

## Liverpool Council...

# Stop Tory attacks!

### Public meetings rally support

SAVING JOBS is not just a luxury for Merseyside. The district has been one of the most devastated in the whole of Thatcher's Britain.

By Graham Casey

Local people are responding magnificently to the fight by Liverpool City Council to stop the Tories destroying the council which has brought new jobs and new hope to Liverpoolians. Many meetings have been held, some of which have attracted up to 300 people despite atrocious weather.

A local authority worker told one meeting, "I'm proud to have lived to meet a council prepared to break the law—capitalist law. I'll

Continued on back page

- "Under Labour, 81 apprentices have been taken on by the Engineers Department"

- "If our predecessors in the movement hadn't broken the law, 12 year olds would still work down the mines"

### What Jenkin plans

TORY Environment Secretary Patrick Jenkin is considering suspending next May's council elections in Liverpool unless the council "balance the budget".

Balancing the budget would either mean the axe for one-sixth of council jobs or raising rates sky high, which under Tory legislation will mean even further loss of rate support grant from the government! Some choice.

Plainly the Tories are scared of a resounding Labour victory, their view is if you can't win elections,

cancel them.

Liverpool are carrying out policies in the interests of the working class people of Liverpool. They are handicapped by a miserly budget from the Liberal/Tory skinflints who ran the council until the election last May, and by Tory government attacks.

Liverpool council are taking the brunt of the attacks. Other Labour authorities and workers should give their full support.

See Editorial, page 2

### Rally and Organisational Conference

**DEFEND  
LIVERPOOL  
CITY  
COUNCIL**

St George's Hall,  
Liverpool  
Monday 27 February,  
7.30 pm.  
Speakers include:  
Terry Fields MP,  
Ron Todd  
TGWU National Officer.  
All trade unionists  
welcome

### Stewards call 24-hr strike

THE JOINT SHOP Stewards' Committee (JSSC) of Liverpool council workers have voted overwhelmingly for an all-out strike in support of the council's stand on Thursday 29 March, the day when councillors make the budget.

The JSSC represents about 30,000 workers. Only one union, NUPE, which has only 2,000 members in Liverpool, failed to support the strike call.

Interview with Liverpool council convenor  
—page 13

### Labour MPs back council

THE LIVERPOOL group of Labour MPs have pledged support for the stand taken by Liverpool City Council in defying government spending cuts.

This followed a meeting between the group and Derek Hatton, Deputy Leader of the the City Council and Tony Byrne, finance chairman. The councillors made it clear they had no option but to fight the government.

In a statement after the meeting, the MPs said "we believe it is the responsibility of the entire labour movement to rally behind Liverpool Labour." They called for the government to give Liverpool the £30m needed. If they did not, "the government should be opposed in Parliament and outside."

STOP PRESS: Jenkin today (22 Feb) refused to give the £30 million needed. Liverpool's battle goes on.

Photo: Militant



A small portion of the massive demonstration on 19 November in defence of Liverpool council. Support has become even wider since then.

# Militant

## Why Liverpool must fight

THE TORIES are threatening to use unprecedented dictatorial powers against the Liverpool council which is fighting for the jobs and services of the city.

Not only is Thatcher contemplating the possible suspension of the council itself, perhaps introducing a commissioner to run the local authority, but there are dark hints that troops may be used in the event of a council workers' strike and even suggestions that the May local elections could be suspended.

If the elections are scrapped it will be for no other reason than the government wanting to avoid the embarrassment of Labour making big council gains; 33 seats are up for election, 23 of which are Tory or Liberal held.

If the Tories imposed restrictions on the council, in order to force more workers on the dole, the May elections would become a focus of opposition to the government, producing a big swing to Labour. Like the president of a banana republic, therefore, Thatcher is contemplating suspension of elections for fear of an 'inconvenient' result.

The seriousness with which the ruling class views the issue can also be seen by the editorial comments in the Press. From both ends of the 'spectrum' of Fleet Street, there have been attacks this week on the stand being taken by Liverpool Council.

The *Daily Mirror* and *The Times* carried editorials on the same day. The *Mirror* cried its usual crocodile tears but then went on to order Liverpool to do its 'duty'. The *Times* offered no sympathy but carried a haughty editorial and urged threats to be made against the council's employees.

The pleading tones of the *Daily Mirror* and the blunt

threats of *The Times* reflect a division of labour that has always existed in Fleet Street: the more open Tory papers make no bones about their distaste for the labour movement while the others like *The Mirror* are no less anti-socialist but masquerade as 'left' papers, all the better to throw dust in the eyes of the workers.

But to have both devote their editorials to Liverpool on the same day shows that big business understands the implications of the firm stand being taken by Liverpool. For far too long Labour authorities have acquiesced in the administration of Tory cuts. The danger is, from the point of view of the ruling class, that others may follow where Liverpool leads.

Workers all over the country—including employees and councillors in other authorities—have applauded the stand taken in Liverpool and are fighting to get their own councils to follow suit. The fight shown by Liverpool is an example to which workers are increasingly being drawn.

### Workers' support

At the same time, and contrary to the impression given in one snide comment in *The Times*, the majority of workers in Liverpool are behind the Labour council. Workers in Liverpool understandably feel they have been crucified by this government. For the first time in decades, they have a council fighting for their living standards.

Even Jack Straw, Labour Parliamentary spokesman on the Environment had to admit: "The problems facing the City council are not of their own making but have been inherited from the irresponsible, penny-pinching former Liberal-

Tory administration. They need more money, not government penalties."

The Tory government, which has taken tens of millions of pounds from the City council over the last five years are responsible for the financial problems of the City not the council.

It is possible that Patrick Jenkin, Environment Minister, may make a 'compromise' offer of a few million pounds extra cash, in an attempt to split the Labour group. But a worker put on the dole is 100 per cent unemployed, whether he has 500 or 5,000 going down the road with him. No Labour authority should allow itself to administer such miseries to working people.

### Unqualified support

The position of the Liverpool City council, therefore, must be given the unqualified support of the entire Labour Party and Trade Union movement. These organisations were established to defend the rights and living standards of working people and not to stand idly by as Tory cuts go through, or, worse still, to carry out cuts on the Tories' behalf.

Nothing is more confusing and disorientating for Labour voters, nothing is more designed to create cynicism and disillusion than to have a Labour council put workers on the dole, take more rent money out of workers' pockets, slash the services and then say... don't blame us!

Moreover, if the Tories are allowed to get away with it, there will be an even greater squeeze on local authority finances. The recently-published White Paper on public expenditure budgets for a cut in council expenditure of 13 per cent in real terms in the next three years.

Labour authorities not already faced with the choice will soon have to decide whether to put up a fight or be responsible for swingeing cuts in jobs and services. There is no alternative, no half-way position. Liverpool has been put in a position where it has no choice but to fight. The labour movement has no option but to give maximum support.

# Chesterfield-mass rally greets Benn



Benn and Kinnock campaigning for the by-election in Chesterfield.

DESPITE speculation in the Tory press that Labour might lose the Chesterfield by-election, all the signs are that Tony Benn will be returning to Parliament on 1 March.

Public meetings held so far have attracted hundreds, often in atrocious weather conditions. On Monday night over 2,000 workers including many young people turned up to hear Tony Benn and Labour leader Neil Kinnock. An hour before the meeting was due to start, 1,000 people had already taken their seats—the 'latecomers' were directed to an overspill meeting.

By Chris Ridge  
(Nottingham South CLP)

1979, unemployment has risen by over 7,000—an increase of 160%. Housing starts have fallen by a sixth, creating new waiting lists. As Neil Kinnock put it: "These are the real issues of the campaign."

Tony Benn added: "Politics is not a spectator sport—not one of the gains we have won has been made without enormous struggle." He called on the audience to join the Labour Party, saying they must continue the campaign for the socialist alternative to Thatcher after the election.

The LPYS has found great support for the ideas of socialism during canvasses and days of action—over 70 names have been collected of people interested in the LPYS.

### Press smears

Nevertheless there is a long way to go and a growing crescendo of press smears can be expected in the build up to 1 March. Last weekend, 800 canvassers came to Chesterfield from all over the country—that's the kind of support needed from party members between now and 1 March. This will ensure a Labour victory that will lift the confidence of the workers everywhere and place another nail in the Thatcher government's coffin.

### Reverse decline

The 2,000 present wanted to hear how Labour would reverse the decline in Chesterfield's fortunes since the Tories took power. Since

## Council selection — no plot

I HAVE been selected as council candidate by the Binley and Willenhall Ward of Coventry South East Labour Party.

Coventry City Council, like other Labour councils, faces a choice. Either accept the Tories' dictates to cut jobs and services, or stand up and fight as Liverpool has done. Our ward members decided that the response that Liverpool Council is making was the only course of action a socialist party could take, and selected me in preference to the present leader of the City Council, Peter Lister.

### Democratic choice

While the press have tried to stir up a "shock horror" story over this, Peter has accepted that this was the ward's democratic choice. However, some other councillors have not been so concerned to preserve party unity. Right wingers Harry Richards and Albert Rose, have publicly attacked me

and their friends have accused *Militant* supporters of "influxing" the ward.

The truth is our ward party doubled its membership last year, particularly after our tremendous campaign to get Dave Nellist elected to Parliament. Half our membership was not "parachuted in" from outside; it has been a determined fight for socialist policies and the failure of anybody else's answers to the crisis that has caused *Militant's* success in Coventry.

The usual rubbish about plots and infiltration is given the lie by my experience, which is that socialist campaigning wins workers to Labour. Already many workers have stopped me in the street to offer their support.

By John Mutton  
(Coventry SE CLP)

## Margate Lobby

AS MILITANT goes to press, the Thanet North Constituency Labour Party holds its annual general meeting which will select a new executive, the make-up of which will decide whether an inquiry into local *Militant* supporters will go ahead.

The EC will be discussing the enquiry on 28 February (see last week's *Militant*) and a lobby of the EC has been called on that day at 7 pm at 42 Hawley Street, Margate.

### Send protests

Also an appeal has been made by local Labour Party activists for Labour Party branches and trade unions to protest at the threatened enquiry to the party chairman (at the above address). Please send copies of any such resolutions to 18 Hatfield (sic) Road, Margate, Kent.

Already the Marden ward of Maidstone CLP have condemned the proposed enquiry, saying: "There is no room for bans, proscriptions or expulsions which amounts to a stifling of debate and the exchange of ideas which are the basic historic principles of the Labour Party."

## Womens section battle

"IF HALF the initiative and effort which had been put into attacking the officers of the Women's Section had been put into fighting the Tories the government would have fallen by now".

This is how Sheila Woodhead, chair of Shaw and Littleborough Women's Section drew to a close the second AGM which our WS has been compelled to hold this year.

The first AGM was ruled out of order by the NW Regional Women's Officer when the WS officers enforced their Standing Orders. These state; "A woman shall be deemed to be a member of the section when she has attended a meeting and expressed interest in joining". Therefore only those women who had previously attended a meeting were eligible in our view to vote at the AGM; 16 women, who were therefore excluded, complained to Regional Office.

Under protest, so as not to disrupt the work of the section or the Constituency AGM, the AGM was reconvened.

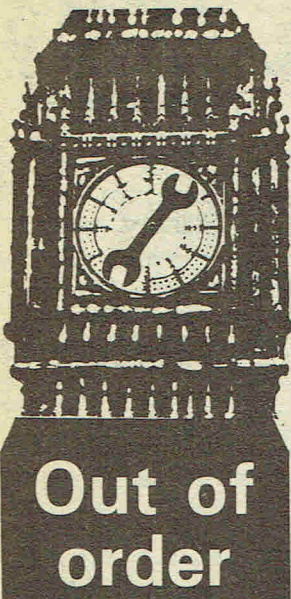
The main problem was obviously the lack of precise rules in the WS. We can't continue with a situation where WS's act in good faith and can be overruled by a different interpretation of the same rules. The WS must therefore clarify its constitution making it clear that there can be no provision at the AGM for new membership. This is an elementary democratic safeguard.

The attempt to build an active campaigning WS will be undermined if a WS's work can be disrupted and those who are active for the other 11 months can be

swamped at the AGM by those who, for example, see the WS merely as a possibility of obtaining two delegations which will support a particular candidate for reselection. new members but if they have political or organisational differences they should argue for their point of view, win the confidence of the active members by their work and earn the right in that way to represent the WS and not merely turn up to the AGM and out-number those they oppose.

The AGM went on to elect its officers reconfirming the decisions of the previous AGM by 29 votes to 20. We look forward to building around firm socialist policies a WS which, considering the 64 people who either attended or gave apologies (not to mention several women who have asked to join the Labour Party after hearing about the WS from their friends) must now be the largest WS in the North West, if not nationally.

By a Militant Reporter



## Out of order

THE LIBERALS will never forgive the Liverpool Labour Party for trouncing them in the local government elections last year. The Liberals, in alliance with the Tories had presided over an onslaught on the city's social services. Yet since they were kicked out by the Liverpool workers, the Liberals have tried to present themselves as 'defenders of Liverpool', conveniently forgetting their past role.

Earlier this month I had to take up Liverpool MP David Alton, who has been fighting a Liberal rear guard action since their defeat. He was opportunistically attacking Liverpool council's reorganisation of schools, which was necessary and which Labour has pledged to do with no redundancies and with minimum gradual movement of pupils.

### Liberals closed schools

I told the House, "During the past 10 years the Liberals and the Tories who ran Liverpool destroyed it and its education system..."

For purely electoral reasons, Liberal councillors shied away from reorganisation and their neglect and political cowardice caused confusion in the hearts and mind of parents and children... If the Liberal Party is so worried about standards of education, how does (Alton) answer the charge that in 1979 the Liberal Party campaigned to retain Fairfield School, Edge Hill school and Lawrence Road School—which had no O or A level passes—but wished to close Paddington School?

"The Liberal Party closed Paddington School, having kidded the parents that the authority would provide a school on cathedral property. But it sold that land from under the parents feet. It also closed Arundel School, which was one of the top five schools in deprived inner city areas that catered for the need of working class children... This is nothing more than opportunism and publicity-seeking by the Liberal Party which created the problem."

By Terry Fields MP

# Right-wing send in bailiffs

WAKEFIELD'S Labour Council has sent in police and bailiffs to successfully break up the occupation of a nursery threatened with closure. This action has been greeted with anger throughout the local movement.

The repossession of the Lanthwaite Grange nursery took place on February 16 at 10 am, one of the rare occasions that the nursery was unoccupied. As the bailiffs moved in the occupiers—parents supported by Labour Party members opposed to cuts—returned and proceeded to occupy the compound in which the nursery is housed, locking in the bailiffs and their vans.

### Thrown out

The protestors were removed from this area and immediately occupied a temporary nursery nearby. After the police and the bailiffs moved in they were dispersed and the nursery was lost.

To make matters worse even the Labour Group wasn't consulted before the repossession order was

Photo: John Smith (FL)



Parents and labour movement organisations march through Wakefield in support of the occupied nurseries on February 18.

given. It had been agreed that any decision to repossess the nurseries would not be made until a further 'member decision'. The question is, which member gave the order? It was certainly none of the the left wing councillors who oppose the closure.

If the right wing believe that they have weakened the resolve to save the other nursery or to get the cuts reversed, they could not be further from the truth. The issue will be raised at the

Yorkshire Regional Conference of the Labour Party. The local labour movement together with the parents at the other nursery facing closure, Sandal Hall, are determined to fight on.

### Out of step

The leaders of Wakefield council, lead by Sir Jack Smart, have shown themselves out of step, not only with the Labour Party itself but Wakefield's work-

ing people. Their action has proved that they are not workers' representatives—they are acting more like puppets to Westminster.

To remove and lock out workers and their children who are taking action to defend their rights and living standards is an unforgivable act that will never be forgotten by Labour Party members and supporters.

By Mick Richardson  
(Wakefield LPYS)

# Humberside-defend all workers

OVER 100 angry parents and teachers recently lobbied a meeting of the Education Committee of Labour controlled Humberside County Council.

The protest was called in opposition to plans to "re-organise" the education system in Hull, which is seen as an attempt to bow down to Tory government pressure and make cuts.

Tempers were really running high at the lobby. This resulted in the Labour Chairman of the Education Committee having to be escorted into the meeting by Police.

### Jobs axe

The government attack on Labour councils is beginning to be stepped up in Hull. The Tories are ruthlessly forcing

By Ray Duffill  
(North Hull LPYS)

Hull City council to raise council house rents by 75p a week. Humberside County Council may be forced to axe 200 teaching jobs later this year.

As the recent lobby shows, all this has not gone without opposition. Several Parent Groups have been formed in protest. Increasingly, Teachers unions and parents are uniting to fight the cuts. Altogether, a widespread mood of resistance is starting to develop.

Unfortunately, the Humberside ruling Labour Group is currently carrying out a policy of making cuts—especially in the rural areas and those places that voted Tory in the last election. This will only serve to divide the labour movement and local communities. It should be the duty of socialists to uphold the interests of working people—no matter where they happen to live.

### Fightback needed

A resolution has been passed by OPE Ward Party in North Hull, that calls upon Labour councils to op-

pose making Tory cuts and rent rises. Labour Councillors should use their positions to rally support, by taking the issues into the council workforce, out to the factory gates and onto the estates.

A labour movement conference needs to be immediately convened, consisting of delegates from local government unions and trade union branches generally, Labour Parties and Parents/Tenants groups. This Conference could then put forward a programme of resistance—the Tories must be forced to retreat and pay back the millions of pounds they have taken from Labour councils.

# Youth CND conference success

THE YOUTH CND held its annual conference last weekend in London.

Ninety YCND branches were represented with over 300 delegates present, mainly 14-16 year olds at their first major political meeting. The conference was three times the size of last year's event.

### Good response

The fraternal speaker from the LPYS received a good response when he said he looked forward to joint work with YCND.

Afterwards, two delegates spoke to *Militant*. Ann Donnelly of Sheffield YCND and Sheffield Central LPYS, said in her area the two organisations had worked together

over particular issues, and were now involved in a joint campaign to keep a maternity unit open. With support from the local labour movement, the YCND and LPYS had called a demonstration on March 10 under the slogan of 'Jobs and Services, not Bombs.'

Dawn Collins, of North Norfolk YCND and LPYS, said she had been active in YCND since she was 13. She said; "The only way forward for YCND is through the LPYS and the labour movement."

It is vital that all LPYS branches become involved with their local YCND, and where no such branches exist, help set one up.

By John Hird  
(LPYS National Committee)

# Unions fight nuclear threat

OPPOSITION is growing to the proposal to use a disused mine in Billingham as a dump for radio active waste.

As reported in *Militant* 675, Nirex, a government agency, would use the mine owned by ICI to dump nuclear waste. This decision has angered the local community—people in this area of Cleveland already face more industrial hazards per head of population than anywhere else in Europe.

Who will benefit from this proposal? ICI certainly, the government definitely—the local community certainly and definitely not!

The EEC have debated this issue and if their policy becomes a 'directive', Billingham would take waste from all over Europe. In Pontius Pilate fashion, the Tory Euro-MP for Cleveland, Sir Peter Vanneck, abstained in this vote.

By Paul McGhee  
(TGWU Deputy Convenor, ICI)

Head of Nirex, Maurice Ginneff, said on local radio; "Nirex were delighted that particularly the Germans and the Europeans support the site of Billingham..." Yes, they probably do.

### TGWU strike

But the local TGWU senior stewards committee are far from delighted. They pledged last month they would take strike action if ICI sells the mine of Nirex. Already there are strong feelings on this committee to stage a 24 hour protest strike to show their determination and solidarity with the local community.

ICI, after 50 years of profiting from the labour of Cleveland people are now saddling them with the prospect of having to live in an

# Student campaign launched

THIS THURSDAY (February 23) marked the beginning of the Student Union's "New deal for Students" campaign against education cut backs and to highlight the conditions faced by students.

The campaign has begun with local days of action and will culminate with a mass demonstration in London including a rally in Battersea Park on March 10.

### Hit hard

The Tories have hit the education system hard. In the past four years my college, the North East London Polytechnic, has lost 25% of its teaching staff and the administration and ancillary staff have been decimated. Now the National Advisory Body (a Tory quango which cuts education) has ordered further cuts.

These, coupled with a reduction in the contribution from the local councils (stemming from the Labour controlled Barking Council), has meant that with inflation the budget for NELP will be cut by 13.3% for 1984-85. This means a further 220 teaching and 30 other staff being lost which will mean course closures and a lower educational standard.

A general meeting was held recently, outside because of the huge turnout, and we rejected an indefinite occupation, and voted for the setting up of a Campaign Committee which will take on the tasks of fighting the cuts (unfortunately something the Students Union has failed to do), preparing for a one day total shut down, sending delegations to local Trades Councils, education unions and to build support for the fight against the Tories.

Only a campaign joining up with ILEA and other Polys facing the same attacks, built on the trades unions both in and outside the Poly, can defeat these cuts.

By Jon Johnson  
(Chair, NELP Labour Club)

area that will become known as the radio active dustbin of the world. It is ironic that ICI were party to the birth of Billingham through the opening of the mine. Now they will be party to the death of that same community 50 years later.

This radio-active threat is already having an effect on the economy of Cleveland. Businesses are withdrawing from proposed investments—they realise they won't get good returns on a town known as a nuclear dustbin. But while businessmen can move out, ordinary local people are stuck with Nirex's plans. We have no choice but to fight this threat all the way.

● At the "Dumping Convention" in London on Monday (20 February), Jim Slater, General Secretary of the National Union of Seamen said the union would block attempts to dump nuclear waste at sea.



WITH JUST one week to go to the target date for our Building Fund we need a massive bombardment of donations. Every single reader should send in their contribution this week. We want to announce a huge total next week.

Premises have now been seen which would be ideal for the housing of all the machinery and staff necessary for the production of a daily paper. If all our supporters respond in the way many already have then there should be no doubt about obtaining these premises. However, it needs an all-out effort to make it a possibility.

As well as individual donations we need labour movement organisations to give us their support. Special appeal letters are now available to be sent out to trade union branches and Labour Parties. They should

follow the example of Taff Ely, NUPE District, Mid Glamorgan, which has sent in £15 wishing "all the very best in your appeal".

£4,471 has come in this week bringing the total to £84,862. Another £195 has come from readers in Leicester, £375 from Cambridgeshire, a further £209 from Bradford and £395 from Humberside.

### Marxist paper

It is essential that other areas follow suit and ensure their targets are met. Every day further attacks are laun-

ched by the Tories making the need for a daily Marxist paper more urgent than ever.

The more we can expose the stark class brutality of the Tories the better will we strengthen the resolve to sweep them out of office. With a daily paper putting forward a clear Marxist exposition of events we could spread our ideas into every area of the labour movement. In the end the only guarantee of achieving a socialist society is to see that our ideas become the ideas of the labour movement as a whole. Make this possible by contributing to the fund. Forward to a Marxist daily.

By Nick Wrack

## ADS

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

### Accommodation

ROOM to let, all in, £20 per week. In Tooting Broadway. Contact Box 3, *Militant* Circulation, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

### For Sale

MILITANT STICKERS. Still available. 200 for £2.30; 500 for £5.60; 1,000 for £11.00. Contact: 'Militant Circulation, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

"Militant Turn left for workers unity and socialism"

T-shirts—£3.50—white, yellow, navy black.

Sweatshirts—£6.75—grey, pale-blue, navy, dark green.

Small 32"-34" chest  
medium 34"-36"  
large 36"-38"  
extra large 40-42"

All proceeds to *Militant Fighting Fund*. All cheques and postal orders with size and colour preference to R. Harris, 2 Dukes Brow, Blackburn, Lancs.

### FOR HANDICAPPED READERS

Cassette tapes with two issues of *Militant* (one each side). Available fortnightly. £3.50 per quarter, £13 for year. Write to: 'Militant Tapes', 26 Aston Terrace, Harehills, Leeds 8, or phone (0527) 73795.

CALLING ALL Marxist athletes. Have you past the finishing post for your pledge for the Building Fund? No? Then start training for the *Militant* Marathon! Join this fund raising event to be held in early spring. Contact Paul Henry, c/o 10 Kensington Road, Chorlton, Manchester.

SRI LANKA: The tasks today. New pamphlet from the Nava Samaja Party (UK Branch). Obtainable from World Socialist Books (see address below). Price 75p plus 10p postage.

HUNDREDS OF BOOKS and pamphlets available by Marx, Lenin, Engels, Trotsky, Luxemburg, Connolly, Plekhanov, Grant, Cannon, Gramsci and many others. Writings on economics, philosophy, politics, science, war and peace, nuclear weapons, socialism, women, international developments, etc.

Send for your copy of our new booklist. Available (free) from: World Socialist Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

SPONSORED RUN: There will be a sponsored run in support of the Tyneside Seven, arrested at Warrington on the NGA picket line. Date: Sunday, 26 February.

The run will be 12 miles from Jarrow to Chester-le-Street, on the route of the Jarrow March. All donations to: Days of Hope Bookshop, 115 Westgate Road, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear.

HEALTH FIGHT Back 84 Conference called by Dutton View Hospital Bradford. Hayes Cottage Hopsital, Northwood & Runer Occupation committees. Conference sponsored by: Jeremy Corbyn, Tony Benn, Ernie Roberts, Bob Clay, Jo Richardson, London Health Emergency Campaign. 25 February 11 am—5.00 pm. Bradford Community Building, Bradford University. Creche provided.

LEICESTER MILITANT Supporters wish to express their sympathy with Tony & Elaine Church and family over the death of Tony's parents.

SCOTTISH LPYS conference, Saturday 25/Sunday 26 February, 10.30 am—5.00 pm. Couper Institute, Clarkston Road, Glasgow. Speakers include: Derek Hatton and shop stewards from Scott Lithgow.

## Militant

### MEETINGS

For events in your area contact your local *Militant* seller.

THANET: *Militant* Readers' Meetings are held on alternative Monday evenings. For further details phone (0843) 291293.

HARTLEPOOL: Marxist discussion groups. Held weekly. Ring Malcolm Fallow, Peterlee 867789.

BLACKBURN: Thursday 15 March at 7.30 pm, at King George's Hall. Speakers: Peter Taaffe (Editor, *Militant*), Terry Fields MP. Note new date.

HULL: "TUC—Abdication of Leadership" Thursday 23 February 7.30pm, Spring Bank Community Centre Hull. Speakers: Jeff Price USDAW (Broad Left), Steve Cawkwell, Sec. Humberside CPSA (Broad Left).

HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING. Thursday 1 March, 7.30 pm at: 'The Jolly Farmers', Market Place, Houghton-le-Spring. Further details phone: (0783) 653994.

BIRMINGHAM AUEW Broad Left meeting at 12.00 prompt. Saturday, 3 March at White Lion, Queensway, Horsefair. All members welcome.

SOUTHWARK: "No to council cuts. Save jobs. Save services." Tuesday 6 March at 7.30 pm. Speakers: Peter Taaffe (Editor: *Militant*), Derek Hatton (Deputy Leader, Liverpool Council). Chair: Brian Kelly (Southwark Councillor). At North Peckham Civic Centre (corner Old Kent Road/Peckham Park Road).

MILITANT READERS' meeting "No to council cuts. Save jobs. Save services." Wednesday 14 March at 7.30 pm. Speakers: Nick Brooks (Southampton Labour Party Personal Capacity). At Ryde Labour Hall, Star Street, Ryde, IOW.

# This week

# £2,141

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target 7 April
Eastern	461		2500
East Midlands	472		2900
Humberside	285		1500
London East	902		3250
London West	270		2050
London South	411		2650
Manchester & Lancs	317		3520
Merseyside	715		4000
Northern	515		3350
Scotland East	290		2150
Scotland West	287		3000
Southern	837		4300
South West	282		2000
Wales East	435		1880
Wales West	465		1650
West Midlands	447		3500
Yorkshire	839		4100
Others	253		2000
<b>Total received</b>	<b>8483</b>		<b>50,000</b>

BY CONTINUING to explain the ideas of Marxism *Militant* can give direction to the millions of workers facing battles with the Tories and the bosses.

More and more the need for a fighting leadership in the trade unions is brought home. From the NGA dispute to the question of the political levy, the present TUC leaders refuse to take on the Tories. Workers in every industry are looking for a way forward. Our paper can give just that.

and outlined the need to carry on the fight against privatisation and the increasing threats to jobs from new technology and modernisation.

### Resources

A tremendous sum of £120, after expenses, was collected for the Fighting Fund. Obviously, these workers understand the need to provide the resources for a daily *Militant*—a vital weapon in the fight for socialism.

By Nick Wrack

### DONATIONS THIS WEEK INCLUDE:-

J McKechnie, West London £20; Ted and Roy, Walton £15; Mike Singleton, Brighton Kempton CLP £12; Connie Dixon, OAP Thanet £10; Alan and Kathy Bowman, Stoke Gifford LP £10; Tony Lill, Leeds ASTMS £8.10; NUPE member, Plumstead £5; M Kiernan, GMBATU Leicester £4.

Martin and Ruth Stanford, Leicester £3; M McCartney, Cathcart £3; Ted, Uxbridge UCATT £2; Terry Lee, Hayes UCW £1.80; D Frost, Nottingham £1; Pat Waters, West Ham £1; Tony Alford, Hastings £1; CPSA DNS Glasgow, Collection £6.70; Iranian Night, Bradford £7.22; Raffle of champagne (!) at South West Regional LPYS conference £12.20.

## Militant editor on Irish tour

LAST WEDNESDAY, 15 February, a meeting took place between the officers of the Irish Labour Party and the Editorial Board of *Militant Irish Monthly*. The Editorial Board was given 24-hours notice of this meeting, and were not informed of its format or purpose.

At the meeting they were subjected to a detailed questioning about the finances and production of *Militant*. Making it clear that all the information asked for could have been provided in writing if it had been requested, and despite the lack of notice the Editorial Board answered all the questions asked.

### Expulsion threat

At the end the real purpose of the meeting became clear, when the party leader—Dick Spring—spoke about the stopping of *Militant* and stated explicitly that what was being considered was the expulsion of *Militant* supporters from the Labour Party.

As in Britain it is an attempt by the right wing to stifle the ideas of *Militant*. The real reason is the growing opposition to the anti-working class policies of the Fine Gael-dominated coalition,

Socialists in Ireland will have the opportunity to defend *Militant* by attending the meetings and rallies which will be addressed by Peter Taaffe, one of the five temporarily expelled from the British Labour Party, as well as a member of the Editorial Board of *Militant*.

In the North the ideas of *Militant*, for the unity of the working class and for a socialist solution, are gaining an ever-wider echo. In particular, the demand for a trade union-based Labour Party is beginning to take on flesh. At the rallies in Belfast and Derry these ideas will be fully explained.

### Strengthen Marxism

Peter Taaffe's tour will strengthen Marxism in Ireland. It can assist in weakening the hold of right wing coalition ideas. In the North it can be an answer to sectarianism and a boost to those struggling to build a



Peter Taaffe.

political voice through the working class.

By Peter Hadden

### DETAILS OF MEETINGS AND DATES OF PETER TAAFFE'S TOUR

CORK: Monday, 27 February, 8 pm at Connolly Hall, Ladds Quay;  
GALWAY: Tuesday 28 February, 8 pm at Atlanta Hotel, Dominic Street;  
DUBLIN: Wednesday, 29 February at St Francis Xavier Hall, 8 pm;  
DERRY: Friday 2 March, at Grand Central Bar, Strand Road, Derry, 7.30 pm;  
BELFAST RALLY: Lasts from 1—6 pm at: Central Hall, Rosemary Street, Saturday 3 March.

## Cannabis legalisation?

# Fight for hope -not dope!

PAUL AND Linda McCartney hit the headlines recently when they were fined for possession of cannabis. But smoking cannabis is by no means just a habit of the superstars. It is now estimated that up to a million people in Britain take cannabis.

Over the past three or four years there has been an explosion amongst young workers, unemployed and school students of taking the drug. With the present crisis in capitalist society, which has shattered the futures of millions of youth, all aspects of momentary 'escape' from the acute problems they face are on the increase.

*Militant* 684 reported how heroin addicts in Britain now number nearly 150,000. Over the past three years there has been an epidemic of glue sniffing amongst young children. In the past 10 years, alcohol consumption has risen by a third—there are three million excessive drinkers in Britain with 850,000 problem drinkers.

### Looking for relief

With lengthening dole queues, social pressure at home and—a fear of many youth today—the unrelenting build up of nuclear weapons, it is not surprising many people have turned to look for momentary relief, however illusory.

With the massive growth in cannabis taking, there have been calls from some quarters—mainly 'liberal' politicians and even sections of the Young Conservatives—for the drug to be legalised. What then should be the attitude of Marxists to this question?

It cannot be looked at in an abstract way, it is not simply a question of personal liberty and freedom. We must look at it from a class point of view: would it advance the struggle of the working class or detract from it?

Firstly, it is a fact that cannabis is harmful. The *Sunday Times* (22 January) reported that "cannabis smoke seems to be just as likely to cause cancer as cigarette smoke." The report goes on to say that it can impair short-term memory and the ability to learn and think, and has been linked to hormonal disorders in women and infertility in men.

Of course alcohol and tobacco, which are legal and widely used, can be just as harmful. Socialists are also opposed, therefore, to the widespread use of alcohol and tobacco. But at this stage it would be unrealistic to campaign for their abolition—such a blunt demand would not be understood by whole layers of workers who see these as their only relief from the drudgery they face. Instead we should demand that the advertising resources presently used by big business to promote alcohol and drugs should be used to wage a continuous campaign to expose their harmful effects, and the massive profits made at the expense of workers' health.

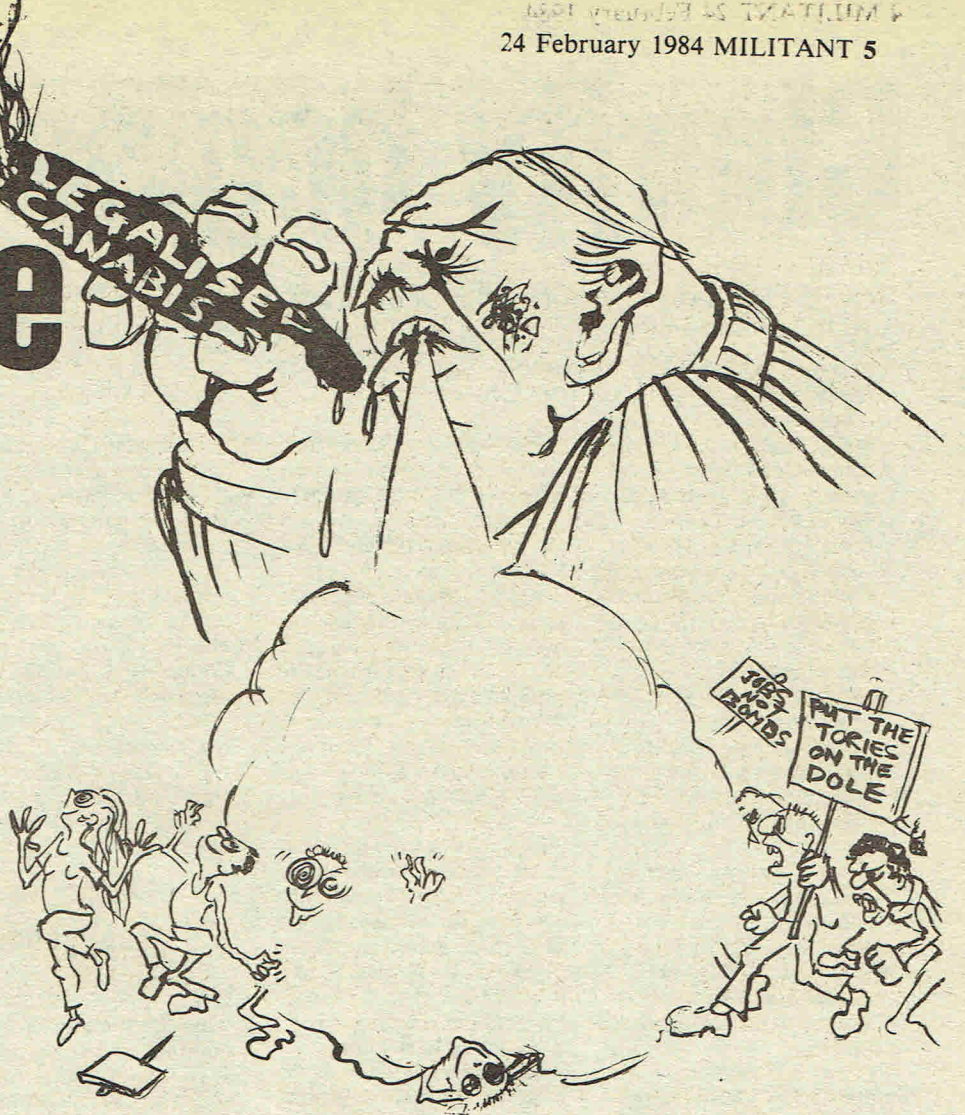
But cannabis, as yet, has not reached the same level of acceptability and widespread use amongst most workers as alcohol and tobacco, so it would be wrong to call for yet another means to be made available for people to damage their health.

However, socialists do not oppose legalisation purely or even primarily on the grounds of health. The fact is legalisation of cannabis would mean giving big business the opportunity to move in and mass produce yet another social sedative with which to dampen the anger of our generation.

### Floodgates could open

Legalisation wouldn't just mean cannabis being restricted to the present band of users, the only difference being they were now legal. With big business—especially the tobacco multinationals—moving in the floodgates would be opened. With the elimination of the criminal underworld who currently organise distribution of cannabis, alongside the vast resources of the multinationals, it would become widely and cheaply available. You can imagine popping into the off licence to buy a packet of 20 Red Leb King Size!

But big business wouldn't just move



in for the sake of maximising profits. The sudden mass influx of cannabis would be used as a deliberate ploy by the ruling class as a way of stopping youth from struggling against the social nightmare they face. Unlike nicotine, cannabis induces an unnatural euphoric state of mind. There is nothing the British ruling class would relish more than to see the present generation become passive and docile onlookers, incapable of fighting back.

### Bosses ignore law

Some people have raised the question of 'decriminalisation' as a way of perhaps drawing a distinction between the users and the real criminals, the pushers. However in the long term, decriminalisation would be no different from legalisation, as far as big business is concerned. Cannabis is effectively decriminalised in California, and it is now the state's largest cash crop. Legalistic jargon does not stop big business moving in if there are vast profits in the offing. Look at asbestos. It has been 'criminalised', (not banned outright but restricted to certain levels) yet the bosses totally ignore the niceties of the law.

Of course it is recognised the way in which the police use the drug laws and their powers of stop and search to harass young people, especially black youth. We are implacably op-

posed to this harassment. *Militant* supporters can claim a proud record in fighting this aspect of state oppression.

But we must recognise that simply scrapping this law or that will not of itself end police harassment.

The infamous 'Sus' laws are now formally scrapped yet police harassment of youth continues every day of the week. This situation will continue until we have, in the short term, democratic control over the police, and in the final analysis the ending of the capitalist society that requires a permanent state force to police the majority of society.

It is this transformation that will also end the necessity of whole sections of workers needing a prop to lean on in the face of the intolerable social pressures of capitalist society.

### New obstacles?

It is our job as fighters for socialism to fight for that new socialist society. It is *not* the business of socialists to allow the ruling class to get their hands on the mass production of cannabis, and allow them to throw up yet another obstacle in the way of the labour movement.

By Matt Reed  
(LPYS National Committee)

## Clash against Thatcher

AT THE *Clash* concert in Glasgow last week, Joe Strummer shouted from the stage; "There's two and a half thousand of you out there. You are the activists. Get off the drugs, get off the drink! Become activists! Fight back!"

This followed Scottish LPYS branches handing out 3,000 leaflets to queues outside the concert and getting a great response; a determined mood that filtered right up to the stage. The leaflet got the LPYS message across using *Clash* song titles. The LPYS branches are now preparing similar treatment for the coming *Simple Minds* concert.

## History lesson from the Drug Squad

DURING THE mid-'70s I experienced the police's wide use of stop and search powers at first hand. In one month alone I was stopped and searched four times, either by uniformed police or the Drug Squad.

On the fourth occasion I was thumbing it home from Southend in the early hours of the morning, when an unmarked Rover 2000 slewed up in front of me. Out jumped two plain clothes heavies; it was the usual routine—name and address, empty pockets, frisked up and down. As I was 'clean', they offered me a lift home, which seemed a good idea at the time.

However, they had radioed in my details to check me out. It came back over their radio about my grandfather's Irish republican background. He had apparently been active in the '20s in Ireland and died in Britain in the early '60s, which shows the extensive range of police computers.

I was grilled about my

'political affiliations' all the way back. Fortunately I was 'non-political' at the time—indeed they seemed to know more about my grandfather than I did. Even so, this was just after the Birmingham pub bombings and feelings were running high—being locked in the back of a squad car with two heavies at 4 am is a far from comfortable experience.

As it was clear I hadn't a clue what they were going on about, I was allowed home.

But it proved to me how easy it was for the police to abuse the drug laws and use them, not only to harass youth, but to further their surveillance of political activists.

By Bob Wade

## When the Movement stepped in . . .

1919 WAS a revolutionary year for Britain. The ruling class had been rocked by one crisis after another, with the working class on the offensive; there had been the heroic struggle of 'Red Clydeside', strike waves in Belfast, social upheavals in Ireland and wide-spread strikes and mutinies in the British army.

One of the solutions put forward in a report by Lloyd George's government was to drastically lower the price of beer—they planned to drown this upsurge of working class militancy in a sea of cheap booze.

This is a typical tactic of the ruling class, using cheap booze or drugs to break the will of the workers. Throughout history there has been many examples of

where workers' organisations have had to step in when they recognised this danger;

★ In 1917, the Bolsheviks banned vodka when the Russian ruling class tried to use it to forestall the revolution.

★ In the Soweto uprising in South Africa in 1976, youth smashed up beer trucks that attempted to enter the area as they understood the danger that drunkenness would pose to their struggle.

★ In the fight by Solidarity in 1980 against the Polish bureaucracy, workers occupying the Gdansk shipyard banned alcohol.

★ The Black Panthers in the USA in the '60s banned the use of cannabis by its members, and the youth section of the People's National Party of Jamaica have called for the banning of the drug.

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# Charity begins in business

SPOT THE odd one out; Adam Smith Institute, Common Cause College, Institute for Economic Affairs, League Against Cruel Sports and Social Affairs Unit.

The answer, as you probably guessed, is the League Against Cruel Sports. The reason? All the rest are charities.

This month's *Labour Research* points out that the status of the above as charities is open to doubt. According to the Charity Commissioners, charities:

- ★ Should not argue for changes in law.
- ★ Undertake political propaganda under the guise of education.
- ★ Should not bring pressure to bear on the government to adopt, alter or maintain a particular line of action.

Why then are the following classed as charities?

#### Adam Smith Institute

Founded in 1981 with a donation from British United Industrialists, its main activity has been arguing for more privatisation. Its pamphlet, *Reservicing Britain* was sent free to 20,000 local councillors. Its author Michael Forsyth MP, manages his own public relations firm whose clients in-

clude Pritchards (who won a contract in Wandsworth from the council workers).

It also produced reports on 'how wet' MPs in the last Parliament were. Its president says that one of its projects will "give the government a comprehensive range of policy objectives and the means to achieve them."

#### Institute for Economic Affairs

Founded in 1957, it was also helped in its early days by British United Industrialists. It now gets two-thirds of its income from regular donations: minimum company donation to IEA is £250. Shell Petroleum's view of the IEA is clear; they declare their contribution as "a political donation".

#### Social Affairs Unit

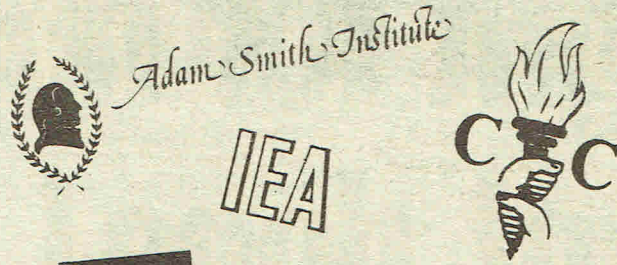
Founded in 1980 it is an offshoot of the IEA, whose office it shares. Its first publication criticised Thatcher for not cutting welfare spending enough. Its second publication called for an end to the "anti-business bias taught to teachers during

training by sociologists of education". Its latest is "a brief guide to the Communist or revolutionary Marxist press".

**Common Cause College**  
Founded in 1952 it is part of Common Cause, a right wing organisation who devote 80% of its propaganda to "exposing left wing subversives". It runs three companies one of which is a charity. Amongst recent donors to Common Cause are GKN and Rank Hovis McDougall. They inhabit the nuttier reaches of the far right. One of their publications last year was *The donkey jacket factor in the rise and decline of socialism*.

### Tax-safe propaganda

Yet whilst all these right wing charities are allowed to continue their propaganda safe from tax, radical charities face legal attacks. War on Want and Christian Aid have been criticised for being "too political", and War on Want have now had to establish a separate company for its campaigning activities.



THE SOCIAL AFFAIRS UNIT

Even if you are not a charity then the law will try and restrict you. In 1979 the League Against Cruel Sports decided to donate £80,000 to the Labour Party. £30,000 went specifically for the Labour Party's campaign for animal welfare and a further £50,000 for the party's General Fund as the only political party which could implement the League's policy in government.

Last year the courts ruled the £50,000 donation as illegal and took it away from the Labour Party. One law for charities, or radical pressure groups, another for business organisations.

By Jim Chrystie

THE ADVANTAGES of being a charity are numerous. You are exempt from income tax, corporation tax, capital transfer tax, and development land tax. You are entitled to a 50% reduction in the rates, and do not have to pay National Insurance surcharge. The benefits for companies are good as well. Donors do not have to pay capital gains, capital transfer, income or corporation tax on donations.

## Or is it the army?

A TWO thousand-strong paramilitary group, the "Legion of Frontiersmen of the Commonwealth" has become a registered charity. According to its commander this was at the suggestion of Ministry of Defence officials.

Writing in the *New Statesman*, 10 February, Duncan Campbell quoted the Legion's Scottish Commander, Major TCR Armstrong-Wilson of Dumfries: "The Legion is a military (or rather cavalry) style force very similar to the Territorial Army, but it is not part of the Ministry of Defence. It is however approved by the MOD otherwise it would not exist."

The Legion's objects include assistance to the Army in times of "war" and their

history states that they "assisted in quelling the troubles in Rhodesia" in the 1950s. The *New Statesman* reports that although the Legion has no connection with any fascist organisation it has been subject to individual fascists joining it. It has established a military structure in different parts of the country with Squadron headquarters in Scotland, Sussex, Northamptonshire and Greater London.

Now whilst 'war' might be a charity, peace is not. Last month the Greater London Council asked the Charity Commissioners about the council's plans for a Peace Prize. They were sternly rebuked. "The promotion of peace as such is not a charitable purpose" according to the law.

## LEFT and RIGHT

### Caring, sharing Co-op

Are there any links between Cambridge Co-op and the local labour movement? If there are then the behaviour of one of its members must give cause for concern. *The Guardian* reported, 31 January, that its staff training officer was heading a seminar this month on how to dismiss people. We quote:

"A seminar to help managers who want to sack their staff, organised by the Cambridge group of the Institute of Personnel Management, is being held near Cambridge next month. Delegates will pay £50 each for advice on how to deal with the legislation in order to dismiss people. Chairing the seminar "Dismissal—a Practical Update" is Miss Elaine Stewart, staff training officer with the Cambridge Co-op. That's right, the caring, sharing Co-op."

### Anne gets dosed up

Princess Anne has had to undergo a series of extremely expensive inoculations before her tour of what *The Times* described as "one of the poorest and hungriest corners of the earth," in West Africa. Besides the usual cholera, typhoid, tetanus, typhus, polio and yellow fever, she had had to endure jabs for rabies, hepatitis and meningitis.

Her loyal followers have no need to worry whether she should be inoculated against the psychological effect of seeing such poverty and hardship close up, something known in the past to have caused some sufferers to part with money. After all she's already immune to that.

### Winston's words to the "wets"

The following is an extract from a speech made by Winston Churchill in Manchester on 13 May 1904, having crossed the floor of the house from the Tory to Liberal benches the previous year:—

"We know what to expect when the Tories return to power, a party of great vested interests, banded together in a formidable confederation. Corruption at home, aggression to cover it abroad; the trick of tariff juggles; the tyranny of a wealth-fed party machine. Patriotism by the bucketful and imperialism by the imperial pint. An open hand at the public exchequer, an open door at the public house. Dear food for the millions and cheap labour for the millionaire. That is the policy the Tory party offers you..."

## Nicaragua 'Under Fire'

"I DON'T take sides, I take pictures", is the first comment from the 'war-hardened' camera man, who is the film's central character. The film focuses on the last days of the corrupt Somoza regime in Nicaragua.

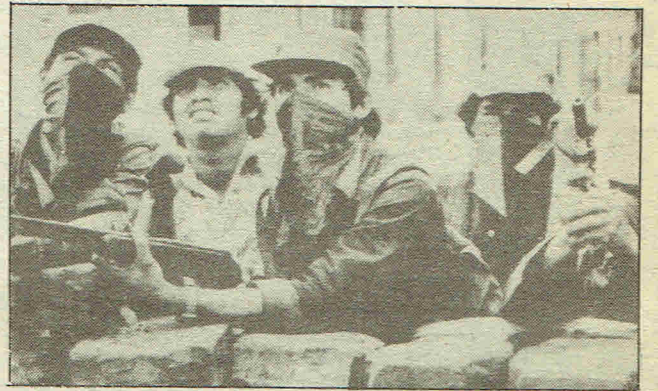
Russell, the cameraman is determined to get a picture of the guerilla leader, Raphael. In his quest to find him he experiences first hand the gross brutality and venal decadence of the Somoza regime and finds that his previous ideas of 'journalist

RICHARD KNIGHTS reviews *Under Fire*, a film about the Nicaraguan Revolution

independence' come into conflict with his growing hatred for the regime.

### Based on actual events

He witnesses one of his colleagues murdered in cold blood by Somoza's troops. Like many other parts of this film, that incident is based



Barricade against Somoza.

on actual events. And the film graphically exposes the role played by the CIA in backing Somoza.

It does not analyse the revolution of the Nicaraguan people. In the true Hollywood tradition it centres on the battle of one man against the system.

One Nicaraguan peasant puts the situation into

perspective when she remarks to a weeping journalist: "You are crying about the death of one American journalist. This war has been going on for fifty years and we have lost 50,000 people. One American journalist dies and the world wakes up. Maybe one should have died fifty years ago".

## Corruption: More than 'a few bad apples'

EVERY SO often a corruption scandal hits the British headlines. The 'establishment' response is invariably the 'rotten apple' argument.

The overall standard of conduct in 'public and business life' is presented as virtuous, with only occasional, isolated examples of 'malpractice'.

### Documented account

This detailed and well documented account of corruption in British society suggests that it is the barrel, rather than isolated apples, which is rotten. When Andrew Cunningham, a senior Labour figure in the North East was sentenced to five years in prison for conspiracy to accept gifts in his capacities as councillor, union official, and member of the water and police authorities, he said: "All this sort of business goes on. So if I am corrupt, half the country is corrupt." Cunningham was one of

the many convicted in the major corruption trials which rocked local government in the 1970s, and these trials and investigations are particularly well covered in the book. Other sections deal with the police corruption trials of the 1970s, Operation Countryman, and corruption in the Civil Service, Armed Forces, and elsewhere.

### Lubricating business

There are interesting accounts of the chequered history of governmental and legal views of what constitutes corruption, and the murky world of MP's financial and business connections. The book is not easy to read, but its academic thoroughness in notes, references, tables and index make it a useful source for

PAUL TRAYNOR reviews *Corruption and Misconduct* by Alan Doig (published by Penguin, £4.95)

the seedier side of capitalist Britain.

Corruption, by its nature is extremely difficult to investigate and prove, even if the will is there. The author argues that the few cases that come to court are only the tip of an iceberg of corruption, and that official complacency and a tame press allow the bribers and fixers to continue largely undetected.

Marxists have long understood the hypocrisy of capitalist legality and morality when power and money are involved. In our economic system—based on legalised theft—bribery, favours, and the old boy network are an inevitable and indispensable business 'lubricant'.

In the words of a former leading Labour politician in

Swansea, Gerald Murphy, after his release from a prison sentence for corruption: "If you're running local government or you're involved in local government, central government or any other public body, you've got to be involved in business practice, that's what it's all about. It's vast amounts of money to be spent."

### Rotten results

"You've got to meet people and talk to people and see what is the best value for the money you spend. I think you just can't divorce one from the other... we've got to live with the capitalist system... if you've got a capitalist system, you've got to work with the capitalist system."

Read this book to get a whiff of the rotten results of this 'practical' view.

## Civil Servants

# Drive back the Tory onslaught

**THE TORY attack upon GCHQ union members is the latest and so far most savage attack upon the civil service—the government's own workforce. Since 1979 civil servants have been under continual attack.**

When the Tories came to power they came armed with a report prepared by Nicholas Ridley MP which singled them out as a top target in the battle against the unions. The Tory strategy was to weaken the trade union movement by picking off one or two unions which were in a vulnerable position and then, once the movement generally had been softened up, go for the big battalions—the industrial unions.

### Longest strike since 1926

This attitude led to the longest official national strike in British history since the General Strike—the 1981 Pay Campaign which lasted for 21 weeks and only ended because the union leadership caved in. They snatched defeat from the jaws of victory.

Civil Servants, after years of Tory abuse, are now

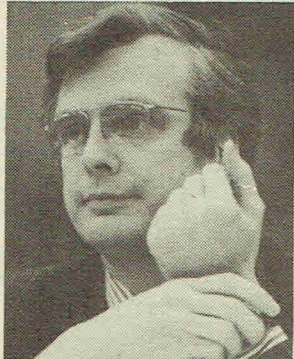
prepared to fight for their rights. That response in 1981 speaks volumes about the nature of the 'moderate' white collar trade unionists.

### Trade unions sharpened

As economic pressures have bourned down on civil servants, conditions have worsened as a result of the cuts. And there has been mounting pressure of increasing workloads as staff who leave are not replaced.

A basic trade union consciousness has been sharpened and re-shaped through these attacks. Traditionally moderate areas of the service like the Land Registry Section, the Civil Aviation Authority and the Ministry of Defence are moving into action to defend jobs, working practises and—in the case of MOD and British Telecomms workers—against the lunacy of privatisation.

That is why the Tories want a tame Staff Association at GCHQ—they want to make this the beginning of an offensive into other areas of the Civil Service as a prelude to tackling the bigges and most well organised sections—DHSS and DE are the obvious targets. The Tories will fail. The response of the GCHQ workers proves this.



Alistair Graham, General Secretary of CPSA Union.

While the general standard of living for most workers in 1983 went up by 5%; civil servants, as a result of poor leadership, suffered a drop of 10%. This drop was suffered by chronically low paid workers. The average wage in the grades organised by the Civil and

Public Services Association is between £57 and £70 per week.

Job losses through arbitrary cuts are already over 80,000—10,000 in the DHSS alone. The only department to enjoy an increase was the Home Office Prison Department. After all Tory Britain has its priorities.

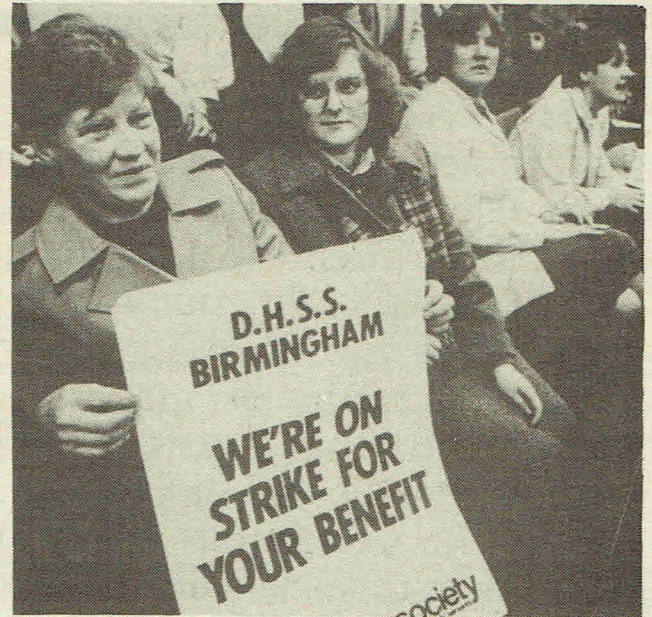
A further 37,000 civil service jobs are to go by 1988, which will mean massive economic and social consequences.

### In Thatcher's gunsights

Already the huge loss in DHSS has led to the almost total collapse of the benefit service. Birmingham is a good example. There claims for Supplementary Benefit have risen by over 50% since 1979, whilst those for Unemployment Benefit have trebled.

Thatcher has the Civil Service trade union movement in her sights. What is lacking is a fighting trade union leadership to answer her.

**By Steve Dunk**  
(Chair CPSA Inland Revenue Section, personal capacity.)



Strikers meeting, Birmingham November 1982.

## Birmingham DHSS strike

**FROM 14 September 1982 to 24 May 1983, when the last office on strike re-opened, the benefit system in Birmingham collapsed.**

Despite warnings DHSS management refused to increase staff. In the previous 12 month period an extra 27,702 people claimed Supplementary Benefit. In only four years unemployment in Birmingham has risen from 5.7% in May 1979 to 16.2% in May 1983.

### Intolerable pressures

This strike was not led from the top. It occurred because of intolerable pressures on staff. They were adamant that they would stay out until they won and indeed they wrung out of management a review of the whole DHSS staffing system which has not yet fully

reported its findings. Local Labour MPs joined the fight as did other unions and the local trades council.

### Indicator of future

This particular strike was about to escalate into national action when the union executive backed down, called off the prepared ballot and persuaded the strikers to go back. The NEC received subsequent censure for this action.

Birmingham was an indication, on a small scale, of what the future holds in store for Civil Servants. These struggles are the only way to safeguard jobs and conditions. With thousands more jobs up for the axe in DHSS a national fightback is essential. If it is not organised local disputes will certainly flare up.

negotiations must be carried out only by an internal staff representative.

Equally repugnant to union members will be Sir Robert Armstrong's demands that non-union members must have as much right in deciding working conditions as members.

The trade unions fought bitterly for the basic rights which the civil service union leaders are placing at the feet of the Tories for negotiation.

There can be no agreement with the Tories on fundamental trade union rights. The day of action on 28 February must be built into an all-out strike of the civil service as a preparation for the mobilisation of the might of the movement for a battle for the rights of GCHQ members.

- No deals on strike clauses.
- Access to industrial tribunals.
- All out on the 28 February.
- Workers' solidarity with GCHQ.
- Stand firm—defend union rights.

**By Kevin Roddy**  
(CPSA National Executive, personal capacity)

# GCHQ: The way forward

**WHY HAVE the Tories launched this new attack upon the trade unions and why have they singled out GCHQ employees?**

First and foremost the Tories took this workforce and civil service trade unions totally for granted (see article above).

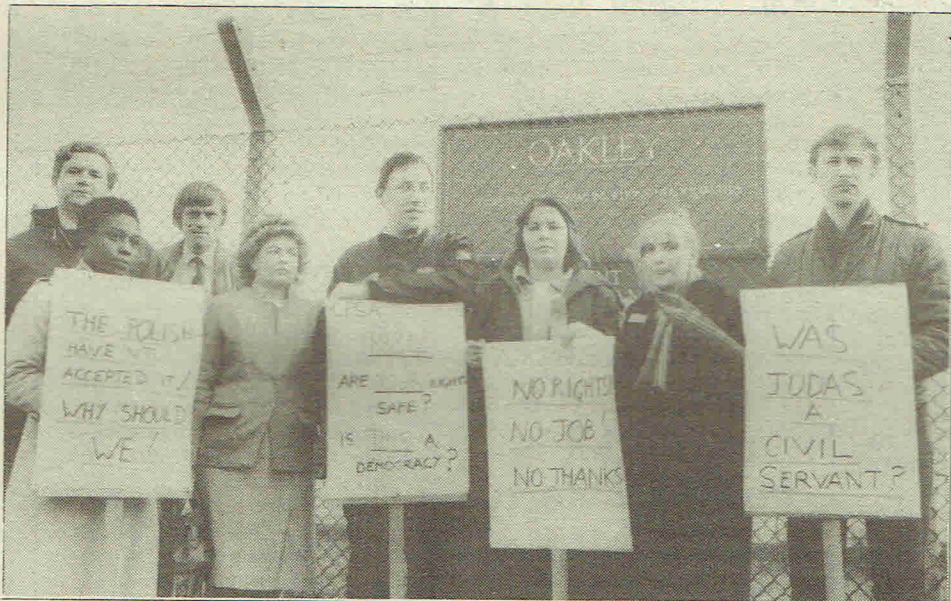
Secondly, they had been encouraged by the TUC's failure to support the NGA, and especially by the role played in that affair by the CPSA General Secretary, Alistair Graham. On the steps of Congress House, Graham justified his intention not to support the NGA with his cynical jibe that no-one had yet been transported to Australia. If the TUC had backed the NGA, the Tories would never have contemplated the assault on trade union rights at GCHQ.

Yet this workforce has traditionally been one of the quietest in the whole civil service. Even the protracted 1981 Pay Campaign hardly touched them. There was token action, just a picket line, that is all.

### Long-term aim

Yet this very first stirring into trade union action has been enough. The Reagan administration, Thatcher's cabinet and the Head of GCHQ are all well aware that these first seeds will have thrown down strong roots for the bitter years which lie ahead.

They hope by their arbitrary ban to abort not only the spread of militant trade unionism at GCHQ, but also the inevitable contagion of socialist ideas. The state machinery is preparing for titanic battles with the



Civil Servants picket over ban on unions at GCHQ.

Photo: J Harris (IFL)

trade union movement.

Under the surface of today's relatively quiet social relations lies an almighty explosion of discontent. The ruling class is preparing for a massive confrontation with the unions.

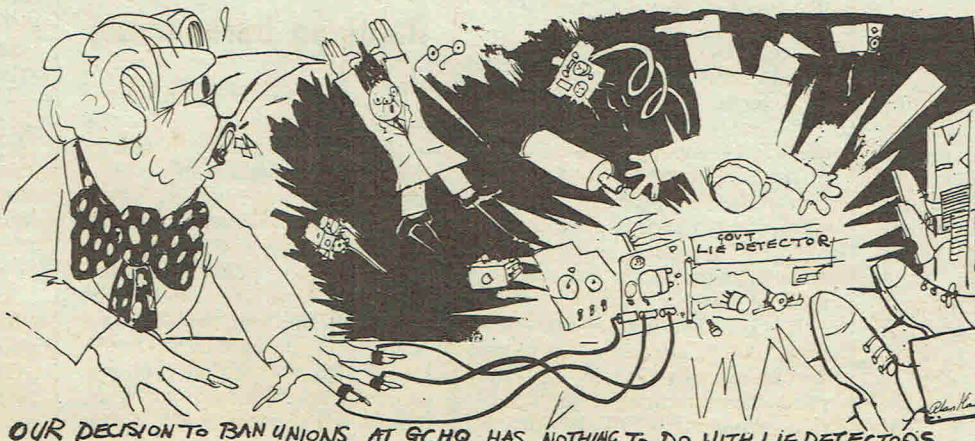
GCHQ is the centre of the network of security surveillance which also spies upon the activists (and often participants) of the labour and trade union movement. The Tories are attempting to

make sure GCHQ is completely "safe" for the coming battles and that they have a cadre of non-union staff prepared to do any dirty work they find necessary against the trade union movement.

But their contempt for the British trade union movement, for civil servants and, in particular for GCHQ employees, has blown up in their faces; already they have managed to provoke the very

movement which they are most frightened of. The general mood of resistance has even persuaded some GCHQ workers to retract their applications to leave the union.

It is now essential that the union leaders give these workers the leadership they deserve. Unfortunately it is clear that the trade union leaders are still seeking an "accommodation" with the Tories.



OUR DECISION TO BAN UNIONS AT GCHQ HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH LIE DETECTORS.

# Russian economy: ch

THE DEATH of Andropov and his replacement by the even greyer and older Chernenko has been the occasion for the hirelings of capital in Fleet Street to predictably point to the deficiencies of the Stalinist regime, its totalitarian character, massive corruption, etc. By this means they seek to extol the virtues of their own system and at the same time smear the genuine ideas of socialism with the brush of Stalinism.

PERHAPS NO-ONE has typified this more than Brian Walden an ex-right wing Labour MP would could write (seriously!) in the *Evening Standard* about the leaders of the Russian Revolution Lenin and Trotsky... "neither of them could have run a successful fish and chip shop in Brighton". This from someone who when a Labour MP presided over a Constituency Labour Party with a total membership of less than 100 and whose agent just happened to turn out to be a British Movement sympathiser.

## For the working class the replacement of Andropov by Chernenko is secondary.

Even more nauseating has been the spectacle of Thatcher, the former "Iron Lady", and even Reagan cooing like sucking doves about "international peace and understanding". This represents a complete somersault by Thatcher who boycotted Brezhnev's funeral fifteen months ago but seized the opportunity of Andropov's death to immediately declare her intention to visit Moscow.

### Productive forces

Puffed up like a bullfrog, Thatcher imagines that she is now able to play a decisive role in the international arena particularly as a broker between Stalinist Russia and American Imperialism. However, such pretensions were brutally punctured by George Bush who stated bluntly that America did not need any intercession on its behalf with the Russian regime, particularly by a third-rate power like Britain.

But much more decisive in Thatcher's and also Reagan's *volte face* towards the Stalinist states, first Hungary and now Russia, is the need to be seen to mollify the growing "anti-war movement" throughout the capitalist world by appearing to do something about "peace".

For the working class however the replacement of Andropov by Chernenko is of entirely secondary importance. Stalinism will do anything but get off the backs of

the working class. Even if the regime was headed by a mere stripling of 61 like Romanov or the 53 year old Gorbachev, it would not fundamentally alter the perspective for the coming upheaval in Russia. This upheaval is being prepared by the complete incapacity of Stalinism to further develop industry and society.

It was Marx who pointed out that the key to the development of society was the growth of the productive forces, science, technique and the organisation of labour.

Marx's aphorism now applies with equal force to the Stalinist regimes of Eastern Europe and Russia. In the past the advantages of nationalisation and a plan of production, the main conquest of the Russian Revolution, were evident in the colossal development of the productive forces and the increased living standards of the Russian working class and peasantry.

The productive forces developed at two and sometimes three times the rate of capitalism in the West. Thus despite all the horrors of Stalin's regime—the purge trials, the slave labour camps, the "gulag"—Stalinism, given the lag of the world revolution, played a relatively progressive role.

It fulfilled in Russia the tasks which capitalism was incapable of carrying out, developing industry, borrowing technique from the West and constructing the infrastructure, through the development of heavy industry, of a modern industrial country.

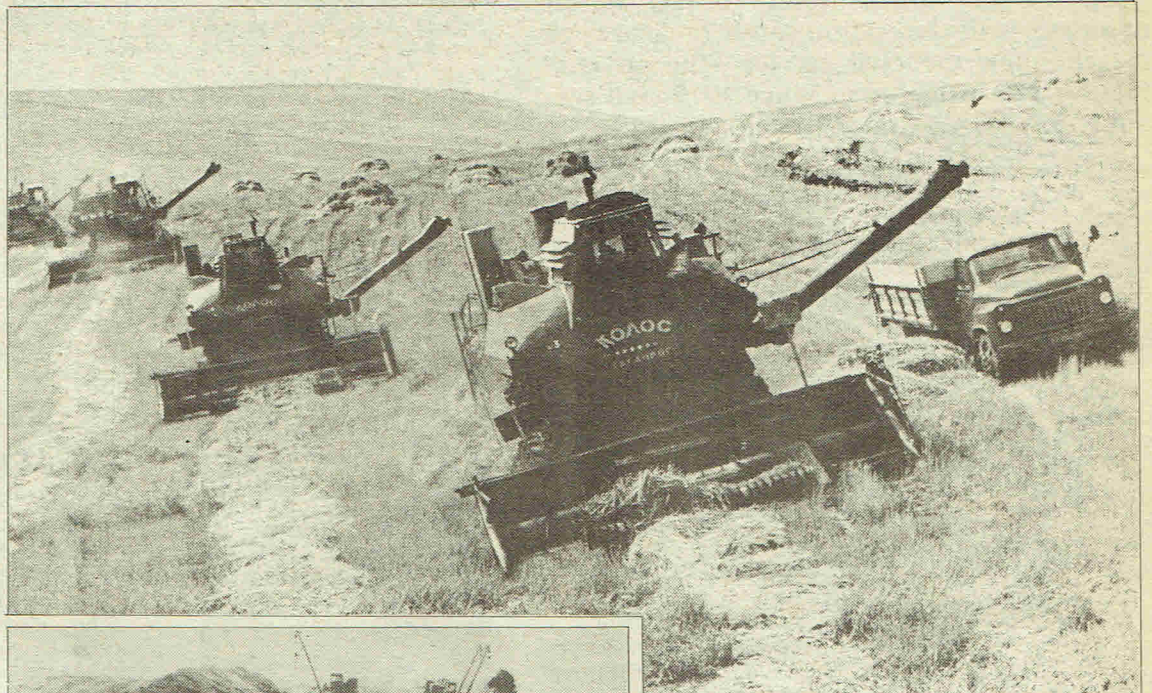
It is true that this was achieved at two or even three times the cost under capitalism. Nevertheless, no economy in history has managed to increase the productive forces on such a scale as the Russian economy since 1917.

Incredibly, *The Times*, which since Murdoch took control has assumed the character of an "up-market" *Sun*, recently declared "Projected into the present the figures for industrial development under the Tsars reach higher than Russia has climbed today" (13 February).

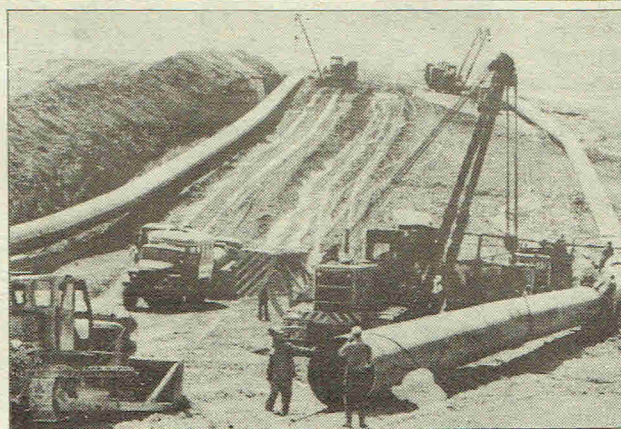
### Unparalleled progress

Before the Russian Revolution Russia was the India of Western Europe. Any objective analysis of Russia's progress in the last 66 years could not fail to record unequalled progress of the economy despite the disadvantages of the one party Stalinist regime.

Thus, even the Japanese economy over a similar period of time has not had the rate of growth of the Russian economy. Even in the post-war period we saw the enormous advantages of na-



2. Despite almost a third of all investment going to agriculture, production still trails behind the levels of 1970.



1. (Left) Laying pipelines for Siberian natural gas. The Stalinist theory of "Socialism in one country" has been superseded by active participation in the world market.

tionalisation and a plan of production in Russia's rapid economic recovery from the terrible destruction of the war.

### Catastrophic decline

The economy increased in general at twice the rate of capitalism in the 1950s. It increased by an average of 12% during this period. Yet only in one year—1967—did the economy increase by 10% in the following decade.

## Russian productive potential is comparable to Western Europe.

In the 1970s the rate of growth was only half the rate of the previous decade. And in the two of the last four years there has been a catastrophic decline in the rate of growth in the Russian economy.

In 1981 and 1982 there was a yearly increase of 2½%. This is the lowest since the Second World War. In 1983 it probably increased by about 4%. Agriculture grew by 4% in the same period after four years of decline. But despite an enormous investment in agriculture this figure is still below the 1970 level.

Recent estimates of Russia's national output puts it at only 60% of America.

In heavy industry—steel, cement, etc—Russia outstrips most of the capitalist powers. But also now in the most modern industries such as micro-processors Russia is only two to three years behind America in the design and development in this key field.

It is planned that 100,000 computers will be introduced into Russian industry by 1985-86. Thus the productive potential, if not the actual productivity of labour, is

similar to the most advanced capitalist countries of the West.

What these figures mean is that all the advantages enjoyed by Russia and other Stalinist states in the past which resulted from nationalisation and a plan of production are now almost completely cancelled out by the monstrous incubus of Stalinism. The rate of development of the Russian economy is hardly different to the measly growth rate of the capitalist countries in the West. America grew at 3½% in 1983.

### Economic zig-zags

The Stalinist bureaucracy is now an absolute fetter on the further development of the Russian economy and of Russian society. It is a monstrous historical road block which can only be removed by the political revolution of the Russian working class acting in consort with the working class throughout the whole of Eastern Europe.

The Stalinist autocracy is no longer capable of presiding over the further development of industry and society. It lurches from one expedient to another; each economic zig-zag is less effective than the previous one.

Thus Andropov launched his reforms with an "anti-corruption" drive in the early part of 1983. Like Stalin, Krushev and Brezhnev before him Andropov, while representing the privileged bureaucratic stratum nevertheless was alarmed at the mismanagement, the waste and the enormous part of the surplus consumed by this elite.

### Raids on bureaucrats

In an attempt to cut down the swollen privileges of the bureaucracy special brigades swooped on fashionable cafes, raided saunas and the other luxury palaces of the bureaucracy, in Leningrad, Moscow and other cities. For a very short period this seemed to have some effect. In the early part of the year the economy seemed set to increase by 5% or 6% but by May or June the economy dropped back. The same problems, only in a more aggravated form,

which beset Brezhnev and Krushev confronted the feeble and ailing Andropov.

The history of the Stalinist regimes has been a history of one economic zig-zag, of one economic adventure, piled upon another. In a dizzying change of policy the Stalinist regimes have moved from centralisation to de-centralisation and back to re-centralisation.

No modern economy could work with the rigid centralised control exercised by the privileged stratum in Moscow. Even 10,000 Lenins, Trotskys, Marx's and Engels', would not be capable alone of running a highly sophisticated economy like that of Russia. Capitalism has at least the imperfect check of the market. In a planned economy only the conscious control and management of the state and society by the working class can exploit its full potential.

Only workers' control and management could eliminate the monstrous wastage which blights Russian society and economy at the present time. The untrammelled rule of the Kremlin elite has led to the absurdity of the central ministries in Moscow trying to determine the plans of thousands of miles away.

### Crude methods

These plans, moreover, were determined with the crudest methods; by targets of weight and output. Thus in one factory the plan was set in *volume* per output and bonuses were awarded on the basis of the total output of the factory. Huge nails were therefore produced which were sometimes bigger than the wood they were supposed to go into!

The plan was then changed to the *number* of products turned out. Tiny nails were then produced which were equally useless! The centralised control exercised was equivalent to the British Treasury attempting to determine the output of a small factory in Rochdale.

The Brezhnev regime attempted in the 1960s to escape from its impasse with experiments in "controlled" de-centralisation and the introduction of the "profit motive" together with one-man



# oked by bureaucracy



4. Lenin (above) laid down strict conditions to avoid bureaucracy, none of which apply in Russia today:

1. All officials to be elected and subject to recall.
2. No permanent bureaucracy. Jobs to be rotated: "every cook can be a Prime Minister and every Prime Minister a cook."
3. No standing army, but the armed people to defend socialism.
4. The maximum income differential within society to be no more than 4 to 1.

3. Andropov's coffin carried by the leaders of the Russian 'Communist' Party, new leader Chernenko, second from front.

management in individual factories. As we predicted then, this merely duplicated the deficiencies of the centralised bureaucracy many times over.

Limited control was ceded to the different "nationalities" which created 16 mini-bureaucracies in the national republics which added to the inefficiency and waste of the centralised Moscow bureaucracy. At the same time, bribery and corruption have reached monumental proportions.

## 18 million Party members

In 1936 Trotsky pointed out that the bureaucracy swallowed a considerable part of the surplus value created by the labour of the working class. The bureaucracy in the trade apparatus consumed one-tenth of the total production of Russia at that time. He estimated that the bureaucracy as a whole numbered 5 to 6 million out of a total population of 170 million.

Yet the privileges enjoyed by the Stalinist apparatus of 1936 seems almost like the "kick backs" to a village policeman compared to the monstrous corruption and squandermania of the latter day Stalinist grandees. The so-called "Russian Communist Party" is in effect the party of the bureaucracy. This has swollen to a nominal membership figure of 18 million out of a population of 270 million.

Of course this privileged officialdom stretches from the lords in the Kremlin down to the village town official. The bribery and corruption has reached such a monumental scale that not even Trotsky could have anticipated. It is now estimated that up to 50% of the total output of Russia's economy is wasted either through inefficient mismanagement or outright corruption.

## Diamond-studded sword

Andropov before he died recently revealed the extent of corruption amongst Brezhnev's immediate entourage. He criticised Brezhnev himself only after the latter was incapable of answering back from beyond the grave.

Brezhnev had been awarded a

diamond encrusted sword from the leader of the Azerbaijanian Republic just before he died. The Minister of Fisheries was shot for "economic crimes". This involved the smuggling of vast amounts of caviar to the West in boxes which were labelled as herrings!

Similarly, the Airways Minister has been executed for similar crimes which caught up in the web of corruption thousands of people in his ministry. No matter which way they turn the bureaucracy cannot solve the insurmountable problems that beset their regime.

The attempt to ape some features of the capitalist market in the so-called Lieberman reforms in the 1960s were only partially applied in Russia itself. The Hungarian regime of Kadar, on the other hand, took up some aspects of Lieberman's proposals and implemented them in Hungary.

## The Stalinist Bureaucracy is now an absolute fetter on progress.

Andropov toyed with the idea of imitating the so-called "Hungarian model". Thus the Russian bureaucracy seek to imitate their own imitators in an attempt to extricate themselves from their difficulties. The much-vaunted Hungarian reforms gave a certain independence to factory managers.

It also represented an attempt on the part of the bureaucracy to draw a section of the Hungarian working class into sharing out the privileges enjoyed by the elite. It was coupled with an attempt to introduce into Hungarian conditions a kind of Stakhanovite movement like that in Russia in the 1930s.

Trotsky pointed out that this represented an attempt by Stalin to involve a section of workers in sharing out the privileges of the bureaucracy. Stalinist regimes are

incapable of inspiring the workers to develop industry and society. Instead the Kadar bureaucracy sought to buy the support of a section of the Hungarian workers through bribery. The outcome of the "Hungarian reforms" has been the huge growth of disparities within Hungarian society.

## Hungarian model

Now even a former Hungarian prime minister Hegedis has estimated that the income of the top 5% in Hungary was 80 times that of the bottom 5%! Corruption is now so widespread that every layer of Hungarian society, even including Hungarian football teams, have been drawn into an enormous web of corruption.

Throughout all the states of Eastern Europe and not just in Poland there is enormous simmering discontent that could easily boil over in the next period.

Hungary experienced a growth in its economy following the revolution of 1956. This arose partially from the participation of the Hungarian economy on the world market. But in 1983 the Hungarian national income was expected to drop by 2%.

The situation that now obtains in Eastern Europe and Russia is qualitatively different to what existed in the past. All the objective political pre-requisites for a successful political revolution against the bureaucracy have matured in all the states of Eastern Europe and Russia itself.

## Fear of working class

The bureaucracy itself is riven into different factions with one section seeing the need for reform from above in order to prevent revolution from below. Another section insists on "harsh measures" to prevent the coming revolt of the workers and peasants of these states. It feels itself as an encumbrance, as an impediment to the further development of society.

Some of the most visible signs of opposition have come precisely from within the ruling stratum itself, from their sons and

daughters. In January 1982 we had such an example with the arrest and trial of a discussion group of 40, mostly young people who came together to discuss Trotsky's ideas because, in their own words, he described "the betrayal of the Russian Revolution". Stalinism is utterly rotted and decomposing before our eyes.

The bureaucracy feels and fears the power of the Russian working class today. Like the capitalists in the West they have presided over the mighty development of industry. They have therefore given a gigantic impulse to the growth of their own grave-diggers the Russian working class.

## There is not one regime in Eastern Europe which is stable.

Without doubt the Russian working class is now the most powerful on the planet. Russia is no longer a backward society with a predominantly rural population. Agriculture now employs only 20% of the labour force.

The increased power and social weight of the working class is shown in the following figures. There are now 18 cities of more than one million people: there were only five in 1970! 270 cities now have a population of 100,000 or more. This is fifty more than in 1970. Twenty new towns are created each year in Russia alone.

There are huge concentrations of workers in individual factories which dwarf those in the capitalist West. For instance, in the Gorky automotive factory there is a total of 200,000 workers in the factory complex! In the Togliatti factory there are 170,000 workers! A strike in protest against rationing in 1980 in these two factories alone assumed almost the character of a general strike!

In Poland the bureaucracy used fear of Russian intervention as one of the means of derailing the revolution. But once a movement takes place in Russia, the bureaucracy will be powerless to stop it. Particularly if the revolution began in Moscow or Leningrad.

## Political Revolution

Where will the forces for the bureaucratic counter-revolution come from? The population of Moscow now is 20 million. Once the working class in one of the major centres of Russia begins to move this will be the beginning of the end of the bureaucracy.

Moreover with correct leadership, a peaceful political revolution is entirely possible. Trotsky pointed out that despite the enormous size of the bureaucracy, it is more heterogeneous than the peasantry. It reaches from the humblest policeman in the town and village right up to the lords in the Kremlin. Once there is a movement of the Russian workers, the bureaucratic elite at the top will be suspended in mid air.

Therefore the present situation in Russian and Eastern Europe points towards the coming political revolution in Russia and throughout the whole area. There is not one regime which is now stable, which does not face opposition from the workers.

There is growing opposition in Czechoslovakia and in East Germany, where 100,000 youth gathered to protest under the banner of the Lutheran church in early 1983. It is also visible in Hungary, and in Rumania, where the miners actually stoned Ceausescu's helicopter in the Jilulu valley and he was forced to flee. The crew on his private yacht have recently fled to the West!

To a much greater extent than 1956, 1968, or even 1980, all the conditions for a continental political revolution are being prepared in Russia and Eastern Europe.

By Peter Taaffe

**Chile, Thailand**

# Chilean workers-learning in struggle

**IN THE autumn of 1982, about 160 workers at the A2A foundry in Santiago, Chile, fought a two-month strike on wages and conditions.**

We print below extracts from an interview with the elected leaders (the junta's legislation permits so called unions restricted to one factory. There are elections every two years).

"The strike wasn't just about immediate problems over the renewal of our contracts. There was also a build up of tension—particularly since 1981. We've had to bottle up our anger until then.

"In 1981 we were all sacked and shortly afterwards taken on again but without seniority or any benefits we had before. That's why the strike found us quite clear what had to be done.

"We were taken aback by the firmness, even the boldness of our workmates. We, as leaders, took a while to react. Remember, this was the first time most of us had experienced a strike. Only one in three had been here when we last struck in 1967.

"The decree laws of the last few years eliminated many of our conquests. Shorter holidays, cancellation of bonuses and the traditional family outing, the end of scholarships for children at school, the five yearly wage rises for time served. All went by the board when they threw us out and re-hired us on new terms.

"In the first part of the strike, there was an exhilarated mood, 'we are the champions'. At the 30-day stage the police were arresting our people who went out with collecting boxes, accusing them of being beggars, but despite this, we raised 64,000 pesos.

"The strike wasn't a spectacular victory but we went back with our



"Years of bloody struggle with arrests and imprisonment"

heads held high. Nobody is getting high wage rises at the moment, but we got 100% of the increase in the cost of living index plus four per cent. We also managed to get a free canteen meal as a formal right. As a lot of us live on tea and bread at home, that was important.

"We gained unity between the two trade unions which previously had kept the shop floor manual workers a bit apart from the office staff."

At this point a laboratory worker, who it seems had supported the Pinochet coup in 1973 as 'an end to the chaos'; interven-

ed: "I had my salary raised by 90% just before the strike... which I supported.

"When I returned the boss asked what I had gained. I said an increase in solidarity, that this government defended only privilege and that I had got an increase in my social awareness.

## Young workers take up banner

"We were helped in the strike by the metal workers' federation, by groups of tenants, of left wingers, by the church, but I thought the

biggest effect on our fighting spirit was the woman who walked here with a baby in her arms. It was quite a walk and she couldn't afford a bus but she came to tell us our fight was just and should continue.

"We have also seen that the official union federation of Contreras did nothing except bleat like lambs when they were with the bosses. We realise now which of the federations really represent the workers, and which don't."

But a 25-year old worker who played an active role in the strike, and was often critical of the steps

taken (or omitted) by the officially elected leaders, showed most clearly the militancy developing:

"I'd like to stress the participation of the younger workers in the strike. We were kids when the 1973 coup came, still politically virgin. But in ten years they haven't been able to impose their ideas on us. We're taking up the banner of struggle.

"The strike taught us that being a good worker doesn't just mean becoming a good skilled craft-master, but also participating outside the factory floor. The strike was hard. It caught us on the wrong foot and nobody had anything saved up. Strikes today are more of a sacrifice than before 1973.

## Tough struggles

"Our only weapon is to join the factory trade unions together in federations but not the official pro-junta ones, that way we'll be able to bend the arm of the system.

"There have been several years of really tough struggles since the 1973 coup which occurred because of lack of awareness of the workers. They've been years of bloody struggles with arrests and imprisonment, not 'white glove' struggles.

"Young workers like myself have been unemployed several times. We know that it's like to be without income. I've been unemployed for 2,4,6 months, so I'm not worried about having to buckle down to a couple of months' strike without pay.

"I'll be standing in the next elections and I'm attending a course organised by the federation. The present leaders were elected two years ago; most have been leaders for six years and some of them are getting worn down by the struggle."

## Profits from the misery . .

By Jane Ingham

HEARTBREAKING, sickening, disgusting—these are just a few of the words I heard from women at work the morning after the *World In Action* TV programme *Rags to Riches*.

This described the plight of young girls in Thailand. As young as 12, girls travel from their families in the poverty-stricken north to Bangkok where they are immediately sucked into prostitution or slave-like conditions in the sweatshops. Of a population of 8½m in Bangkok half a million are prostitutes.

The girls are picked up when they arrive in the city and sold on the back streets to the brothel owners. In the brothels they are subjected to up to 10 'jobs' a day. Like commodities, they are put on display in windows. Clients can pay more for 1, 2 or 3 day girls—this indicates how long it is since they have lost their virginity!

## British firms make millions

Most of the programme, however, concentrated on highlighting the conditions in textiles. Two young teenage sisters, one only 13, told how for a 12 hour shift they got paid 60p which after bus fares and the price of a bowl of rice left 36p. They are the 'lucky' ones because they live at home with their grandmother.

Most of the other girls live in the fac-



One of the profit makers in Thailand, opium exports. Every sickness of capitalism exists in Thailand, prostitution, superexploitation and drug addiction.

tories, sleeping in dormitories on the floor sometimes shoulder to shoulder. 12 year olds talked of working 7 days a week, rising at 6 am and working until after midnight. There are even cases of girls sleeping over their sewing machines. The girls have no choice, if they don't work they don't eat.

All this, of course is shocking. They are breaking the laws of Thailand of a minimum working age of 15 and a minimum wage of £2 a day. The government of Thailand turns a blind eye. What perhaps is most shocking is that these girls are labouring under these conditions producing clothes for sale in Britain in stores such as Littlewoods, Woolworths, Debenhams, C & A and Great Universal Stores.

When we look at the profits, it is clear why British firms turn a blind eye. A knitted suit with a Bangkok factory price of £4.75 is on sale in the Great Universal Stores Catalogue at £19.99! Clearly, for British business it is very lucrative to allow child labour in Bangkok to continue.

The British buyers visit the factories, but the sight of the suffering must be softened when you are enjoying the luxuries of £140 a day hotels! As women, mothers and consumers, my friends at work and I are angry at the terrible exploitation exposed by this programme. We all vowed never again to buy clothes with "made in Thailand" labels.

## Prostitution, exploitation— or socialism

But we recognise that in itself won't solve the problem. It's a 'Catch 22' situation—if sales go down the girls lose their jobs and have the choice of prostitution or starving. The international labour and trade union movement has to intervene to exert pressure for the wiping out of these conditions.

However, to wipe out the poverty that drives these girls into these conditions not only in Thailand but in the Phillipines, South Korea, Hong-Kong, the only way out of this nightmare is through socialism.

## . . and profits from the phoney cures.

"THE BOSS, he gives us each one of the pills at about 10 o'clock at night. Then after that my hands shake, my head becomes very awake. I work all night—fast."

The pills are amphetamines and the speaker was a woman worker in a knitting factory in Bangkok, quoted in *New Scientist*. Thailand exists on the seediest outskirts of world capitalism, but a very profitable one for capitalists in the West and Japan.

As in South Korea, labour is cheap—so is life. The women in the factories realise the pills can "burn out their brains" but they help them get through the long night shifts.

Every sickness of capitalism can be seen magnified in Thailand. The half million prostitutes in Bangkok are part of the "tourist trade" for foreign businessmen (and Thai police chiefs). It is the world's leading exporter of opium and there are half a million heroin addicts.

The country has been ruled by the military more or less non-stop since 1932. Their armaments frequently come from the International Narcotics Control Unit, but

as many Thai generals actively push heroin, the arms are, predictably, used for political oppression.

The government support "private enterprise" 100%. If "enterprise" means agony it also means profit. And the multinationals are not averse to the pickings. There is no health service and chemists do a roaring trade with addictive and harmful drugs; pharmaceutical firms import almost free of tax and make huge profits. Farm labourers ease the burden of backbreaking toil in the paddy fields with up to 20 tablets a day of a mixture of aspirin, codeine and phenacetin which leads to stomach ulcers. Valium and librium are sold for colds.

The bosses make a profit out of the misery and another profit out of ameliorating it. They are taking advantage of the lack of trade unions and legal political opposition—at present. Any attempts to offer an alternative to prostitution and drug racketeering have been labelled as communist and eliminated.

By Roger Shives

## USA, Iran-Iraq war, Greece, Italy



Boston, the Greyhound strike. A picket fell under the wheels of a scab bus. He was not seriously hurt.

# Standing up to Reagan

**WHEN REAGAN came to power in 1980 it was the signal for US employers to go on the offensive against living standards and union rights.**

Reagan bust PATCO, the union of the air traffic controllers, lifted or eased federal control of safety in the workplace and cut back on social security benefits. He moved to de-regulate trade and industry resulting in increased competition between the corporations, the purpose of which was to encourage them to cut union rights, wages and jobs.

Not that the bosses needed much encouragement. In cars and steel, airlines and roads and rail, in sector after sector they demanded concessions from the workers. Wages were "too high". Foreign competition was eating away their markets. Contracts must be reopened and wage cuts made "to save jobs" they said.

Union busting firms headed by greasy lawyers sprang up like mushrooms. Bosses prepared to win concessions, to de-certify unions where they could and also to plan to fight strikes and employ scabs and keep their plants open.

In the past two decades their attitude in the main had been to close the plants in face of strikes, as experience showed that employing scabs usually led to enormous conflicts, often violent, between the striking workers and the police and the company's own strike-breaking forces.

This offensive caught the union leaders unprepared to say the least. Many union leaders have become accustomed to negotiating behind closed doors with the employers, smoking the same cigars, eating the same food, sleeping in the same hotels and exchanging views on the best location to spend a holiday.

### Years of consensus are over

They had gained increases for their members without too much difficulty because of the enormous profits US big business due to their dominant position in the capitalist world and the prosperity of the post-war boom years.

Suddenly these leaders faced a determined employers' onslaught backed up by a vicious right wing government. Their reaction in the main was to echo the bosses' arguments and implore their members to take cuts and make concessions. At best they made no recommendation and certainly organised no campaign to mobilise the union membership for a fightback.

### First of two articles by Robb O'Neill

Members of many unions faced this attack without a fighting lead from their leadership. They could also see unemployment was rising. Over the recessions of 1980 to 1982 it reached between 10 and 11%. The employers produced figures which "showed" the companies were on the verge of going bust. Many workforces voted to make concessions.

The bosses gloated in their press about the "weakening of US Labor", about the possibility of a "union-free environment". Was not union membership below 20%, the lowest since the early 1930s. Were the workers not making concessions? Their optimism seemed boundless. This attitude found echoes amongst the labor leaders and labor lawyers, the left academics and the ultra-left sects.

**"Management think cooperation with labour means riding rough shod over workers. We will show them that is not the way it works."**

Fortunately events are not determined by such people. True, the percentage of the workforce organised has dropped to 20% but in absolute terms there has been a rise in union membership from 1950 to 1980 from about 14 million to about 19 million. There has not been the decline seen in the slump years of 1920 to 1934.

The working class is bigger and also potentially stronger. The monopolisation of US business has led to bigger and bigger work units in the industrial, commercial and retail sectors.

In August, the Bell Telephone Company AT&T demanded concessions from their workers. Bell is the most profitable corporation in the world, making \$7.2 billion profit in 1982. The 650,000 workforce struck for three weeks, showing total unity. The company was forced to retreat and their demands for concessions were rejected.

Around the same time the powerful Teamsters Union were asked by truck owners to re-open their contract to discuss concessions. The union leadership recommended this course of action, the members rejected this demand by a massive 7 to 1 majority. On 17 October 6,600 members of the UAW (United Auto Workers) struck at three Mac-Donell Douglas plants after voting down demands for concessions by an

80% majority. At Continental Airlines all unions including the pilots came out when the company, after filing for bankruptcy "offered" them their jobs back at 50% of their previous wage.

In Twinsburg, Ohio, 3,200 workers at the Chrysler plant struck in early November, closing all but two of Chrysler's plants. Bob Weissman, president of the UAW local at Twinsburg said: "Management has come to think that co-operation with labor has come to mean riding rough-shod over the workforce. We are going to show them that is not the way it works".

The strike centred around overtime, safety and workrule issues. After six days the strike was settled. The *Wall Street Journal* commented: "The agreement approved by blue-collar workers here restores many labor practices that Chrysler and other auto-makers have sought to eliminate in recent years, such as sharp restrictions on moving employees from one job in a plant to another. Throughout the strike Chrysler executives worried that giving in on such issues—as they apparently were forced to do—would prompt workers at other plants to make similar demands."

They lamented that at the meeting to vote on the settlement workers showed "little sympathy for Chrysler management". When Bob Weissman, "announced that the strike had cost the auto-maker over \$50 million in lost profit there was a roar of applause and cheers. 'Management cannot kick us around anymore' yelled one worker."

On 4 November, 2,000 members of the Amalgamated Transit Union struck the Greyhound Bus Company (see *Militant*, 16 December). The management were trying to force through concessions of up to 25% of workers' wages. Yet the company was making \$20 million profit. On 7 November Greyhound management began to roll their fleet out again with scab labour. Outside hundreds of depots from Seattle to New York, from Boston to San Diego, from Miami to Chicago workers blocked the paths of the scab buses. Solidarity actions came from other unions and labour councils. In Boston 5,000 mainly construction workers struck and marched to the city centre.

It was only after the ATU leadership got members to vote twice on the settlement that this strike was ended. The first vote was 30 to 1 to continue the strike!

Workers only voted to accept the concessions after seeing their leadership was not prepared to struggle but instead intent on getting the strike settled. Many workers felt that to go on with that leadership would mean certain defeat.

*In the second article, Robb O'Neill will look at the perspective for future struggles.*

## Gulf war escalates

THE seemingly endless Gulf war has increased in tempo.

The bloody war between Iran and Iraq has raged for nearly four years with a massive death toll of 200,000, enormous amounts of money wasted—and no gains for either side.

Both countries are headed by vicious dictators, Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran. Iran has just launched a new offensive for control of the major road in Iraq between Baghdad, the capital and the port of Basra.

Over 500,000 troops are lined up against each other over a 730 mile border. One reason for the massive casualties has been the First World War style of fighting with wave upon wave of soliders "going over the top" and being massacred. In just two days last week over 1,000 troops were killed.

The town of Basra itself has also come under heavy fire killing hundreds and making thousands of refugees flee to the tiny oil emirate of Kuwait.

Saddam Hussein has retorted by repeating his threat

to "bomb the mullahs into sanity". Which the Ayatollah would answer by closing the Straits of Hormuz—which would cut off 25% of the Western World's oil.

The US has already pledged itself to keep the straits open—by force if needed. To back this up a task force is heading from the Indian Ocean to the Gulf. Reagan's administration still want to play the 'policeman' of the world's trouble spots. Their recent disaster in the Lebanon shows their involvement in the Gulf would only lead to a massive escalation in the war.

By Matt Reed



## Greek workers' appeal

WE HAVE received the following letter from workers in Greece asking for the solidarity and support of British workers.

Brothers and sisters,

In the Greek cities of Athens and Salonika the Chicago-based multinational National Can has two factories. This company recently decided to close them down. We, the 400 workers there refused to accept this decision and since 18 January have been occupying the plants.

We are demanding that the government takes action to ensure that the factories are reopened under our control.

Through supporters of *Xekinima*, the sister paper of

*Militant*, we have heard of the occupations in Britain. We send you our support and hope you succeed in your struggle. In these times we must fight for our jobs not allow ourselves to be put out of work just to satisfy the greed for profit of big business.

We would be glad to hear from you and your struggle.

Yours fraternally,  
Vasilis Athanasopoulos,  
(Secretary Union of National Can) on behalf of the workers occupying National Can.

Messages of support to Trades Council of Elefsis for the Union of National Can workers. Platia Iroon, Elefsis, Greece.

## Italian strike wave

SPONTANEOUS strikes broke out in Italy after the government issued a decree, cutting the index linking wages to prices.

The strikes were called sometimes by local organisations of the union federation GGIL but most of all by the factory councils which are linking together. At Alfa Romeo in Milan and Fiat in Brescia workers are calling for a national meeting of factory councils to co-ordinate the fight against the attacks.

Last year Italy's bosses got the agreement of the unions to a 20% cut in the index, the *scala mobile* after promising to hold down prices. This promise is now understood to be a "con". When a similar process started this year workers

launched a wave of telegrams of protest. Now workers have taken action, 40,000 marched in Milan the day after Prime Minister Craxi announced the plan.

Actions included the occupation of the rail station in Genoa, road blocks in Rome and Milan while in Naples, railworkers are demanding that local GGIL leaders resign for opposition to the strike.

The fear of the ruling class comes across most clearly by the television news stopping reporting strikes after just one day! This had led to protests outside a Rome TV station.

By a correspondent in Milan

# Letters

Write to *Militant*, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

## Haunted Tory

Dear Comrades,  
Who ever spread the malicious rumour that the quality of leaders produced by the ruling class has gone down over the years.

Not afraid to deal with the burning issues of the day, former Solicitor-General for Scotland, Tory MP Nicholas Fairbairn has announced that a ghost of a long departed monk attended his wedding last May at his 13th century castle near Dunfermline.

Not content to gatecrash this important gathering of top people the monk also managed to pose for a photograph and had been captured on two video films!

Thanks in part to his upper class breeding, but mainly to his famous eccentricity, Nicky has taken the shock well and now says he wants to meet the ghost at some time in the future.

That's the spirit. The pound may down, and we had to do a bit of a Dunkirk in Beirut, but at least no ghost is going to force Mr Fairbairn to face reality.

Fraternally  
Frank White  
Glasgow Central LPYS

## Doubletalk award

Dear Comrades,  
From the seemingly endless personal accounts, articles and television biographies on George Orwell and his works, the "1984 Doubletalk Award" must surely go to the East German Deputy Culture Minister Klaus Hoepcke. Of Orwell's 1984 he says that the book accurately portrays the capitalist West not the communist East: "The grotesque images in the book apply to the characteristic features of capitalist reality."

The novel is banned in East Germany.

Yours fraternally  
Gordon McKinley  
Leith GMBATU

## Nuclear imbalance?

Dear Editor,  
As someone who reads *Militant* for its factual industrial reports and socialist analysis, I was disappointed to read your article "Nuclear and chemical leaks—Bosses contempt for human life" (27 January).

This article, in its biased selection of facts, its jumbled mixture of inadequately researched allegations and inclusion of distracting issues eg petrol additives, is typical of the worst type of journalism available from Fleet Street, which I have heard denounced by your own speakers at *Militant* meetings.

The energy debate is important and *Militant* should contribute a balanced socialist plan. This should recognise the relative advantages and disadvantages of coal and nuclear power. For example we should recognise that coal causes much more cancer, ill-health, and en-

## Dirty play in soccer world

Dear Comrades,  
Manchester United Football Club chairman, Martin Edwards and his family, are in a dilemma over the proposed take-over of the club.

This dilemma entails either continuing the traditions of his father at the club, or accepting 'financial security' for him and his family. This so-called financial security amounts to the meagre sum of £4 million.

Martin Edwards said that, "everyman has his price". His price being a little higher than others.

Supermarket millionaire James Gulliver and publisher Sir Robert Maxwell are formulating their plans for a takeover. Gulliver is said to have 'tremendous influences' in the business world, no doubt at the expense of workers.

Wheeler-dealers like these live off the backs of working class football supporters, the majority of whom can't afford to go to see their teams play.

So next time you go to a match and pay £4 and £5 a time, just think Martin Edwards and his family will be raking in their financial security.

Yours  
A Boardman  
Worsley LPYS

## Acts of (capitalist) God

Dear Comrades,  
Workers struggling for a living wage must sometimes wonder if God is on their side or the bosses. For black miners in South African coal fields, where the death-rate is estimated to be six times Britain's coal mines, official statistics appear to have answered the question.

While management were held to be responsible for less than 2% of coal mining accidents, the blame for over 90% of accidents was put down to "Acts of God".

Fraternally  
Dave Blackwith  
Bournemouth

vironmental damage eg acid rain, pollution etc, than nuclear power.

In view of the recent weather in this country your writer's uncritical support for solar power stations also seems a bit over optimistic. Nor should we forget that solar power is nuclear power.

Elsewhere in the same issue of *Militant* you cite Orwell's criticism of socialists for their over-reliance on sloganising, and consequent failure to get their message across to even their natural allies, the poor and oppressed. Please let's not make the same mistake in 1984. The most effective way of putting forward the case for socialism is to present the facts in a reasoned argument which leads to the inevitable acceptance of the advantages of socialism. The argument is so overwhelming that we don't need to resort to shoddy reporting and sloganising.

Yours fraternally  
R Murray  
Eastbourne

# Putting on the pressure



Policeman with picket in stranglehold at Grunwicks, 1977—police violence has become a common feature of industrial disputes.

Dear Comrades,  
*The Observer* recently had an article about police tactics in arresting demonstrators based upon three photographs showing a police sergeant making an arrest by applying pressure to the neck of a demonstrator.

Such a stranglehold could easily result in death—and has done in the USA where

such methods are standard procedure. A person could die within seconds because of pressure on the carotid artery—which takes blood and oxygen to the brain; pressure on the wind pipe could result in death by strangulation within two or three minutes. The spinal cord could also easily be damaged.

The Home Office said that it was up to the Courts to decide whether the force used in a particular case was appropriate. On being shown one of the pictures an Assistant Police Commissioner commented: "As you know, photographs taken at a particular time show something quite different from what actually happen-

ed." So much for the "camera never lies."

This method of arrest is actually banned in the police force. That it nevertheless occurs shows quite clearly the need for democratic control of the police.

Yours fraternally  
Andy Wallwork  
Broadgreen LPYS

## Council house sales drawbacks

Dear Comrades,  
The article by Neil Vann in *Militant* (issue 686) on the purchase of council houses by tenants prompted me to write about the experience of someone I know.

He had managed to buy his own council house out of a redundancy payment, but was now retired and struggling to live on his pension.

He pointed out that now he owned his own home the responsibility for its maintenance lay with him. The woodwork was in need of urgent repair, and the house desperately required some form of insulation (it was by no means new). He couldn't afford to carry out either of these 'improvements'.

His situation highlights the reason behind the Tories' home ownership policy. It is a further means of removing responsibility for the provision of basic human needs from the state. The burden is placed on the individual members of the working class.

Yours  
L Studd

## Eyes opened

Dear Comrades,  
What an eye opener! The management at my hyper-market are acting like children to try and stop me becoming a shop steward.

They thought they had it all sewn up, but they'll fail because I now have peace of mind and a clear understanding after years in the dark.

I've had years of frustration, knowing things were wrong but never knowing why. "One instinctively knows when something is right" burbles the toff in a TV ad, well same here. Thank you to all involved in *Militant*.

Yours fraternally  
Mike King  
Southampton

## Dole casualties

Dear Comrades

I recently met an old friend who has been on the dole for several years. His wife has been in and out of psychiatric hospitals, probably as a consequence of the misery of long term unemployment.

He told me he had already attempted suicide with a drug overdose but had been saved by the timely arrival of his son. However, he says he will have another go because life is unbearable for him.

Readers will appreciate that this man is not unique in Thatcher's Britain. Sadly the message is lost on many 'leaders' of the labour movement. The working people of Britain, indeed the whole world, need socialism now.

Fraternal greetings  
J. Roberts  
NUJ Chester

## Young reader

Dear Comrades,

I am 13 years old and an ardent reader of *Militant*. I am writing this letter to show my support for your front page article (issue 684) about Tory MP Mathew Parris spending one week on Supplementary Benefit, for the TV programme *World in Action*.

It goes without saying that he failed to manage, and on the last night he ran out of gas and electricity, and was forced to walk the streets. Parris did not buy soap, and what would he do about shoes if his old ones wore out? Buy second hand ones? Surely everyone deserves at least one decent article of clothing at least once in their lives? And what kind of life is it eating pilchards with nothing but this to look forward to?

I have enclosed 30p for the fighting fund, my pocket money for this week.

Yours fraternally  
Christopher Deadman  
Staines

## Human guinea pigs

Dear Comrades,

An article which appeared recently in the 'quality' press (*The Guardian* 30 January, 1984) shows the depths into which people are being forced by Tory attacks on those with low incomes. The report explained that dangers faced those who acted as human guinea pigs in trials for new and untested drugs.

It quoted the Vice-Provost of University College medical school, Professor Derrick James, who said that his college was advising its students to take part only in drugs trials which had been approved by their own ethical sub-committee, but who added that the advice did not help, "unemployed people who are doing it because they need the money," or students who choose to do something which might "be harmful in future, to pay the overdraft."

## Tolpiddle TUC

Dear Comrades,

*Militant* has said much about the TUC devaluing the struggles of workers, but one has emerged that takes the gold medal.

Planning to place a monument at Tolpiddle to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the trial and transportation of the Martyrs, the TUC leadership came up with a most insulting idea—a public lavatory.

If the right wing leaders of the TUC can't think of a more fitting way to honour the courage of the six farm labourers then they should step aside for people who do know something about the struggles of working people.

Yours fraternally  
Clive Walder  
Brighton LPYS

## Winter wonderland

Dear Comrades,

If you wanted to get away from the winter gloom you could have tried a week at the Winter Olympics.

For £71 a night (almost three times what I get in supplementary benefit for a week), you could stay in a double room at the Holiday Inn, where you could rub shoulders with the likes of King Gustav and Queen Silvia of Norway, or Princess Nora of Lichtenstein (who?)

Our own dear royals, reflecting the straitened state of the British economy are slumming it in a £31 a night two star hotel.

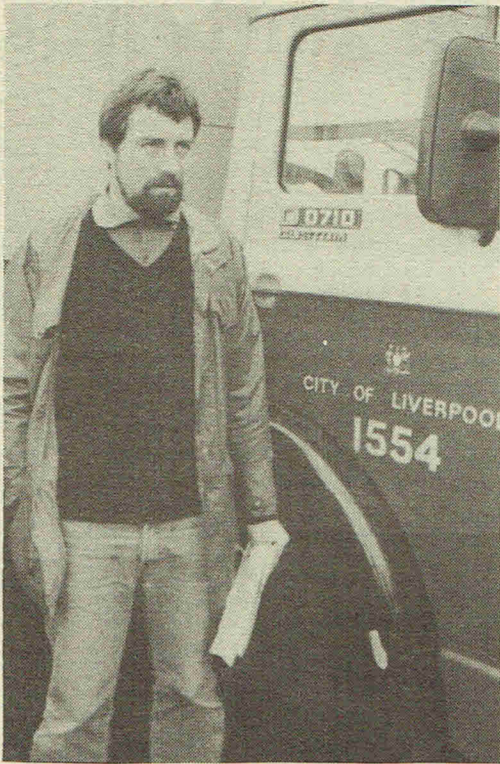
What makes it all the more sickening is that all this is taking place in 'socialist' Yugoslavia.

Yours fraternally  
Dave Buss  
Tonbridge/Malling LPYS

# By Liverpool's lights

**PAT WETHERS** is an electrician with Liverpool City Council. He is 34, started with the council eight years ago and is now convenor of the City Lighting Department. He represents all trades in three depots, over a hundred workers in all, and is the Lighting stewards' delegate to the Joint Shop Stewards Committee (of which he was a founding member) representing the Council's 30,000 workers.

In future articles we hope to deal in more detail with the development of the JSSC and the relationship between council unions and the new Labour council. Here Pat talks about his experience at shop floor level and how it relates to the political battles in Liverpool.



control we've had an intake of apprentices for the first time in four years.

Under the previous administration when the lads had finished their time they were shown down the road. Labour is committed to finding jobs for them when they complete their training.

Also in other areas, particularly the semi-skilled, where we've had difficulty because of frozen recruitment, those vacancies are now being filled. We're well pleased that our manning levels are being brought up to scratch after being eroded over the years. 5,000 council jobs were lost under the Liberals.

## The difference Labour makes

Because Labour has carried out and is trying to carry out the policies it was elected on, relations between our JSC and the Council are good. We find they are working in the same direction we are.

We don't have the old situation under the Liberals where they weren't just councillors they were bosses. Now they will sit down and listen to your case. Obviously the efficiency of the service is in their minds when decisions are made, but we've found the decisions more in keeping with our attitude to problems than previous administrations.

We now sit on disputes panels and have an input into decision making. Although we don't have voting rights we do contribute to the panel's decisions. Facilities for attending courses have improved. Previous to May we had great difficulty—they were more or less blocked.

I think the members appreciate the role the council is playing. The marked improvement in council/union relations is seen on the shop floor. There's an awareness that we're all going down the same road.

The lads don't have the day to day contact with disputes

THE CONSTANT problems our stewards committee deals with are things like bonus, target times, demarcation, and so on, which we take up with management or personnel.

We've been looking for consolidation of bonus. The council have agreed it for one department. It would be a benefit to the men and the department. One big advantage to us is it will reduce on-costs which at present make it difficult to compete with outside contractors. Our high administration costs mean that if we price a job at say £100 there is an on-cost of 180% ie. add £180.

## Problems for DLO's

In contracting where I came from there is a smaller management structure. The bigger burden of administration does create problems, you do find people looking to justify their positions.

As it is most of our work is

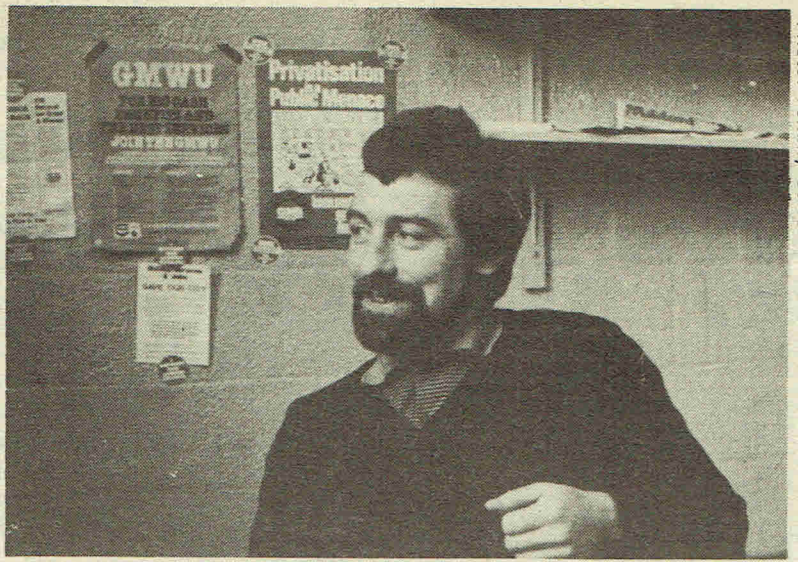
on an agency basis for the Merseyside County Council. A lot of their major contracts go to outside contractors who put in the installation. Mainly we are following on from them. If there's problems they aren't around to pick them up.

## Wages, conditions, jobs

Wages in local authorities are far behind outside industry. The average wage here is probably less than £100 per week. We are in the lower-paid bracket. There isn't a big differential between skilled and unskilled—about 12%.

On the other hand conditions are far better. On a building site you'd have a hut. Here you've got a canteen, a stewards' room. It's easier to organise in local authorities because you're on long-term. In contracting you're maybe six months on a job.

This department was one of the most prominent in the struggle for taking on apprentices. Since Labour took con-



Pat Wethers in the stewardsroom at the Kent Street depot, one of the gains of strong union organisation.

panels and filling of vacancies that the stewards have but it gets home when they see men on the floor they didn't before—when they'd seen them outside the gate.

Until Labour's election we'd faced the constant threat of redundancy. Thatcher's got designs on the public sector and privatising the lot.

That related to our sections because we're all under the City Engineers and that linked us to Breckside Park and the Cleansing section which were under threat of privatisation. If the Cleansing section was closed all the back up facilities, including repairing of vehicles would have gone with it, threatening our future. We certainly felt badly threatened previous to May.

That's gone but we see ourselves in a struggle later in the year simply because of Thatcher's policies on privatising the public sector. That fight will continue. My own point of view is that the struggle should be a united one with the socialist council of Liverpool.

In this department we've had two workforce meetings. One was before the 19 November demonstration. We had one of the councillors, Pauline Dunlop down. She put the facts on the line to the lads and it was very productive. We had a great turn-out and then over 50% of the lads were on the demo, leafletting and so on.

We had councillor Hatton down only last Monday to give an up-date on how the cam-

paign is progressing. There was a good response to him. Over the year's he's been a friend to the department on the Personnel Committee and supported our fight to keep apprentices on.

We've circulated the list of local public meetings the council is organising. Only this morning we had an indication that the lads want to attend and support the council.

**We think this is important. What the council's doing has been presented as an adventure. But the lads recognise it is not an adventure. It's necessary to defend jobs and services in one of the most deprived areas of western Europe.**

Judging by what's happened since Labour took office in May I think it will be far easier to motivate our members, and the community; to re-elect Labour in May whatever happens over the budget in March.

Our plans have always been there. For years we've been under threat. We've always been geared to take action. There was a mass demonstration over the closure of the direct works department going back four years now.

We can see a fight coming and I think the workforce are ready to take it on board.

## Delivering support

*It's not just local authority unions which are supporting the City Council. ALAN KELLY, vice-chairman of the Postman's Joint Council and a member of the shop stewards' committee in the mechanised office talked to Militant*

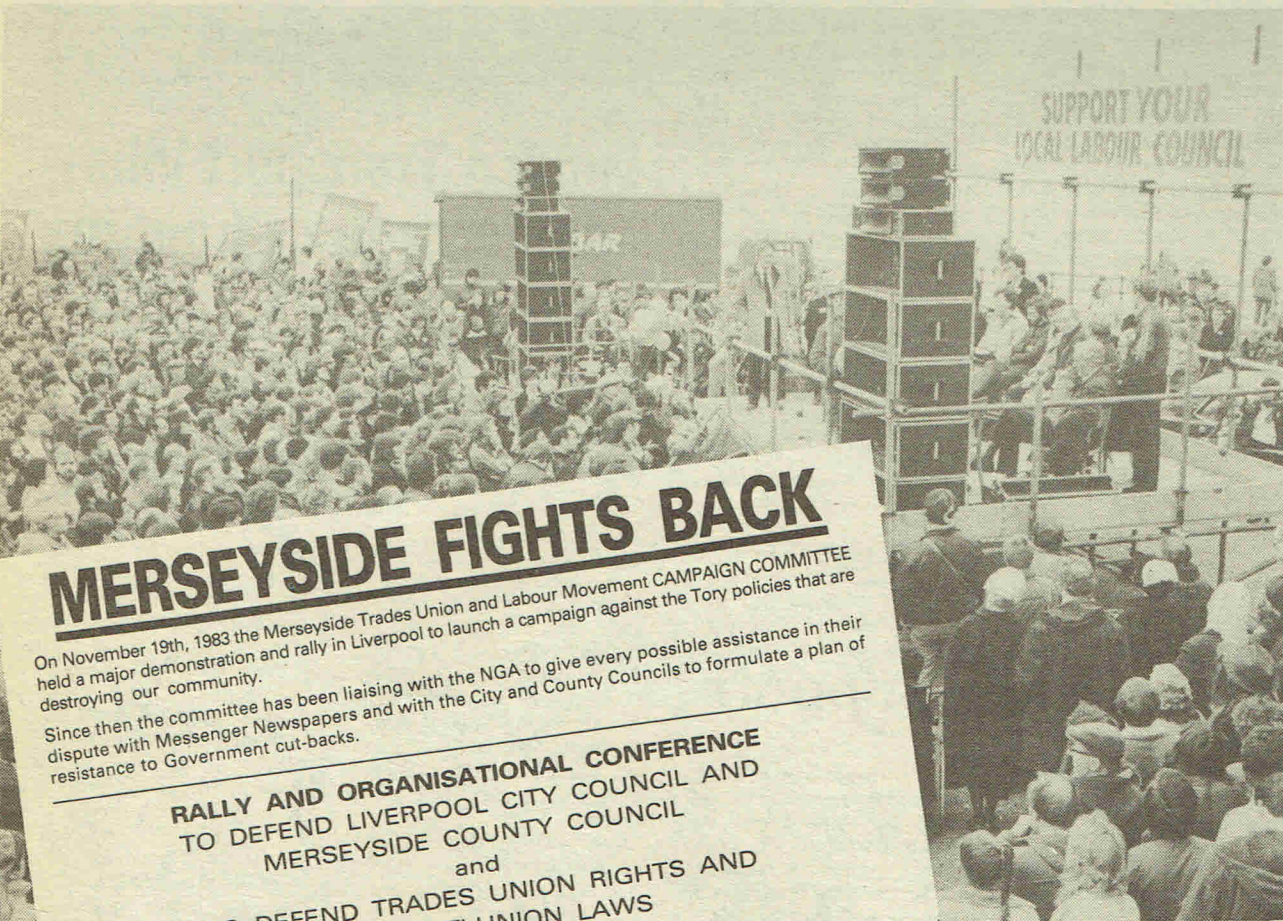
"Since the City Council were elected they have been doing quite well in carrying out the manifesto. The platform they were elected on was to resume building council houses which they have started to do, to create 1,000 jobs which they have done, and lowering rents by £2 a week which is also being done.

"The workers on Merseyside should support and rally round the council, because the Conservatives are terrified of what is going on in the city. They don't want the Labour council to carry out its policies and they are attempting to sabotage them by

withholding money from the rate support grant.

"At our workplace branch of the Labour Party we had Derek Hatton, deputy leader of the council along to speak on the city council policies and why they will carry out these policies regardless of any Tory threats. I think the feeling was fairly unanimous that people must support the council. The 19 November demonstration illustrates this. There was a massive turn-out of workers showing their solidarity.

"Now people realise the threat is there that the Tories could send in commissioners to run the city. But it isn't clear what they would be doing. Once they were sent and a democratically elected council removed by the Thatcher government there would be a strong possibility of a general strike on Merseyside.



## MERSEYSIDE FIGHTS BACK

On November 19th, 1983 the Merseyside Trades Union and Labour Movement CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE held a major demonstration and rally in Liverpool to launch a campaign against the Tory policies that are destroying our community.

Since then the committee has been liaising with the NGA to give every possible assistance in their dispute with Messenger Newspapers and with the City and County Councils to formulate a plan of resistance to Government cut-backs.

**RALLY AND ORGANISATIONAL CONFERENCE TO DEFEND LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL AND MERSEYSIDE COUNTY COUNCIL**

and  
**TO DEFEND TRADES UNION RIGHTS AND FIGHT ANTI-UNION LAWS**

**ST. GEORGE'S HALL  
MONDAY, 27th February, 1984  
7.30 p.m. to 9.30**

The leaflet shows how the campaign has been carried on and widened, in this case linking up with the struggle of the NGA against Eddie Shah and Tory laws.

Above: The 30,000 strong demonstration in Liverpool on Nov. 19 in support of the City Council culminated at the pier head, destination also of most Liverpool buses.

# INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

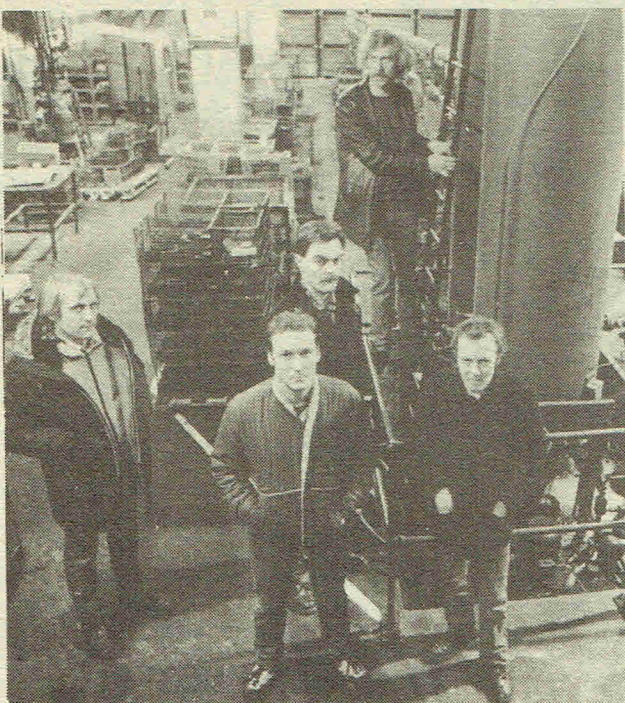


Photo: John Smith (IFL)

Inside the occupied Phillips factory.

## Manchester occupation: Brassed off after thirty years

**THE DISPUTE** at Phillips Rubber company in Manchester escalated when workers occupied the plant last Monday. The strikers were enraged at the advert placed by management in the *Manchester Evening News* advertising their jobs as vacancies

Over 100 workers took part in a mass picket on Monday morning. After attempting to stop management, staff and strike-breaking engineers from crossing the picket line, the workers decided to follow them in and take over the factory.

Tommy Watkins, TGWU senior steward said, "after seven weeks of struggle we decided enough is enough and we

determined to lock them out".

"The company gave me a 'gold' watch for 30 years' service. It soon fell to bits. Then I found out it was only brass. It shows you what type of skinflints they are," one of the bitter remarks of a striker.

After years of accepting minimal and even nil wage increases to help the company through 'hard times', the workers found

themselves on a basic pay of just £48.50 for a 40-hour week.

The Manchester average for the trade is £108. But even with the bonus, most of the workers could only achieve £60 a week.

For seven weeks the workers have now been out to force management to accept their demand for parity with others in the rubber industry, which would still only put the finishing shop on £65 a week.

"We'll stay out for ten years if necessary" said Tommy. "We've already been sacked and sent our P45's. Morale is very high and picket attendance has been good. Even non-union members came out with

us—though four have been forced back. Union support has been good and blacking is very effective.

"Originally we didn't call out the eight in the AUEW and the staff in ACTS. But management were forcing them to do our work. We cannot have scabbing by union members".

"We are appealing to other trade unionists to help us. I also personally would welcome the BLOC conference in Sheffield on 24 March and the campaign for a fighting union leadership.

All donations to Brother T Watkin, 16 Barker Street, Heywood. Cheques payable to "TGWU 6/702".

## Spread Scotts strike

At a meeting of the Bakers' Union members employed at Scotts in Bootle, held on Thursday 16 February, they again showed their determination to resist attacks on jobs and working conditions.

They overwhelmingly reconfirmed the continuation of their fight to keep the factory open and retain their jobs. The Bakers' Union is now being balloted on solidarity action throughout Associated British Foods.

### Redundancies

The dispute started when Associated British Foods, the Scotts parent company, declared 58 redundancies at the plant. At the same time, they put forward a plan to re-organise the shifts; workers were now expected to work a 69½ hour week, and shifts of from nine hours to four of twelve hours, with a six day working week! This was apart from proposals such as the sacking of company cleaners and putting their jobs out to private contractors.

Management responded to the strike by declaring a fur-

ther 123 redundancies, and demanded that workers sign a 'no strike' agreement. In a letter to all employees, they stated that workers should return to work, on the understanding that the management would conduct monthly reviews of work, with further redundancies being necessary.

Even if the workers did return, they were told in the letter that any future industrial action would result in immediate dismissal without redundancy pay, etc, for the employees!

Faced with this, the Scotts strikers have stepped up their action. They have sent representatives round the country to other bakeries seeking support. They have increased picketing, and have gone to the local labour and trade union movement for support. Donations and support has come from Labour Parties, factories, and groups of workers throughout the area. As an example, Liverpool City Council has stopped purchasing SUNBLEST bread in support of the strikers!

The Bakers' Union ballot on the question of strike ac-

**BAKERS, FOOD & ALLIED WORKERS' UNION**

## BAKERY WORKERS NEED YOUR SUPPORT

SPREAD THE FIGHT ---

VOTE FOR STRIKE ACTION !!

**WE CAN WIN THIS FIGHT !!**

VOTE FOR STRIKE ACTION !!

Scotts strikers have been issuing regular strike bulletins. Inset: Convenor Ronnie Draper.

tion throughout the ABF combine must go in favour of action. It is vital that this strike goes ahead. The loss of jobs in Bootle will signal a loss of jobs throughout the baking industry.

Support has come in internationally. The International Food Union has promised all the support needed to force

ABF management to negotiate keeping the factory open.

Long days and nights on the picket line have made these workers determined to win. All possible support must be given to them. Messages of support, donations, etc, should be sent to: The Bakers' Union, 64 Priory Road, Liverpool 4.

with other technical industries.

Another twist in the situation is whether a pass in the assessment constitutes regrading. The union insists that those who fail won't be downgraded. Yet the employers have hinted that extra money be available to those who pass. What a conundrum.

The question is therefore raised as to whether having knowledge of the standards of the industry (15th Edition), constitutes regrading and/or extra monies? More fundamentally, what is the position of those who fail the assessment and yet are capable electricians? These questions deserve a full and open discussion within the industry.

**By Chris Hill**  
(EETPU,  
personal capacity)

## Sparks retraining—whose expense?

ELECTRICIANS WERE presented last year with new technical requirements that could affect their employment prospects right across the industry.

The new requirements are laid out in the 15th Edition of the regulations from the Institute of Electrical Engineers. These will basically tighten up on earthing and other practices that will greatly improve the safety of electrical installations.

Many electricians, whilst welcoming improved safety are fearful that they are being instructed to re-learn their trade after working in the industry for many years.

Unlike those working in television and electronics who face a daily battle to keep up

with all the technological advances, contracting electricians, in particular, have been somewhat left behind in the technological revolution. The 15th Edition therefore poses quite new problems for electricians, who will now have to rapidly update their skills.

To prove our understanding of the 15th Edition, we face a 60 question, multiple choice assessment. This is a frightening prospect for some of the older electricians who may have come into the industry as mates or perhaps had training as apprentices on earlier editions of the 'regs'.

Some 'sparks', on their own initiative and at their own expense, have taken courses at night school to study the 15th Edition in more detail.

Though not decrying this, many officials within the electricians union (EETPU), feel a simpler path could be found than this drastic step. It has been proposed that the union and the contracting employers 'jointly' organise classes to give a background to the technical requirements of the 15th Edition.

But with the inception date of 1 January 1985, anxiety is growing in the industry whilst concrete guidelines for retraining are still to be fixed.

Retraining should occur at the bosses' time and expense, ie. in-service training. The 15th Edition has been brought in over the heads of the workforce. The contracting employers must be committed to in-service training in line

## Militant teacher

SUPPLEMENT  
February 1984 10p

### DEFEND EDUCATION

Teachers and Students Beware!

Militant Teacher special supplement 10p from World Socialist Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

## Hindles need support

**THE STRIKE** of Hindles engineering workers in Bradford continues.

Management have used every aspect of the law to try and starve us out. The last one was to move our wood for the fire, and a makeshift hut, across the road, and put a fence up with a "Trespassers will be Prosecuted" sign on it. We have received tremendous support from our own

Labour Groups here in Bradford, and surrounding towns.

I am sure you will agree, the Labour Party and the trade union movement must stand together, or Mrs Thatcher will get away with murdering the trade union movement. I feel confident we can rely on your support.

All replies, donations, etc, to Hindle Strike fund, AUEW, 2 Claremont, Bradford, BD7 1BQ.

## Port of Bristol

**JOHN BEES** chairman of Registered Dock stewards at the Port of Bristol Authority spoke to Roger Thomas and Brendan Kelly about a dispute over a wage claim of 9%.

MANAGEMENT'S INITIAL offer was 0%. They gradually increased it to 4% after the men showed they were not prepared to take a further cut in living standards. The previous four years' wage settlements have all been below the level of inflation.

Management then went on the offensive claiming that dockers were earning £187 a week. John denied this. They are using the best trading quarter of the year, he said. The basic is really much closer to £93.60, though he agreed large amounts of overtime were worked.

Sometimes up to 40% of the men's wages is from overtime. This was because of the enormous fall in the number of dockers in the last few years from 1,325 in 1979 to 611 now!

A further hundred took voluntary severance: a reduction which the union strongly

fought as it resulted in a lack of men, and enforced overtime. John said many men live in the docks and are barely able to recognise their own families.

Management are clearly attempting to run the docks at the expense of the men. A new manager has been introduced by the Tory council who seems intent on a full-blooded attack on conditions on the docks.

John sees these attacks as the thin end of the wedge. The men must win the claim. Attitudes have hardened after an overtime ban introduced by management in response to spontaneous one-day actions on individual ships.

This was intended to force the men back to work by cutting their wages however it is management who can't operate their own action.

The dispute has the overwhelming support of the workers in the Avon area as they realise their jobs are linked up with the future of the docks. Support has also come from other dockers who have refused to deal with ships directed from Bristol.

## London Transport jobs—haemorrhage or hanging

EVEN BEFORE the abolition of the GLC and the formation of London Regional Transport, London Transport workers' living standards are being savaged.

In return for the 38-hour week the unions agreed to the loss of approximately 250 jobs by unfilled vacancies.

Rosters have been changed so stations will lose many shifts. On top of this the turns that are left will start later and finish later. Low paid workers who rely on the shift payment for dead late and early working are in trouble. On average our brothers and sisters are expected to take a £20 a week pay cut.

My own grade of guard faces extinction on 25 March. The trial period for one-man only operation begins on the Hammersmith and City line. After 12 weeks with us observing we will be dispersed to other depots.

It will then be the turn of the Central Line and stage by stage the rest of the

Metropolitan and District line. This will be the green light to spread OMO to the rest of the combine. Eventually there will be nowhere left for the displaced guards except to return to the stations—but this will be closed to us.

LT has written to the unions outlining plans for the demanning of 52 stations with less than 6,000 passengers. It is planned to have only a booking clerk from 9 to 5. If this spreads, thousands of jobs will go.

This could lead to a one-man train driver being the only member for miles around when accidents and incidents occur. Demanning on the New York subway has been disastrous. It now costs three times as much to police the system as it cost to keep the staff. Be warned!

**By Bob Law**  
(East Ham NUR and delegate to the BLOC conference, personal capacity)

# INDUSTRIAL REPORTS



Miners finishing a shift at Polmaise stop for a quick pic.

Photo: Rick Matthews (IFL)

## Miners must act to save Polmaise

**250 MINERS** at Polmaise Colliery in Fallin near Stirling, have come out on strike to save the pit. They have been out since last Tuesday morning and are determined to halt the Coal Board's plans.

The closure would also waste an opportunity to create 450 jobs which would be created if the pit was put into full production.

After three weeks of intense lobbying by the Polmaise men, the Scottish NUM Executive recommended that only Polmaise comes out, while the other Scottish pits merely give financial support and take part in a broad campaign against the closure.

### All-out strike call

Over a 100 angry miners from Polmaise lobbied the delegate conference on the Monday this was decided. They had been calling for all-out strike action in the Scottish coal field.

The Executive, dominated by the Communist Party,

had refused to come off the fence, postponed action for three vital weeks and then told Polmaise to go it alone.

Immense anger and bitterness has made the Polmaise men even more determined to fight on.

### Communities threatened

Closure for the pit would not just mean lost jobs but the death of Fallin, the neighbouring villages of Cowie, Pla and Bannockburn. Youth unemployment is already 40% in this area.

These communities were founded on coal, Polmaise is the last remaining pit in the area, that is why the miners know that this fight is a struggle to the finish.

On Monday night when the strike action was agreed Fallin LPYS held a public meeting attended by 70 people, predominantly miners and their families. Speaking at the meeting was John McCormick, the pit delegate, and Jim Armitage, the NUM Branch Secretary plus Militant supporter Arthur Lewis, secretary of Fallin Labour Party.

Jim said that the geological fault NCB management have found could be gone through in five weeks, which would open up a field of coal lasting thirty years.

John McCormick, the delegate to the conference held on Monday, said there was total unity amongst the Polmaise miners. No-one would take the redundancy money. In fact, said John, in communities where everyone knows everyone else, if anyone did take the money they would have to move from the area. "The management want to hammer us no-one can ever say to us, that we ran away."

### Rolling closures

John said he didn't want to see the cart leading the horse, but the Scottish Executive of the NUM, the horse in this case, had been doing very little leading in the last few years.

In the course of the discussion a young miner made the point that in the last three years he had been at four pits—at each one he had initially been promised 20 years' work. Each one had

subsequently been closed down. Unless this pit was fought for then no pit was safe.

### Lead needed

Polmaise must not be left to fight alone, the arguments must be taken again and again to every pit in Scotland and the membership convinced of the need to struggle to save this pit.

The Scottish TUC must link up the question of Polmaise with the struggles of other Scottish workers, especially Henry Robb and Scott Lithgow shipbuilders' against closure.

Polmaise miners have laid down their marker—and need the full backing the NUM throughout the country.

Over £40 was raised at the meeting for the strike fund. John McCormick congratulated the work done by the Labour Party Young Socialists and the Labour Party during the dispute and hoped to be able to call on our assistance in any future action.

By Willie Campbell

## Cowley dispute: British Leyland bubbling

THE ENDING of the 'washing-up time' dispute in April 1983 solved nothing for the workforce at BL Cowley. Management, in their ruthless drive for increased productivity, continue to ride roughshod over the shopfloor rights and conditions of workers.

The latest dispute centred on the transfer of 'Trim Shop' workers from the North Side (where the production of the Rover and Acclaim models are being phased-out and transferred to Longbridge) to the South Side Assembly plant. (Where the Maestro and LMII are produced).

Management are ignoring the previous long-standing agreement to treat both Trim shops as one. Instead, they want to put "surplus" workers from the North Side onto the Track—irrespective of seniority. In effect, sewing machinists with up to 25 years service will be forced to work on the track or resign. As one worker described it; "...its redundancies through the back door".

### Catch-22

Stoppages and walkouts occur frequently. Last Thursday (16th) the entire Night-Shift walked out stopping Maestro production after a worker was given a written warning from management. The worker concerned, apparently, wasn't

supplied with the correct tools for his job, yet management threatened him for stopping production!

### Petty and incompetent

If 'labour relations' are bad, then the fate of the new LMII looks increasingly bleak. The launch date continues to be put back due to design problems. In addition, many of the components don't fit the car. "We have the technology—but it doesn't work" is a typical comment from a workforce that was denied three minutes at the end of each shift last year, but now spend large amounts of their time waiting for management to sort out production of the LMII.

Not that the Assembly workers have been without their share of visits from top management. Though the recent visit of Harold Musgrove didn't exactly go as planned when the first worker approached on his shop-floor walkabout refused to even acknowledge his presence! More alarming however has been the fleeting visit of anti-union, millionaire publisher, Robert Maxwell. You can't help wondering if the Cowley Plant will be levelled to provide a new football ground for Oxford united.

By Dave Carr  
(Oxford)

## Goodbye Marti Caine

AT 9 am on Saturday 18 February all scenery came to a halt in the West London studios of BBC Television. This was due to a withdrawal of labour by the newly-formed Entertainment Trades Alliance (the amalgamated ABS and NATTKE unions).

All through 1983 and January 1984 the BBC and the unions had been in negotiation over the proposed reorganisation of Scenic Services and Operations. This would involve the loss of 180 jobs and a saving to the BBC of £1¼ million. At ACAS on 1 February the unions rejected the BBC's final position and sought arbitration on the outstanding issues. The BBC refused and decided to implement the reorganisation on 18 February.

Both unions balloted their members and both voted in favour of industrial action. A complete withdrawal of labour took place on the 18 February

with a final meeting together with management that morning, leaving no room for any further negotiations.

Both sides are now locked in what looks like being a long struggle. All studios stand as they were left on the 17 February with a small force of management labour to move any scenery. Marti Caine and Truckers Luck have both been lost in production so far, but as the dispute continues more of the BBC's future and present schedules will be affected.

The dispute only affects two branches of the ABS and the local NATTKE branch so far but it is likely affect more and more members of the newly-formed ETA.

By a member of the Association of Broadcasting Staff and the Entertainment Trades Alliance

## Morris women—a degree in class struggle



Women on the picket line at Morris factory in Wigan—learning the hard way.

**COLLEEN CATTERALL**, shop steward at textile firm S Morris and Sons of Wigan spoke to Janice Hall and John Hunt as strikers there entered the 15th week on the picket line.

Colleen has worked for the company for 12 years. The longest service of any of the strikers is 33 years. Nearly all of them had worked there for a long time.

She talked about some of the grievances they had, apart from the management's attempt to cut their low wages which had sparked off the dispute: "We had no first aid boxes. One had his finger cut off and his hand was just wrapped in a piece of cloth that was lying around the floor. We had no decent heating and no proper canteen and the supervisors treated us very badly."

Her accusations were backed up by one of the other

women who said: "Once in summer we got a drink of juice because it was very hot and he tried to charge us 2p for a plastic cup".

Although there has been a union at Morris as long as Colleen worked there, they have not always had a shop steward. She took the job on six years ago because there were a lot of things wrong in the factory. She feels that the strike had been brewing up for about four years. In the weeks before this dispute there had been stoppages nearly every day.

Colleen outlined some of them: "We stopped work when a woman was taken off a machine which she had

worked on for 22 years and placed on an overlocker, which is a very dangerous machine, without being given any training.

"Another girl was only taking home £36.40 per week and this had been going on for a long time. We stopped work until it been altered. There was also a dispute when the heating system broke down and our wages were all docked for stopping work until it was mended".

Most of them were over money. The boss constantly attempted to cut their wages. However, all the stoppages had only been for a few minutes or hours. It was Colleen's suspension for refusing to be retimed on her job which sparked off the strike.

When asked if the rest of the members had just walked

out following this, she said: "I did not speak to anyone at first. At lunch time I had a chance to speak to some of the staff but management had locked the rest of the girls in the factory because they had stopped work after my suspension. Then, in the afternoon, management came out and said that all the girls had gone back to work".

That night Colleen received dozens of phone calls and they all decided to put a picket on. None of them crossed the picket line.

She believes that all the strikers, who are mostly women, have changed a lot during the last fifteen weeks. Colleen believes that they are more political now and would support other workers in struggle more readily, although before the strike forty had gone on a march during the day of action in support of the health workers. She said that some women had gone short before they would walk away from the picket line.

There is general agreement amongst the picket that they have learned a lot during the dispute. One girl said: "I used to wonder why people went on strike and picketed—but now I know". Another added: "Other unions have supported us. I would never be afraid to go and stand on a picket line now and give money."

Messages of support and donations to: Mrs J Atherton, 37 Sycamore Avenue, Beech Hill, Wigan, Lancs.

## ... and Hull textile women

**THE 300 WOMEN** textile workers at Mansfield Hosiery in Hull are mostly young, but they're not green.

Shop steward JANET DAWES explains how they stood up to management:

A setter, Sue Everington, was taken off her job and offered another on 20% lower pay, due to "poor attendance". This is often a problem for women with domestic responsibilities.

Her steward took up the case and brought in the National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear

Workers but got nothing satisfactory.

Management then refused to observe the *status quo* clause in the disputes procedure. So on 6 February all the women came out on strike. Non-union members also put themselves on the line by striking.

After two days management backed down, agreeing to return to the *status quo* while talks continue. At a mass meeting the women agreed to return to work, so long as there aren't any hidden traps.

## GCHQ dispute

# End the ban! Defend union rights

**CIVIL SERVANTS are seething at the Tories' ban on unions at GCHQ. All indications are that the Day of Action on 28 February will be a massive success.**

Already local Council of Civil Service Unions (CCSU) committees in West Scotland, East Scotland, Hull, Humberside, Manchester, South Yorkshire and London have called on their members to come out on a one day strike.

### Standing firm

These committees represent hundreds of thousands of civil servants and give an indication of the feeling against the Tories' actions.

As 28 February approaches the government have much cause for concern.

Apparently only a small minority of GCHQ trade unionists have so far been bribed into relinquishing their rights for £1,000. The rest are taking union advice and standing firm.

The real reasons behind Thatcher's ban, as *Militant* has consistently argued, were of a wider nature than that of "national security" or even American pressure. A new pamphlet to be published next week from the ultra-right wing "Centre for Policy Studies", set up by Thatcher in 1974 to feed her "ideas", shows that.

It urges the government to ban industrial action in

essential services and to make retention of union immunities from civil action during disputes depend upon their observing procedure agreements. At a recent seminar Thatcher was told to act quickly because an upturn in employment would see a reassertion of some former union strength.

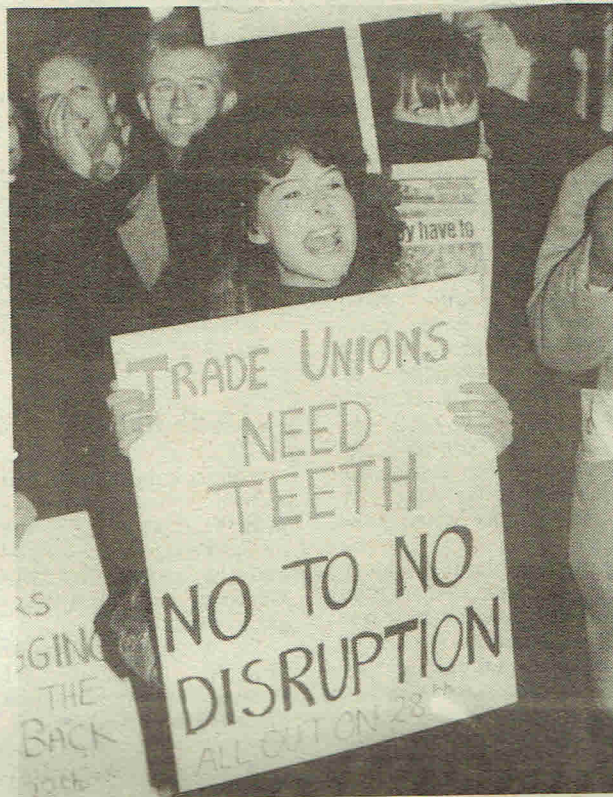
The Tories define "Essential Services" as gas, electricity, water, sewage and health services and all workers whose industrial action would damage such services. They also recommend that the unions be held liable for all strikes in essential services even if unofficial—unless it could show unambiguously that it had made every effort to end the industrial action.

### All out strike

The choice for the TUC and the union leaders is clear—fight the Tories or police the working class.

If Thatcher digs her heels in, and signs are that she will, (unless a deal is done with the union leaders), then the Council of Civil Service Unions will have to escalate action to win back union rights at GCHQ. CCSU must immediately seize the

Photo: Melanie Friend (Report)



Demonstration in support of GCHQ workers outside TUC headquarters.

initiative.

If necessary preparations must begin immediately after 28 February for an all-out civil service strike to defeat the Tories' proposals. The wider support of the movement must be sought.

All workers will be outraged by the Tories new proposals to ban industrial action in other sectors. GCHQ is only the beginning. A timid leadership will not beat

the Tories.

- ★ Workers solidarity with GCHQ.
- ★ Escalate the action all out strike to beat the ban.

### STOP PRESS

IN ANOTHER attack on union rights, the civil service has stopped employees taking annual leave or flexi-time for the rally day of 28 February.

# Organise to beat Thatcher

WHEN THE trade unions are facing problems of mass unemployment, attacks on union rights and the attempted dismembering of public services, what should be the response of the labour movement?

Frank Chapple, the leader of the electricians' union, EETPU, has appointed a new head of communications, dealing with the union's campaigns and their newspaper. It is John Grant ex-MP for the Social Democrats, who support anti-union laws and cutbacks and are an openly capitalist party.

The rank and file of union activists think differently, as the tremendous response to the Broad Left Organising Committee conference on 24 March shows. Merseyside trade unionists have had such a good response they

claim that the Football League has had to move the Milk Cup Final between Everton and Liverpool on to the Sunday to avoid a clash! (This is disputed by Aston Villa fans).

Workers involved in disputes have been amongst the first to send delegations. John West, Scotts and BAT, civil service workers and council unions like GMBATU are to the fore in Liverpool.

Delegates from branches of the print unions and the POEU show that workers know from experience how important it is to fill the vacuum at the top of the labour movement and get a working class leadership able to take on and beat the Tories.

By Wayne Jones

AMONG THE delegations received over the last few days were contingents from:

TGWU 10/79 (Heavy Chemicals, Grimsby); NALGO West Midlands Gas HQ branch; POEU Met. NW London; POEU Met. West London; SOGAT '82 Markem System Chapel, Manchester; TGWU 9/180 Doulton Glass, Bradford; Mid & East Lothian Trades Council; CPSA (Plymouth DHSS branch); Old Oak Common Shop Stewards' Committee (HST&TM depots) (4 delegates from NUR & AUEW); COHSE Middlesex Hospital; NUPE Bexley General.  
 AUEW-TASS Tameside; AUEW-TASS Bracknell; UCATT (Sutton-in-Ashfield); NUM Monkwearmouth Lodge (Durham) (11 delegates from various workplaces); SOGAT '82 Clerical Chapel (Surrey House, Sutton); SOGAT '82 London Clerical (*The Guar-*

dian); NGA (Norwich & District); NUPE Sutton Area Hospitals; USDAW (Smiths Crisps) Swansea; USDAW Blackpool Woolworths; NUPE North Swansea Health; FTAT (Fleetwood, Lancs); AUEW (Construction) Grimsby; AUEW (Engineering) Meadow 85 ME (Nottingham).

FBU (Edinburgh); AUEW Davy McKee JSSC Sheffield; NUSMWHDE, Halifax; COHSE, York; NUM Highmoor branch (Derbyshire Area); TGWU 7/245 Brybrough's Brewery, Edinburgh; ASTMS Ellesmere Port (branch 254); TGWU 1/6 East London Docks; USDAW Manchester Kellogg; GMBATU Senior Representatives Committee (Liverpool City Council); GMBATU branch 5 Shop Stewards Committee (Liverpool); AUEW Thomas Glover Ltd JSSC Oldham; Knowsley Trades Council; CPSA Civil Aviation Authority Group Executive Committee.

# Liverpool council

(Continued from page one)

go to jail with them if necessary".

A shop steward, Pat Wethers told the council, they were being too modest about their achievements. "I've seen people getting these 1,200 new jobs. I go to vacancy meetings and it's like a doctor's waiting room with queues outside. Vacancies were frozen by the Liberals. Apprenticeships too, even though kids were on the streets. Under Labour, 81 apprentices have been taken on by the Engineers Department."

Deputy Leader of the council, Derek Hatton explained why they had to defy the Tories. "If our predecessors in the movement hadn't broken the law, 12 year olds would still work down the mines and 14-year-olds up the chimneys. If we didn't fight in 1984 we would either have to sack one in six of our workforce or to treble rates. We are not prepared to do either of these. We will fight for jobs and services."

The Tories are hated in Liverpool. When a Tory councillor spoke from the floor at one meeting, a member of the public got

a lot of support calling for her ejection for stealing workers democratic rights. But the chairman Paul Loocock pointed out she had the right to put her views—anyway Labour had the answer to them.

Hundreds have signed their names and addresses to become involved in the campaign to save the council, its jobs and its services and workers are preparing for the meeting on 27 February of shop stewards and labour movement activists, to step the campaign up a gear.

Liverpool has to fight, it has no alternative.

## Get moving! Build a Marxist daily!

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Once that's in the bank, negotiations on a building can begin!!

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(See page 4)

DUE TO increased production cost in the three years since the last increase, the editors regret that the price of *Militant* will have to be raised to 25p from next week.



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