

Council workers prepare for battle



Photo: John Smith (FL)

Young marchers demonstrate their enthusiasm for the Liverpool councillors' stand on last Saturday's massive demonstration

COUNCILLORS IN Liverpool, Lambeth and Edinburgh, face legal attack from the Tories for daring to defend local jobs and services. It is the labour movement's biggest challenge since the miners' strike.

Patrick Jenkin is recruiting a mercenary army of District Auditors and bailiffs to penalise those councillors who are prepared to fight his demand to cut services and sack workers.

Forty-nine Liverpool Labour councillors have received threatening letters from the District Auditor, telling them of a £100,000 surcharge and the possibility of disqualification from office and bankruptcy. Homes and furniture could be taken away; some may lose their livelihoods. Jail could await those prepared to fight to the end.

But these councillors know why they have to fight. A "legal" budget would mean huge rate rises, cut-backs in services and a longer dole queue. Workers,

By Roger Shriver

tenants, owner-occupiers, small shopkeepers and businessmen and users of the city council's services would all be hit.

Last Saturday's 20,000-strong demonstration showed the depth of support for Liverpool, not just in the city but nationally.

The trade unions in Liverpool have been quick to show their appreciation and support for these councillors' stand.

Mass meetings of council workers and shop stewards in private industry have started to take the fight into every section of the community.

The Local Authorities Joint Shop Stewards' Committee have now given notice

to Jenkin that if he penalises any Labour councillor, on the Monday after they will call for strike action and ask for backing from other workers in Liverpool and local authority workers nationwide.

The National Local Authorities Co-ordinating Committee, representing council workers throughout the country, have called a national conference in Lambeth on 13 July to defend the three threatened councils. Local authority unions and shop stewards' committees are urged to send delegates.

Every local authority worker in Britain must be made aware of Liverpool's plans for a fightback. As the NLACC say, failure to back up this fight would make it much harder to stop the next attack—the huge job losses threatened by privatisation. This message must be taken to every council depot.

Liverpool councillors and trade unionists are determined to build a movement which can stop Jenkin axing our future. The Tories can be beaten if we organise. Join the fight now.

**National Local Authority
Shop Stewards' Conference
organised by the National Local Authority
Co-ordinating Committee
12 noon, Saturday 13 July, Lambeth Town
Hall, Brixton, London SW2.
Details from Ian Lowes, Grove Mount, Penny
Lane, Liverpool 18.**

Young homeless in new "tent city"

IN BASILDON, Essex, over three hundred mainly young, single people are affected by the notorious board and lodgings regulations. A "tent city" has been set up by the Unemployed Workers Centre in a park.

One, who had recently moved from lodgings in another area, progressed to tent city from the back of a friend's car—upward mobility 1980's style!

Many "vulnerable" groups of people are supposed to be exempted from the rules. These include mentally or physically handicapped people, those who are pregnant or have children, people who are undergoing rehabilitation (ie ex-prisoners) and people who face danger at their parents' home (if they are under 19). However they are not easy rules to establish.

One 20 year old man who had evidence from his doctor and social worker to prove he was educationally sub-normal was initially told he wasn't handicapped. By the time it was established that he was handicapped he had been sleeping rough for three days having been evicted from his lodgings. The fact that he had a mental age of twelve was not enough to impress the DHSS of the danger of sending him off to fend for himself.

The Labour controlled council are putting people on the waiting list for bedsits, but there is little hope of getting anywhere—Basildon has a serious problem with second-generation housing as it is.

One young man when told about the 'exemptions' said: "I have three options—get someone pregnant, hit a copper, get put in jail, and then get exempted as an ex-con, or else kill myself".

Not only the lodgers will be affected by these new regulations. Many landlords and landladies are also on Supplementary Benefit. They are allowed to make a small profit out of bed and breakfast, but if they try to get around the regulations by not providing meals, just giving lodgers a room, any rent collected will be stopped from their own benefit.

Another man affected by the regulations explained that as he had no money left after paying his reduced dole money over to the landlady, he was forced to go shoplifting. So the Tory Party, the party of "Law and order" is swelling the ranks of criminality.

Many young people may be forced back into the homes of their parents which creates problems of overcrowding and conflict. However, many either don't want to or simply can't. Some face violence at home, one case a lad of 16 faced having to return home to face a stepfather who had sexually assaulted him! He could only be exempted by bringing the crime out in the open, taking his step father to court. However, once you are nineteen according to the rules it doesn't matter what dangers you face at home: you are not exempt!

**By Ann McKay
(Basildon LPYS)**

Militant

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Labour must grant full amnesty

LABOUR COUNCILLORS in Liverpool, Edinburgh and Lambeth face surcharges, bankruptcy (including the possible loss of their homes), disqualification from office, and even jail.

The NGA, TGWU and NUM have had money taken by the courts. Miners have been sacked and jailed for defending their jobs.

The Tories have "criminalised" the actions of those in the front line of the battle to oppose their social and economic policies. The consequences of taking action can be severe; the stakes are high.

Strikers and councillors do not set out to break the law to seek martyrdom. They do not lightly risk great personal hardship. They are, however, determined to stand loyally for the interests of their class.

The Liverpool Labour councillors regard their commitment to protect and preserve the living standards of the workers they represent, despite the risk

to themselves and their families, as a higher principle than Tory class laws. They are determined to see that the working class does not pay for the Tories' economic crisis.

It is vital that the next Labour government is committed now to repay any penalties imposed on labour movement representatives for actions taken in the course of their duty to fight for workers' interests. They must also repeal the laws under which these penalties are imposed.

Arthur Scargill has called for the freeing of all jailed miners and the reinstatement of all those sacked. Tony Benn has introduced a bill in Parliament to achieve an amnesty for dismissed miners. He pointed out that in the Lancaster House agreement, Thatcher pardoned many of the Rhodesian security forces who may have committed crimes up to and including murder.

Neil Kinnock's reaction, that "this bill cannot be taken seriously by anyone", will have enraged Labour Party and trade union members. The party must demand from its leaders a commitment to a full amnesty and reinstatement for miners and councillors.

The 1984 Labour Party conference supported "any councils which are forced to break the law as a result of the Tory government's policies". This must now be translated into a firm commitment to reverse any punitive measures taken against them. There must be no repeat of the last Labour government's abandonment of the Clay Cross councillors who had been surcharged by the Tory government led by Heath.

Those representatives who are willing to sacrifice their money and their freedom are owed a debt by the movement. This can be repaid by a massive response from the whole membership to the call to action when it comes. A lead from the top is needed, but most vital is a movement from below which will shatter the Tory government's confidence and force it to back down.

Last year Liverpool councillors achieved such a victory. This year it will be harder, but with an even mightier campaign, another historic victory can be won. This will not only save councillors from victimisation, but save the people of Liverpool from further Tory attacks, and give heart to the miners still fighting for their jobs and their freedom.

IRA arrests Police mount paramilitary operation

A MASSIVE police operation surrounds the trial and detention of alleged Provisional IRA members, accused of the Brighton bombing.

The Lambeth area of South London where the court case is taking place, more resembles the streets of Belfast, with roads cordoned off, armed police, snipers and helicopters.

To justify this military operation, the press has been full of police claims that the Provos were about to launch a bombing campaign of seaside resorts. Little evidence has of yet been produced save police claims of discovering a 'hit list'.

However, it is unlikely workers will challenge the validity of the police allegations, given the terror tactics used by the Provos in the past. One bomb that was discovered was in the Rubens hotel in London's busy West End—its victims would have been tourists and the shop-workers in the store below the hotel room.

This latest episode graphically illustrates the reasons why Marxists fundamentally oppose the methods of individual terrorism. When a small isolated group indiscriminately let off bombs, far from bringing down the ruling class it strengthens their position. The ruling class play on the revulsion of workers to such actions to justify more repressive measures for its arsenal, which are then used to attack the organised labour movement.

For example, the Prevention of Terrorism Act, introduced in the wave of horror that followed the Birmingham pub bombings has been used extensively—over 1,000 have been detained under the PTA in Liverpool alone in the past decade, many of them trade unionists. The 'counter in-

surgency' methods of surveillance, phone tapping, riot control, etc extensively used in Northern Ireland are increasingly being used against the labour movement, as was seen in the miners' strike.

Furthermore, the futile tactics of launching an individual 'military' campaign against the ruling class, rules out winning over the mass of workers, however justified the 'cause'.

Passive

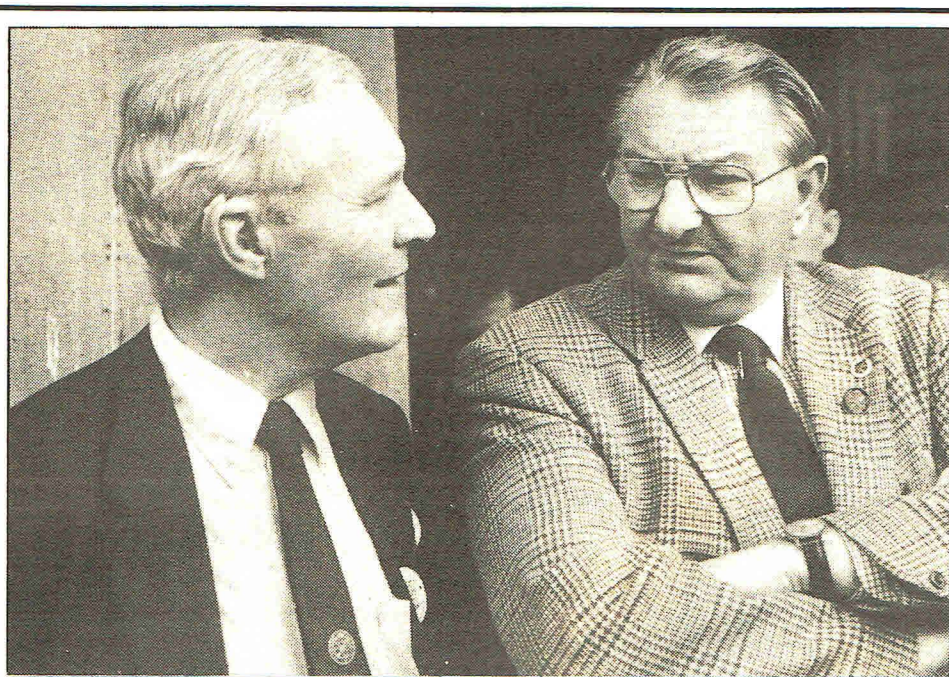
Even in a situation where there was 'popular' support for an act of individual terrorism (ie the assassination of a Latin American dictator) such tactics reduce the workers to no more than passive onlookers, as the small secretive band slugs it out with the armed power of the state.

The Provos' ranks were swelled in the early 70's by Catholic youth in response to repression by the British Army.

Besides falling support, the leadership of the Provos consciously sought to reduce membership, now believed to be around 50, with a back up organisation of 100-200, to avoid detection by the state. Such a small band has no hope of defeating British capitalism, especially when their tactics are to kill and maim working class people.

To change society, to achieve socialism in Britain and Ireland—and to end the rule of British capitalism in Northern Ireland—needs the active participation of the mass of workers, whether British, Irish, Catholic or Protestant. They are the only force capable of changing society. The tactics of individual terrorism only make the task of building such a movement all the harder.

By Bob Wade



Tony Benn and Eric Heffer show their support at the demonstration in Liverpool last Saturday for real jobs for youth, called by YTURC. Photo: Dave Sinclair.

Lefts' strong challenge, high turnout, right wins

Shop workers' election:

THE ELECTION of general secretary of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW), has been won by the 'soft right' candidate Garfield Davies who polled just under 150,000 votes.

Broad Left candidate Bill Connor, in a powerful challenge, collected 81,277 votes, and pushed ultra-right deputy general secretary, John Flood into third place. Apart from the excellent

Broad Left campaign, which extended the network of the Broad Left support, and laid the foundation of a much stronger activist organisation, the most notable feature of the election was the unusually high turnout.

High turnout

At 77 per cent it was nearly 15 per cent higher than in the 1979 general secretary election. Only 12,000 less

votes were cast than in 1979, yet the union has lost over 80,000 members since then.

In a highly centralised union with a generally low level of branch activity at present, many rank and file activists will feel that the high vote reflects the pressure of officials who feared a Flood victory. (Full analysis in next week's issue).

Britain to expel Chilean

PEDRO Galleguillos, a 24 year Chilean refugee is being threatened with deportation.

Pedro, who has lived in Britain for three years, has been actively opposing the Chilean Military dictatorship both here and in Chile.

Pedro's case is a matter of life or death pending on the decision to be taken soon by the minister of state for the Home Office, David Waddington.

A well attended demonstration and rally was held on Saturday 29 June in Manchester in support of Pedro's right to stay in Bri-

tain. Speakers highlighted the collusion between the British government and the Chilean regime.

Other Chilean refugees returning to Chile have faced execution, and this could be the fate awaiting Pedro if he is not allowed to stay here. The Pedro Galleguillos Defence Campaign is therefore urging support from all sympathetic individuals and organisations, to petition the Home Office. For more information contact; Pedro Galleguillos Defence Campaign, c/o 9 Lucy Street, Manchester, M15 4BX.



SALEP ban opposed

LABOUR PARTY activists are fighting back against the decision of the National Executive Committee to proscribe the Southern African Labour Education Project (SALEP).

This is a body providing valuable information and political analysis to assist those fighting for national liberation and socialism in South Africa.

Saturday's meeting of the Party's Eastern Region Executive Committee passed a motion saying constituency parties and affiliated organisations had the right to decide whether to seek information about SALEP and it was not for the NEC to decide for them.

By Theresa McKay

Workers back Lambeth

TWO MASS meetings of NALGO and NUPE members in Lambeth have backed the council's fight and pledged selective industrial action escalating to all out action if the Tories disqualify any Labour councillor.

The industrial action began on 3 July by NALGO members in Housing and Finance.

There has been a good response to local Militant supporters who have produced leaflets and bulletins and sold over a 100 papers in the past two weeks.

On 1 July over 70 people came to a Lambeth Militant Readers' Meeting, where speakers from Lambeth and Southwark outlined the need for labour movement unity between Lambeth, Liverpool and Edinburgh.

By Steve Nally
(Vauxhall LPYS)

Labour women and class issues



Women lobby London Region Post Office headquarters against proposed Post Office closures. The Labour Party Women's Organisation must take up issues affecting working class women. Photo: Paul Traynor.

LABOUR WOMEN'S Conference this year was dominated by a preoccupation of the mainly middle class majority with constitutional changes in the Labour Party, aimed at making special provisions for women.

Such changes may be in the interests of some of the more ambitious women within the organisation, but go little way towards tackling working class women's issues. (See last week's *Militant*)

There is no doubt that women are seriously under-represented at all levels of the Party. But this is a reflection of the lack of mass involvement of women in the Party nationally, in addition to the discrimination against women taking up positions of responsibility.

If the energy and talent of working class women, like that shown in the miners' strike, is directed into the Party, it would have a far greater effect in combatting discrimination than any constitutional changes. Working-class women will join the Party in their thousands when there is a serious campaign taking up issues which affect them.

This was the feeling of many of the delegates at the conference who expect the Women's Organisation to take up such a campaign against the devastating effects of the Tories' policies.

Margaret O'Hagan, from Cupar Women's Section, North East Fife Labour Party, said: "I feel lost at this conference. It isn't doing anything. I feel as though I'm in some sort of foreign land. They don't discuss the basic things with you and say what is expected of you."

Margaret, who spoke in the debate on food policy and called for nationalisation of all the major food monopolies, first joined the Labour Party when her husband's union was banned at GCHQ.

Union rights

She supported her husband in a campaign to preserve union rights at GCHQ even though if her husband lost his job it would mean the family losing their house. She faced opposition from neighbours and even from the Labour Party when she first joined, when a woman who said she was a feminist asked:

"Why do you campaign for your husband's job; you don't have any say in what he does?"

Margaret joined the Labour Party because she thought it might teach her things but was quickly disenchanted: "They all seemed to talk some different language. When I asked them (things) I was looked at as if I was stupid."

Margaret spoke at the *Militant* Readers' meeting. "I was petrified", she said. "Someone said to write it down. So I wrote it down and scribbled it out and wrote it down again, and so on. In the end I just said what I thought. I was really quite surprised that people listened to me. When I got home, I was worried that they would think I was daft, but to me the *Militant* is excellent."

She said after the meeting: "People from *Militant* are the only ones who have helped me. They were talking about ordinary working class people. That is what this conference should have talked about, not all these organisational things about one woman and one black and so on, but about things that really affect you like housing."

Health and safety at work

ELAYNE SYMONDS delegate from the Fire Brigades Union and a member of the North West Regional Labour Women's Committee described in a speech at conference the problems of health and safety at work arising from the increasing use of visual display units (VDUs).

After VDUs were installed in the control room of a fire station in Greater Manchester where 82 women are employed, the union representatives carried out an investigation following reports of

birth and pregnancy abnormalities amongst VDU operators.

Abnormal

In the five years since the introduction of VDUs there were 17 pregnancies and all but three were abnormal in some way. Of the three that were normal two of the mothers were on sick leave for most of their pregnancies.

Of the rest there were health problems affecting both mother

and child, including miscarriages, emergency caesarian sections and one case of cerebral palsy. There was an 83 per cent problem rate, as opposed to a 20 per cent problem rate before VDUs were introduced.

Elayne reported that the FBU now has policy that any pregnant VDU operator should be offered alternative work with no loss of pay or changes in conditions. Thousands of women operate VDUs and more than half of them are not organised in trade unions.

Party's threat to miners

OGMORE LABOUR Party, South Wales has moved a resolution for the Party's national conference calling for the expulsion of *Militant* supporters from the Labour Party.

This constituency includes the mining communities of Maesteg and NUM officials at St John's pit who are party members and *Militant* supporters would be threatened by any such move.

In his "Parliamentary report" to the General Committee meeting, local MP Ray Powell attacked the St Johns colliery NUM May Day rally, attended by 400 local people in Maesteg to fight the threatened closure of the pit, as a "*Militant*-organised meeting". Powell didn't attend one picket line during the strike.

"Militant MP"

Complaining of being pushed into the background by Dave Nellist MP; he said: "What business have 'Militant' MPs' entering my patch; if people speak in my constituency, they must agree with my views or not speak at all."

Only 40 were present at the meeting which voted for expulsions of whom 23 voted in favour. NUM delegates to the party were not informed of the meeting, nor were

AUEW delegates.

The Party has also prevented the formation of a Young Socialist branch for two years, even though 21 people want to join.

Militant supporters in Ogmogre Labour Party, have an unblemished record and are not intent on destroying the chances of return a Labour government, as Powell claimed.

They established the miners' support group in Maesteg, helped to raise £153,000 and feed 900 miners. They recruited many working people into the Party.

Are the right-wing in Ogmogre seriously proposing the expulsion of Ian Isaac, Secretary of St John's NUM, Phil White, Compensation Secretary and other Lodge officials who support *Militant*, when effort is needed to save St John's pit?

Militant supporters in Maesteg are organising a 'Fight the Tories not the Socialists' meeting, on Wednesday 10 July at 7.15pm, Caerau Middle Club, Maesteg. Speakers will include Bill Mullins (expelled by Warley West LP, and Ian Isaac (Secretary St John's Lodge NUM).

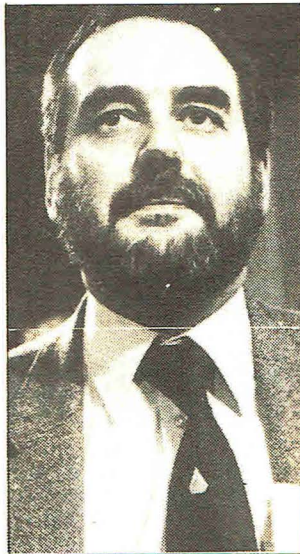
By Ian Wells
(Secretary, West Ward Labour Party, Ogmogre, in personal capacity)

NUPE member hounded

UNDERHAND methods are being used to discipline Paul Severn, an active member of NUPE in the union's branch at Loughborough University.

Paul, who is a *Militant* supporter, was threatened with expulsion by the branch secretary after he complained that he'd been excluded from paid relief to attend a union meeting.

The branch secretary organised a special meeting which voted by 29 votes to 18 to refer the proceedings against Paul to the Divisional Council. But previously the secretary attempted to push the decision through the shop stewards' committee without referring to the membership. Having failed to do this, the special meeting was organised with only three days notice at a time when Paul was known to be away from work, and when the majority of members could not attend.



Tom Sawyer NUPE assistant general secretary.

Only 50 members attended the meeting compared to the normal 100 to 200 out of a membership of 560. Many of the catering workers were stopped from attending by

the management because it was half an hour before lunch.

Paul has been accused of giving the union a bad name because he spoke at the local school students' strike meeting, but he points out that this is an attempt to attack the ideas of *Militant*, and has appealed for "unity to build a fighting union".

A campaign is being organised within the union to get the disciplinary action called off. A *Militant* readers' meeting is being held on 4 July aimed at bringing local NUPE branches together. Paul Severn, Paul Shawcroft (recently expelled from Mansfield Labour Party) and a representative from Loughborough Hospital which is threatened with closure will be speaking at the meeting.

By Dan Bintley
(NUPE, Loughborough County Services Branch, personal capacity)

Swansea says no witch hunt

AN ATTEMPT at another witch-hunt in Swansea Labour Party received a set-back last week. Two right wing wards had submitted resolutions to "expel *Militant* supporters" to go forward as Swansea's resolution to this year's Labour Party conference.

However, the mood amongst the majority of party members was not

for witch-hunting but for party unity.

After a heated debate, the resolution was lost by 36 votes to 27 with the anti-witch-hunting stand of Swansea Labour Association now being its policy.

This is important as further moves to expel *Militant* supporters and therefore wreck the party are expected to come up

at the July Association meeting. Most delegates feel confident these will also be defeated so that we can get on with the real job of expelling Thatcher.

By Alec Thraves
(Delegate, Swansea AUEW No 6, personal capacity)

Branch votes for unity

WINDMILL HILL branch of Bristol South Labour Party has passed a resolution calling for "party unity around socialist policies" and points out that the "witch-hunts and expulsions over the last six months played directly into the hands of the capitalist press."

It warns that party leaders "who condone these attacks will be held responsible for splitting the party in the face of the enemy."

The motion, which reaffirms the party's previous position, was passed at a packed meeting of over 50.

Michael Cocks, the sitting MP and Labour's Chief Whip faces a strong challenge from the left at Bristol South's forthcoming reselection meeting. Cocks has refused to have any dealings with the party in the last 18 months since the left took control, and has subsequently resorted to legal action against the NEC in order to force an enquiry.

After years of neglect by the right wing, left controlled branches are succeeding in building up their membership, and Labour candidates were returned in every ward in the recent county elections.

By Bryan Beckingham

Cleared of killing then sacked

THE NCB have sacked Welsh miner Anthony Williams, who was cleared of all charges arising from the death of taxi-driver David Wilkie during the coal dispute.

He was employed at Markham Colliery in Gwent, in Neil Kinnock's constituency, and lives in Rhymney in Mid Glamorgan.

As in many other cases the court decision was not good enough for the NCB. Not content with seeing Dean Hancock and Russel Shankland wrongly convicted of murdering David Wilkie and sentenced to life imprisonment, they are determined to exact their own revenge on Anthony Williams.

He had been suspended from work since the strike ended. Anthony had an interview with the pit manager and was left with the impression he would be restarting work. Then he had his dismissal notice from Hobart House in London, not his manager or regional office.

This leads Emlyn Williams, South Wales NUM area president, who described the sacking as an 'act of extreme callousness', to suspect the hand of MacGregor.

It is long overdue for the leaders of the Labour movement to take up the cause of the sacked miners. A clear commitment must be made that a future Labour government will free the prisoners and reinstate the sacked men.

In the meantime the whole movement must be rallied in defence of the miners and expose the double standards and victimisation by the NCB.

By Frank Cuthbert

Coventry sackings upheld

A SACKED Coventry miner has been refused access to an industrial tribunal for unfair dismissal.

Clive Ham was found not guilty in court of the offence for which he was sacked. But the NCB refused to reinstate him.

Clive stayed loyal to his union during the strike and didn't appeal to a tribunal because amnesty was one of the NUM's demands. Now the law says that Clive and others like him can't go to a tribunal because they haven't appealed within three months of being sacked.

How convenient for the tribunal that they can avoid judging a case which so obviously goes against the NCB!

Three other Coventry miners have already been to tribunals. Two lost and the only miner who 'won' finds himself working on the surface for six months on lower earnings.

By Tony Cross

Miners fight NCB victimisation

THE MINERS' national conference must step up the campaign for amnesty for all sacked and imprisoned strikers. Even the Tory dominated Parliamentary Employment Committee has called for a review of all cases of dismissal.

But the coal board and the government are unmoved. It is up to the labour and trade union movement to bring pressure to bear to force them to back down.

The injustices done to strikers are illustrated in the story by William Hodge from Killoch colliery, Ayrshire.

'I FEEL I must make some sort of protest about the victimisation in my pit. I would like to do so through your paper as it was one of only a few who gave us total support during the dispute.'

At Killoch those who stuck it out till the end are very much in a minority—about one in five. Since returning we have been forced to swallow some bitter pills.

As we work for a nationalised company we expect the same treatment as everyone else, but this is not the case.

As a member of the tradesman's union, SCEB-TA, I find I get a cut in



Confrontation outside Marine Colliery, Cwn, South Wales—now the NCB carries on the hard line underground

wages when I take a rest day due to me, though this is supposed to be protected by the National Power Loading Agreement.

Those who scabbed, no matter how long they had been back, even one day, get the full entitlement of eight rest days which they can take anytime they choose. We only get three which we can take anytime, as long as it is after August.

Men who worked in specialised jobs such as minedriving have lost those jobs. They are forced to take huge cuts in wages as a result

of being placed as spare this and that.

During coal cutting operations some inevitable accidents happen. Electrical cables burst and require immediate replacement. This has always been a fact of life in the pits. But now those who look after them are subject to downgrading if one is damaged.

In one case a man who had returned to work was downgraded to oncost wages. This set up a one day stoppage at Killoch. The stoppage achieved nothing except perhaps a sign that we

could start to rebuild the union in our pit.

The union has some new faces now due to the NCB giving redundancy to those who were most militant. They also sacked other militants prior to our return for 'severe offences' like being over a white line and on NCB property. These 'new faces' are hopefully going to give a high priority to getting those who have lost their jobs back with us.

Although collections for these men are made each week we don't seem to hear of any other sort of action.'

Photo: Martin Shakeshaft.

Amnesty now!

which causes a great deal of anguish for a few of us.

We have waited long enough for action on this. Now let us show our comrades we have not forgotten them—call for the same action we had for the scab because he was downgraded. Let's show we are not accepting these things lying down—call for strike action in support of our sacked colleagues.

I hope that through your pages we can get the message across to other areas that we still need to fight or we will go under. This is something we cannot and will not let happen. In unity there is strength, and we need all our sacked colleagues with us in our workplaces or we do not have that unity.

Support the call for a united attack on NCB victimisation and for immediate reinstatement of all sacked miners.

● Rugby, Kenilworth and Daventry miners' support groups held a social recently raising £200 for the sacked miners of Keresley NUM.

Women still part of struggle

Mary Smith of Hoyland Womens Support Group spoke to Sheila Andrew of Barnsley LPYS about her work during the miners' strike and the future of support groups:

"I first got involved when I heard the group were looking for volunteers to help out in the kitchen. I went along and it was there that I first came across *Militant*.

"*Militant* supporters were instrumental in setting up the kitchen. They came and gave practical help in the kitchen. One of them was a young lad who had been at the same school as me and he gave me a copy of *Militant* to read.

"Apart from running the kitchen and feeding up to 400 people a day we went out raising money on Hoyland market stall and speaking at firms.

Shop floor

"We went on picket lines and to factories like Shadlows in Sheffield and discussed with workers on the shop floor about the issues and what was actually going on on the picket lines. We did things we'd never done before or even thought we'd do.

"After the strike our group was split up. I think that's happened with a lot of the smaller groups though the bigger groups like Barnsley have kept going. We should have kept together because the fight still has to go on



Women on the SERTUC March in London, June 1984

over pit closures.

"The latest attacks in Yorkshire on pit closures and redundancies shows that everything Scargill said is true.

"The closures in my area

show that the NCB aren't bothered about pits being uneconomic. Darfield Main is targeted for closure—that's because it is one of the most militant pits and stayed most solid during the strike.

It's not uneconomic because it's had loads invested in it quite recently.

"The fight should start now against these attacks. It's not going to end here. They'll keep coming back to close more and more. We can't just sit back.

"I think there should be a campaign launched and taken out to everyone in our local communities with mass demonstrations and rallies to explain the issues at stake. The women have a key role to play.

Conference

"A national conference of Women Against Pit Closures is definitely a good idea. It needs to include women from every group that existed.

"It's important that the organisation of Women against Pit Closures is strengthened at regional and national level and given direction by taking up things like the amnesty campaign, which I don't think is being pushed nearly enough.

"They should also campaign for equal pay and free coal for women NUM members. The idea for the women in the support groups to have associate membership of the NUM is also good.

"It's very important that the women feel that they are still part of the same struggle against pit closures and to protect our communities."

10,000 enjoy Yorkshire gala

10,000 Yorkshire miners and their families gathered in Rotherham for their annual gala last weekend. MP Tony Benn pointed out that experiences of many miners during the strike had helped to create thousands of new socialists.

He called for a full amnesty for all imprisoned and sacked miners and he pointed out that the Tories had given a similar amnesty to the Rhodesian rebels led by Ian Smith. Benn and the Campaign Group of MPs plan to introduce a bill along these lines in Parliament. Union President Arthur Scargill received a rapturous reception.

He correctly pointed out that the heroic struggle of the last 12 months had not been in vain. And he called for industrial action "if they try to close our pits". For this he received a tumultuous reception, which should leave the NCB in no doubt that Yorkshire miners are preparing to fight again.

Many NUM activists commented that, at last a clear and decisive lead was being given by the union.

Militant supporters were prominent throughout the event 2,500 copies of the second Yorkshire *Militant Miners Bulletin* were distributed. Over a hundred *Militants* were sold.

Photo: Mick Carroll

FIghting FUND

This week: **£8,359**

Target date **31 July**

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	996		3200
East Midlands	486		2900
Humberside	303		1900
London East	627		2850
London West	638		2650
London South East	460		1950
London South West	350		1100
Lancashire	381		1100
Manchester	216		2650
Merseyside	1009		6200
Northern	949		4650
Scotland East	377		3000
Scotland West	933		3800
Southern	1206		5000
South West	363		2150
Wales East	373		2450
Wales West	543		2150
West Midlands	1226		4350
Yorkshire	828		5950
Others	15077		10000
Total received	27340		70000

Huge donations boost fund

TWO MAGNIFICENT donations have put the fighting fund back on target to meet the full amount needed by the end of July. Dave Cartwright from Newham has donated £4,500 to the fighting fund out of redundancy pay he received.

Then there has been a further donation of £1,000 (by a supporter who wishes to remain anonymous). To Marxists the struggle for socialism is not a game—these two outstanding con-

tributions show the commitment of *Militant* supporters to change society.

This week's total of £8,359 is one of the best ever achieved.

Stickers

Merseyside supporters deserve a mention—selling stickers and rattling collecting tins they collected over £200 on the Liverpool demonstration on Saturday. It seemed everybody was wearing a sticker in Liverpool that day.

Other donations this week are: Damon Cummins (Halesowen and Stourbridge CLP) £15; Wallasey LPYS £5; Watford LPYS £3; Workers at Ford's Dagenham £4.55; Workers at British Aerospace, Preston £2.72; EETPU members at Rosyth Dockyard £16; John Hogan Thamesmead, £26 sponsored half marathon (more to come); Janet Smith Hounslow £2; Terry Gallear and Tony Ireland (BFAWU Hednesford) £1 each; Joe Campell, Enfield £28—selling stickers.

MILITANT HAS played no small role in building the movement in Liverpool. It is the only paper that has given unwavering support to the fight by the City Council.

It is not surprising that sales of *Militant* on Merseyside in the past week have been without precedent. On the 27 June demo itself it is estimated that anything over a thousand papers were sold with hundreds more on the buses and trains to the demonstration.

The paper is going down well on the streets and outside workplaces especially amongst council workers—18 were sold outside Shiel Road Security Guards depot, with £6.50 raised for the fighting fund. When one seller on the

Trade unionists donate

TO LISTEN to the Labour Party leadership and read the Tory press you'd think the last rites were being administered to *Militant*. Reality is totally different.

Support for Marxism, especially amongst trade union activists is growing all the time. This is not idle speculation, but can be measured by the tens and fivers donated by trade union delegates during the conference season.

The near £2,000 collected at the TGWU conference has been highlighted on the back page. At the local authority union NALGO conference, £786 was collected; ASTMS—£327; COHSE—£456; IRSF—£66; Bakers union—£62.

GET Militant

streets was being harassed by the police one passer-by showed their support by stuffing a tenner in the seller's rattling tin.

People don't just want to read the paper, but want to get involved in the fight for socialism too. In Tranmere while 32 papers were sold on one sale, 17 asked about coming along to discussion meetings. In Birkenhead—ten papers sold, three wanting to get involved.

It's not just in Liverpool but everywhere the labour movement meets that *Militant* goes down well—137 were sold at the TGWU conference.

And don't forget to sell the special 10p broadsheet on Liverpool. Sell it at council depots, Labour meetings—workers everywhere want to read about Liverpool's struggle.

Marxist Daily Building Fund

	£	£	
Eastern	2781	Scotland East	2238
East Midlands	3146	Scotland West	2546
Humberside	1595	Southern	3887
London NE	3137	South West	867
London NW	3991	Wales East	1916
London SE	1953	Wales West	1453
London SW	2160	West Midlands	1959
Lancashire	561	Yorkshire	1486
Manchester	2548	National	1302
Merseyside	5085		
Northern	3061	Total	47672

This Week: **£554**

THIS WEEK, several unemployed supporters have donated a week's income to our Marxist Daily Building Fund. Ian Woodland from Andover has sent £25, George Smiles from Sunderland £20. Readers in Coventry have collected £71, as

have supporters in Liverpool. Julie Wyeth, a CPSA member from Poole has donated £50.

TGWU branch 5/373 from Nottingham has sent a donation of £10. Many other union and Labour Party branches agree with the need for a Marxist Daily Paper. Have you asked your branch for a donation yet?

ads

CLASSIFIED: 15p per word, minimum 10 words. SEMI-DISPLAY: £2 per column centimetre. Three weeks for the price of two. *Militant* meeting ads free. All advertisement copy should reach this office by Saturday.

SHEFFIELD: 'Socialists Against the Witch-hunt', Tuesday 16 July, 7.30pm, Frechville Open Door Centre, Birley Moor Road, Frechville.

SALEP BADGES: 25p each. 20 or more 18p each. 100 or more 13p each from: 'Badges', 1 Park Lodge, Park Avenue, Manchester, M19 2EE. Cheques/POs to 'SALEP'.

"LIVERPOOL MILITANT Labour" badge "Black and white youth unite" badge with red Militant logo, 25p each plus 25p minimum p&p. FF cheques payable to P Cooper, 31 Balmoral Road, Fairfield, Liverpool, L6 8NB.

DEFEND SALEP against Labour Party proscription! Buy a SALEP T-shirt! £3 & postage. Also still available: SALEP bulletin with NUM member Roy Jones report on his visit to SA NUM. 20p & 13p postage. Available from: Southern African Labour Education Project (SALEP), 28 Martello Street, London E8. Phone: 01-241 0434.

Militant Meetings

MILITANT WOMEN'S Weekend schools. South 10-11 August, North 31 August-1 September. Agenda: The family, Internationalism (workshops on South America, and Northern Ireland) Transitional Programme and Stalinism. Venue to be announced.

HARROW *Militant* Marxist Discussion Group. Monday 8 July, What *Militant* Stands for; Monday 22 July, The State; Monday 5 August, Northern Ireland; Monday 2 September, The Communist Manifesto. All at 11am at 172a Kenton Road, Kenton. Near Kenton B.R. Station.

MARXIST mega mix volume two. Even better than Vol 1, the socialist solution to music. Available from P Harris, 20a Blenheim Avenue, Leeds 2. Cost £2.25 (inc p&p)

DEAL socialist discussion group meets on Mondays throughout July at 8.00pm, at the Landmark Centre, High Street, Deal, Kent. Subjects include: "What is socialism" and "History of the Labour Party". For further details ring (0303) 43541.

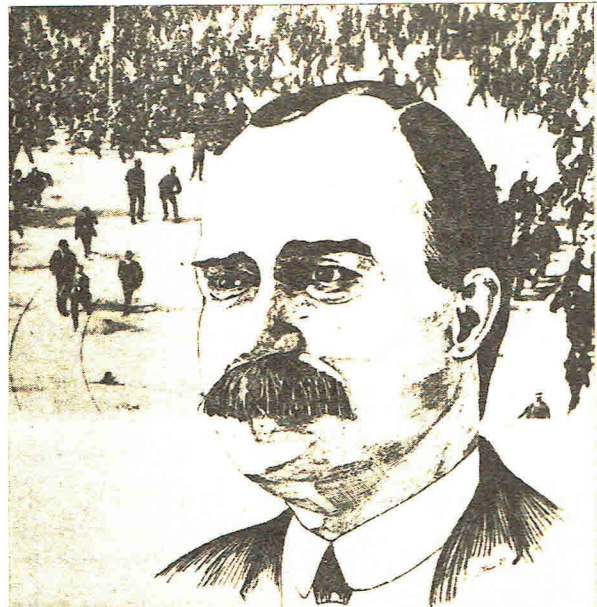
MILITANT South Wales Summer Camp. August Bank Holiday. Discussions on Britain, Chile, S. Africa, N. Ireland and the Labour Party. Price £12.50 per adult (£2.50 child). Contact Roy Davies, 181 Hanover St, Swansea for details.

IRAN-IRAQ WAR: Need a speaker for your LPYS or Labour Party branch or Marxist discussion group? Then contact H Khayam, 7/5 Oak Avenue, Bradford, BD8 7AQ. (Tel: Bradford 306665 or 724722).

COVENTRY public meeting: 'For a socialist Labour government'. Speakers: Nev Bell, sacked miner, Dave Nellist MP, Rob Sewell. Tuesday 9 July, 7.30pm, Sidney Stringer School, Coventry.

SOUTHAMPTON: Marxist Discussion Group meets every Sunday, 7.30pm, 206 Honeysuckle Road, Bassett, Southampton. Tel: 551420 for details of subjects or any further information.

BRISTOL EAST Marxist discussion group: 'What *Militant* stands for', 18 July, 7.30pm. Details ring: (0272) 656591.



James Connolly 1868-1916

Revolution is never practical until the hour of the Revolution arrives. This is also in practice, and all the efforts of the revolutionaries and organisations become the mere futile and vain "talk" of human conditions. For that reason, the only way to change the world is to change the conditions, the weapons were ready, the conditions were there, but the revolutionaries were not.

POSTERS—Marx, Lenin, Trotsky and Connolly. Cost 50p each. Bulk orders of 10 or more 25p each. Please add 50p p&p.

Militant/NSSP public meeting Sri Lanka—Workers fightback against repression

Speakers: —Dave Nellist MP —Vasudeva Nannayakkara, leading member of NSSP, recently released from prison —Tamil speaker with eye-witness account of events in Jaffna

At: Conway Hall (nearest tube—Holborn) Friday 26 July, 7.15pm.

LPYS Summer Camp 1985

Saturday 27 July – Saturday 3 August
Bracelands Campsite, Christchurch, nr Coleford, (Forest of Dean), Gloucestershire.

A brilliant week of sunshine, politics, sport and lots more. £30 for a week (half price for children 3-12). All-in "family price" £75. Brochure, leaflets and booking form from, Labour Party Young Socialists, Andy Bevan, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT.

Marxist Weekend School 1985 London 14/15 September

Courses on: Marxist philosophy, Marxist economics, the Russian revolution, Marxism and the state, black workers and the struggle for socialism, the colonial revolution, the trade unions—the 1920s and today, the lessons of popular frontism, women and the struggle for socialism.

Plus a rally/debate on Saturday and disco. Professionally run crèche. Put the date in your diary and make your transport plans now!

Only £7 (£5 unwaged). Book now! Cheques to: "Marxist Weekend School" 3-13 Hepscott Road, London E9.

I would like to register for the course on _____ at the Marxist weekend school (reading guides will be sent out from July).

I will need accommodation (bring a sleeping bag) for Friday/Saturday night(s).

I will require the crèche for the following children (name(s) and age(s)) _____

Name

Address

Fowler brings back poor law

THE government's Green Paper on Social Security proposes fundamental changes in the welfare state. A member of the Society of Civil and Public Servants working for the Department of Health and Social Security examines the Supplementary Benefit proposals and the way forward for the Action for Benefits campaign.

RECENTLY, ONE claimant stabbed another in a fight in the waiting area at Westminster DHSS office. At the time, there were 300 claimants waiting to be seen in a room designed to hold 50. Staff went on strike, fearing for their own safety if they carried on working. Management's short-term solution to this crisis was to introduce 10 security guards for the office, and a turnstile to enter the waiting area, so the number of claimants in the building could be restricted.

With the future for the DHSS outlined in the government's Green Paper, this type of arrangement will probably become the norm for inner-city DHSS offices. The Social Security Reviews that led up to the Green Paper were an opportunity to introduce a decent system of benefits, catering to individual needs and problems, whilst removing the means test aspect of social security. Instead of this, the government has come up with a scheme which will reintroduce many of the worst aspects of the 1930s "Poor Law" into the social security system, and cut expenditure on the welfare state.

Income support

The proposals for Supplementary Benefit—renamed "income support"—will classify claimants according to the reason for their claim, not by their level of need as at present. This will mean, in effect, claimants being divided into the "deserving" and "undeserving" poor, and make it easier for the government to discriminate against the unemployed when setting benefit levels.

The government have so far not published the proposed levels of benefit, which severely restricts debate on their plans. But this scheme is wrong in principle even if some claimants marginally gain from it.

By abolishing the "additional requirements" like ex-

tra benefit for accommodation or health problems—the government are attacking the most vulnerable sections of claimants. 3.7 million were receiving these payments in 1983. They can be up to £20 a week to some families. The Green Paper comments: "Individual-based additions involve considerable investigation into the details of claimants' circumstances. Such investigations can be intrusive. It cannot be right to have rules which lead to officials asking claimants how many baths a week they have been advised to take".

So instead of introducing a system which could mean claimants with particular problems receiving extra money without having to be asked embarrassing questions, the government solve the problem by abolishing the extra payments altogether!



Placard at DHSS claimants' protest. Photo: Militant

Other proposals in the Green paper will hit unemployed under-25s, who will receive a lower rate of benefit, in a clear attempt to drive them into low-paid jobs; all claimants will now have to pay 20% of their rates, and all the water rates (currently covered by Supplementary Benefit), which could cost up to £4 a week in some cases; and there are hints that the payments of mortgage interest as part of benefit payments may be restricted in future.

Social fund

One of the worst attacks is the decision to abolish "single payments", and in-

roduce the "social fund". At present "single payments" for those on Supplementary Benefit are a lifeline out of a crisis, with payments for furniture, bedding, maternity items, etc. as a crucial part of the whole system, not an optional extra. The existing system, as with all Supplementary Benefit, is a 'legal' one, based on previous cases which set a legal precedent which should (in theory) mean equal treatment for claimants from every DHSS office. There is a right of appeal for claimants to an independent tribunal.

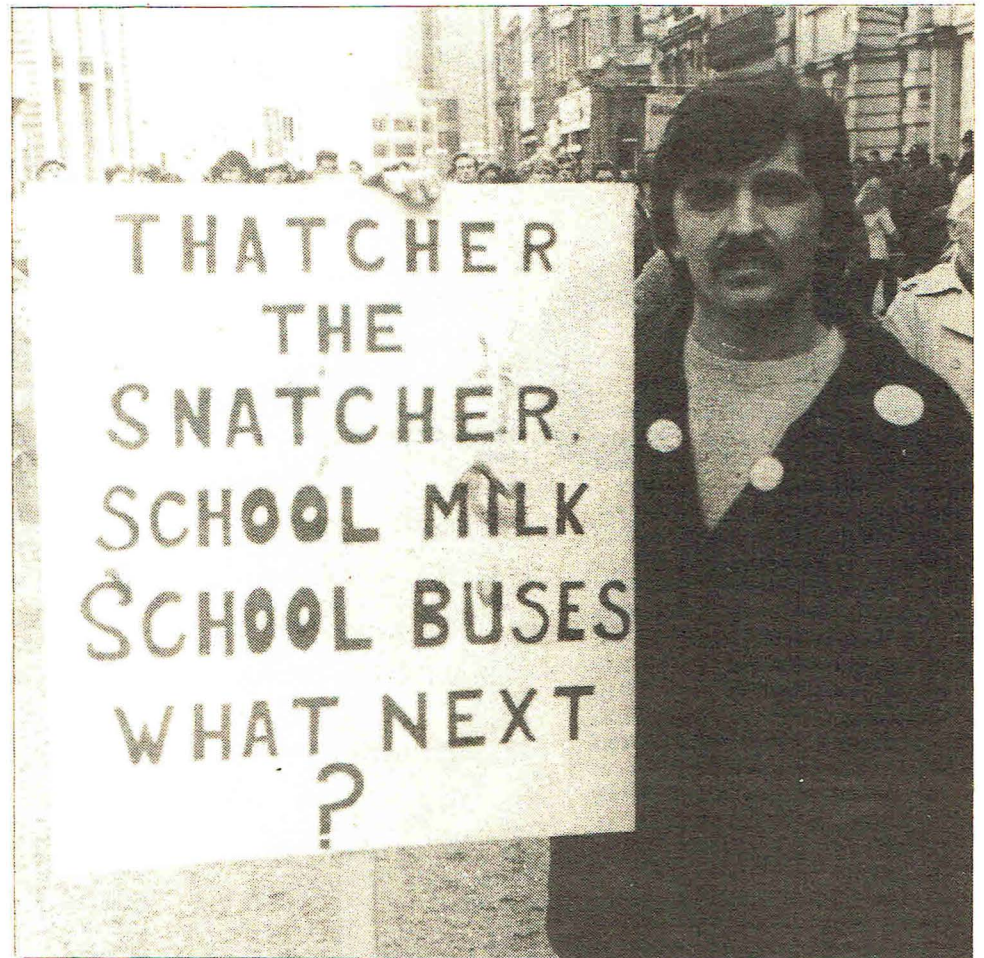
The government is proposing to abolish this system in favour of a "social fund", with an annual budget, to be operated from each DHSS office, at their discretion. The number of payments will be severely restricted, and many will be loans, repayable to the DHSS! The only right of appeal will be to the office that made the original decision.

Diabolical mess

The Green Paper says of the pre-1935 social security system: "There was criticism of the variations in help from area to area". This government, with their 1980 Social Security Act, changed a discretionary system into one with a legal entitlement, depending on the claimant's situation, to remove this problem and ensure equal treatment. Now they have completely reversed their 1980 decision.

The new system will be a diabolical mess, both for staff and claimants. For staff, it will be necessary to make value judgements between different claimants, with the additional limit of an annual budget, meaning a payment may be possible in September, but not in March. For claimants, the additional stigma of claiming from a special fund, with no doubt a more vigorous means test, will discourage many from claiming. And neighbouring offices could be giving completely different decisions in similar cases, with no real right of appeal.

The possibility of decisions being made on the whims and biases of individual members of staff will exist. "Troublesome" claimants may be denied payments that would be



Thatcher's record on social service is summed up by Liverpool demonstrator on 9 March rally in support of City Council

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

made to others. Racial and sexual prejudice could also play a part. The 1930s are back with a vengeance!

New technology

Enormous pressures on DHSS staff will mount up. The new "simplified" system will link in with the introduction of new technology, which threatens thousands of DHSS jobs. The limited welfare role the DHSS has now will be destroyed. Areas such as visiting, which can play a useful role for claimants in increasing benefits and providing single payments, will be severely restricted, probably only applicable to the few who try to claim from the "social fund", or those

suspected of "fraud".

For claimants, apart from actual cuts in real levels of benefits, the possibilities of extra payments, which many have come to rely on, will be virtually abolished. Some will try to claim from charities, which have seen a vast increase in claims in recent years. This will involve further humiliation and stigma. Others will fall prey to unscrupulous money-lenders, or "working on the side", both of which are often seen as the only way out of a financial crisis, but can have dire consequences.

In some areas of the country, scavenging from rubbish tips is commonplace, as the unemployed try to find a few items to sell or use in their homes. Is this the future for

the unemployed in Thatcher's Britain? The present benefit system has many faults, is very complex, and is in need of review. But the labour movement must organise to defend what we have, and fight to improve it.

Most vulnerable

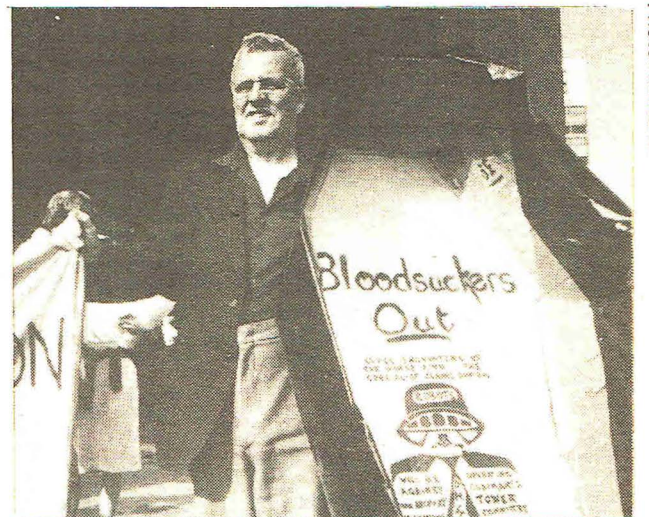
The government are attacking the most vulnerable sections of our society—the sick, pensioners, and the unemployed. They have no mass organisations to defend them. We must ensure that the government are not allowed to destroy the welfare state our ancestors in the labour movement fought for for so long.

Action for Benefits campaign

THE "Action for Benefits" campaign, organised by civil service trade unions, Child Poverty Action Group and other welfare rights groups has played an important role in putting the issue of the Social Security Reviews on the political agenda. Their recent conference on the reviews attracted 1,200 people, with DHSS trade unions and local welfare groups represented.

However, the campaign has now reached a vital stage. Concrete proposals for action must be put forward, if the campaign is really to be built. At present, it mainly concentrates at a national level on trying to put pressure on MPs, and its latest publication proposes writing letters to Mrs Thatcher as the first step of action to take!

The campaign must be taken up by the trade union movement as a whole if it is to have any chance of success. The government's climb down on compulsory YTS shows that concessions can be won if enough



Graphic protest against DHSS "bloodsuckers".

pressure is put on. It cannot be won solely through a "battle of ideas" as proposed at the conference. One effective focus for the campaign could be a national demonstration to mobilise the unemployed, pensioners etc. in the defence of the welfare state.

The question of the DHSS trade unions taking industrial action against the

proposals in the Green Paper could also come onto the agenda. This would be a radical new step for the unions, and would need the support of the whole labour movement to succeed.

Opinion polls show that there is a great deal of opposition to the Tories on this issue, but a fighting plan of action must be drawn up now before it is too late!

Disabled forced to crawl

SOCIAL SERVICES for the elderly and disabled have reached crisis point. In Staffordshire, waiting time for urgently needed appliances in now two years or more. Officially 1500 in the county (500 in Stoke-on-Trent alone) are in the queue for chair-lifts, grab-rails and walking frames. Unofficially the figure is thought to be much higher.

"The system can no longer cope" said an experienced front-line social service worker, "People have to wait six or nine months for a visit. It is not just the elderly. I know of

young disabled people who are crawling around their homes for want of grab rails."

Outcasts

The Tories treat this section of society as outcasts. Typical is their treatment of a 63 year old Stoke woman who suffers from cancer. Her sons have had to carry her up and down stairs to the bathroom for months. After making 23 phone calls to the social services office, they were told that the waiting time for a chair-lift was two years.

"I'm not blaming the

staff" said one of the sons, "They seem to be working under intolerable pressure. In fact I spoke to one who broke down and wept because she had had enough of trying to placate people who were desperate for help."

Militant has put forward the demand for a minimum wage of £115 to include pensioners, the sick and disabled. This must be taken up immediately by the whole labour movement.

By A Bentley

Liverpool mobilises

THE NATIONAL Executive of the Labour Party decided at its last meeting to "support councils defending and promoting services and jobs"—and—"calls upon all sections of the party to offer maximum support to those councillors in Liverpool, Lambeth, Edinburgh and other authorities in seeking to prevent the threatened disqualification and surcharge".

After the decisions of the party conference, the justified stance of the councils and the pressure of the rank and file this was the very least that the NEC could do. Neil Kinnock has now been invited to tour the city on 15 July—he will see the stark reality which faces workers daily. Undoubtedly he will then see that the council has no alternative to its present course.

Given the support of the NEC Liverpool District Labour Party now intends to write to every Labour Party offering speakers to any meetings which are organised. This will be important to overcome the national press and media silence.

At this stage the Tories could be considering a twin track attack on Liverpool. They intend to pursue legal action against the councillors and in tandem they could move to starve the city of funds.

The government may refuse to renew loans from the Public Works Loans Board. This would make it very difficult for the council to borrow on the open market.

The effect of this is unknown. No city has ever gone 'bankrupt'. Not only wages but services to other industries could not be provided. Grants to voluntary organisations would not be paid. The interest on Liverpool's £700 million debt, which amounts to £180 million in 1985/86, could not be paid. And even though the government would obviously underwrite their friends in banking circles the initial effect on the banking system is incalculable.

The aim of this would be to create an atmosphere of social breakdown and chaos and allow the Tories to step in as saviours.

Back in February Jenkin said that he had "the firm backing" of the Cabinet to take direct action if local administration in Liverpool

appeared to be breaking down.

The problem with this approach is that it would mean the Tories rushing emergency legislation through Parliament to provide individual commissioners to run the individual services. As the *Sunday Times* pointed out last year: "The caretakers have to unlock the doors, the computers have to be set-up. There are 25 things that have to happen before you can sit in your office and pretend to run the city"—25 March, 1984.

Moreover, they have to find volunteers for these posts. The salary may be lucrative but the task will be impossible.

Their preferred solution will undoubtedly be to take the legal road and "for Sir Trevor Jones to lead his Liberals into a breach caused by removal from office of labour"—*The Times*, 29 May, 1984. This poses a dilemma. Firstly the District Auditor's letter may not lead initially to a legal certificate being issued against the councillors—because his case against Liverpool is so flimsy.

Even if a certificate is issued the legal case with appeals could well go into the autumn. Either road will be preceded by a major financial crisis unless the government provides the additional funds which Liverpool needs.

If £30 million was provided and the penalties were removed a "legal" budget could be introduced.

If workers are laid-off the state will have to pay out benefits which will easily exceed this figure. If workers are sacked the cost of redundancy and the knock-on effect in private industry will be catastrophic.

The only other alternatives would be massive rate increases of 60 per cent or more. This would only mean a cut in the living standards of all workers—further fuelling the dole figures. Imagine the number of small companies and small shops that would be bankrupted.

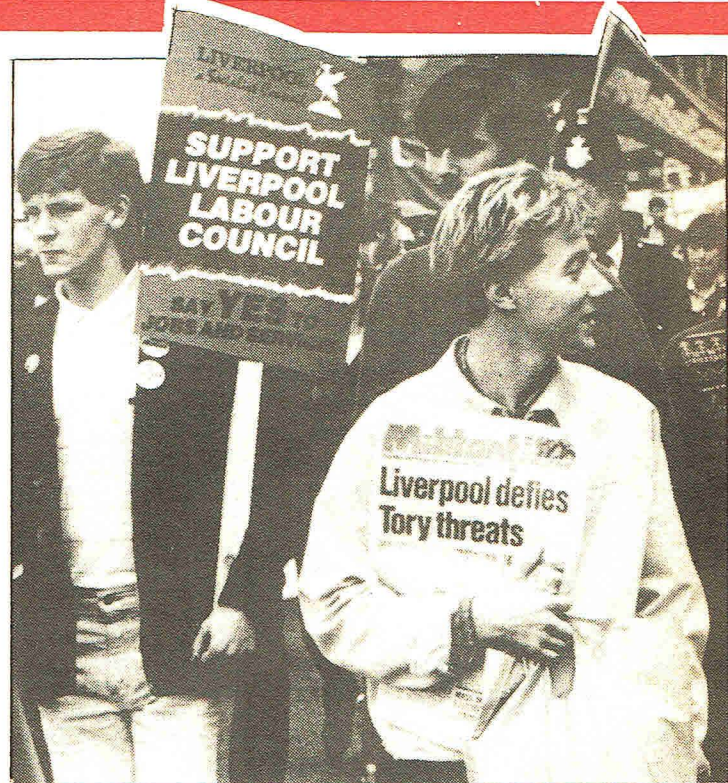
But of course bankruptcy is a Tory speciality. Not content with presiding over record figures for bankruptcy since they came to power, they now want to add 49 Labour councillors to their list and with them thousands of workers and small businessmen.

that if they use public halls then picket lines will be erected.

The only honourable solution is for them to resign as Labour councillors and as party members and for them to stand against the party.

Demands for their expulsion are not pursued by *Militant* supporters. Rather appeals are being made for workers to join the party to ensure that councillors are elected who represent party policy and remain true to socialist principles.

LIVERPOOL COUNCIL'S campaign to save jobs and services got a massive boost from the 20,000 strong demonstration last Saturday. Now the council unions are seeking solidarity ties with council workers in Lambeth, Edinburgh and all local authorities. Dave Cotteril, Terry Harrison and Roger Shrivess look at different aspects of the struggle. All photos *Militant*.



A section of the audience at the solidarity rally in Liverpool.

Private sector workers back council

A SOLIDARITY rally of 500 private sector workers on Merseyside supported the campaign of Liverpool City Council.

They unanimously agreed to a resolution welcoming the decision of the NEC of the Labour Party to back of the stand by Liverpool, Edinburgh and Lambeth Labour councils.

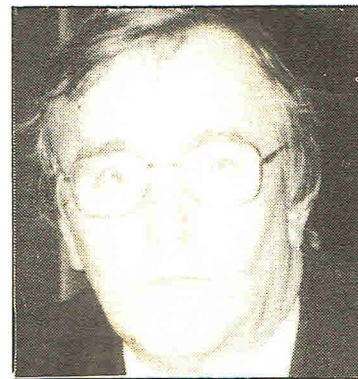
It went on to say that the decision of the District Auditor to impose a £100,000 surcharge on Liverpool councillors is an arbitrary, political decision.

Recognising that cuts in jobs and services, tied to large rate increases, would result in massive job losses in the private sector, the meeting agreed to work to secure supportive industrial action to defend the councillors under attack.

Factory-gate meetings are to be organised, to prepare for the convening of a delegate conference in July for all workplaces.

Speaking at the conference were Keva Coombes, Leader of the Merseyside County Council, Ian Lowes chairman of the City Council Joint Shop Stewards' Committee, Billy Harper, a councillor and a Ford worker, Eleanor McLaughlin the Deputy Leader of Edinburgh Council, Ted Knight, leader of Lambeth council, Trish Grue LPYS member, and Derek Hatton, deputy leader of Liverpool City Council.

Billy Harper explained the massive job losses that would result from the Tory/Liberal proposals to cut jobs and services in the authority. Not only must private sector



Ted Knight, leader of Lambeth council—'the three councils are in the front line'



Eleanor McLaughlin, deputy leader of Edinburgh council—'next year all Labour councils face same problem'

unions organise meetings where councillors could explain the issues, but also wage a campaign of support through the union to a national level.

Ian Lowes said: "This is a fight for every working class man, woman and child in the city".

Local authority workers have to demonstrate their willingness to struggle before they could appeal for support from the private sector workers, he said.

Eleanor McLaughlin reported that whilst Edinburgh was bound by Scottish law they were in the 'same boat' as Lambeth and Liverpool. Next year all Labour councils would face massive problems.

She said: "The house I live in was built by the man I married. I said to him, 'what would you feel like if they came to take the house?' He said, 'if they come and take it love, they can have it the way I brought it up the hill—brick by brick!'"

Trish Grue, for the LPYS, said

that under the Tories there was no hope for youth. In comparison to the super-exploitation of youth on the schemes by private employers the Liverpool City Council had a proud record. They employed 100 YTS trainees on trade union rates of pay who enjoyed full trade union rights with the guarantee of a job at the end.

Terry Fields, MP for Broadgreen took the collection—a magnificent £1,204.

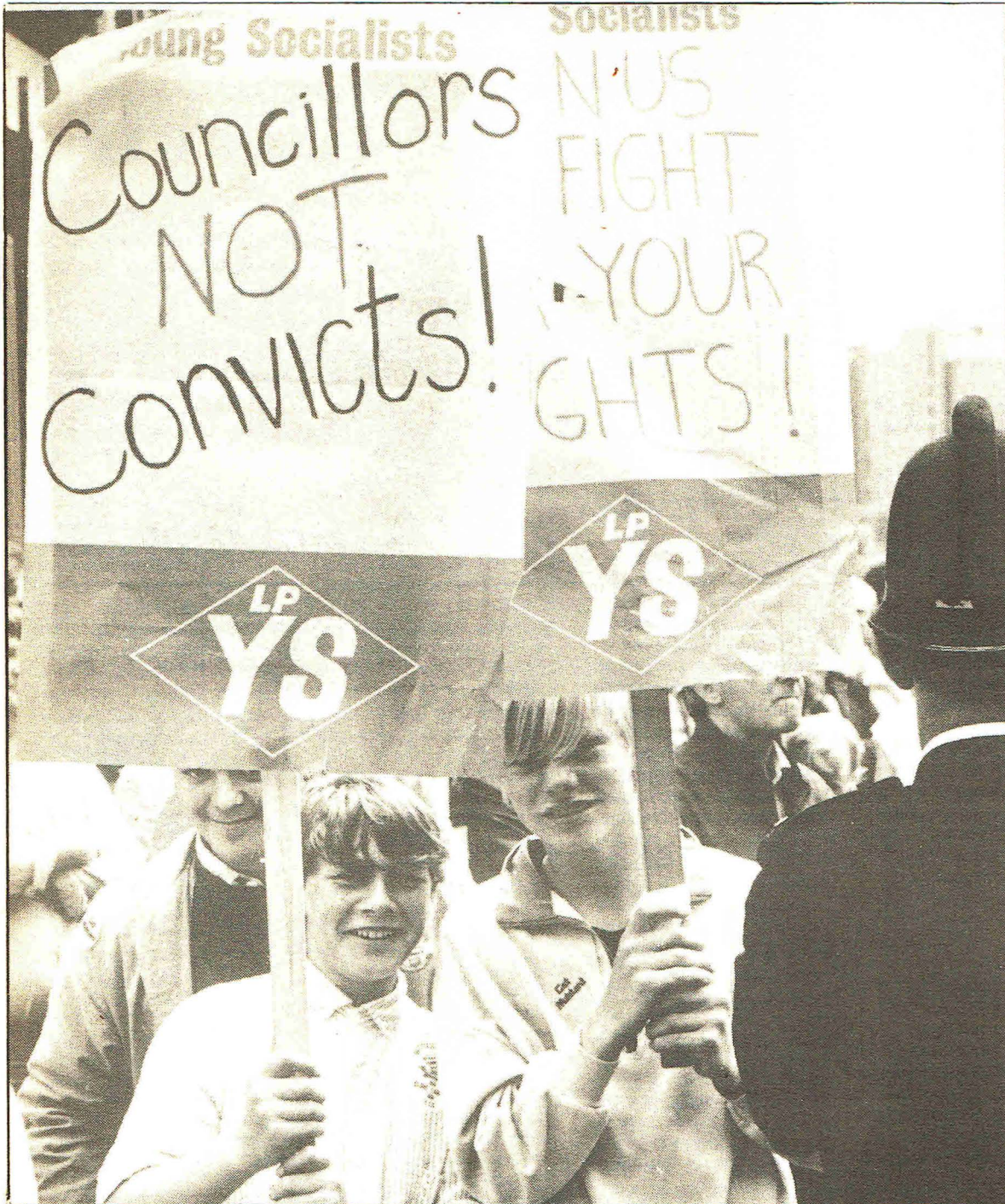
Ted Knight, leader of Lambeth council, said that these three councils were in the front line of the struggle against the Tories. Hundreds of thousands of people, seeing for the first time councillors prepared to carry out their election programme, look to us to stand firm.

No elected councillor should walk away from the threats of Tory cuts in council expenditure. Councillors do have a choice what they do, but working people who suffer from such cuts can't and local

Moves against 'Sensible Five'

DURING THIS year's budget vote the so-called "sensible five" (as named by Neil Kinnock last year) voted with the Liberals/Tories to implement a budget which would have meant 10,000 job losses.

Their actions have generated enormous anger. Moves are now underway to expel them from the Labour Group. In one ward which some of them represent a decision has been taken to withdraw all facilities for their surgeries. The local trade unions have decided



Above and above left: on the Liverpool march, 29 June.

Thousands march to support council and YTURC

YOUNG PEOPLE came in their thousands to Liverpool last Saturday to march for real jobs and in defence of Liverpool Labour Council.

Over 20,000 marched in solidarity with the Labour Councillors under threat of surcharge, disqualification from office and even jail.

The march was applauded all the way along by workers and their families out shopping in Liverpool City Centre.

"Young Tory" Martin Ponsonby-Smythe (star of many LPYS City Centre street meetings) harangued the workers of Liverpool from the YS float, telling them he had come to the city to clear the scallywag councillors from office, and jail them. He was drowned out by the song of thousands: "City council—we'll support you evermore".

At the rally at the city hall the first speaker was appropriately Rachel Harrison from the National Committee of the newly formed School Students' Union. She described the school students' strike and movement and thanked the City Council for its support. She added: "School students defeated the Tories over YTS conscription. Surely the combined working class and councillors of Liverpool,

Lambeth and Edinburgh can do so again".

Tony Cox, National Secretary of YTURC got tremendous applause when he listed the success of YTURC organising youth against the Tories. Tony appealed to the ranks of the labour movement to come to the aid of YTURC who are under attack from Labour's leaders purely because of its success. He ended by saying: "Labour's leaders should, instead of evicting YTURC from Walworth Road, concentrate all their energies on evicting Margaret Thatcher from No 10 Downing Street."

Other speakers included Keva Coombes, Derek Hatton, John Hamilton, Frances Curran, Rob Owen, Alex Wood, Ian Lowes, Eric Heffer, and Tony Benn. To end the rally Tony Mulhearn put a resolution to the march which committed the councillors and labour movement of Liverpool to continue the fight against the Tory government in defence of the city's jobs and services. 20,000 hands were raised unanimously in favour.

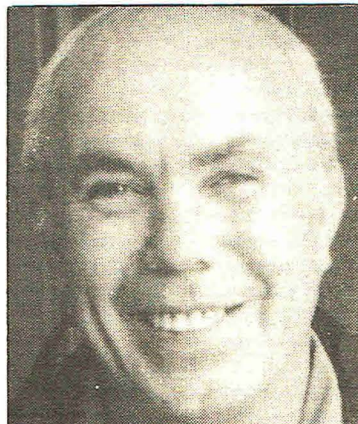
The overwhelmingly young march, the biggest ever for the LPYS and YTURC, showed the opposition the Tories will face in their attacks on young people and on Liverpool.

Councillors determined

JIMMY DILLON, a Labour councillor and a taxi driver told *Militant*: "I find myself threatened by a particularly vicious government. My furniture, my livelihood and now my position as councillor is threatened. I put myself up for councillor to take the knocks of Liverpool's people. That's why I'm involved in politics."

"As a socialist councillor, I didn't look for confrontation with the government but they gave us no alternative but to fight for a better deal or the people of Liverpool".

WILLIE HARPER, a Labour councillor and worker at Ford Halewood: "We were elected to do a job of work. It's very difficult to bankrupt me because I'm hard up anyway. Fords aren't



Liverpool councillor Jimmy Dillon.

great payers.

"But they can use various methods to take money off you, even taking money out of your wages, leaving you with just a very small sum to live on."

Unprecedented powers of district auditors

IN AN unprecedented way, the Tories have gradually changed the local government laws so that in effect they can be used to back up their policies.

Until now under English law it was considered that a defendant was innocent until proven guilty. With the creation of the Audit Commission—appointed by the Secretary of State—we have an entirely different situation.

In the past it was understood that auditors were necessary to check on abuses and financial mistakes. The Audit Commission now has the powers and scope to ensure that councils comply with government targets and priorities. In other words, despite its supposed independence it is a political watch-dog for the Tory government.

The powers given to the Audit Commission and the District Auditor are without precedent. They represent a further move away from local democracy and reinforce what even Ted Heath commented on last year that this represented the 'most draconian' legislation introduced—even greater than the powers that governments assumed during the first and second world wars.

The powers of the auditor enable him to set an arbitrary date by which councils must fix a budget—although this is not laid

down in law. The auditor's letter to councillors states the "General Rate Act 1967 does not specify a time limit for making a rate... if the council fail to levy a rate by 20 June ratepayers will be unable to take advantage of their statutory rights to discharge their rate liability by 10 monthly installments."

The auditor can prepare a report on the council's financial affairs and can allege losses and financial misconduct even without doing an audit!

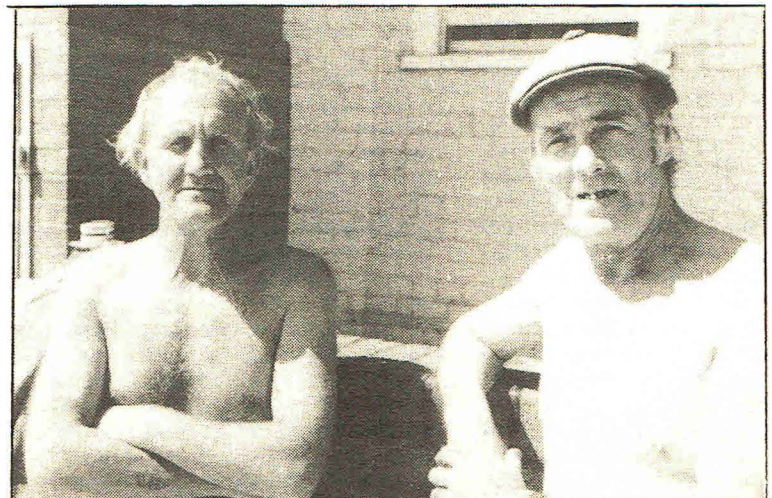
This power is obviously written in because of the experience of Clay Cross where it took the auditor two months to complete an extraordinary audit—for a village of 10,000 people.

The auditor has discretionary powers—so for example even though councils such as Southwark, Islington, Camden and others went past his arbitrary deadline they have not moved against these councils.

Using all these powers the auditor can and has issued letters to the councillors in Lambeth and Liverpool. If he is not satisfied with the answers he can issue a certificate which in effect declares the councillors guilty and will order costs and disqualification from office.

He is therefore judge, jury and executioner. Having been found guilty the councillors can only appeal to the High Court to try and protect themselves.

Local support grows



Tommy and Frank, building workers employed by the council—'we've got to have a go'.

THERE IS a high level of political consciousness on Merseyside. Below are comments typical of thousands of local working class people. **Tommy and Frank**, two corporation building workers gave their views to *Militant*:

"We've heard that 27,000 jobs will go if the council are beaten. If that Trevor Jones comes back we'll all be out of a job. We need to fight like Arthur Scargill and the miners. We'll need more support than the miners got if we're going to stand a chance against Thatcher. She's out to get us. Sink or swim, we've got to have a go. There's no choice any more".

Bill Butler from Edge Hill said: "I'm near retirement now and I've never been very interested in politics. I never used to vote in local elections but I definitely support Liverpool City Council and Merseyside County Council. Liverpool in particular are doing something. Who does Thatcher think she is? And who does Thatcher think we are, if she thinks we are not going to fight back?"

Ellen Connor, who was at the Merseyside People's Festival on Sunday, was enthusiastic about the demonstration she had seen the day before: "It's good to see so much support for the City Council. I've lived in some real tips in this city. Now the council are building some

decent places for us for once. I back them all the way."

Mark Hazelhurst, from nearby Wallasey, said that it was scandalous to take away the democratic rights of an elected council. "I'm unemployed, and as time goes on we were told that our situation would get better. It hasn't, it's got worse."

"There's no chance of any jobs round here, except for what the council's producing. I've been out of work for six months, but I have known a couple of my friends have got jobs with the council. They are the only jobs being created at the moment."

Alan McDonald, a member of Walton LPYS, is a school student at Anfield Comprehensive: "We did a leaflet of Breckfield Comprehensive. All the school students were tremendously behind the council's stand. They thought of them as being the only possibility of getting jobs in the future. Over 200 turned up after school for a meeting. We were offered a room to hold the union meetings in and we are going to form a union in the school. On 13 July we are holding a school students' conference. We think that all Liverpool school students will back the council and will be one of the main forces for getting a victory."

authority workers who stand to lose their jobs—have no choice at all! Labour Party conference has made it clear. When a law was against the interests of working people, this is a law that we don't have to obey.

Derek Hatton said it was vital that a national lead is given by the party and trade unions. He welcomed the decision by the Labour Party executive to support a campaign against the surcharge and disqualification of the councillors.

It was unacceptable for Neil Kinnock to say he could not support breaking of the law. The District Auditor was acting under instructions from the Tories. Last year he had numerous opportunities to pursue the surcharge of councillors, but chose not to. "The lesson of last year's campaign was that a concerted campaign would make the Tories retreat. The battle we are entering is one for the survival of the city", he said.

Zimbabwe, Zambia

Socialist words, Capitalist deeds

AS WE have reported previously, the Zimbabwe Prime Minister Mugabe recently denounced two South African socialists whom he had detained for seven weeks without charges, then deported from the country.

He accused them of being "infiltrated" into Zimbabwe by *Militant*. Socialists in the local trade union movement were warned: "we are watching you!"

The facts are that 14 trade unionists and socialists, including three from abroad, had been arrested on 1 March. They had been involved in a struggle to build the General Engineering and Metal Workers' Union on a fighting programme. They had supported the socialist aims put forward by the ZANU (PF) government. But they believed that democratic discussion was needed in the unions and in the ruling party about the policies to be followed.

In particular they had criticised the government's economic policy, and the new repressive Labour Relations Act

Released

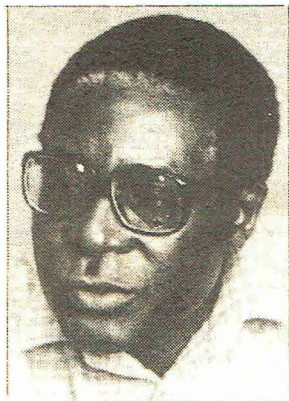
Two weeks after the arrests, 12 detainees had been released as a result of protests from many working class organisations in Europe and elsewhere. The remaining two were kept in Chikurubi Maximum Security Prison until they were deported. This attack was a direct result of the policies followed by the ZANU (PF) leadership since before independence. To coincide with Zimbabwe's elections we are reprinting an article from the Dutch Marxist paper *Offensief* on developments since independence:

IN 1979 the ZANU (PF) and ZAPU nationalist leaders signed the Lancaster House agreement with British imperialism and the local capitalists to end the liberation war and state the terms for independence. This agreement guaranteed the property of the capitalists in Zimbabwe.

Since independence in 1980 the ZANU (PF)

Translation from the Dutch Marxist paper *Offensief*

government has based all its reforms on trying to develop the capitalist economy, especially by attracting foreign investment. This meant that despite some immediate improvements, the low wages and miserable conditions of the workers and peasants had to be continued.



Robert Mugabe

The minimum wage for industrial workers is about £19 per week, while many consumer goods cost the same as in Britain. The government has brought some limited improvements in people's conditions. But the whites live in the same colonial luxury as before. One difference is that they have been joined by a small black elite.

Corruption is increasing among the tops of the ruling party and the civil service. The ZANU (PF) Congress of August last year was forced to adopt a "leadership code" which "bans" the worst excesses of corruption (but does not limit leaders' incomes). Since then, however, very little has been done to implement this code.

Socialists naturally support every improvement such as the extension of education and health care, a minimum

wage and, above all, black majority rule.

But it is necessary to point out that the weak capitalist economy of a country such as Zimbabwe can never satisfy needs such as land for the peasantry, a living wage for workers, and adequate social services (for example, unemployment benefits and pensions).

These can only be met if the economy is brought into public ownership, under the democratic control of the working people. The main industries, the banks and the land must be nationalised. Production could then be organised according to a democratic plan based on the demands of the people. The wealth of Zimbabwe could then be used to develop the country, not enrich the capitalists and the multinationals abroad.

"Disruption"

In theory the government agrees with this; in practice nothing is done that might frighten off foreign investors. "We have never nationalised", says Finance Minister Chidzero: "We don't intend to nationalise". (*Africa News*, 25 March). Mugabe himself goes even further: the government does not want to "disrupt" the economy, he says, and "nationalisation would lead to that kind of disruption."

Socialists have always pointed out that the implementation of socialist policies, promised by the government in words, is a matter of life and death to the mass of the people. But socialism cannot be built inside a single, underdeveloped country like Zimbabwe. Apart from the economic limitations, the South African regime—which dominates the whole of Southern Africa—would never allow that to happen. That is why the struggle for socialism in Zimbabwe has to be linked to the revolution in South Africa itself.

This struggle obviously cannot be completed overnight. But the necessary



preparation must go ahead: building the workers' organisations in South Africa and Zimbabwe, campaigning for socialist policies in the workers' movement, and developing close links between workers' organisations in different countries.

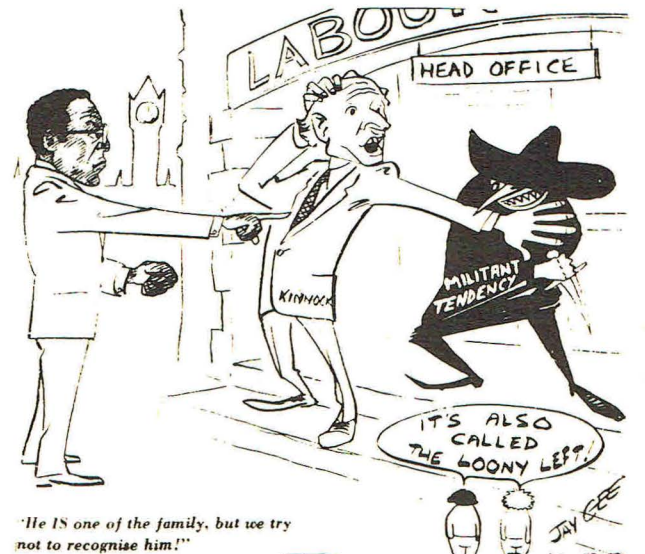
The policy of the Zimbabwe government—socialist in words, capitalist in deeds—forces it to oppose the development of a revolutionary workers' movement. The leaders feel threatened by the beginnings of socialist criticism in the ranks of ZANU (PF), and try to suppress it by state repression.

But the setbacks they can inflict will only be temporary. The government is making it more and more clear that it does not intend to carry out its revolutionary promises.

The crisis of capitalism will inflict worse poverty on the mass of the people in the coming years. The government, bowing to the dictates of the International Monetary Fund, plans harsh cuts in public spending already pathetically limited. Minister Chidzero boasts that there is "no real disagreement" between the government and the IMF!

Despite an economic upturn this year based on good rains and increased exports, there is no hope of jobs for the youth, serious land reform, or higher wages. The repression of the Ndebele minority in all its brutality is continuing, aggravated by acts of terrorism by the "dissidents". All these factors will force the regime further in its campaign to install a one-part dictatorship and smash all opposition parties.

Socialists in Britain and elsewhere gave tremendous



"He IS one of the family, but we try not to recognise him!"

This cartoon, from the pro-government *Sunday Mail* in Zimbabwe, shows how the Mugabe government views the ideas of Marxism. The response of Jim Mortimer (then Labour Party general secretary) was to "blame" the detainees for their detention—in defiance of an NEC resolution expressing opposition to their detentions. Press reports in Zimbabwe even concluded after speaking to Mortimer, that the jobs of two of the comrades who moved to Zimbabwe had been arranged for them by Dave Nellist MP!

In the meantime released detainees continue to face harassment and persecution in Zimbabwe. In some cases, it is reported, their children have been expelled from school.

Events in Zimbabwe have shown that "imprisonment is the extension of witch-hunting by other means." Labour Party activists will be shocked that party officials can apparently sympathise with and connive at the methods that the Zimbabwe government has used to attack Marxism.

support to their comrades in Zimbabwe. The strength of the outcry in the labour movement worldwide has surprised the government and undoubtedly secured the release of the trade unionists in detention. The attacks, however, are not over. Labour movement support must continue.

Support needed

★ Organise discussion about Zimbabwe in your trade union branch, shop stewards' committee, Labour Party or YS branch.

★ Give financial support to the Zimbabwe Trade Unionists Defence Campaign. This is vital for legal defence and in support of the struggle for democratic trade unions.

★ Put forward resolutions in support of trade union and democratic rights in Zimbabwe.

Further information and speakers from: ZTUDC, 28 Martello Street, London E8 3PN Tel. 01 241 0434. Cheques payable to Zimbabwe Trade Unionists Defence Campaign.

Suffering the IMF's remedy

ZAMBIA fought for and won political independence from British imperialism. But the multinationals, the world markets and institutions like the IMF have kept Zambia in thrall to capitalism over the past two decades.

The country is heavily dependent on one mineral, copper. But demand has collapsed in the world recession and prices have been falling for a long time. In 1970 one tonne of Zambian copper could buy what it now takes five tonnes to purchase. Some of Zambia's elite have taken to drug smuggling to South Africa to gain foreign exchange.

The government are now giving big incentives to the richer farmers to increase neglected agricultural production. This is increasing class polarisation in rural areas. The IMF want to 'solve' Zambia's huge international debts by a de facto devaluation of the currency. This would raise prices enormously. Already slashed subsidies have hit hard at Zambia's poor.

Strikes

Workers, including copper miners, have struck over pay restraint in a time of raging inflation, even though President Kaunda's government have banned strikes in

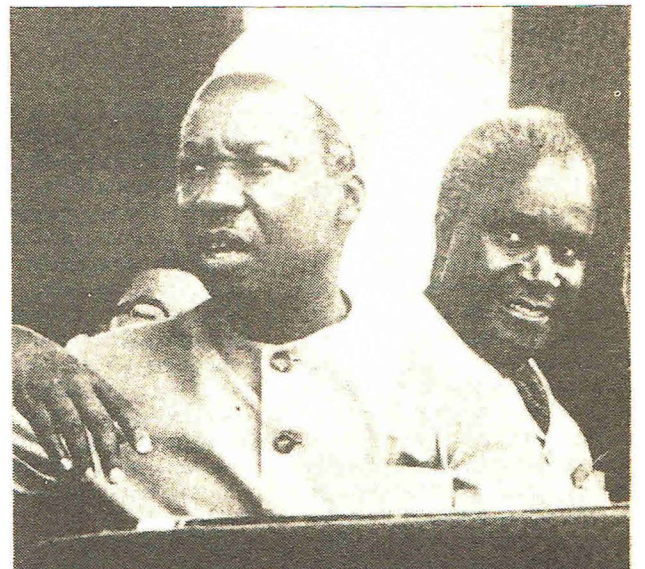
most industries. A correspondent in Zambia writes of the effect of the crisis. "THE IMF bandits are just posing around menacingly. 27,000 workers are to be reduced from the Civil (and Party!!) Service alone. Perhaps about half as much would come from the 'parastatal' companies and corporations.

"Although on paper the government claims the reductions should 'cut' across all levels, in practice only the 'lads' are getting the sack. The bosses of course are charged with the heavy responsibilities of implementing the directives to the best interests of the 'people'! "The aim is apparently to

have 'slimmer', more motivated and 'efficient' organisations, resulting in 'enormous' savings (according to the IMF sympathisers). Even large state owned farms and factories are about to be privatised in line with these socialist ideals!

"Aggressive"

"Everywhere there is talk (in government circles) of being 'aggressive', private investors are being wooed back to 'develop' the economy and so on. Prices have more than doubled in the past year alone. Apparently this time they are following the 'Chinese model'—I am not



Zambian leader Kenneth Kaunda (right) with Tanzanian president Nyerere.

sure whether it will get them very far because corruption is drowning everybody (except of course the bosses)."

By a Zambian correspondent

The fight to save St Johns

THE STRUGGLE in the pits is far from over despite the end of the National strike. There are many examples of strikes which have shown the continued undaunted determination of the miners.

The proposed closure of many pits has rekindled the anger of the majority of miners. The major difference between the movements now and March 1984 has been that when a pit has been threatened with closure not only does this meet with the resistance of the NUM but also with the opposition of the wider labour and trade union movement and whole community.

This lasting legacy of the strike at St Johns Colliery in South Wales is a testament to the model way in which the arena of struggle was broadened during the course of the strike involving the miners—their families—the wider community and trade union movement directly in the struggle. Richard Morgan reports:

ON 20 April a general meeting of the St John's NUM unanimously voted to fight a recommendation made by the South Wales NCB Deputy Director and Area Director to the NCB that 'Geology was hopeless at the pit' and that production should cease at St John's Colliery.

On Monday 6 May approximately 400 people packed into Maesteg Town Hall in a meeting organised by the St John's mining unions and the Communities Action Committee, to hear the case to keep the last pit in the Llynfi and Afan Valleys open.

St John's NUM lodge secretary Ian Isaac, hit back at the NCB saying: "The argument concerning geology is an attempt to rig the closure of St John's colliery prematurely. The area of the mine which has at least five years of mineable coal reserves called 'The

Bute and Lower Nine' is an area that has been worked for a decade and more; the men are experienced in working minor faulting in these faces.

"The other area where reserves remain of mineable coal is the 'Lower 6ft seam' which has cost, according to the NCB £8m to develop. In the view of the unions and the men experienced in working this area, it is entirely possible to work a number of 100m long faces between faults.

"To say 'geology is hopeless' is a yard stick that would close three-quarters of the South Wales coalfield. The NCB directors are comparing the output figure for large mines like Kellingly in Yorkshire with collieries like St John's in South Wales, a ploy to decimate the coal industry".

Case for retention

IAN ISAAC explains the NUM's case for St John's future:

"TWO WEEKS after the ending of the strike the NCB recommended closure taking no account of the union case. No reserves remained in South Pit Gelli—Deg, which had been exhaustively mined since the 1950's. With 200 men over 50, the NUM lodge agreed to a slim down.

In a further attempt to intimidate the men, the board wants to down grade, this would result in face workers losing £30 a week. But the pit is determined to fight.

With manning down to 500 and this, coupled with the installation of a Hydrosizer for complete washing of all minerals, will bring proceeds to the pit instead of stocking costs and

could result in the slashing of financial losses for 1985/86.

The new investment would not have been put in unless the NCB had markets for St John's coal and the stocked 2 million tonnes to be lifted. (coal from St Johns and two other pits in Maesteg, Coegnant and Caerau which have since closed.)

Locally, markets exist or are about to be brought in, for coal-burn products eg. British Tissues, (Bridgend Paper Mills) fluidised bed combustion boilers system designed to burn all grades of coal currently using coal from Dawmill Colliery in the Midlands. This has a potential market of 500 tonnes a week and more for local coal.

A Coal Briquette Plant is planned for the site of the old Llynfi Power Station, a

ready made market for small coal.

The potential for dovetailing local markets with production at St. John's Colliery, saving large-scale unemployment, is a case that only asset strippers and Tory governments bent on a nuclear programme would ignore.

St John's Lodge argue that from this year on, based on a 500 man workforce, that new coalface can be opened with only routine development incurring minor costs after 6 weeks of major development to reach the new coal seams where large losses were incurred. To do so will now save the community and tax payer and other pits millions of pounds and also contribute to the local economy to the tune of £11m per year.

Support groups' key role

THROUGHOUT THE 12 month strike St John's NUM earned a reputation as one of the most militant and hardest campaigners in combating the lies and distortions of the NCB and Tories.

A key feature of the strike nationally was the establishment of miners' support groups. Throughout the Llynfi and Afan Valleys ten branches were established with a hard-core of approximately 300 participants.

Mrs Shirley Wells, treasurer of what is now known as the Community Action Campaign Committee explained: "The support group started on 16 April with just five involved at first. We started factory collections and publicised our group throughout the community.

"In the first week we collected £132. By May we started branching out, collecting between £500 to £4,000 each week.

"Throughout the twelve months we collected nearly £148,000, giving out thousands of food parcels and establishing food centres. Miners and Support Group



Mitzi Sedgbeer, member of the Maesteg supporters' group on trip to Denmark to raise funds.

members visited various countries including, Ireland, Holland, Sweden, West Germany, Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, and France.

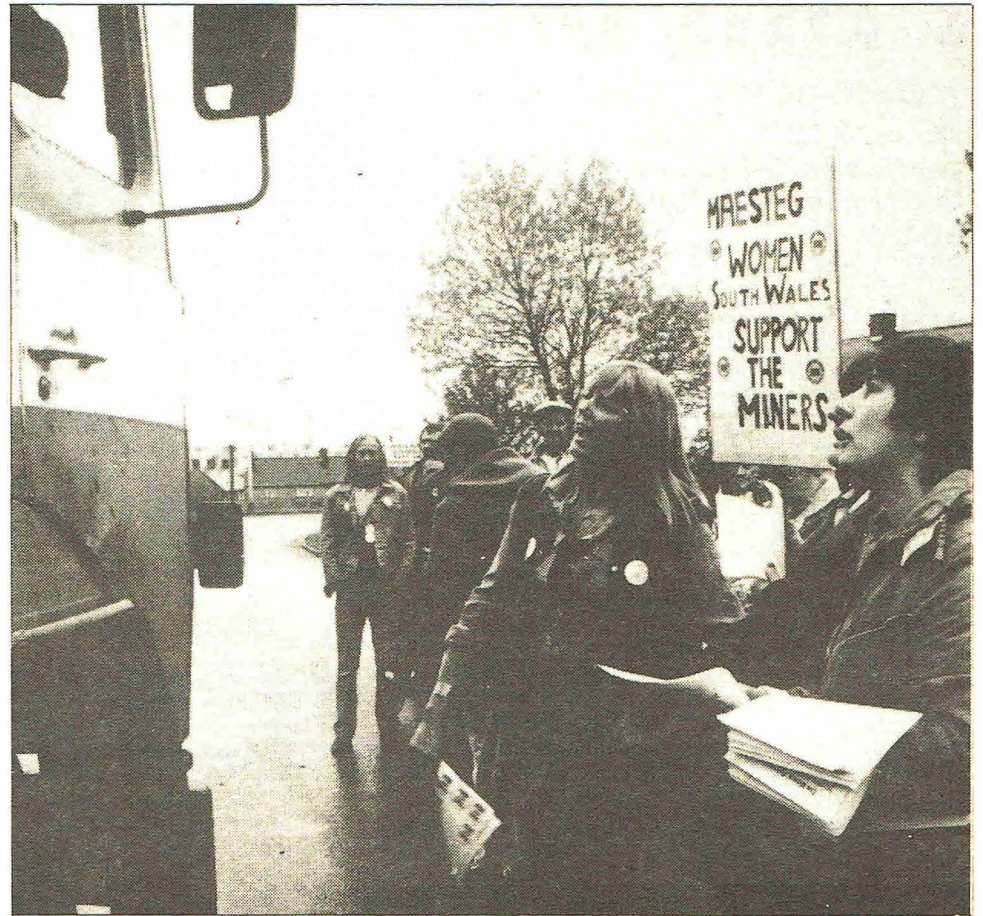
"The Support Group has since been named the Community Action Campaign Committee with the aim of mobilising the whole town, as the fight is above all a fight for the future of Maesteg and the surrounding communities. We still hold regular meetings and are raising between £200 to

£1000 per week to finance our campaign".

Adult unemployment is already approaching 23 per cent in the Llynfi travel to work area, with youth unemployment above the national average.

Gareth Bowen, aged 19, and unemployed for two years since being made redundant from a local building firm, and Ian Bowen aged 18 years, who hasn't worked since leaving school said: "We need to fight to keep the pit because the whole of Maesteg revolves around it. The nearest work will be in Bridgend which is nine miles away and will cost £2.00 per day in bus fares.

The St John's NUM and Communities Action Campaign Committee as well as campaigning to save the pit, are also fighting for the passenger and freight rail service to be re-activated, and the restoration for the old rail links between the Llynfi and Afan Valleys, in order to bring more employment to the Valleys.



Maesteg miners and wives were active on the picket lines throughout the strike—that determination is carried over into the fight to save St Johns.

THE NCB have claimed that St John's colliery has the fourth largest loss per tonne in the British coalfields. Based on the NUM argument there is a cast-iron case to keep the pit open, and consequently other pits that are prime targets for closure because they are in the category of what the NCB describes as 'uneconomic'.

Economics of madhouse

THE ISSUE of 'uneconomic pits' was at the heart of the miners dispute. Yet the NCB have still to give a satisfactory reply to a seemingly simple question of what is an 'uneconomic pit'?

A document produced by the St John's NUM, based on information from Oxford economist Andrew Glyn, counters the NCB's claim that the cost of producing and mining coal at St John's Colliery for the year 1983/84 was £14.25m, a loss according to the NCB of £7½m.

As Andrew Glyn explains, the break down of costs calculated by the NCB in-

cludes early retirement costs, which cannot be regarded as a cost of production of coal.

The NCB also claims that wages, materials, for opening new seams are regarded as a substantial element of production costs. Andrew Glyn claims these to be development costs. This opening up of new seams is investment and not current expenses.

Glyn calculates that the NCB would gain approximately £5.75m rather than the £7.5m loss that they claim (based on the 1983/84 calculation) from stopping all production and develop-

ment at St John's.

The effect of closure would be devastating both financially and socially. He calculates (based on 880 miners employed at St Johns) that a total of 1,592 workers, which includes workers in supply industries, would be made unemployed, at an estimated cost of £12.8m per year on a continuing basis. In addition the loss of rates to the local authority would make a total of £12.85m.

This cost is more than double what the NCB would save from the closure of St John's colliery.

Determined to fight on

The fact that the miners of St John's Colliery and the local communities have once again dug in their heels shows their resilience after a year long strike.

It is also a reflection of the stormy period that is approaching. It proves that the NUM is far from defeated. On 22 April—the day and afternoon shift went on strike for the remainder of the day over management victimisation of Mike Macdonnell a young coal face electrician, forcing management to back down.

On the day of the National Review meeting (date still to be announced) the whole of Maesteg will be mobilised to lobby the meeting in London.

The fight for the survival of Maesteg is an inspiration to workers everywhere.

Commencing after a year-long strike, the Tories must be shocked by the solidarity displayed. There is a convincing case from all angles to KEEP ST JOHN'S COLLIERY OPEN.

PUBLIC INQUIRY

into proposed St Johns colliery closure

Tuesday 9 July to 11 July at Mid Glamorgan County Hall, Cardiff

Chair: Alan Fisher (former General Secretary NUPE and chair of TUC

Maesteg Militant Public Meeting

Save our services Fight the Tories not the socialists

Wednesday 10 July 7.15pm Caerau Middle Club, Maesteg.

Speakers: Ian Isaac (Secretary, St Johns Lodge NUM), Bill Mullins (expelled from Warley West CLP), Bryan Murphy (TGWU branch secretary, Bridgend buses)

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Print unity vital to defeat Tories

THE NATIONAL Graphical Association has again fallen foul of Tory anti-trade union laws. This time the fine amounted to £15,000—because of a 'nod and a wink'.

Tony Dubbins the union's general secretary had written calling off the blacking of the *Wolverhampton Express and Star*, six days after an injunction granted by the courts to the management. The judge maintained that the action, which continued, was authorised "by nods, winks and similar clandestine methods of approval".

In other words the Tories are determined there will be no legal way around their anti-trade union laws, which were introduced in the interests of the bosses and are administered by their social friends, the judges. The NGA must break free from this legal strait-jacket and fight them on class lines.

The Employment and Trade Union Acts hit at the heart of the industrial strategy of the NGA. Especially the question of secondary blacking which is now unlawful.

The Shah during the *Stockport Messenger* dispute effectively strangled the union whilst it attempted to

By Peter Jarvis

win within the law. But the NGA's leadership have given no guidance to the members on how to pursue similar disputes.

A national official, at a recent London meeting, stated when pressed on the *Star and Express* dispute: "When the national council has developed its tactics they will let the members know".

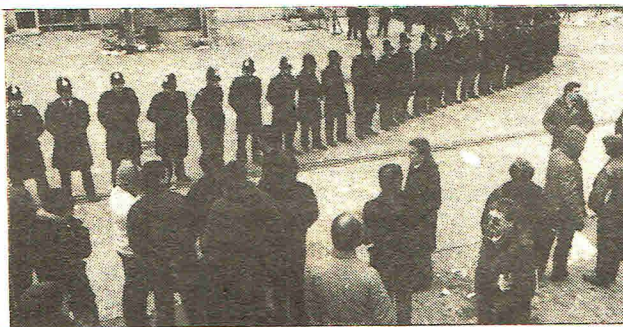
Workers in the print and newspaper industries must recognise that the first task in combatting employers is to unite. Relations between the union leaders are at an all time low. At chapel level, during recent strikes NGA and SOGAT members have crossed NUJ picket lines and NGA and SOGAT picket lines have been crossed. Agreements have been made while another union is in dispute. Mutual recrimination and name calling plays into the bosses' hands. If the union tops can not agree the FOCs at local level must meet and local agreements



must be made. The job of building one print union must start now—from the ground floor up, if necessary. The idea of one union is absolutely essential if an organised fight is to be mounted against the employers.

The old union maxim "unity is strength" should be the slogan. No picket line can be crossed. It is a sign of weakness which the boss will play on.

The necessity then is for a common policy on the introduction of new technology. The conse-



(Above) NGA members from *Wolverhampton Express and Star* picket NUJ headquarters. (Below) Eddie Shah's scab printing plant at Warrington the day after police brutally defeated the mass picket.

quences for failure would be devastating.

The Shah of Warrington is planning to launch a daily paper—another union

bashing exercise. Murdoch the owner of *Sun*, *News of the World*, *Times* and *Sunday Times* is making noises concerning moving the *Sun*

and *News of the World* to Wapping in East London. The factory is fully completed.

Unless the unions accept cuts in manning levels non-print union labour will be introduced. It is rumoured that the company have already discussed with the police about controlling the expected pickets.

Anti-union laws

To be successful the Tories' anti-trade legislation needs to inflict maximum damage on the print unions, breaking the NGA's near 100 per cent organisation. The traditional blacking of non-union material must be maintained.

The battle at the *Express and Star*, cannot be won by any one union. If agreements are reached at the expense of one union then management will attack the others next.

An ongoing campaign, involving the whole membership of all unions must be launched.

This battle is vital to the whole of the trade union movement. Victory for the print unions will cripple the Tories' attacks. It can only be obtained with united and militant print trade unionism.

LAST MONTH British Rail Engineering Limited announced that they intend to destroy a further 4,800 jobs, with the total closure of Swindon works, the reduction of Springburn (Glasgow) to insignificance and the axing of hundreds of jobs at Eastleigh, Derby and Crewe.

This follows the total closure of Horwich works, Shildon (which specialised in wagon building and repairs), Temple Mills (wagon repairs) all in the last 2½ years, and other job losses.

The front page headline of British Rail's propaganda sheet *Railnews* has the astonishing headline: "New investment leads to decline in workload". This rag then goes on to explain: "Ironically, BR's success in getting new investment authorised and in speeding up the replacement of the diesel multiple unit fleet has been the main factor in BREL's dilemma."

BRB Chairman Bob Reid, in a personal message, coo-

British Rail lies exposed



March against BREL closures.

ly, calmly and apparently seriously tells us: "We have all known there was surplus capacity in BREL. It's one of the penalties of the very investment which we welcomed to attract more customers. More investment means modern equipment. That means less repair and maintenance work. And that represents 75% of BREL workload."

So there you are then! We've all done ourselves out of a job by having argued successfully, in the face of initial Tory and management

opposition for greater investment in an expanding rail industry.

Reid finishes his message with this little gem: "That is the way to maintain jobs in the railways, we certainly will not keep them by inflating our costs as we certainly would do by keeping staff in BREL for who there is no work." So now you know. The way to safeguard jobs is to make people redundant! Goebbels, the Nazi propaganda minister could learn from BR management.

Nobody believes such rubbish, least of all BR management.

In an internal circular of 11 June from the Director of Freight to Regional and Sector managers it states: "I am now seriously concerned at the level of gross revenue which Railfreight is losing as a result of insufficient locomotives and wagons being available on a daily basis."

"Gross revenue exceeding £100,000 was lost last week. Some examples of the problems are: £10,000 lost through shortage of mineral wagons for scrap—40 per cent of the fleet are stopped. £40,000 lost through shortage of 102 tonne steel carriers—17 per cent stopped. In addition there is a build up of wagons due for positive maintenance, which will lead to an increased cripple rate shortly if the work is not carried out."

"The locomotive position is equally serious; for example, £11,400 was lost from fertilisers diverted to road; £20,000 in aggregates and £12,000 in cement as a result of lack of power."

This information—first

disclosed by *Militant* supporter Dave Evans, a delegate to NUR conference, is a million miles away from the false picture painted by Reid and his cronies.

The situation outlined in the circular is a result of pure mismanagement of existing wagons as indicated by other BR circulars and their drive to get more and more out of less and less.

But it also shows the backlog of repairs that Springburn, Swindon and Temple Mills (before it closed) should be engaged on. It shows also the need for locos and wagons that all the works could be building, in particular Shildon, which specialised in wagon building.

The railways are kept going by the dedication and commitment of railworkers. The Board's role has been exposed. We cannot allow this bunch of incompetents and wreckers to destroy the industry and jobs.

The future of BREL must be linked with the issues of DOO, job losses, defence of the closed shop.

Swansea civil servants halt government drive

IN THE 7 June edition of *Militant* we reported on events at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre (DVLC) at Swansea which have resulted in the local CPSA branch (one of the biggest in the CPSA) calling for industrial action to protect pay rates threatened by new technology.

On 12 June the CPSA's Environment and Transport Committee (Ministry level) pledged full support for the branch and is now taking urgent measures to generate

practical support amongst members throughout the rest of the Department of Transport and Environment and beyond.

Leadership!

On the same day, however, the committee learned that the Union's General Secretary, Alistair Graham, had decided, entirely without consultation, that the strike should not commence on 14 June as originally planned. In his

view not all avenues of negotiations had been explored. This caused some anger and disbelief on the committee.

Motions were carried unanimously which called for a settlement: "that is acceptable to the members concerned". They asked the National Committee not to call off the strike now due for Monday 24 June unless an offer of hard cash is made by management.

Perhaps even more than the strike at Newcastle

DHSS Central Office, the outcome of this dispute will seriously affect other computer installations in the Civil Service, many of which are moving towards new technology developments now being implemented at DVLC.

In a circular to all members the union's full time officer responsible for this area, Terry Ainsworth, said that a successful outcome to this dispute will mean that: "for the first time there is recognition of

the impact of technology on the quality of jobs done by CPSA grades".

On 13 June the members at DVLC at the centre of the dispute, additionally angered by a management anti-strike circular, voted 97 to 22 in favour of industrial action in line with the CPSA branch policy.

By Steve Appleton
(DOE Section CPSA, personal capacity)

Bristol AUEW fight GEC

SHOP STEWARD Mike Bell explained why 50 AUEW members are on strike at Parnell's factory in Fishponds, Bristol.

"We put in a claim for seven per cent just to cover the cost of living. The offer of four and a half per cent, with a one-off payment of three-quarters of a week's pay is an insult".

Mike went on to explain that if they are not working normally by next Wednesday the company are going to sack them, even those off sick.

Wage rates

"But we are going to stick it out", he said.

Parnell's is part of GEC and made £800,000 profit last year. The manager has just been awarded a 27 per cent rise and given a new 'Roller', while one of the strikers earns £60 a week. Even the toolmakers on the highest rate were on just £99. With bonus most of them could only expect to earn £115.

A 24-hour picket is on and only one lorry (non-union) has crossed. Even the postman refused to cross. The strikers want to contact stewards at other GEC plants to discuss putting as much pressure as possible on the company.

Messages of support and donations to: Mike Bell, 138 Burley Grove, Downham, Bristol. Tel: (0272) 564515.

By Paul Morehouse

Confident miners defy critics

HANGING OVER the first NUM conference since the ending of the miners' strike is the delegates' hostility towards the scab leaders of the Notts Area.

In his president's address however, Arthur Scargill pointed to the "disaster for every member of the union if any breakaway were to take place... as history shows all too clearly it would be most disastrous of all for those who themselves formed any breakaway".

Notts

Trying to turn history on its head, the Notts Area moved an amendment to the motion that read: "Congratulations the NUM Executive Committee on its work over the past 12 months to 'condemns...'"

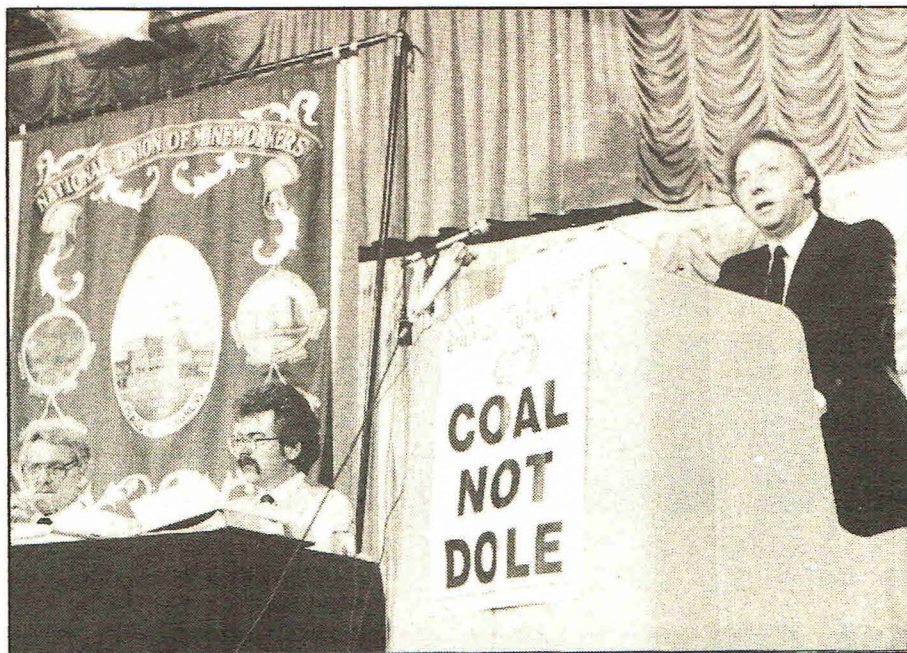
With a straight face,

By Chris Herriot
(Sacked Monktonhall miner)

George Little went to the rostrum and told delegates that the Notts "leaders" had done their best to bring the men out at the start of the national dispute. If this is the case, it is difficult to understand why the Notts Executive should have taken disciplinary action against its own officials, Henry Richardson and Ray Chadburn.

In fact, this pitiful episode is an indication to the rank and file Notts miners that its leadership are not too familiar with the concept of honesty. The Notts amend-

Photo: John Harris (IFL)



Arthur Scargill speaking at conference making one of his best speeches ever called for unity whilst emphasising the continued strength of the union and outlining a policy for the future.

ment fell because it failed to get a seconder—surprisingly not even from the other scab leaders.

Arthur Scargill made some demands of the next Labour government: "It must first of all ensure that it frees from jail and reinstates any miners who remain victimised". He added that: "It is no longer enough merely to call for the dismissal of Ian MacGregor... the next Labour government must remove all senior Coal Board personnel and all area and local managers who have not only participated during the

last two years in a deliberate destruction of our industry but who have viciously attacked our members and sought to humiliate them since the end of the strike".

Socialist policy

He also called for the NUM to be "invited to share in the responsibilities of running the National Coal Board, as it should be run—of the people, by the people for the people. The Board must be accountable to those who work within our industry and the chairman should be a nominee of the

unions."

On the question of pit closures, Scargill remained as resolute as ever, declaring "In the present climate only industrial action, hopefully involving other unions, can stop a pit closure programme."

The task of preparing the battle to defend our industry must be the main issue before this union. The NUM must come out of the conference looking forward to and preparing, especially at rank and file level, for the next struggle against the NCB and the Tories.

Bridgend bus workers attack privateers

BRYAN MURPHY TGWU branch secretary, Bridgend bus workers talked to Richard Morgan about the threat to local services of Tory privatisation plans.

THE PRIVATISATION bill for buses will cost some 30% of jobs nationally. Locally in Bridgend, this will mean 35-40 jobs. At the moment, 150 are employed at the Bridgend depot including cleaners.

When I started in 1965, there were over 100 buses with 450 workers, there are now just 40 buses.

The secretary of a local taxi firm from Bridgend visited the Hereford area where privatisation was first piloted and he saw OAP's trying to use their bus passes on local taxis!

In Hereford, three private operators have been used, each of them have lost their licence at some time for flaunting safety regulations.

The cowboys who have so far come in have not been able to compete. We place a

great deal of emphasis on the safety of our coaches, which are thoroughly checked every five days, and our buses once per week.

We pay trade union rates of pay and comply with the drivers' hours laws. We employ thirteen fitters, electricians, coach builders and cleaners. We don't allow part-time labour.

These overheads cost money. How will we be able to compete with the single operator cowboys, the one thing we offer is a quality of service and clean buses.

If the government were serious in offering a quality service they would bring in a national scheme. The private operators will only be interested in making every penny they can.

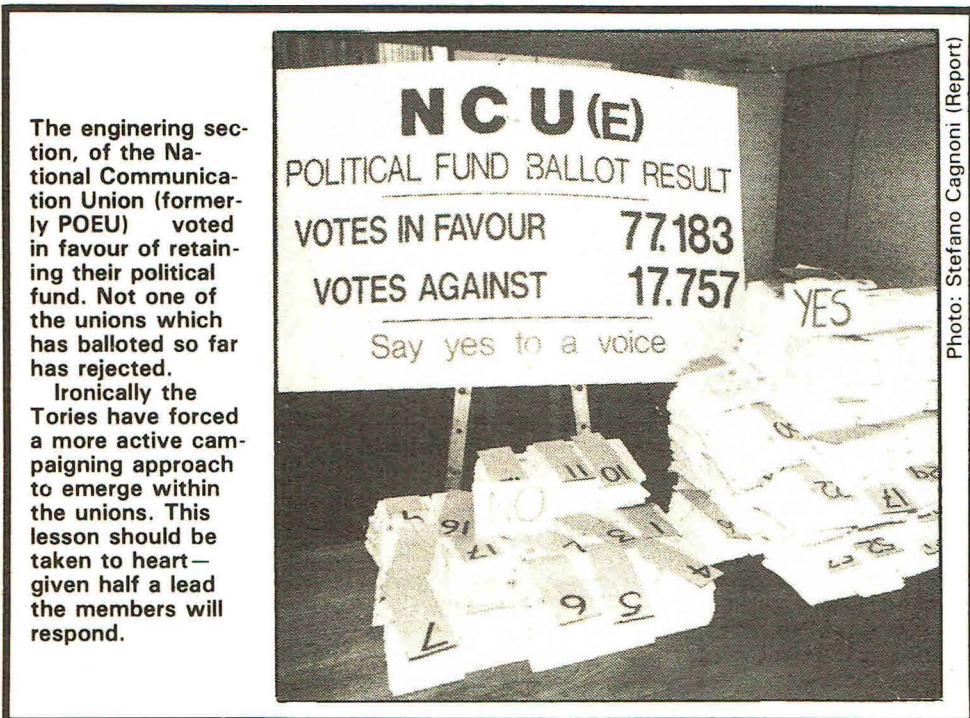
If the bus service is privatised, there will be no integrated service. It will have an effect on bus routes. We operate five main routes, the three valley routes surrounding Bridgend, and the Cardiff, Pontypridd, Porthcawl routes.

to their own members.

The NUJ chapel at NALGO are grateful for the excellent solidarity action taken by other NALGO staff during the three week strike. But it should not be forgotten that following the conference decision on 'circumstantial evidence' the employment status of all NALGO staff has been made far more secure.

Jimmy Roberts must not be allowed to become a sacrificial lamb for reforms forced out of the union leadership, who are acting more like a Tory council than a local authority trade union.

By Bob Wade



The engineering section, of the National Communication Union (formerly POEU) voted in favour of retaining their political fund. Not one of the unions which has balloted so far has rejected.

Ironically the Tories have forced a more active campaigning approach to emerge within the unions. This lesson should be taken to heart—given half a lead the members will respond.

Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (Report)

NALGO Reinstate Jimmy Roberts

WITH BLATANT disregard for the feelings of the membership, the leadership of the local authority union, NALGO are refusing to reinstate sacked journalist Jimmy Roberts.

He was dismissed from his job as staff journalist following a leak from NALGO HQ to Derek Hatton, deputy leader of Liverpool council. The only evidence presented was that Jimmy is a Militant supporter, originally from Birkenhead.

At NALGO's recent conference the leadership hid behind a legal smokescreen to stop delegates discussing the case directly. However, a motion saying union staff should not be sacked on circumstantial evidence was overwhelmingly carried.

But now, not only are the

THIS RESOLUTION was passed at the recent meeting of the North-West District Council of NALGO.

"This District Council notes that NALGO is still engaged in a current dispute concerning the dismissal of Jimmy Roberts. District Council urges the NEC to settle this dispute as quickly as possible in line with the policies of the Association."

With NALGO conference in June passing a motion which declared the policy of the Association to be one of opposition to the sacking of staff members on the basis of circumstantial evidence alone there is no doubt that many similar resolutions will be passed by NALGO branches.

NALGO leadership still refusing to reinstate Roberts they are punishing his union, the National Union of Journalists.

The NALGO leadership now say that while APEX and ACTTS members will have to pay deducted for the three strike spread over three months, the NUJ members will have the whole amount deducted from July's pay.

The NUJ are meeting NALGO's General Purposes Committee shortly to discuss this as well as continuing to demand Robert's reinstatement. The NUJ nationally has blacked the vacancy left by Roberts' sacking and he is receiving hardship money.

However, with the strike over and NALGO's leadership's continued intrans-

Militant

Miners' conference report See page 15

'No witch hunt' say transport workers

THE TRANSPORT and General Workers' Union (TGWU) has scuppered a campaign to swing it to the right.

After defeating the right wing's two attempts to win the general secretaryship, the biennial conference has rejected calls for a witch-hunt of *Militant* supporters and compliance with anti-union legislation.

In response to eight resolutions calling for a witch-hunt of *Militant*, the General Executive put a statement to conference. Moving it, Ron Todd, newly elected general secretary, expressed the GEC's "total opposition to bans, proscriptions and witch-hunts within our ranks against any officer or member because of their connections with organisations or factions with which we happen to disagree".

Never again

"Never again" said the statement, "do we want to return to that period of the union's history when individuals were barred from office, not because they lacked ability, but because they were associated with particular political groups".

The same principle is applied in the union's attitude to the Labour Party: "The essential principles of natural justice and free debate must be applied at all times. We cannot use administrative means to fight the battle of ideas".

The ground for an attempted witch-hunt was clearly laid in a speech at conference by Neil Kinnock who said that: "those who

By Simon Rogers
(Region 1 delegate, personal capacity)

indulge in hobbies on the fringes of the labour movement should get out of the Labour Party". If this was meant to refer to *Militant* supporters, these remarks were a disgrace when you consider that they, along with other socialists on the Liverpool City Council currently face surcharge and disbarment from office for the firm stand they have taken in defence of jobs and services—some hobby!!

Yet despite a weekend of intensive lobbying and press speculation the right wing attempts at a witch-hunt were defeated.

However often they repeated that expulsion of *Militant* supporters was not a witch-hunt, they failed to convince. One outburst from a right wing delegate that: "Benn, Skinner, all these people, need to go" really gave the game away. Another even compared *Militant* supporters to the IRA as "subversives" who "keep their faces hidden".

They got their answer with a three to one vote in favour of the Executive's statement rejecting a witch-hunt.

This decision will come as a major blow to all those who are seeking to launch a purge against *Militant* supporters in the Labour Party.

Conference also rejected a right-wing attempt to compromise the union's opposition to Tory anti-union laws.

Cowley convenor Ivor Braggins rammed the right wing's hypocrisy back down their throats when he said that the people moaning about the union losing £200,000 for disobeying an injunction during the Austin Rover dispute were the same people who had cost the union £1 million by using the media to obtain a re-run of the general secretary election.

A motion was passed calling for all anti-union legislation to be repealed by a future Labour government and all fines and property taken by the courts to be restored.

A motion committing the union to an immediate 24-hour strike in the event of another fine being inflicted was defeated, but the mover, *Militant* supporter Keith Edwards, got a good response and sizeable vote. He argued that unless the membership was mobilised in defence of union policy then fighting speeches would just be rhetoric.

£2,000 collected

Activists in the trade unions and labour party must strain every muscle to defend these democratically arrived at decisions in the struggle for a socialist labour government committed to defence of working class interests.

As well as a great victory in defeating the witch-hunters, *Militant* supporters collected nearly £2,000 for the fighting fund, sold 137 papers, nearly a thousand *Militant* TGWU charters distributed and the biggest ever public meeting held.



Photo: John Harris (FL)

Roy Lynk and other Notts delegates at the miners' conference remain seated and embarrassed, as other delegates give Arthur Scargill a standing ovation. See report on page 15.

Support for South African strikers

THE STRIKING chemical workers at the AECI plant in Newcastle, South Africa have been promised help by Britain's biggest union, the TGWU, which organises chemical workers.

The T&G conference condemned the sacking of 600 workers at the ICI associated company.

A resolution was remitted to the executive, and retiring general secretary, Moss Evans, assured conference that steps in line with the resolution would be implemented.

"These workers and their union, the South African

Chemical Workers Union" said the resolution "have been in dispute since March.

"Despite going through all the procedures, workers were threatened with dismissal at the beginning of the month. Now they have been sacked for their action and management are bringing in scab labour.

"Workers demand the right to regulate their own wages in an industry where black workers' wages are low to start with. Workers demand the right to be free from victimisation and intimidation. Conference condemns this attack by a com-

pany, 38 per cent owned by ICI, whose director Sir John Harvey Jones received a wage increase of 68 per cent this year.

"Conference therefore asks as a matter of urgency that the next meeting of the Finance and the General Purposes Committee: 1) Sends a letter of support to SACWU; 2) Sends a letter to protest to ICI; 3) Gives financial assistance to the strike; 4) Circularises union branches in the chemical industry asking for support both moral and financial for the dispute."

Messages of support to: SACWU, PO Box 4990, Johannesburg 2000, South Africa. Protests to: ICI Head Office, Millbank, London SW1 3JF.

Donate

I would like to donate £ . . . p each week /month to the fighting fund.

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Russia 1905, Pakistan, Jamaica

The Potemkin mutiny -80th anniversary

"THE MUTINOUS battleship *Prince Potemkin* has been the centre of some of the most extraordinary events in the present extraordinary situation in Russia.

"Her mutiny, her threats to open fire on Odessa and upon Theodosia, her declaration of war against the Russian government, her defiance of the Black Sea Squadron, make up a series of chapters that no one, save perhaps Jules Verne, would have dared to suggest in fiction." (*The Illustrated London News*, July 1905).

The Odessa events of eighty years ago were no Jules Verne fantasy but living proof of the ability of the masses to change society.

The 1905 revolution, prepared by years of repression, was sparked in January when troops opened fire on unarmed workers humbly petitioning the Tsar. A terrible massacre ensued.

Revolutionary

The Russian workers were taught an unforgettable lesson: rely on your own strength. Never had the world seen such a strike wave as the one in the wake of Bloody Sunday. Within months the hundreds of revolutionary Social Democrats had become thousands, thrust to the head of a mass workers' movement drawing the peasantry in tow. The revolt spread across the whole Russian Empire.

Meanwhile most of the Russian Navy had sailed halfway round the world only to be promptly sunk in a one-sided war with the fledgling capitalist nation of Japan. Understandably,



Russian troops in the Russo-Japanese War. Defeat for the Russian forces created a revolutionary mood in the navy.

revolution was affecting the remaining Black Sea fleet, too.

The events of 27 June are vividly reconstructed in the film *Battleship Potemkin* made in the Soviet Union in 1925 to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the famous mutiny. Meat is loaded aboard the cruiser. A commotion breaks out when the men discover the evil smelling carcasses teeming with maggots.

Mid-day, the men refuse to eat the meat bortsch. The crew is called on deck and dealt a warning about this disgraceful behaviour. The captain said: "All who wish to eat the bortsch take two paces forward."

All but a few petty officers refuse. Events escalate and a few scapegoats are lined up in front of a firing squad as an example to the mutinous rabble. Whispers spread quickly through the ranks, then "Don't fire, Comrades!" The guns waver. Not a single shot is fired. At this

point the officers started a gun fight but the crew soon finished it, having swiftly raided the ships armoury!

From then on, the *Potemkin* flew the red flag and was run by a committee elected by, and accountable to the whole 700 crew. The most powerful battleship in the imperial fleet had come over to the side of the Russian workers.

"Public safety"

That night, the body of the *Potemkin's* first martyr, the Bolshevik Gregori Vakulinchuk, was rowed ashore. Next day, as the word got round, thousands came down to the harbour to pay their respects and to see the ship across the bay. Dozens of small boats sailed out to greet the *Potemkin* and to offer supplies.

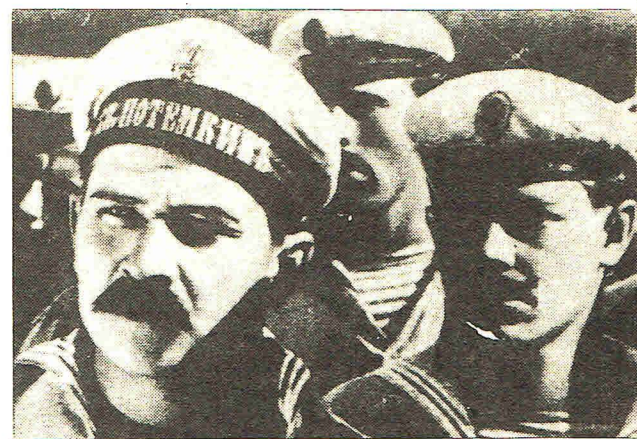
The authorities were panic stricken. Tsar Nicholas decreed: "In order to guarantee the public safety and put an end to the

disorders in Odessa and in the neighbouring localities we have found it necessary to declare a state of war..."

The vast granite Richelieu Steps linking the well-to-do Nikolaevsky Boulevard with the docklands far below were the scene of an almighty vengeance.

In the most horrific scenes of 1905, Cossacks descended three steps at a time, pausing, then firing and bayonetting with clinical efficiency. Many thousands died that day in the interests of "public safety".

Meanwhile the Black Sea fleet was mobilised to further consolidate the beloved safety of the ruling classes. On 30 June five battleships with accompanying torpedo boats were sighted on collision course for the *Potemkin*. The cruiser turned to meet them head on. The *Potemkin* sailed clean through the fleet! Instead of firing, sailors came on deck to wave to the mighty battleship.



Still from Eisenstein's film.



1905 was the precursor of the Russian revolution.



British soldiers guarding Bolshevik premises in Murmansk in 1919.

The Tsarist government suddenly found itself without a navy. The warships sent against the revolutionary cruiser refused to fight against their comrades.

Armed forces

Ultimately the sailors of the *Potemkin* were forced to seek refuge in Rumania. A number of them, later offered amnesty, were to return to Russia—only to be jailed or executed. But nothing can take away the significance of the revolu-

tionary sailors' first shot across the bows of Tsarism.

Those pseudo-socialists today who doubt that the armed forces can be won to socialism understand nothing. The ranks will always have more in common with the workers than their officers.

Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* is a silent masterpiece which puts flesh on historical reality. If you get the opportunity to see it do so.

By Andy Beadle

Pakistan seminar-7 July

LEADING opposition politicians from Pakistan are to meet at a London seminar to discuss national oppression. The meeting comes amid increasing fears that Pakistan will move towards virtual civil war along national lines.

The seminar, the first of its kind, will be held on 7 July between 10am and 6pm at County Hall, York Road, London SE1. Speakers will include leading representatives of the major political and national movements resisting Zia's dictatorship.

Among them will be Sheikh Mohammed Rashid (senior vice chairman Pakistan People's Party), Mumtaz Ali Bhutto (convener, Sind Pashtoon Baluch Front Pakistan), Ghulam Hussain (ex-secretary general PPP), Tariq Ali (a leading writer), Afzal Banghash (president, Mazdoor Kissan Party, Pakistan), Tanvir Gondal (editorial board *The Struggle*), Professor Hamza Alvi

(Manchester University), Farooq Tariq (PPP Workers Steering Committee), Khalid Mehmood (a leading Kashmiri activist) and Abdul Quayum Butt.

Also expected are Atta Ullah Mengal (ex-chief minister Baluchistan Province), Hanif Ramey (president Pakistan Musawat Party), Abdul Hafiz Pirzada (secretary Sind Pashtoon Baluch Front) and Wali Khan (president National Democratic Party).

Opportunity

The event could prove an historic opportunity for opponents of the military regime to co-ordinate their approach to the national question and intensify the struggle against the dictatorship. It has been organised by the socialist journal *The Struggle*, which since it was founded five years ago has represented left activists in the Pakistan Peoples' Party and trade unions.

Discussion will focus on the increasing likelihood of



Military rule has intensified national oppression as well as class exploitation.

the break-up of Pakistan into four provinces. During the eight years of Zia's brutal rule, decades of national exploitation have come to a head. Nationalism has come to the fore in Sind Baluchistan and North West Frontier Province. The leaders of the newly formed Sind Pashtoon Baluch Front now put forward the idea of confederation.

This has provoked hostility from the military regime and state bureaucrats. And

the opposition parties including the PPP have resolutely opposed confederation. However, there has been little or no discussion on the issue between different opposition parties.

The seminar will give hundreds of activists the chance to discuss national oppression and nationalism. The seminar will be in Urdu and English. For further details contact: Azhar Malik or Amjad Javed on 01-986 2810.

Strikes in Jamaica

ON 25 June, workers throughout Jamaica started a general strike (expected to last three days) in protest at lay offs and the high cost of living. In public services and private companies, workers stopped work, even in the plush tourist hotels of Montego Bay.

"Threat"

The secretary-general of the Organisation of American States has warned that the economic malaise of Caribbean countries is a major threat to the region's political and social stability. In Jamaica the government of the right-wing "Jamaican Labour Party" under Edward Seaga is unashamedly capitalist, promising a private sector boom in the JLP election victory in 1980.

Reagan, his idol, has sent some aid to Seaga. But the boom has turned to its opposite.

The raw material base of the economy, bauxite, has

been hit by a "world glut". The American aluminium firm Alcoa's announcement in February that it was closing its Jamaican operations forced the government to intervene with an agreement to save the plants. But redundancies here and elsewhere forced unemployment figures up to an official total of over 25%.

The IMF are adding to the instability the bosses so fear by their demands. They want devaluation, a low ceiling on wages but none at all on prices, and spending cuts. Inflation has already gone through the 30% mark-and all to no avail.

The Gross Domestic product fell by 0.4% last year, this year the decline is expected to be about 3 or 4%.

The riots in Kingston early this year against prices rises (see *Militant* 25 January) and the general strikes show that Seaga's problems are only just beginning.

LETTERS

Militant welcomes letters from readers. Send us your views, comments or criticism. Write to *Militant*, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London. E9 5HB

Abiding by lawful decisions

Dear Comrades,

Our firm had a few temporary employees taken on at the end of March to work until September. Last week a consultant employed by the parent company in the States came over, the temporaries were laid off from the day before he came until the end of the week when he left.

One of the temps had her case referred to ACAS. Con-

sequently, she was found to be entitled to £10.50 per day for the period they were laid off. The company were caught with their trousers down, they had to pay them all.

But they were not going to be beaten; six temps were called up to Personnel at 4 o'clock and told they were finished at 4.30 and would be paid up to Friday night.

Yours fraternally

Mike Wright

TGWU personal capacity
Devon

Turning a blind eye

Dear Comrades

It's a strange thing 'law n' order'. Many times the press and other official representatives have condemned ticket touts. Since the horror of events at Heysel stadium the demand to get tough has grown.

And yet, at the Bruce Springsteen concert in Newcastle the touts were out in force. While we were selling *Militant* we were asked to

move by the police for causing an obstruction.

The touts were doing business right in front of the police. In fact when the police were asked where to buy tickets their reply was, either go round there to the box-office or if you hang around here you'll get some.

I asked one policeman: "Isn't touting illegal?" His relaxed reply was: "Yes, but what can we do about it?"

Yours fraternally

Bill Hopwood

Message of support

Dear Comrades,

The workers of Liverpool City Council are a hundred percent behind the councillors if the mood of one set of workers is anything to go by.

On Thursday 20 June, myself and some other comrades did a paper sale outside a meeting of the Static Security Force. As people

bought papers we talked to them about the situation with the council. One worker said: "Last year there were only 50 of us; if Trevor Jones had his way there would be none here now. Derek Hatton is the only one who has done anything for us. Our conditions have improved and more men have been taken on. We're right behind the council."

Yours fraternally

Mary Jennings

Liverpool



Rioting at the Heysel stadium, Brussels.

Combatting hooliganism

Dear Comrades,

John Mullen raised some interesting points in his letter (issue 754) but I think he has taken the *Militant* editorial in issue 752 wholly out of context.

He argues it is not true that "football violence is...the activity of de-classed, demoralised, lumpenproletarians, not workers." and "it is not unemployment which causes" it, "but...living meaningless lives under a capitalist system."

I would argue, most fraternally, that while the unemployed are not responsible for football violence, capitalism and its offspring—low wages, unemployment, etc.—are.

The threat and experience of being out of work affects the majority of workers, not just 4-million people, and this is one of the main causes.

Also, I believe it is accurate to describe working-

class fighting working-class, i.e. fans fighting fans, as "de-classed" activity because their enemy is the capitalist class, not fellow workers. If workers are involved in such actions they have ceased activity on behalf of their class to engage in "the activity of de-classed, demoralised, lumpenproletarians..."

Of the fascists, Comrade John Mullen says, "The socialist response is not to hate fascists, but to organise youth and educate against racism."

It would be better to say that hating fascists is not enough. This hate needs to be channelled into smashing them into extinction. As for the youth who are lured into supporting them we have to use propaganda and education to win them away. But an indispensable part of this education must be organising within the labour movement to forcibly prevent fascist activity.

Yours fraternally

J. Vasey

Batley East LP



Protesting against cuts in government funding—students and lecturers from Aston University outside Parliament in 1981.

Universities run for big business benefit

Dear Comrades,

The article in *Militant* (issue 752) concerning higher education is out of date. University research funding is already largely dictated by entrepreneurial initiatives. The major science research councils funded by the government have many spokespeople from industry on committees.

University research laboratories are increasingly populated by underpaid, overworked staff who are being used by big business to do their research and development or testing work at low cost.

The model that seems to have been used in the Jarret report on higher education (a report commissioned by university authorities to investigate efficiency) is the Cranfield Institute of technology. This institute has recently incorporated the Shrivvenham College of Military Science and the Silsoe College of Agricultural Engineering. Every department or unit has to be self-funded, a difficult task since there are no undergraduate students and therefore no mandatory grants. 70% of funding it is claimed comes from sponsored research, although a

proportion of this is from a government source, the Ministry of Defence.

Departmental buildings have 'rental' charged on them. Painters, plumbers and others who work centrally for the Institute are expected to submit tenders along with private businesses for jobs.

Personnel, accounts and other departments in administration do not make a profit so they remain short-staffed; for instance one typist servicing three personnel officers. The blatant anti-union stance of management is compounded by administrative inefficiency all

leading to increased bitterness on the union side.

Research here is not for social need; experience gained over years is now sold to the highest bidder. This is capitalism digging its own grave because with a slowdown in the production of technology and ideas will come the inevitable deepening of the crisis of capitalism.

Yours fraternally

Gwyn P Morris

ASTMS 577

Cranfield Institute of Technology Group executive, (personal capacity)

Student support

Dear Comrades,

Last September I started going to Liverpool University and joined the Labour Club. Initially, I was slightly anti-*Militant*, due to the influence of my father, but since then I have become a supporter of the ideas of *Militant*.

There were two main factors that decided me. The first was the attitude of the so-called 'Democratic Left' at the University Labour Club, which shocked me by

their support of the Black Caucus, and their defence of the treatment of members of SALEP at NOLS conference.

The second was the achievements of Liverpool City Council in their fight for jobs and services in Liverpool, such as the building of much needed council houses and saving and creating thousands of jobs.

Yours fraternally
Graham Mogford
Mossley Hill South LPYS

New books for old

Dear Comrades,

As a librarian I feel bound to reply to Dave Webb's letter (issue 753). He suggests that the books which libraries destroy could be donated to old people's and children's homes etc. In fact, libraries discard fiction when the books are too damaged or dirty through constant use. Why should old people and children have to make do with these 'cast-offs'? Public libraries provide special collections and bulk loans of new and carefully selected books to precisely these groups.

In the case of non-fiction, books are discarded when they are out of date or superseded by new editions.

The rising cost of books and the cuts in local government spending mean that public libraries are under pressure to cut back on book buying.

Instead of advocating the continued use of tatty, outdated books, we should be fighting to defend library bookfunds, so that the best books (in terms of quality and physical condition) continue to be available free to all users.

Yours fraternally
Carl Wiper
Northumberland NALGO

Explain please!

Dear *Militant*,

Last week's *Militant* (issue 754) carried an excellent article on Lebanon, 'Beirut Hijack crisis', a clear description of the situation.

Unfortunately it was spoilt by the last two paragraphs stating: "These factions are

fighting purely for power and wealth for their leaders. Capitalism has reduced Lebanon to a shambles", etc. I don't doubt the truth of these statements but they are not self-explanatory to the man or woman-in-the-street like me, who reads *Militant* for information.

Yours sincerely
Connie M Thorpe
Birmingham

LEFT and RIGHT

Gamekeeper turned poacher

US ADMIRAL Stansfield Turner, former head of the CIA under the Carter administration, is up in arms. Before his new book about his time as head of the American secret service could be published, it had to go before CIA censors. His book, *Secrecy and Democracy*, was ripped to pieces with over 100 passages taken out. "The deletions ranged from the borderline issues to the ridiculous", moaned Turner. Another former CIA employee, Frank Snapp, must be laughing up his sleeve. In 1978 when Snapp published his book on working for the CIA he failed to submit it to the censors. Turner had him hauled up before the courts and prosecuted.

Down in the doldrums...

THE BOSSES jump up and down with delight when trade union memberships decline. They keep very quiet though when their own tame 'professional associations' take a tumble. The Institute of Journalists—a non-striking 'rival' to the 33,000 strong National Union of Journalists in the print industry—is in the doldrums. Its membership has slumped to 2,000, it has a financial deficit of £17,000 and its once monthly journal now only comes out four times a year. Many IOJ members are switching to the NUJ in fear of new technology.

...and down, and down

TALKING OF dwindling figures, latest reports show membership of the fascist National Front has fallen to around 2,000.

Quote of the week

JOHN CONSTABLE, newly appointed Director General of the British Institute of Management: "I do not believe manufacturing is going to create any new jobs in this country for a very long time—or possibly ever again".

Photo: Militant.