidential candidate who can carry public support but who at the same time would not stray from within the framework of capitalism.

Workers will want tangible reforms

The mass of the workers will have no such qualms. They will go into the election enthusiastically demanding change: an end to all corruption, police repression and to capitalist mismanagement. The workers will not want legalised parties and trade unions as useless ornaments, they are very practical people: they will expect to be able to use their new-found freedom to fight for better conditions, to gain tangible improvements in their lives.

In the first week of this month, the last vestige of the spirit of 'national unity' evaporated a year after the 'Malvinas' triumph. The official military parade marking the anniversary was met by universal public indifference.

The same week, army veterans held their own 'celebration' by means of another protest demonstration against military rule. The trade unions organised their second one-day general strike in three months, once again bringing industry to a stop.

Inevitably, large layers of workers, especially in the left of the Peronist party and trade unions, will move in the direction of socialist ideas. Argentine capitalism cannot provide a way out for society and workers will therefore draw their own conclusions.

Enormous explosions impend in all Latin America

There will be no question mark against the willingness and the ability of the Argentine working class—the largest and most powerful in all Latin America—to fight to change society. The enormous explosions and struggles that impend in Argentina will have a tremendous effect in Brazil, Chile, and all of Latin America and will even eclipse the bitter struggles in Central America at the present time.

But the key question facing the labour movement will be the creation and the development of a Marxist leadership, to provide the necessary direction, the programme and perspective of socialist change, without which the spectre of future military coups would be raised again, if not immediately, then certainly at a later stage.

Price of war

The result of the war from the standpoint of the British ruling class has been to drag the ailing British economy into a spiral of ever-rising defence costs.

Militant explained a year ago that the Tories would be forced by the logic of their own policies to build up a 'fortress' in the Falklands: "Once taken back...holding them will be enormously difficult. The Falklands could become a bottomless drain for men, warships, supplies and economic support." (9 April 1982)

"Before April 2," a later editorial explained, "the Falklands had been neglected by successive British governments, and because of the lack of development from Britain, the islands came to rely upon Argentina for air communications and for the provision of fuel and other necessities. The fact

amount will have been spent for every single islander, if all the military costs are totted up: and all to defend the honour of British capitalism.

It is hardly necessary to add who will be picking up the bill. British workers will pay the lot, through higher income tax, NI contributions, excise duty, etc. etc. Workers in Britain already pay a much bigger proportion of their wages in taxes than they did in 1979 when the Tories came into power.

The Tories, and Thatcher especially, have tried to squeeze every last drop of glory and prestige out of the British military victory, by special parades, ministerial visits to the islands, and so on. But the gloss is wearing thinner with each day that passes.

Tories' hypocrisy over Argentine "fascism"

The Tories' collective hypocrisy over Argentine



was kept by the Tories and their press over the no less bloody regime in Santiago, because, of course, Chile was held up to be a 'friend' of Britain.

As soon as the war was over the moral outrage at Argentine 'fascism' was forgotten. The bodies of the 255 servicemen were hardly buried, the 777 wounded hardly repatriated, before British capitalism hurried to re-establish 'normal' economic relations with Argentina.

New frigates, for example, are presently being delivered to the regime, with engines and other vital equipment, care of British industry.

Then the news broke in January that a consortium of British banks was involved in providing \$260m of a total of \$3000m IMF loan to the Argentine Junta to help it service its international debts.

British banks were taking part in the financial rescue, Thatcher pointed out,

the index of electronic and electrical shares had risen by nearly 50 per cent in only nine months.

As always, workers bear the costs. Even in their treatment of the casualties, the Tories are showing their class attitudes. Within months of the end of the war, it was revealed, the hundreds of wounded and maimed servicemen had still received no compensation from the £13m in the 'South Atlantic Fund' and, in fact, there were some who, because of their disabilities, actually had a reduction in their service pay. War widows were beginning to complain about the bureaucratic and callous treatment meted out to them by the service top brass.

The final insult, however, has been the revelation that the widows of officers will receive greater compensation from the fund than the widows of 'other ranks'. In blunt terms it means that the life of a worker is worth less



Families of Service personnel welcome them home from the Falklands

Photo: Denis Doran

that many Falkland Islanders were refused British citizenship under the new Nationality Act is an indication of the disregard for the interests of the Falkland Islanders shown by the Tory government.

"But having spent hundreds of millions of pounds and many lives to recapture the Falklands, the ruling class will not now be prepared to give them up." (28 May 1982)

By the government's own estimates, the war will have cost £700m directly, £900m in replacement costs for warships and aircraft, and £424m in the first full year for the garrison. These are likely to be underestimates. These massive costs will add to the already swollen expenditure on arms so that by 1985, the total defence bill will be over £20bn a year.

£2m is the total sum paid to the Falkland Islanders in compensation for the direct losses and damage incurred during the war. Yet the same

The press and the Tories discovered, as if by a sudden revelation, the repressive character of the Argentine regime. As soon as the war was over, all their moral outrage at Argentine 'fascism' was forgotten.

"fascism" was demonstrated during the war itself. They discovered, as if by a sudden revelation, that this regime which they had been supplying with arms for years—let it not be forgotten that British-made missiles were used to shoot down Harrier jets—was a repressive military-police dictatorship.

The press, in most cases for the first time ever, began to put the spotlight on the horrors of the Argentine police state, purely in order to win public backing for their war. A discreet silence

"because it is in the interest of this country and the Western system to do so." When it comes down to defending the capitalist system, in other words, any totalitarian regime will do.

Not that Tory businessmen will complain. For those companies that provide sophisticated electronics and other war material the war was like a huge side-show where they could show off their goods. They will be rubbing their hands at the prospect of more orders and more profits, from home and abroad. By June 1982,

than that of an officer. "The amount of money a widow receives," a Defence Ministry spokesman blurted out, "depends on her husband's rank and what his prospects and prospective earnings were." (*Daily Mirror*, 4 April 1983)

Perhaps, from the Tories' class standpoint, there is some point to that. "Officers and gentlemen", after all, may have a direct stake in fighting on behalf of British capitalism, with their stocks and shares, their public schools and their directorships.

But what were the 'ranks' fighting for? What were their 'prospects'? What does Tory Britain give them as a reward? One able seaman, on leaving the navy, advertised for a job in his local paper in Newcastle-Under-Lyme: "Ex-serviceman (Falklands), 20, efficient, reliable, fit. Any work considered." He did not get a single reply.

For the past four months America has watched a horrifying scandal unfold. The press dubs it "Sewergate".

It involves the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) attempt to cover up its gross mismanagement of a clean-up programme on an estimated 14,000 dumps, open pits, ponds, and lagoons containing toxic chemical waste.

Leading officials have been accused of destroying documents, "sweet-heart" deals, and lies under oath. Since December nearly half the Agency's administrators have been fired to cover up their illegal dealings.

Last month the head administrator, Anne Burford, was forced to resign after becoming a political liability to Reagan, whose reassuring words to the public were, "there are a group of environmental extremists out there trying to interfere with government policy and if they had their way they would turn the White House into a birds' nest".

These "extremists" have discovered that billions of pounds of the most toxic chemicals known have been used as land-fills and buried in residential areas throughout the country by chemical companies. The waste is now festering and seeping into water systems, roads, basements, and gardens, causing health problems ranging from headaches, to haemorrhaging, cancer, and birth defects.

The end result of concern for profit above all else has surfaced from one end of the country to the other

The EPA is a federal body, with leaders appointed by the president, and was established to provide guidelines to industry and enforce laws to safeguard the public and environment from toxic contaminants. However, the Agency, like most government agencies in the US, works behind the scenes in a dual role.

They protect business profits while quieting public opinion. With one foot in government and another in private industry, these officials suffer from conflicting interests. Meanwhile, working men and women pay with their lives.

'SEWERGATE'

By Marcy Barnett

(District 65, UAW, AFL-CIO, personal capacity)

Two weeks after Burford resigned, the new Acting Administrator was fired because he allowed a report to be altered in order to exonerate Dow Chemical Company of involvement in dioxin contamination of a small town.

This scandal became public last November in Times Beach, Missouri. After heavy rains and flooding residents were advised by the EPA not to return to their homes because the level of dioxin in soil and water was deadly. **The EPA had been aware of these buried poisons for ten years.**

The clean-up operation was to have been overseen by the Agency and financed through their "Superfund" of \$1.6 billion. The fund received its money partially through a tax on chemical companies. Less than half that amount has been collected, but far from bringing these negligent companies to court the EPA has negotiated agreements with them.

The government was to have contributed funds as well. However since Reagan took office the EPA's budget has been reduced by 48%.

To prevent public disquiet, the government agreed to buy out Times Beach, so 2,500 residents will be sent off with a government cheque. But money can not replace what has taken this community their lives to build. These are working men and women who have lost everything and with the economic crisis and unemployment it is unlikely that they will have the opportunity to rebuild their lives.

In Missouri alone there are 21 other sites with contamination at even higher levels. Throughout the country there are as many as 50,000 dumps and 180,000 open pits, and at least 418 other towns with contaminated sites. Fewer than a dozen of these sites have been cleaned up (*Newsweek* March, 1983).

The *Wall Street Journal* reported, in a residential town of Pitman, New Jersey

Poisoned by the market place

an innocent looking stream in a family's back yard so polluted that fish placed in it die within a few hours. The nearby waters are so thick with sludge that a rowboat can't push its way through, while the pollution has poisoned the wells of families living on a nearby farm.

In 1979 the EPA assured the residents of Pitman that these hazardous chemicals would be cleaned up and the company taken to court, but the project never even began. Again in 1981 EPA promised the community that a \$10 million clean-up project would begin, with costs recovered from Rohm and Hass Company, the principle waste generator. Within weeks, the company convinced the EPA to shelve the project.

Government and industry has tossed its burden on the backs of working men and women. The end result of concern for profits above all else has surfaced from one end of the country to the other. In California's "silicone valley", where chemical cleaning solvents have seeped into the water wells, high rates of birth defects ranging from congenital heart defects to skin disorders has been seen.

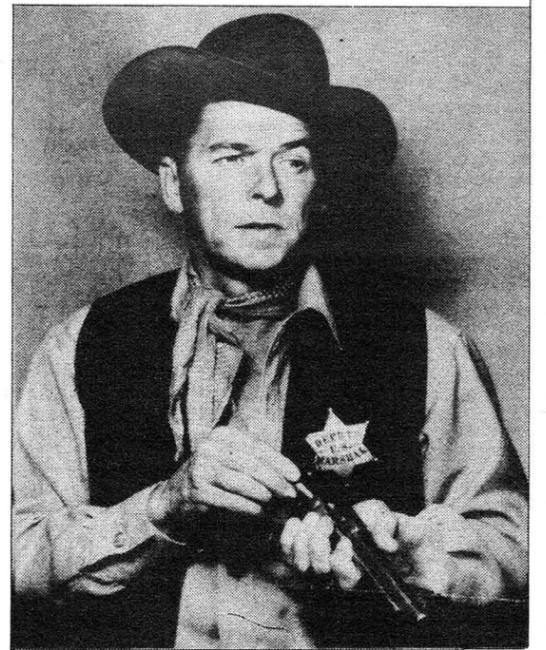
In Woburn Mass., with one of the deadliest waste dumps, 22 children have developed leukaemia since 1966. As the horrors go on, the government stalls and

continues to cover up its scandalous operations. As one woman from Woburn explains, "What do I care about property values? I have an empty room". Her son died of leukaemia at the age of 13.

It is estimated that US companies each year produce more than 200 pounds of toxic waste for every man, woman and child in the country and the government admits the bulk of that material has been disposed of improperly for decades.

Dumping is still the cheapest way for industry to be rid of chemical waste. American technology has the means to neutralise these toxics and develop other safe facilities, but profit is what rules industry and government, and it is not profitable to invest in technology for health and safety. As an EPA official explains, "It is not the responsibility of the regulatory agencies to create or change economic incentives, we have to leave the marketplace alone" (*Newsweek*, March 1983).

Not until major industries begin to nationalise will there be incentive to develop safe technology. The time is near when the American working class will see, through incidents such as EPA, the uselessness of the Democrats and Republicans, and bring nearer the future when the reality of an American Labor party will come to the fore.



Reagan dismisses concern about chemical pollution as "extremist". But the effects of similar catastrophes like Seveso are still being felt today. Photo (below): Seveso 1976.



Agent Orange

An Italian court will shortly be trying to assign blame for the worst case of accidental pollution in modern times, the overheating of the chemical plant at Seveso in Northern Italy. Five executives of the multinational Hoffman La Roche are accused of failing to take precautions to prevent the accident. Clouds of poisonous chemicals particularly dioxin a highly toxic substance produced by overheating the defoliant Agent Orange, were sent into the atmosphere in the summer of 1976. Vegetation wilted, animals died and people in the area suffered headaches, nausea and skin burns. The long term effects may include increased miscarriages and malformations. Despite previous accidents with Agent Orange, Seveso had a safety system that worked directly into the open air and there was no system to prevent explosions. Health officials believe the extent of the problem has been greatly underestimated, and many fear the trial will be a cover-up

BRAZIL- Eruption in Sao Paulo

By David Churchley

The Army on full alert. All public meetings banned. Two days of demonstrations and protest marches in the Sao Paulo region of Brazil had seriously shaken the newly installed state governor.

The government, elected last year on a rigged ballot predictably dismissed the protest as "the concerted plan of small groups". But these demonstrations were attended by tens of thousands. They erupted into violent clashes with the police.

Chanting "Work! Work!", protestors broke into the grounds of the governor's palace which prompted an even larger police presence on the streets. In the Sao Paulo area 770,000 are officially out of work, living in makeshift tin huts and shanty towns on the edge of the "prosperous" city where workers have been forced on to the streets.

The spectacular economic gains of the previous years have not put money in the pockets of the workers. The governor promised last week to create 40,000 jobs as soon

as possible but this will be a drop in the ocean when you realise 400,000 have lost jobs in the last eighteen months alone.

25 million underemployed

Just to keep unemployment stable, with the number of underemployed reaching a barely believable 25 to 30 million, Brazil needs to create 1½ million jobs a year. Widespread layoffs at a large chemical plant were the trigger for these protests

The governor for the Sao Paulo region Franco Montoro is a member of the main opposition party the PMDB (Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement), an alliance of liberal Tories, social democrats and apparent supporters of the Communist Party.

Mantoro, along with other "opposition" governors denounced "these violent demonstrations which will only serve the enemies of democracy". In fact many disaffected supporters of the PMDB have been involved in the protests. Such events

are inevitable in the Sao Paulo area and will eventually be echoed in Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais.

Bankruptcy

The democratic alliance will come under severe pressure to resolve the social and economic problems of the Brazilian people. They will be patently incapable. In the regions, bankruptcy is haunting the corridors of power. Inflation has been at 10% a month wiping out any wage increases gained.

The election of Lionel

Brigola of the Labour Party in Rio was a shock to the generals, but even here the demonstrators have been denounced. Brigola even said that seizures of unoccupied land were "politically coordinated".

Future demonstrations will expose the efforts of the opposition to maintain the facade of democracy and change in Brazil. The rate of redundancy in the last three months when more jobs were lost than in the whole of last year will only be matched by the pace of workers looking for socialist change.

STALIN'S HEIRS FEAR TROTSKY'S IDEAS

By Mike Waddington

Yuri Andropov, the butcher of the Hungarian uprising in 1956, one-time head of the KGB and now leader of the Soviet Union has had "second thoughts" about repression. A trial of six dissidents has been postponed now three times.

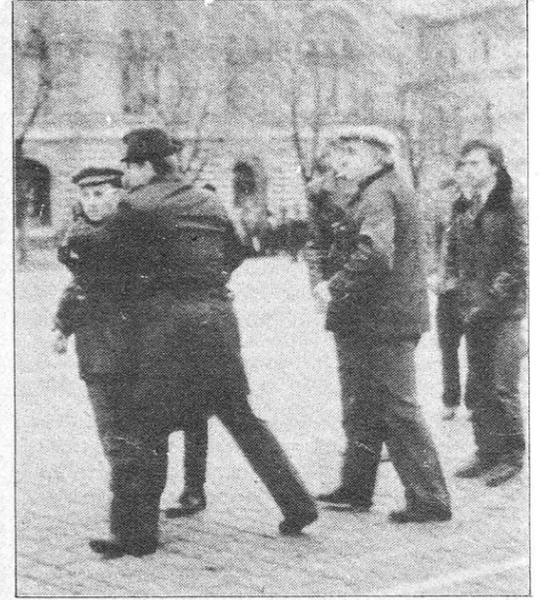
The 'crime' of these six young men is to have organised a discussion group of about 40 people and discussed why the Soviet Union is not a socialist country. They are charged with slandering the Soviet state and forming an illegal organisation.

What is worse for Andropov is that the participants in the group are sons and daughters of the bureaucracy. One defendant is the son of an army officer, another the son of a leading literary critic and the rest are sons of high ranking party or government officials.

Leaders afraid of future

This new generation, sickened by the privileges of the elite to which they belong, argue "that far from achieving communism, the system has produced a new ruling class which exploited the working masses" (Richard Owen, *The Times*, February 1983).

This certainly explains why the "gerontocracy" is frightened of handing any



A banner is unfurled in Red Square, Moscow and immediately members of the almost million strong secret police pounce on the demonstrator. But how much longer can Andropov and the bureaucracy keep the lid on the working class?

power over to the younger generations and this latest development will no doubt raise even higher the average age of the ruling bureaucrats!

The Times further comments, "It is striking that the socialist discussion group was drawn from the sons of Russia's 'Communist elite'. In a certain sense this mirrors the 'hippie' movement in the West in the 1960's—beginning with the upper reaches of society, representing a questioning then the rejection of privilege."

Indeed the group has adopted some of the ideas of the so-called "New left" of the '60s Marcuse, Sartre etc. "There is also a strong strain of sympathy for Trotsky, and in particular for Trotsky's critique of the 'betrayal of the revolution' by Stalin".

Here is Andropov's problem. His credentials for repression are perfect but the

overheads in this instance could be substantial; to be accused of Trotskyism poses the question, who was Trotsky? What did he stand for?

For again as *The Times* comments, "If and when Andropov does finally sanction a trial he will be taking the risk that the young socialists' views will become far more widely known both at home and abroad than they would have been had he left them in obscurity."

Political revolution

It is indeed ironic that the very methods of Stalinism used to exterminate Trotskyism could provide the vehicle for reintroducing Trotsky's ideas—however distorted their judicial airing may be.

This is what Andropov fears most. The working class Trotsky attempted to rally in the 1920's in Russia was small and demoralised



Yuri Andropov

following the isolation of the revolution to one economically backward nation.

Now after half a century of industrial development the proletariat is the most mighty battalion of Russian society, the average Soviet citizen today lives in the city and works in industry.

Their voice is unheard. But the capitalist press have just given a glimpse at a process in Soviet society, the re-education of a layer of workers in the basic ideas of Marxism for the removal of the bureaucracy who stifle the planned economy they infest themselves on, depriving it of the democratic "oxygen" of workers' power.

Through the process of political revolutions, the working class could transform Russia and the East European countries into a real socialist inspiration to workers everywhere.

For a Marxist analysis of Russian society read *Bureaucratism or Workers' Power* by Roger Silverman and Ted Grant, from World Socialist Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace London E8 3PN. Price 75p including postage.

Other Militant publications

all prices inclusive of postage and packing

Stalinism & Bolshevism
By Leon Trotsky 40p

China
By Peter Taaffe 30p

Cuba
By Peter Taaffe 30p

In Defence of October
By Leon Trotsky 40p

SRI LANKA - When the phoney boom ends

Following the presidential victory in October for J.R. Jayawardena, the leader of the right-wing United National Party (UNP) a referendum in December obtained a majority for extending the life of Sri Lanka's Parliament without elections for 6 years.

As *Militant* reported, the period before the referendum saw unprecedented violence and intimidation. Opposition newspapers were closed down, the leading organisers of the main opposition party SLFP, arrested and political and trade union activists beaten up, and mass impersonation of voters.

In some cases events bordered on the farcical. One would-be impersonator forgot who he was supposed to impersonate. When challenged by the presiding officer with the support of a policeman a UNP MP drew a gun on the policeman!

Taking impersonations and intimidation into account, the 54.9% of votes in favour of Jayawardena's

proposal probably represented an actual defeat for the government, but the vote nevertheless represents a significant defeat for the left. Why was this?

"Cheapest labour in the world"

The coming to power of the UNP in 1977 led to the opening of the economy to international big business. A free trade zone was created north of Colombo, where foreign firms could use what the government boasted as the cheapest labour in the world, with unrestricted profits. The aim was to make Sri Lanka another Singapore or South Korea.

Massive foreign loans were forthcoming on the basis of these policies. Together with money sent back by workers in the Middle East, a tourism boom and a relatively favourable situation for Sri Lankan exports, this has pushed up economic growth rates. Despite high inflation and drastic government cuts, the availability of the trading

sector has given an illusion of well-being to the economy.

However, the victory for the right in the presidential election would not have been possible if not for the failure of the traditional left parties. The main workers' party, the LSSP, was in coalition with the capitalist SLFP, before 1977 and was held jointly responsible in the eyes of workers for the economic crisis at the time. When the UNP came to power in 1977 it could even pose as 'socialist' because of the disillusion with the previous government.

Not only did LSSP lose all its parliamentary seats but the dominant position in the trade union movement has been eroded. The UNP union, the JSS, has supplanted it in many areas, using control over jobs and promotions and thug tactics.

But despite the superficially strong position of the ruling class, its more far-sighted representatives realise the potential strength of a mass movement of opposition. J.R. Jayawardena, seeing the danger of the masses, denied parliamentary representation

resorting to extra-parliamentary action, has promised elections in seats where the UNP were in a minority in the two recent elections.

Meanwhile, another wing of the UNP, represented by the Prime Minister Premadasa, considers Parliament a redundant luxury and would like to settle accounts with the working class by violent means.

Marxist traditions

Whatever their differences in tactics, the ruling class is united in waiting to suppress any popular movements in order to allow capitalism a free rein. In March a meeting of 400 women was closed down and a planned march banned by the government. Increasingly the government will attempt to remove any remaining political or trade union rights.

However the favourable period for the ruling class is coming to an end. Interest

and debt repayments on colossal foreign loans are taking a rapidly growing proportion of government revenue—25% in 1981, 33% in 1982. The opening up of the economy, far from stimulating local industry, has probably caused a decline, as foreign competition and higher profits from trade have caused local investment to shift away from industry.

Sri Lanka is now importing almost twice as much as it exports. All the country's external assets would only finance 2½ months imports. The Finance Minister, Ronnie De Mel, has stated the International Monetary Fund conditions for further support—20% devaluation. This will only worsen Sri Lanka's position as imports become more expensive without any real boost to exports.

After the defeat of the 1980 general strike the workers' movement is also recovering. The short boom period has partially healed the wounds caused by the defeated strike and new sections of the population have been drawn into the working

class.

In mid-December 5,000 dockers in Colombo struck over a bonus demand. Many workers expect a few hundred rupees bonus at Christmas. The dockers demanded Rs 5,000! In January the workers at a large tourist hotel, the Mount Lavinia, went on strike. Significantly these last 2 strikes were called by the JSS, the UNP union!

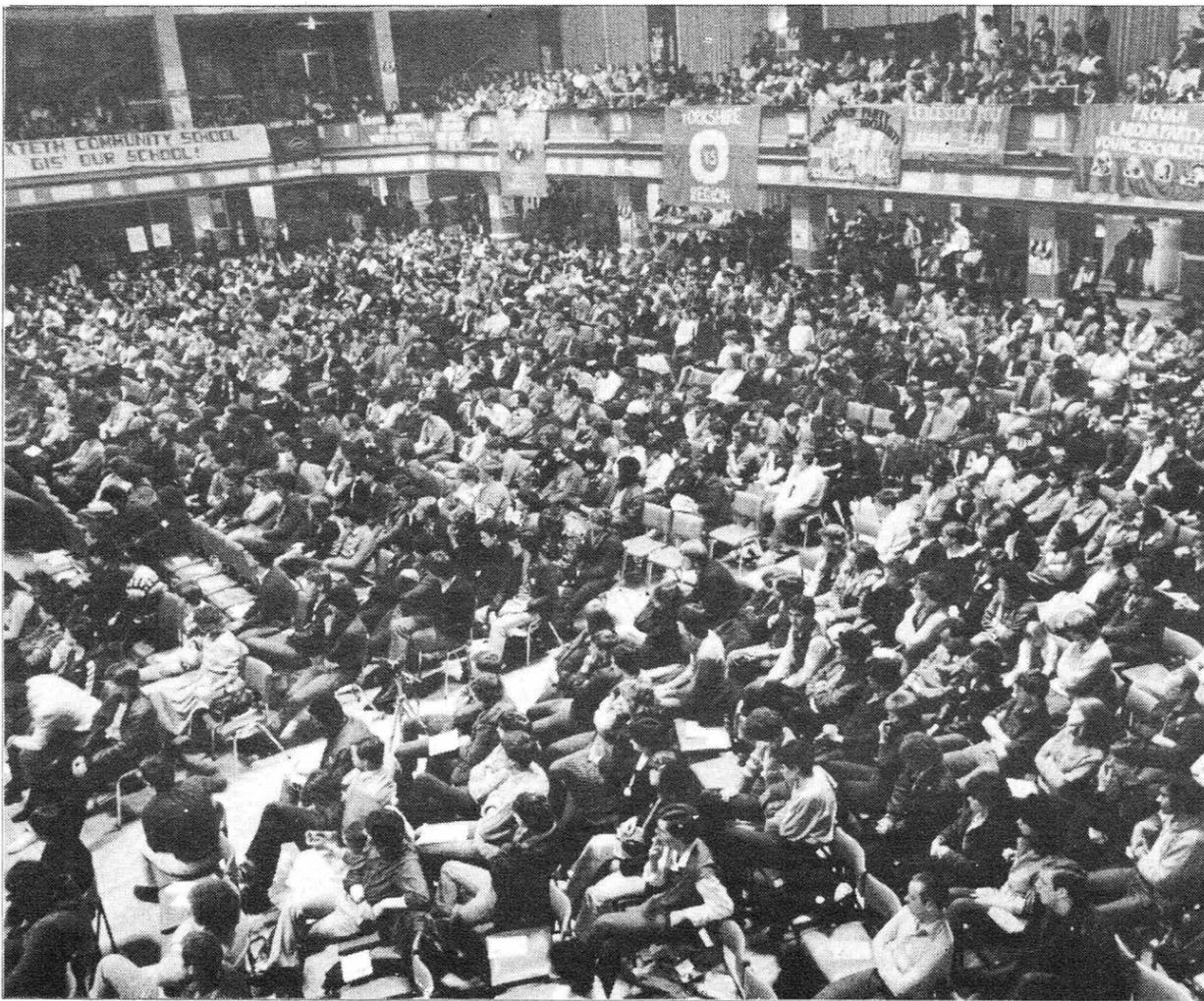
With the end of the 'boom' the ruling class are forced to launch stringent attacks on living standards in line with IMF policy. Workers will be drawn into the struggle and draw political conclusions. Memories of past defeats will disappear as the militant Marxist traditions of the working class re-assert themselves.

As a leader of the Marxist Workers' Party, the NSSP, put it to me, "When the budget and other measures are announced, that's when workers will wear their red shirts once again".

By Jim Hensman

Letters

**VIEWS? COMMENTS? EXPERIENCES?
 CRITICISM? WRITE ABOUT THEM TO**
MILITANT, Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN



Too much

Dear Comrades,

After reading the views expressed in *Militant*, I have contacted my local LPYS with a view to joining, I also plan to attend the LPYS national conference at the weekend.

One of the things you stand for which I find interesting is that MPs should accept the average wage of a skilled worker. I think you should include in this union leaders.

earn £3,490 per year and the General Secretary of our union, the CPSA, earns £22,201 per year plus a London weighting of £1,144, and

many unions pay more for their leaders.

Members pay their subs each week to defend their living standards and working conditions not to line the pockets of their leaders.

Yours fraternally,
 Martin Fenton,
 Pontefract.

A real pleasure

Dear Comrades,

I attended my first LPYS national conference this year in Bridlington and I feel I must write and say what a great feeling of solidarity I got.

When I saw the 2,000 fellow working class comrades there, as an unemployed bloke of 24 it gave me great pleasure knowing that there is a real chance of defeating Thatcher and her class.

When I returned home I was out for a quiet pint when a young lad who had been on a YOP scheme asked me what we stood for after seeing my Karl Marx Militant Badge.

After a short talk he now wants a regular copy of the paper and is coming to a YS meeting tonight.

Yours fraternally,
 Ivor Knowles,
 Redcar and Teeside LPYS

Watch it Denis!

Dear Comrades,

Members of my YS branch wrote to complain to the NEC about the witch-hunt. This is their reply, "Good socialists in membership of the Labour Party do not establish organisations within the Party which operate against the provisions of our constitution".

If you're reading, Denis Healey, old son, I should keep your head down lest someone proscribes the Bilderberg Group.

Yours fraternally,
 Olwen Davies,
 Grimsby LPYS.

Waiting for the SS

Dear Comrades,

The other day I was wasting an afternoon trying to get an interview at the Supplementary Benefit Office.

Suddenly voices were raised at the reception desk. Not that that's anything unusual: the receptionist sits behind a glass screen like he's guarding the Crown Jewels and the chair you sit in is bolted to the floor. You get the feeling they expect trouble!

This time a man had come to find out why his Giro hadn't been sent. He was fac-

ed with having to pay the rent and had no money.

The man was shouting, wanting to know what he was meant to pay the rent with, why it took so long to process his claim, and couldn't he be paid in the meantime?

In the end the receptionist said "Look, there's nothing I can do. It's not my fault the powers that be won't let us have enough staff to deal with people's claims properly." Immediately the claimant, who was both angry and worried, agreed that it wasn't the receptionist's fault.

Even the other people who

had been waiting all afternoon were sympathetic and started saying how it wasn't the fault of DHSS workers that they couldn't cope.

Perhaps we should all get together and put the Tories on the dole. On second thoughts—would they be eligible?

Yours fraternally,
 Dave Backwith,
 Poole CLP

Daily Mail disgrace

Dear Comrades,

The recent episode with the *Daily Mail* reporter at the LPYS national conference highlights the disgraceful treatment of issues like the Irish debate by the press generally.

It really shows the need to nationalise press facilities and distribute them fairly amongst all political parties.

Yours fraternally,
 Steven Sims,
 South Normanton LPYS.

Pit closures threaten communities

Dear Comrades,

The people of Lewis Methyr or any other pit village threatened with extinction would do well to observe the experience of Blackhall Colliery in County Durham where the pit closed down last year.

The young school leavers of Blackhall who would normally have proudly followed their fathers into the pit find the local mines overcrowded with men transfer-

red from Blackhall and so taking on few or no youngsters; it doesn't take a genius to calculate the destiny of an industry starved of youth.

While the pubs and clubs of Blackhall wage a futile battle for falling trade the once thriving shops have become 'Video Libraries' and 'Amusement Arcades', dealing in what seems to be the only profitable business—boredom killing.

The message from Blackhall to the communities threatened by the NCB's hit-list is still "fight".

Yours fraternally,
 Malcolm Fallow
 Blackhall Ward LP.

Edward Du Hattersley

Talking to the forces

Dear Comrades,

I wonder why Edward Du Cann, Tory MP, on *Newsnight* talked of "nice, decent Roy Hattersley" who has had Labour's recent policy document "forced on him by the left".

Comradely,
 Gary Freeman
 Leicester West CLP

The first crowded photo

Dear Comrades,

The fact that Marx's analysis of society is drawn from the living experience of working people, was well demonstrated in your choice of a photo to illustrate the centre-page article in *Militant* (issue 640).

I have a larger copy of that same photo, a mass demonstration of Chartists at Kennington Common, London in 1848.

Two things about it are particularly interesting. Firstly, it is the oldest known crowd photograph in the world. But secondly, as is clearly shown in the larger version, those 20,000 Chartists had been mobilised around a stage on which the slogan is "Labour—the source of all wealth".

Yours fraternally,
 Dave Nellist,
 West Midlands
 County Councillor,
 Coventry SE CLP.

Dear Comrade,

Two young sailors I met on a train a little while ago made it plain to me that socialists should not just write rank and file service people off.

They noticed my *Militant* badge and asked me what the Labour Party and *Militant* were doing. They said they'd joined the navy because there weren't any jobs outside.

They both said how they hated going to sea, but didn't have any choice. When I said the LPYS supported trade union rights for the armed forces, they laughed and said "that would be a good idea, but then hardly anyone would have gone to the Falklands if they'd been in a union."

Laughingly, one of them said he'd annoy his petty officer and read the *Militant* in front of him. "He's a real navy man, everything's for the navy, not like us."

Yours fraternally,
 Jenny Steer
 NGA (S.W. Peninsula)
 and Devonport LPYS
 Plymouth.

Caring, sharing, exclusive Co-op

Dear Militant,

Socialists will be appalled at the expulsion of Steve Higham from the Co-operative Party as described in *Militant* No. 645. My own experiences lead me to suspect a lack of democracy in the Co-operative Party under its current leadership.

I applied to join the Co-op Party (Liverpool Branch) in December 1981, and in February 1982 was told by letter that my application was deferred "Until such a time as the Co-operative Party and the Labour Party have resolved their relationships with the Militant Tendency."

On the 3rd March 1982 I submitted an appeal to the Co-op Party nationally, and was informed by their National Secretary on 23rd March that the necessary Appeals Procedure was to be initiated, and inviting me to submit an amplified appeal, which I did on 5 May 1982.

To this date I have heard nothing further from the Co-op Party nationally, or locally, over two years since I applied to join.

Yours fraternally,
 Roger Bannister
 Broad Green CLP
 (personal capacity)



Trampled

Dear Comrades,

The witch-hunt has had an enormous effect on our paper sales.

The street sales especially show awareness amongst people of what is going on inside the Labour Party.

Even a tramp who must have read one of the capitalist newspapers before using it as bedding approached me for a paper, giving me £2 for it.

Yours fraternally,
 Anil Singh,
 NW Leeds.

Immediately definite plans were made by the Liberal/Tory controlled Liverpool City Council last November to turn over the refuse collection and street sweeping to private contractors, we called a meeting of all the convenors the GMBATU within Liverpool City Council.

There are eleven branches in the council, representing over 8,000 members, the largest union within Liverpool City Council.

We recognised from the beginning that the only effective way to fight privatisation would be through a collective struggle involving other departments.

As the largest union in the council, and with the largest membership in cleansing (1200 GMBATU, 100 TGWU drivers) it was necessary to consolidate our own members first before we had the right to ask other trade unions for support.

We decided to immediately produce a leaflet for GMBATU members which explained the threat of privatisation, and the need for united action to defeat it. We raised the money ourselves through donations from the branches. The leaflet was written by us and 8,000 copies were distributed within one week of the convenors meeting.

We did the job ourselves because if we waited for our union to do something, it would have taken too long. Much to our surprise, 3 months later the union agreed to pay for the leaflets.

We also decided to call a meeting of all GMBATU shop stewards within Liverpool City Council to discuss the question of privatisation. 100 of 120 stewards attended.

At that meeting we elected a privatisation co-ordinating committee consisting of 3 representatives from each branch, plus the three full time officials who have responsibility for Liverpool City Council branches.

The committee has met regularly since its inception in December, despite attempts by the full time officials to disband it.

We sought a commitment from our NEC that in the event of our members taking strike action to defeat privatisation, the official backing as promised by our Annual Congress, would be forthcoming.

Our NEC replied saying that in the first instance we should try and negotiate a deal with the council, along the same lines as in Birmingham (where the unions negotiated 250 redundancies and cuts in wages to avoid privatisation).

We rejected unanimously this "advice", and passed a resolution which pointed out that privatisation is a political issue, not an economic issue, and that it could only be fought by industrial and political action. It is not the job of the union to negotiate redundancies and cuts in wages, and we called on our leaders to positively encourage members to take action and to give official support to any members who did take action against privatisation. We decided to call a mass meeting of all 8,000 GMBATU members, having already leafletted them. The meeting would take a vote on all out strike action if the council decided to go ahead

Battling against Privatisation

GMBATU stewards at Liverpool City Council spoke to Wayne Jones

with privatisation.

We were informed by the EC that we could not have a mass meeting, and that if we wanted official backing for action we would have to hold an individual ballot of members. After a very heated debate by the committee, it was agreed by a majority vote to request permission to ballot all members. We did not want to give the NEC any reason to renege on the union's policy of official backing for those members who took action against privatisation.

Up to now only refuse collectors and street sweepers have had permission to ballot. We have used the time we have to hold meetings in various departments to prepare the members.

We also recognise that the fight against privatisation doesn't just involve GMBATU, it involves all council workers. We know that if the council gets away with the privatisation of the cleansing department, no individual's job is safe.

No compromises

That is why we are fully involved in the Liverpool City Council Joint Shop Stewards Committee, which represents all council unions, covering 30,000 members.

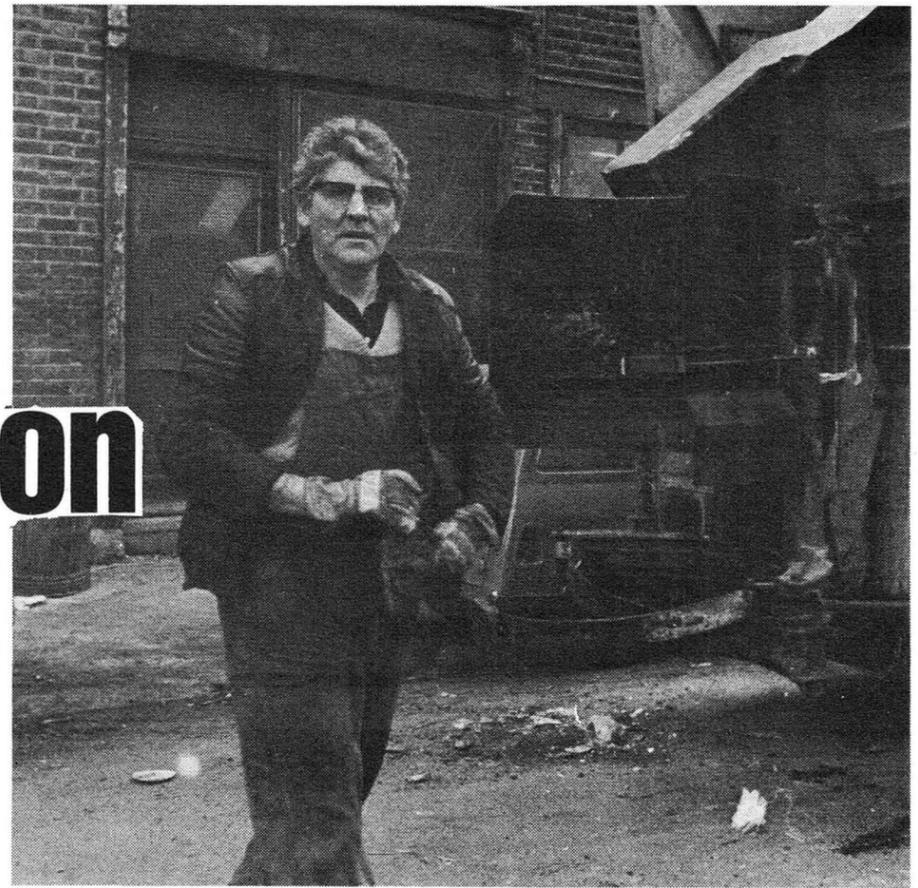
When we raised the question of privatisation at the Joint Stewards Committee, the Communist Party members and their co-thinkers, were hesitant as usual. They suggested that a

compromise could be done with the council to avoid privatisation. We totally rejected this idea, and successfully moved a resolution which called for a leaflet to go out to all 30,000 council workers, explaining the threat of privatisation, and the need for united action to defeat it. We put a resolution which called for an all out strike by all council workers on the day when the council meets to make its decision on privatisation, and in the event of the council going ahead with privatisation, the strike to continue indefinitely. This resolution was carried, and now commits every union to call mass meetings to put the proposals to their members.

If an all out strike becomes necessary, we will take whatever steps necessary to tie the city up. It's going to be the sort of fight that will be won or lost within a couple of weeks. The question of effective picketing will be crucial.

Over in the Wirral, the council has decided to introduce privatisation of refuse cleaning and street sweeping. The unions put in a tender for their own jobs (in line with national advice). The tender was on the basis of a reduced workforce and lower wages. The unions bid was undercut by the contractors, so now all of the refuse collectors and street sweepers have had their redundancy notices. The unions voted for selective strike action in key departments, leaving the majority of members in work, and levying them £1.00 per week.

They are at the stage we



Council services have been systematically run down over the past few years in order to discredit the workforce and make arguments for privatisation easier.

were five years ago. We tried that tactic during the winter of discontent and realised very quickly, that it was the wrong tactic because certain key sections were taking the brunt of the struggle on their shoulders.

For example, the grave diggers and crematorium workers were getting all the abuse from the public and the media, but other workers were just paying £1 per week conscience money, weren't really involved, and didn't really see it as their struggle.

We need to involve all workers in the struggle, however we will be exempting certain workers from strike action such as people who look after handicapped children in residential homes etc.

Labour councillors have supported us every step of the way. Labour Party speakers have addressed our meetings and given encouragement and support. Our union gave £1,000 to the Liverpool District Labour Party to put out a news-sheet on privatisation.

We are liaising with local Labour Parties in the city about putting out leaflets in marginal wards over privatisation, and possibly arranging public meetings in

working class areas. Over 50 council workers turned out on a freezing cold night to distribute leaflets.

In the cleansing department the men have been offered a new bonus scheme which involves the loss of 400 jobs, and up to £15 loss of earnings. The council have also stated that even if this new bonus scheme is accepted there is no guarantee that they will not go ahead with privatisation. The full time officials recommended this "new deal" to a mass meeting of over 1000 refuse workers and street sweepers.

Reject all job losses

The full time officials take the view that if you have a thousand workers and you agree to 250 redundancies to avoid privatisation, you've saved 750 jobs—what we say is that you've not saved 750 jobs but you've lost 250 and we are not in business to sell our members jobs. When the vote was taken, the officials' recommendation was overwhelmingly defeated with

only about 20 votes in favour.

A number of men suggested there and then that a vote should be taken for strike action. The full time officials argued that it wouldn't be made official unless there was a ballot. It was agreed by the meeting that a ballot would be held as soon as possible.

Two weeks after the refuse collectors and street sweepers rejected the new bonus scheme no progress had been made on the ballot. A number of stewards who were frustrated at this, went to see the regional secretary to persuade him to commence the ballot. The ballot was held on 30 March 1983.

A number of stewards suggested that a mass meeting be called, the meeting would be addressed by the stewards and the ballot done there and then. The officials pointed out that they had negotiated with the City Council management that each man could have half a day off with pay to travel to the regional offices to cast their vote individually. This meant some people having to travel 6 or 7 miles to vote!

On arriving at the regional offices, members were given a ballot paper, and a document which outlined the council's new bonus scheme. They were asked to read the document before voting. It stated that the officials were recommending acceptance of the new bonus scheme which meant the loss of 400 jobs, and up to £15 per week cut in wages.

Yet the majority of men voted to reject the "new bonus scheme" and voted for strike action. Unfortunately the vote was short by 72 votes, of the two thirds majority required for official strike action.

The council is due to meet on the 27 April, to approve one of the tenders from the private firms for the refuse collection. We will be calling on all council workers to take strike action on that day, and to stay out on strike until the council retreats. We realise that it will be one hell of a fight, but we are still optimistic that we will win the fight.

GENERAL, MUNICIPAL, BOILERMAKERS AND ALLIED TRADES UNION

SAY 'NO' TO PRIVATISATION

WHAT IS PRIVATISATION?

Simply it means taking Public Services, like Refuse Collection, away from the direct control of the Council and letting Private Companies do the job.

Would this be better for the City? The Rate Payers? Or for the Council Work Force? The answer on all three accounts is an emphatic:

NO.

WOULD IT BE CHEAPER NO.

Don't be fooled by the politician's promises of thousands of pounds saving. It won't happen, Private Companies would submit low initial tenders to secure the contract and once established would then increase their charges to you. Evidence from other parts of the country shows that once a Private Company has the contract, cost to local industry, to schools, to householders actually increases.

WILL IT PROVIDE A BETTER SERVICE NO.

The main concern of Private Companies is Private Profit, not Public Service. In one council, where street cleaning was put out to private contract, over 50 default notices per day were served for jobs not done or not done to the required standard.



Industrial Reports

USDAW - a strategy to stop Tories

For the delegates representing the 417,000 USDAW members, this year's ADM (conference) will clearly show the massive problems facing shopworkers.

We have to decide a strategy on how to combat these attacks. Every problem retail distribution workers face can be traced to the continuing attacks of Thatcher's government.

USDAW must take up the challenge by waging a campaign with other unions in retail distribution (involving over two million workers) for a minimum wage of £95 a week, and a maximum working week of 35 hours as proposed in proposition 34 by Newcastle, which calls for a national delegate conference on low pay to decide tactics.

The motion suggests a campaign involving local and national rallies, meetings and demonstrations, culminating in a 24-hour general strike of all low paid workers. USDAW ADM has called for a national low pay campaign for years, but no lead has been forthcoming. This motion spells out the fighting approach which our union needs to take.

The vast majority of members would rally to a determined stand. The 1983 election results so far known show a leftward shift on the executive council with the Broad Left winning two additional seats. The executive council now has six left wingers, though still outnumbered by 11 others.

The presidency election gave sitting members Syd Tierney a comfortable victory. Tierney 222,806, Price 60,647. Jeff Price stood as a supporter of *Militant*, and Broad Left candidate. Although 21% of the vote is nowhere near winning, *Militant* supporters in the union accept the result as a good start in Jeff's first attempt in what was always an uphill struggle against a well-known incumbent. *Militant* supporters are confident that this vote can be built on.

The largest section of the agenda deals with the Labour Party, and overwhelmingly supports democratisation of the Parliamentary Labour Party, extension of the activity of the Labour Party Young Socialists, and opposes expulsion of socialists.

This debate focuses on the need for Labour to unite to win the next general election. But questions remain regarding USDAW's role in bringing about a witch-hunt at this crucial time. Why did USDAW's delegation to 1982 LP conference vote against the spirit of the decision of last year's ADM to oppose expulsions and witch-hunts in the party? Why does the USDAW rep on Labour's NEC continue to oppose USDAW policy on this issue?

The executive council have produced various policy statements. 'Wages and Economic Policy' outlines the economic situation and

By George Williamson

(Eastern Divisional Councillor)

how the Tory government has reduced living standards. Its conclusions however, show the executive council have no real concept how to tackle the crisis of the British economy.

The policies it envisages a new Labour government carrying out bear no resemblance to those carried at ADM and Labour Party conference. It calls for reflation of the economy, by £29 billion over five years; taxing the rich; cutting spending on defence, and borrowing money from abroad. The leadership has learned nothing from the last Labour government which was forced to carry through a reduction in workers' living standards and which paved the way for Thatcher.

An alternative is posed in proposition 70 by Blackpool Woolworth's, which recognises that nothing short of a complete break with the present economic system, involving the nationalisation of the top 200 major monopolies under workers' control and management, can guarantee permanent eradication of poverty and deteriorating living standards in Britain.

In the last ADM before the next general election, USDAW will no doubt commit itself to maximum financial and practical help to ensure a Labour victory, but our involvement needs to go further, to ensure the next Labour government carries out policies in the interests of USDAW members and their families. We should make sure union policy is fought for at all levels of the Labour Party. The party would then be sure of a huge response from the mass of the union's members.

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USDAW *Militant* Readers' Meeting

Hear: Peter Taaffe (Editor, *Militant*); Jeff Price (Broad Left Presidential candidate, Newcastle ADM delegate). Monday 25 April, 7.30 pm Foyer Bar, Opera House (Winter Gardens Complex). ALL WELCOME

Littlewoods

Littlewoods is another company which threatens the livelihoods of USDAW members. Nearly 2,000 jobs are at risk through "invitations" for voluntary redundancies. Workers have sacrificed for years to keep jobs. Average take home pay is £55 per week, without overtime and bonus is becoming harder and harder to achieve. It's hardly a case of workers pricing themselves out of the market. Workers at Littlewoods want to fight but a strong USDAW will make that struggle that much easier.



Inaugural meeting of the Kraft Action Committee

Photo: John Smith (IFL)

KRAFT - 100% RESISTANCE

By Keith Narey

WORKERS at Kraft Foods, Kirkby, intend to resist the company's 930 planned redundancies by every means in their power.

Stewards representing all unions, thirteen in all, on the site have reported 100% backing from their members. They are refusing to talk to the company about redundancy terms and are mounting an opposition campaign on trade union and political fronts.

The Action Committee is determined firstly to discover the real reasons for the company decision. The great bulk of Kirkby production is for the UK market yet the company is planning to transfer production to Namur in Belgium (they had a trial production run of Dairylea, sold only in Britain there on 14 April) to be imported back into Britain.

Another thing to investigate will be the role of

the company Acatos and Hutchinson, rumoured to have at least one Kraft director on their board. This company has recently bought three edible oil refineries, one of them from Kraft. All the unions are to play their part in investigating the background to the company's strategy in Britain and internationally so the company's arguments can be countered openly and politically.

The ruling Labour group in Knowsley and the Merseyside County Council are giving full support, as is Merseyside group of Labour MPs. The workers realise the support of fellow trade unionists will probably be a decisive factor and are making plans accordingly.

Messages of support to Dick Caton, union convenor Kraft Foods, Moorgate Road, Kirkby, Merseyside.

Yorkshire workers fight Tebbit laws

Aire Valley

SHOUTS of "Scab, scab" resounded through the quiet streets of Farsley, a small backwater of Leeds.

The strike of 22 Asian workers at Aire Valley Yarns Ltd. took a sharp turn with the decision of bosses of Atlantic Yarns to issue writs against the T&GWU, the National Organiser of the Textile sections, Derek Booth and Peter Attack, shop steward at Yarn Dyers, Charles Busfield & Co. Ltd, Guisely.

Atlantic Yarns, woollen yarns spinners operates from the same Cape Mills as Aire Valley. They were seeking an injunction to restrain action and for damages, because T&G members at Charles Busfield have taken action in support of their brothers at Aire Valley.

Since the dispute started on 14 March, over the sacking of T&G shop steward Liaquat Ali, management have been ferrying scab

workers in and out on each shift. They have aggressively accelerated on approaching the picket line, to give strikers no possibility of explaining their case to the workers.

The police are giving scabs full protection. On Sunday evening there were six vanloads of police parked across the road blocking one side of the street to protect two car loads going in and out.

Support is building up from the local labour movement with financial donations and help on the picket line at change of shift. The workers are determined to stick out for their rights.

These cowboy bosses are using this dispute as a 'test case' for Tebbit's anti-union laws. Victory for the bosses on this would be a severe blow to the unions' fight. All support, resolutions and donations to L Ali, 34 Dirkhill Road, Bradford 7.

By Jane Ingham

(West Leeds Labour Party)

PS. On Tuesday 19 April, Atlantic Yarns adjourned indefinitely their writ against the unions and union officials.

Hindle Gears, Bradford

A DISPUTE at Hindle Gears, Bradford reaches its seventh week with new evidence of how Tebbit's new Employment Act is being used to try and smash union organisation.

Workers at this plant who have received pay increases only a third of the rise in the cost of living over the last three years were told on 10 March after entering procedure for a wage rise that 35 of their members plus the shop steward would be made redundant. At this breach of procedure the union agreed to strike.

This was made official by the AUEW. Since then numerous threats have been made including loss of holiday pay (none was paid for Easter). Letters were sent to workers' wives saying jobs would be lost and the factory closed. They only served to harden determination.

However, on 14 April the managing director personally signed letters of dismissal to the 43 employees on strike, a blatant attempt to destroy organisation at the

Bradford plant, the only one unionised.

Already blacking has been organised through the TGWU but support and especially cash is needed. Donations to AUEW District Office, 2 Claremont, Bradford. Bradford Trades Council have called for a mass picket on Friday 22 April at 7.00 am in support of Hindle's workers.

Merton strike

NUPE have called a day strike in the London Borough of Merton on Wednesday 27 April against the local council's proposals to ditch the school meals service, sell off school cleaning and sack caretakers. The local government area committee of the union have called a day of action to back up the strike. A demonstration starts from the War Memorial, Wimbledon Common (top of Wimbledon Hill) at 1 pm.

Industrial Reports

FIRE BRIGADES HIT BACK AT TORIES

INDUSTRIAL action by the Fire Brigades Union looks inevitable. The Home Office have informed our executive committee that an increase in employee contributions of 4% will be imposed on 5 May.

This arbitrary increase amounts to a £20 a month pay cut, putting up monthly contributions to well over £60. The government originally intended this last November when the pay formula was finally agreed, to cut the pay award from 7.5% to 3.5% and leaving £1.00 a week rise in the pocket of the average fireman.

This is an attack on the pay formula, won after the 9-week strike in 1977/78. Ever since Thatcher came in the Tories have been trying to smash the formula, which automatically put firemen in the upper quartile of manual workers, guaranteeing us the average wage increase of a top 25% of manual workers' and a 42-hour week.

The first attempt came in November 1980, when the Tory controlled National Joint Council (NJC) tried to impose a 6% settlement. The FBU immediately went on a work-to-rule of emergency calls only, and shortly after prepared for a series of one-day strikes.

The employers then conceded defeat and granted a 13.5% rise—albeit in two parts.



The FBU won a pay formula through industrial action in 1977/78. The Tories now want to end it by backdoor methods Photo: Militant

The Tories are now attempting to smash the pay formula through increased contributions. The pension scheme is controlled through the Home Office, and contributions are increased by a statutory instrument, which is then written into the Fire Services Act.

The FBU employed an ac-

tuatory to analyse facts and figures used in the government's argument, and prove beyond a doubt to the FBU and the Joint Pensions Committee that the proposed increase were not justified.

But the government seems intent on pressing ahead. Scandalously, the only difference between the Tories

on the NJC and the Labour majority is that the Tories wanted an increase in November whilst Labour wanted a phased increase.

The NJC and the government should understand that firemen will fight hard to defend living standards.

We now have an indication of support through the TUC

local government sub-committee. With solidarity, we can deliver a crushing blow to Thatcher.

By Bob Pounder
(FBU branch secretary,
Stalybridge,
Greater Manchester)

Stop APEX witch-hunt

THE ECONOMIC policies of the Tories have seen a vicious attack on the living standards and on the jobs of APEX members. When the Tories came to power in 1979 APEX membership stood at 152,000. Within 3 years membership has dropped by a staggering 44,000.

The present leadership have been unable to provide the policy and programme to fight back against the bosses. The leadership needs to arm the union with policies to fight redundancies. They should raise the demands of a) open the books and b) nationalise any companies that

mean redundancies.

Instead of fighting redundancies, our union leaders seemed to have preferred to concentrate their efforts on witch-hunting socialists out of the Labour Party and trade union movement. Over the heads of the membership and without any discussion outside of the executive council the leading body of APEX has decided to add *Militant* to its "list of proscribed organisations". This was revealed, in executive council minutes, dated 17, 18, and 19 March 1983, as a mere five-line sub-section of minute 37/'83 headed

"Committee of Enquiry" (see last week's *Militant* 646).

The proscribed list is seen by many members as a means of operating thought control in the union and to prevent the discussion of ideas. *Militant* has, for example, been consistent in arguing against the Tebbit bill, a major issue in the union, and yet the Tory party or the SDP who are in favour of this bill are not on their proscribed list.

Following their decision the executive council can implement Rule 15, headed expulsion. This rule states,

"members can be expelled from the union or fined an amount up to £50". But the executive council are trying to amend this rule at this year's conference to add "suspension from holding any office in the union". Of course in this most democratic union any such member would have the right of appeal. In 1979 this right of appeal was the Annual Conference. But at subsequent conferences this was amended to a right of appeal to an "appeal committee".

This ruling has serious consequences as the executive council could now expel any members of the

union if it decides he or she is connected with *Militant*, which could easily result in members losing their jobs, where they work in closed shops.

This same leadership accuses *Militant* of being unfaithful to Labour whilst Roy Grantham, the general secretary, in his editorial in the April 1982 issue of the union journal *APEX* supported the idea of a coalition government with the anti-trade union SDP.

APEX members will not be isolated from the general mood of anger against the bosses and the shift to the left in the Labour Party and trade unions.

TELECOMMS

POEU branches have shown full support for the official selective industrial action of Westminster and London City branches against denationalisation.

For over three years, the government and Tory-inspired board have whittled away at our industry and the power of the unions.

The Broad Left, over three years ago, warned that the attack on our industry would commence in stages, and we should resist any attack on the public monopoly by industrial action. Although this became union

policy it has never been implemented.

The right have argued that action will only encourage the Tories to press on but the opposite has been true. Encouraged by few signs of resistance they have stepped up their fight to fully privatise BT.

A *Militant* supporter, Phil Lloyd, moved on the POEU NEC two years ago that a membership and public campaign should be begun and that we should warn the government to drop its ideas before it felt committed by draft legislation. **Hopefully, we would thus avoid the need for industrial action.**

Unfortunately, the right

ignored this advice, but branches of the POEU have been able to pressurise the NEC into mounting a campaign at last. Now action has started, we must ensure our brothers taking action are not isolated.

The government must be told, in no uncertain terms, that action will be escalated, to hit their financial backers if they do not withdraw the Telecom Bill. Branches should be sent thousands of leaflets to explain to the public why we are taking action. This should have been done already.

The national levy must be implemented. Finance is the sinews of war. We should be mounting protest solidarity strikes, in a different region each day! Protest action and massive publicity in support of serious selective industrial

action is now vitally necessary.

The London URC (Union Regional Council) should also meet at least weekly, to discuss the action, give support, and prepare for escalation and keep up pressure on the NEC. London is a world financial centre. Rank and file POEU representatives should have a major say in the direction of the action.

In the meantime the POEU NEC should stop any further moves by BT which leads the industry to privatisation. In particular, small branches have been severely affected by BT's area re-organisation, designed to break our union's power and prepare the way to identify and hive off profitable sectors.

The full power of the

union should have been used to stop area re-organisation. Instead, branches have been left to go it alone on the pretext that the "union cannot fight on too many fronts at once"! All further re-organisation should be stopped, including

IN AN excellent initiative, Westminster POEU called a special branch meeting in works time in support of the industrial action against the privatisation of British Telecomm.

Over 1700 members were at the meeting. A proposition was passed unanimously welcoming the NEC decision to start a campaign of selective industrial action against the Telecomm Bill and the refusal to connect

TILBURY DOCKS

2,000 TILBURY dockers have now been on strike for six weeks demanding parity of basic pay with PLA clerks.

The strength of feeling has taken the Port of London Authority completely by surprise. An improved offer, which referred to "comparability" by 1 January 1985, recommended by TGWU officials, was rejected at a mass meeting after 4 weeks on strike.

A thousand dockers at container bases and riverside wharves along the Thames stopped work for 2 weeks in sympathy with PLA dockers. They went back last week, after a split vote at a mass meeting, but picketing by Tilbury men has persuaded some sections to stay on strike.

The PLA have sued the dispute as an excuse to rush through voluntary severance to 200 of its 2,000 clerical staff, engineers and marine staff. More reductions are being threatened, including 200 dockers.

This strike coincided with battles over wages in Hull and Teeside, and earlier struggles about pay and manning levels in Southampton and Liverpool. Unfortunately ports have fought by themselves, and in the past have been picked off one by one by the employers and shipping companies.

Rivalries between ports, and sections within ports, need to be put to one side. Common problems of job losses, containerisation and falling living standards face all 15,000 dockers and all unregistered dockworkers throughout the country.

National action, officially backed by the TGWU, is needed to maintain and improve conditions. Labour must also fulfill its long standing pledge to bring the Port transport industry into public ownership.

We could then share out the available work, and plan the industry for the benefit of dockworkers and dockland areas, instead of for rich, powerful shipping companies.

By Roger Gow
(ACTSS Shop Steward
Tilbury Docks)

the proposal to set up NNS (National Network Services).

The union must take a firm stand on all aspects of de-nationalisation. Time is running out and our industry and jobs are at stake.

By Phil Holt

Project Mercury to the BT network.

It also urged the NEC to broaden the action's scope in attacking government institutions and the City speculators and financiers who stand to profit from the sale of BT.

By Roy Wembourne

(Post Office Railway and Mechanisation branch, POEU)

Why Cowley is OUT



LEYLAND bosses' attempts to intimidate Cowley workers have completely failed; workers remain adamant they won't go back until they have won.

Photo: John Harris



Workers leaving Cowley factory. There was an overwhelming vote to stay out on 19 April. Another mass meeting will be held on 22 April.

By Bill Mullins

The great fear of the strikers was that Terry Duffy was about to reach a deal that in effect would have given the bosses what they want. There is still a danger of this, with Duffy talking about a "buy-out payment", which the workers would pay for by giving up the end-of-shift washing-up periods, amounting to 6 minutes on days and 9 minutes on nights.

Even David Buckle, the 'moderate' Oxford TGWU district secretary, was moved to comment to the *Guardian*, "I do not know on what basis Mr. Duffy made that statement. That is not in accord with the views of three mass meetings."

Leyland cars boss, Harold Musgrove, has been on TV making much of the "fact" that no other BL factory has

...and staying out!

a 3 minutes washing-up period and "anyway, they already get 46 minutes breaks during a shift". In fact only Cowley workers have to clock out at the end of the shift, besides clocking in at the start and during lunch-breaks.

As for the "46 minutes", what Musgrove conveniently forgets is that track workers have to make their own "relaxation time" by having the track go faster than it otherwise would.

This system of work measurements, known as the 100 BSI, recognises the need for relaxation time. The pace of work according to this "science" is supposed to be equivalent to walking at 4 miles per hour. Even the Paras need a break of 5 minutes in the hour on a route march. So under this system, a built-in 10% allowance is included on all timings for such "luxuries" as going to the toilet or just recovering from the "effects of sustained working".

The strike broke out first because workers had had enough of the slave regime of BL management, but equally as important they were now producing a car there was some demand for. Ironically, when the Maestro line was being set up, the bosses made sure it was over-

whelmingly new labour straight off the dole queue.

Around 1,400 new starters have been taken on in the past months, the bulk of them on to the Maestro. It seemed a conscious attempt by BL to have a virgin workforce, with no trade union traditions, and grateful for a job. Management hoped they could mould them into a docile workforce. This completely backfired on them.

In discussions with a group of Cowley workers it became clear there had been a war of attrition since the Maestro was first produced. "There have been walk-outs over shortages in pay packets and on one occasion they told us to keep working while rain poured down our necks from holes in the roof".

Arthur, a track worker, explained his experiences: "I work down a pit where the body is lowered onto the track. Besides having to disconnect the hoist mechanisms, we have to sub-assemble the 'A' posts as well as other jobs; the foreman is always trying to load other bits of work on you.

"The track runs at 33 an hour, a cycle time of less than 2 minutes per car, some of the blokes come in half an

hour early (unpaid) to do the A posts. This is the only way they can keep up with the track.

"The exhaust fumes are really bad sometimes, I suffer with headaches, one time I kept complaining I couldn't get anything done. So me and my mate decided, to miss one car as a protest. The foreman, who we couldn't find when we wanted to complain about fumes, soon appeared demanding to know why this work was missed. That was the only way we could get their attention".

The bosses have conducted a campaign of intimidation, in particular on shop stewards. When trouble first broke out, Bobby Fryer, Cowley TGWU convenor, was handed a written warning threatening disciplinary measures if he called on workers to strike. Arthur continued, "people were too scared to become stewards. We've only one steward on our line, and he's right at the end".

A group of Asian workers explained their particular problems. Every 5 years or so some Asians want extended leave to go back home for 5 or 6 weeks. "Since this costs about £500 we can't do it that often. But management make us sign a bond

saying if you come back late you are automatically sacked. They don't recognise non-European doctors' notes.

"There is always the possibility of abuse, but there is no way to protect the innocent. For example, one Indian worker flew home on Afghan airlines. On his way back, the plane stopped off in Kabul airport. It was Christmas 1980, just as the Russians invaded, and all Afghan Air planes were grounded for a week including his.

"He didn't even bother going into Cowley when he got back, but looked around for another job.

"Sickness is also common for travellers to India, with food and climate changes. But none of this is recognised by BL. This is a big issue amongst Asian workers. We will be fighting for a changed policy through the union".

Cowley workers have demonstrated their tenacity and determination in this fight. Messages of support and finance should be sent to Bobby Fryer, TGWU Convenor, 20 Maidcroft Road, Cowley, Oxford.

Become a Militant supporter!

Name

Address

Send to Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

Youth Training

Continued from page one

job fell through. His parents had given him six weeks to get out of his home, unless he finds a job.

So what choices now face Kevin? "If I could get a flat I would be O.K as the dole would pay the rent, but even then after I'd payed the electricity gas and so on, there's no way I could exist on what was left. The social security offered me a place in a hostel but I'm not touching one of them. My mate was in one and he had to share it with four other blokes. He was only there two days and all his stuff was nicked.

"I've now put my name down for the Army. I don't particularly want to go in the army but what else can I do? I've got nowhere else to go. At least it's with the Royal Engineers so I'd get an apprenticeship."

That's all Tory Britain can offer Kevin—poverty, the dole or the Army.

But Young Socialists like Kevin are not just sitting back and taking it—they are fighting back.

Militant supporters and the LPYS will be supporting the People's March for Jobs, the first leg of which sets off from Glasgow on Saturday. The March for Jobs '83 will consist of six sections, setting off from depressed areas of the country, culminating in a mass demonstration in London on 5 June.

The march, like its predecessors, will express the anger of youth today.

However, it appears the organisers of the march have deemed it 'non-political'.

But the past four years of Thatcherism have shown that the Tories are not open to persuasion, 'common sense, humanity and morals' have no place in Tory ideology. Their policies are dictated by big business and they are quite prepared to coldly force millions of workers into despair and misery in the pursuit of greater profits. Mass unemployment and falling living standards have not come about because of some evil design by a particular individual in No 10 Downing Street, but because of the crisis of capitalism which is incapable of taking society forward.

The solutions to unemployment, youth exploitation and low wages are very much political. The profit system must be swept aside and replaced by a socialist plan of production that provides jobs for all. The labour movement should not dilute its policies for fear of upsetting the Tories but rather sharpen those policies up using the ideas of socialism to defend its class from the attacks of Thatcher and Co. The Tories show no such inhibitions in representing their class!

The Militant and the 10,000 strong LPYS—the largest socialist youth movement in the country—believes it has the programme that shows the way forward. If you are a young worker, an apprentice, FE student, YOPster or unemployed, then join us in the fight to kick out the Tories and return a Labour government based on a socialist programme.

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