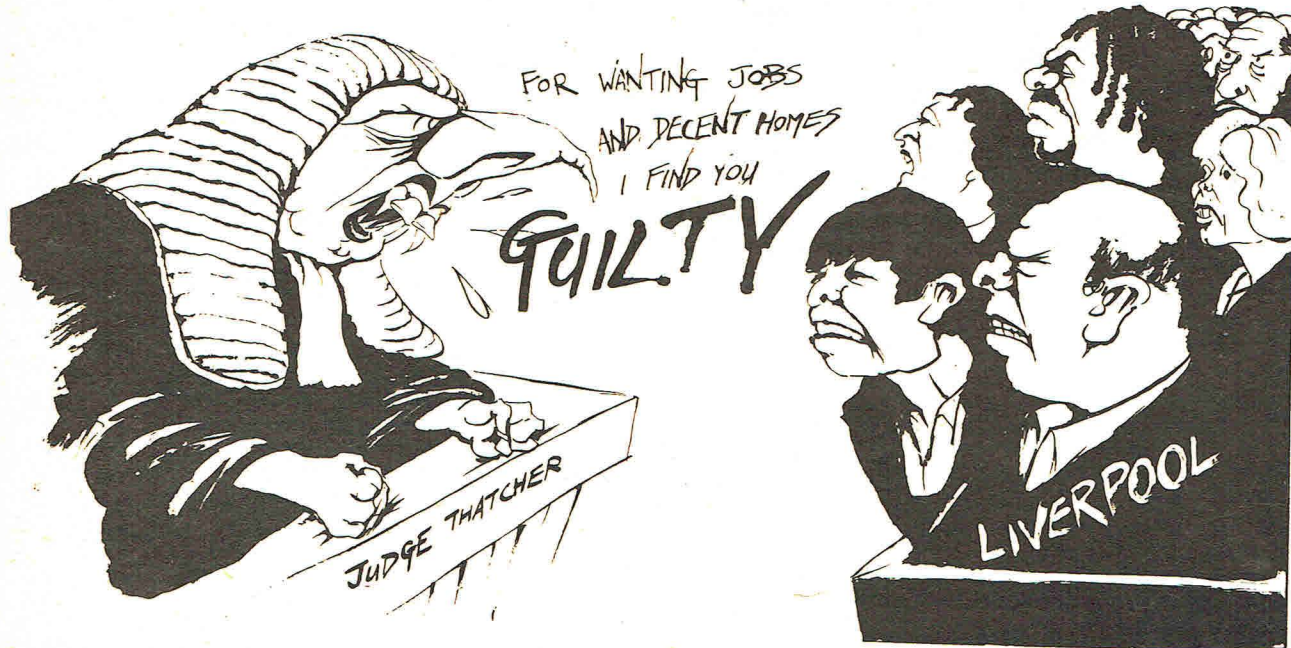


Liverpool strikes for jobs

Tories and
Liberals
demand
sackings



THE CITY of Liverpool is being forced to fight for its life. Workers are enraged at the Tory government's attempt to make their council add thousands to the city's dole queues.

Mass meetings of all sections of the 30,000 Liverpool City Council workforce are being held to mobilise for the all-out strike called for next week, in support of the Labour councillors' fight for jobs, houses and services.

The council were elected to wage war on the poverty, unemployment and decay which the Tory government and Tory and Liberal councillors have inflicted on the city over many years. The European Economic Community have calculated that only Sicily, Sardinia and Calabria in Southern Italy have worse social problems than Merseyside.

By Pat Craven

The councillors have unflinchingly stood by their promises. Jobs have been saved; houses built; services protected.

Robbed

In response the Tory government has robbed the council of £350 million of rate support grant. After Jenkin's humiliating defeat last year, Thatcher is now set on making her battle with the City Council this year's Falklands campaign. All the resources of the state, the

press, radio and TV are being mobilised to try and crush the councillors' resistance.

In a city with 25 per cent unemployment already, they want to force the council to sack 6,000 workers, cut back its house-building and slash its vital services to the old, the sick and the needy.

49 Labour councillors have been surcharged £106,000, but this has only made them all the more determined to stand firm. They have built a solid base of support amongst their workforce. The campaign has been taken to the private sector, where many jobs are dependent on council contracts. They have campaigned on the doorsteps to explain the issues to the voters.

The workers are rallying round the council which has fought for them. But the

campaign must now be taken beyond Merseyside. This has become a national battle as important as the miners' strike. Liverpool's stand will inspire millions of workers to take action to see Thatcher defeated.

Pay award

Council workers nationally already owe a debt to the Liverpool councillors. Last week's eight per cent award would not have been conceded but for the Tories' fear of a national strike of council workers coming at the same time as the Liverpool strike. The Tories have tried a cynical ploy of 'divide and

rule' to weaken national support for Liverpool.

To counter this, it is up to union activists to visit every council depot and union branch to spell out the need for total support for the Liverpool City Council. If they are defeated, there is not the slightest doubt that next year, that modest pay victory will be cancelled out.

This battle is a test of strength. The alarm must be sounded throughout the country to call the labour movement to arms. Every section of the trade union movement and the Labour Party needs to organise emergency meetings at workplace, local and

regional level to mobilise solidarity action.

Victory for Liverpool City Council will spell certain defeat for the Thatcher government, already sinking in the polls and by-elections. If the movement nationally can match the courage and determination already displayed by the Merseyside labour and trade union movement, then that great victory is there for the winning.

Solidarity is the key —

See back page

Militant Third National Rally
21st Birthday celebration
Sunday 3 November, 1985
All tickets £3 (Cheques to "Militant Rally")
(Crèche available, but places must be booked)

BOOK NOW!

Sales campaign — see page 6

Militant

Editor: Peter Taaffe
Militant, 3-13 Hepscoth Road London E9 5HB.
Phone: 01-533 3311.

Liverpool has no alternative but to fight

THE CONFRONTATION looming between Liverpool and the government is entirely due to Tory policy.

Large amounts of money have been taken away from local authorities to finance the Tories' arms programme and huge handouts given to the rich over the last six years. Up and down the country councils have been forced to reduce services, increase charges and sack workers.

What makes Liverpool special, apart from the fact that it is a city with exceptionally poor housing and high unemployment, is the fact that it has a council which is determined to stand up to the Tories' policy.

The Tories gave in to Liverpool in 1984 because they were not at that time prepared to open up a 'second front' in the middle of the miners' strike. This year, they are determined to get their revenge.

Once again Liverpool council has refused to sack workers or make big rate rises to balance the financial cuts imposed by the government. Once again it has refused to cut back on its building programme, providing both homes and jobs for the people of Liverpool.

The Tories are therefore going all-out to crush the council. The working class of the city are to be punished for having the temerity to elect a council which is to carry out the promises it made.

This is the most serious confrontation since the miners' strike. The frenzied headlines of the *Daily Mail* exaggerate the real position, but there is no doubt that the government will have drawn up some contingency plans to use commissioners to run the city, or to give cash to a Liberal/Tory council after the Labour councillors have been sacked.

It is not even ruled out that the Tories would be stupid enough to use troops to run some council services, although this would only harden the council workforce and strengthen solidarity action elsewhere.

The labour movement, therefore, must give this struggle its due weight. It is as significant as the miners' strike and as the historic struggle for outdoor relief of the Poplar councillors in 1921. Liverpool council and the workforce must be given the maximum possible support by the whole labour movement.

At the same time, the Tories' determination will be tempered with some unease. They would have preferred a long drawn-out financial crisis, giving the workforce time to waver and split. But the crisis has been brought on suddenly and there is a huge reservoir of support among the workforce for the council, especially among the blue-collar workers.

The Tories must also realise that they are not taking on councillors who are ready to throw in the towel at the first sign of battle. They are dealing with a firm left-wing council, bolstered by the influence of Marxist ideas.

At the beginning of the year 20 councils declared their intention of confronting the government. The crisis created by the defiance of one council demonstrates what *Militant* has argued: that if a large number of Labour authorities were prepared to stand together against the Tories, then the opposition would be sufficient to make the government back down, if not resign altogether.

One by one, however, the other councils fell away, leaving only Liverpool and Lambeth councillors surcharged, and only in the former case, a mass movement ready to stand up to the government.

At every stage in the struggle, Liverpool council has been in step with the trade unions, the District Labour Party and the people of Liverpool.

A few union officials in Liverpool, including members of the so-called 'Communist Party' who now complain about a 'lack of consultation' are only rationalising the position they have had all along, of not supporting the strategy of the council. They are now doing their best to sabotage the council's fight.

But the majority of workers in Liverpool realise that the councillors have no alternative but to fight. It is to the enormous credit of the councillors that they are prepared to go all the way, to risk personal bankruptcy, disqualification and even jail to defend the working class they represent.

On that basis alone, Labour Party members and trade unionists everywhere must rush to their aid.

Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office. Published by Militant; printed by Militant Publications, 3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB. ISSN 0144-9275.

LIVERPOOL
A SOCIALIST
COUNCIL

Liverpo

Shop stewards vote to strike

ATTEMPTS to show the Liverpool workforce at loggerheads with the council have back-fired with the decision of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee to strike from September 25 in support of the council's fight.

Some lingering confusion over "redundancy notices"—in a situation where the council were resolutely committed to oppose redundancies—still existed up to last weekend, but it was pushed aside by the decisions of the JSSC.

The shop-stewards voted by a small majority to oppose the sending of these notices which were a mere legal formality as far as the council were concerned.

Most of the manual workers' shop stewards had

By Josie Aitman

argued for the notices, so as not to put the council in a position of further illegality, causing the cash to run out in weeks. These stewards argued for more time to prepare a campaign against the Government.

However, other stewards, especially from the white-collar unions, were genuinely worried that once notices were sent out—even though the council were committed

to 'reinstate' all those paid off—that workers could still end up being sacked. They therefore successfully opposed the redundancy notices going out.

But once this decision has been reached, previous tactical disagreements were brushed aside. A senior GMBATU convenor immediately moved that the council workforce should strike as soon as the cash ran out and that the council meeting planned to discuss the redundancies should be picketed, and these proposals were passed with general acclamation.

Outside the Town Hall on Monday the pickets were joined by the Labour coun-

cil and their presence confirmed the unity in struggle of the council and its workforce.

The same day the shop stewards meeting again voted to call out the workforce on September 25. With a handful of abstentions, it was agreed by 99 votes to nil.

Asked whether the strike was legal or not, JSSC chairman Ian Lowes, replied, "I don't know and I don't particularly care. We believe we now have to take this fight to the Tory government and to demand £30 million back of the £350 million that has been stolen."

Massive campaign launched

THE TORIES now face a colossal movement. Ninety days notice has in effect been served on their government.

The solution is in their hands. They can provide the £25 million that the city needs and withdraw all penalties and financial chaos can be avoided.

Otherwise they will face a movement that will put into the shade all previous battles of local councils. Beginning in the local authority the strike will be taken to the private sector throughout Merseyside for support and then out to local authority workers throughout Britain.

The fight will be taken right to the Tories—they will reap the whirlwind of opposition for the attacks they have made on local authority workers and their vindictive attacks on democratically elected representatives.

This week meetings of all the City Council's 30,000 workers will take place to discuss and reinforce the determination to fight for jobs. These will be addressed by JSSC officers and councillors explaining the dilemma of the council.

This explanation and preparation of the working class is absolutely essential to clear away the confusion



A section of the march in Liverpool on 29 June, in support of the council. Photo: Reflex

that the press and media have created in the last two weeks.

The maximum possible active participation of the workforce in the struggle is necessary. This must involve regular mass meetings, campaign bulletins—daily if necessary—to overcome the mountain of media lies, and support groups. Thousands of striking workers must be mobilised to canvass housing estates and other workers—especially in the private sector and elsewhere in local authorities—to get support.

The simple message is that the council has to stand and fight now in order to prevent

6,000 job losses, or increases in rates of between 100 and 200 per cent—the Tories have to return the cash that they have robbed from Liverpool.

The solidarity conference on September 21 and the meeting of the National Local Authorities Coordinating Committee now assume crucial importance.

Every organisation throughout Britain must attempt to send delegates. At this conference proposals will be made to establish a democratic assembly with direct delegations from workplaces, Labour Party wards, YS branches, womens

sections and all affiliated organisations. Such an organisation will be absolutely essential for the setting-up of support groups in every area and the organisation of industrial action.

The Tories must be made to regret their decision to take cash and jobs from Liverpool. They are not taking on 49 councillors, but tens of thousands of Liverpoolians, supported by millions of workers in the rest of the country.

By Dave Cotterill

Fleet Street frenzy

TROOPS AND wartime evacuation plans were the main fare served up to its readers by the *Daily Mail* last Monday.

Working himself up to a frenzy, political editor, Gordon Greig, described in lurid detail imagined government emergency plans to deal with the city-wide strike of council employees.

Those in council care and in approved schools would be evacuated "to the Isle of man"... "the old and vulnerable" would be concentrated in "special centres", and so on. These rantings and a similarly hysterical editorial, are, of course, in no way designed

to reveal the facts or the truth to *Mail* readers, but to add to the mountain of disinformation and create a climate of fear and confusion.

The *Sun* went one better the following day, with an exclusive revelation about a "blue print for anarchy", including a plan to blockade roads, in some cases by digging them up, and commandeering council lorries for road blocks.

Nowhere in all this garbage is there any attempt to describe what would happen to unemployment and the people of Liverpool if this "fanatical council" carried out policies of "sound

finance". The fact is that Tory cuts would mean enormous hardships to thousands of people, including the young, the old and the sick, who these newspapers are hypocritically pretending to speak for.

Sympathy strikes

It is precisely because the council is fighting to protect jobs and services and homes: things that mean a lot to workers in Liverpool, that the workforce are backing it. The workers have pledged that they will maintain all emergency services during the strike, in any case.

But if troops were used by

the Tory government it would be an action that would backfire on them. The troops would not be able to carry out more than a few token duties. But it would be a provocation that would lead to sympathy strike action by local authority workers all over the country, and by workers in the private sector.

Thatcher has already done enough to create a mountain of unemployed. Workers will not tolerate her using troops to enforce mass unemployment on a city pledged to create jobs.

By Jo Eastop

ol fight for jobs

LIVERPOOL
A SOCIALIST
COUNCIL

Council house building record second to none

THE SAME newspaper that spends so many column inches slamming Liverpool Labour council has inadvertently justified the council's policy.

In a small feature on housing, the *Liverpool Echo* described last week how the city council's policy on housing was succeeding.

"The heart of Liverpool is beating again", it says, "as a garden city rises from the rubble of demolished slums.

"Bulldozers are breaking down the walls of heartache to clear away the misery of run-down housing in a multi-million pound city council scheme."

The Labour council was elected in 1983 with a promise to protect and create jobs, and to build homes. The previous Tory/Liberal administration had built *no* family housing for years beforehand (see centre pages).

It had been grappling with enormous housing problems:

- ★ 40,000 sub-standard houses and flats.
- ★ Delapidated and demoralising tenements.
- ★ Increasing vandalism in worst areas.
- ★ Miserable housing prospects for young married couples.

But the Labour councillors have kept their promise. Nearly 4,000 new houses have already been built, re-housing thousands of families. And as the *Echo* reports: "work is continuing on another 3,000 properties in the urban regeneration strategy designed to provide houses with gardens..."

What the programme

By John Pickard

means in human terms was also made clear in the interview with two retired couples who were rehoused out of flats into new houses with gardens. The new tenants were absolutely delighted with their move, as the *Echo* described it, "from prison to paradise".

"It is marvellous", one woman said, "It is like a million dollars to me". The new tenants enthused particularly over their more pleasant environment and their gardens.

It is all the more strange, then, after this feature and interviews, that the *Echo* spends so much time ham-

mering the Labour council whose only crime is to provide houses and jobs.

Left to the Liverpool Liberals or the Tories in Westminster, these homes would not have been built, £140 million worth of building contracts would not have been committed and 12,000 building jobs would not now exist.

Moreover, those proposals to "capitalise" money from the housing programme would have meant shedding all these jobs and freezing the building programme—a policy the councillors rejected.

The policy of Liverpool council is for homes: the Tories' policy is for mass unemployment and municipal "prisons". There is no question about where Liverpool workers will put their support.

'Militant' appeal for cash

IN VIEW of the dramatic turn of events in Liverpool and relying on resources of the movement, *Militant* may have to give far more coverage than is possible from a 16 page weekly. Special publications may be necessary.

That will require a massive increase in our income so we are making a special appeal to you, our readers. Redouble your efforts to raise cash

for our Fighting Fund. Take collections at depots and local authority work places.

All readers who haven't sent a week's income are asked to do so now. If you have, send us another!—or at least a 'tenner' or two!

Councillors and workers in Liverpool are risking all to win the present battle. You owe it to them to back up their sacrifice.

Liverpool 8 residents back Sam Bond

A MASS meeting attended by over 400 members of the Liverpool 8 black community passed an overwhelming vote of no confidence in the Black Caucus.

The meeting was called by the Caucus to elect community representatives as part of their continuing campaign against Sam Bond, Liverpool Community Relations officer. But their efforts backfired when people at the meeting insisted that the Caucus had no

right to put themselves forward as community representatives.

The organisers still tried to have the meeting elect representatives, but those present refused to support a group of Black Caucus sympathisers who were standing. Instead, the meeting demanded by an overwhelming majority that Sam Bond be asked to address them.

However, the chairman of the meeting hastily called it to an end before Sam arriv-

ed. At that stage the whole meeting started chanting "We want Sam Bond!", but the organisers dismantled microphones and told people to leave.

The meeting clearly demonstrated the overwhelming support for Sam Bond in the black community. Many people supported the call for a second meeting which Sam Bond can address properly.

By Bob Lee



Councillors join the picket outside the Town Hall on Monday. From Left to right: Tony Mulhearn, Derek Hatton, deputy leader, and John Hamilton, leader of the council.

Sniping from the 'lefts'

DAVID ALTON, hysterical Liberal MP for Liverpool Mossley Hill has called for a "rainbow coalition" against the Liverpool Council. This would include the Tories, the Liberals, Labour "moderates" who support massive job-shedding and the black caucus, the self-appointed "leaders" of the black community, who also oppose the council's stand against the Tories.

The Social Democratic Party and the Liberals have already carved up the city seats for future elections and have agreed not to oppose any Labour right wingers who are against the Labour Party's policy.

With the backing of the working class in Liverpool, the Labour Party will not be particularly bothered about being 'isolated' from these parties and groups. What many Labour activists still do find very galling, however, are the frequent snipes made against the council from the so-called 'left' of the movement.

Alton's "rainbow coalition" already has its pale pink stripe in the form of the "communist" party and the *Morning Star* which have repeatedly attacked the council in an attempt to sow divisions and undermine the struggle. Tuesday's edition of the *Morning Star* for example reported the 99 to nil vote for strike action among the shop-stewards as "a small majority", rivalling papers like the *Express* and

the *Sun* for lies. Workers in Liverpool will draw their own conclusions in the future about these strike breakers of the left.

The Council's uncompromising stand against the Tories seems also to have been too much for some of the 'lefts' of the Labour Party.

An unsavoury pot-pourri currently congealing around *Tribune*, the Labour Coordinating Committee, with a nasty flavour of *Marxism Today* has been trying to make a stink about the influence of *Militant* in Liverpool.

Tribune recently held a rally in the city as part of the ailing paper's "re-launch", sponsored by the LCC and the *Tribune* Group of MPs. This week's issue promised "next week you won't recognise us".

Judging by the report of the rally and the repeated attacks of the author, Ian Williamson, on Liverpool Council in *Marxism Today* its politics will be all too recognisable.

One of the main speakers was Ken Livingstone. The report tells readers that: "Livingstone's contribution continued the theme of openness and democracy, of the need to involve the talents and energies of all members of the community and labour movement."

Contrasting the GLC with Liverpool, it continues: "His description of the open methods within the GLC Labour Group had some

local councillors goggle-eyed with admiration."

Tribune should have tried telling that to the outraged London Labour Parties following Livingstone's bobbing and weaving in the period leading up to outright capitulation over the "no rate" stance.

Democracy and openness weren't the words on the lips of GLC councillors reporting back to local parties that our Ken hadn't realised that confrontation wasn't 'necessary' and the whole thing was down to the nasty councillor Macdonnell who had been hiding the accounts under his bed.

Apparently, the most important battle ever undertaken by the London Labour Party had been run by a tiny caucus of leading GLC councillors, a section of whom had failed to explain their real intentions to the London Labour Party conference. They did this only days before abandoning policy overwhelmingly agreed at an earlier special conference and reaffirmed at that annual conference! Very open and democratic.

It's going to be a leaky re-launch if *Tribune* continues trying to sell the forward march of Labour's new left moving right into parliament to workers who recall the GLC debacle and understandably feel let down.

It's about time those lefts gave a bit of support for the Labour councillors who for once *are* keeping their promises to the labour movement and the electorate.

Workers send cash to defend Militant

THIS IS a crucial moment for the struggle of the working class. An all-out battle is looming in Liverpool between the government and council.

The Tory press have pushed their racist propaganda in the aftermath of the Handsworth riots.

Militant is being attacked and vilified by the press and the right wing of the movement.

Yet this is the time when right wing Labour MP James White has decided to push ahead with his High Court action against *Militant*. This act could cripple our paper financially and seriously undermine our ability to provide information and guidance for workers.

We need £50,000 immediately to fight the action in court.

White's own constituency party has completely disassociated itself from his actions. TGWU members who were employed by White have backed us to the hilt. *Militant* reported a dispute they were involved in. It was this report which led White to take out a libel action.

Militant wrote the truth about the dispute and will fight White to the end.

Already there has been a huge response from TGWU members disgusted at White's treatment of their members. White himself is a member of the TGWU (not sponsored by the union as previously reported).

These include (all in a personal capacity):

John Kelly, TGWU National Car Workers Trade Group; Alan Jones, TGWU National Committee—Central Wales; Audrey White, TGWU National Womens Committee; Walter Cunningham, chair Hull Docks DC; Christine McVicar, Glasgow DC; John Fahey Nottingham DC and chair TGWU 5/440; Alex Ingram Sussex DC; Bill Denton, branch secretary Yorkshire traction; Keith Edwards sec TGWU 4/92 Longnech; Sandy Newell sec 1/1347 Brighton; Dave Williams, shop steward at Philcocks and Collins Liverpool; Tony Hindle sec 6/53 Passenger Transport Preston; Jim Quigley, deputy senior steward and Phil Spencer, steward, Pork Farms, Queens Drive Nottingham; Paul Bonython, Regional Organiser Region 1; Peter Medhurst, Region 1, District Organiser; Tony Gould, Wilf Page and A S Rudd, Agricultural Trade Group Region 1; Willie Harper—steward Fords Halewood; Peter Casolan—steward Land Rover Solihull; Richard Lewis, steward Austin Rover Longbridge and Ian Schofield, senior steward Range Rover Solihull.

A petition has also been produced appealing directly to miners. Supporters should visit NUM and TGWU workplaces with placards, buckets and tins to collect signatures and cash.

A defence campaign leaflet will also be produced shortly and donation sheets and pledge forms are available. The *Militant* Defence Campaign will be writing to workers whose disputes we have covered in our paper asking them to support us with a donation.

We need hard cash!

Lists of Labour Party members and workmates must be drawn up and approached now! Many will donate to help defend a socialist newspaper's right to print the truth.

Constituency and ward Labour parties, trade unions, women's sections and LPYS branches must be approached and collections from members at these meetings should be held in addition to the donation from the organisation's funds.

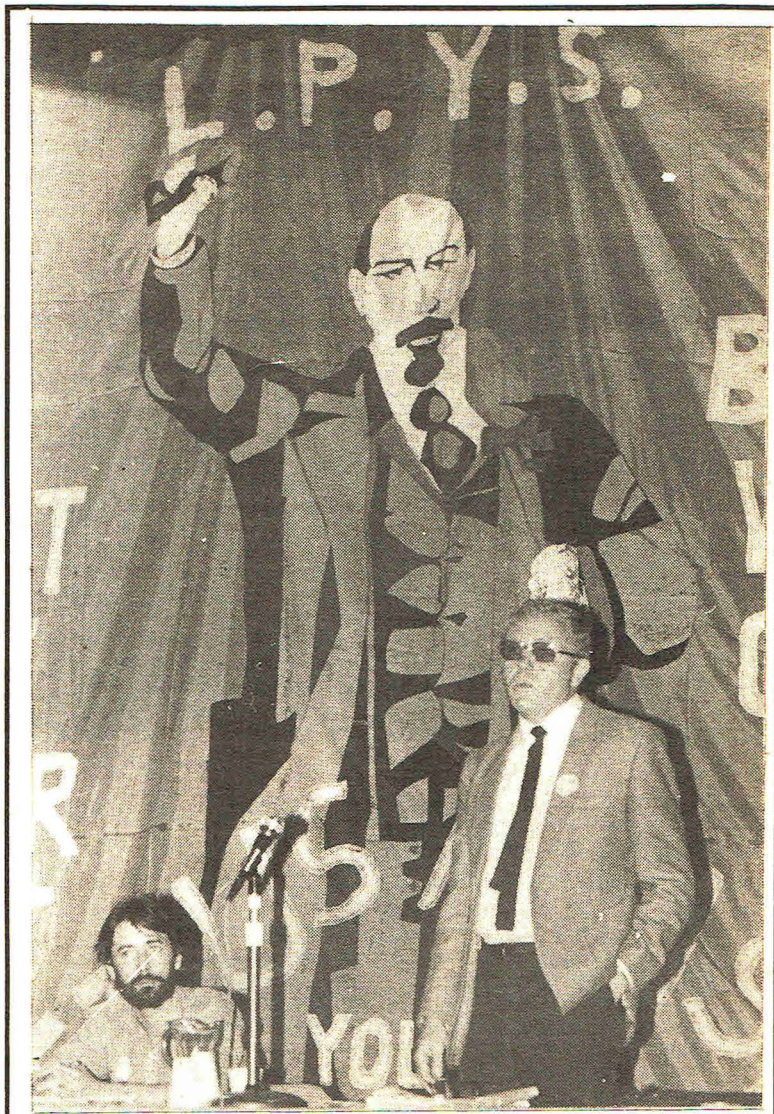
This week Merseyside has shown the way despite the pressure of events there:

Bootle Labour Party has agreed to donate £10 and £45 was collected amongst the management committee delegates. Tubrook ward, Broadgreen constituency, has donated £25 to the fund, £25 has come from Netherly ward, Garston, and £25 from Wirral Trades Council.

In the south, Upton ward of Newham NW Labour Party has donated £10 and £10 has come from the London LPYS Regional Committee. Morecambe LPYS gave £10 "to fight to put the worker's case at all times". Individual donations include £5 from a SOGAT member in Dundee and £20 from a water worker, Steve Feely, in West Ham.

But don't wait until the October meeting, visit Labour Party members; take the hat round at work—guarantee the truth in the future—get the money in NOW!

By Steve Morgan



Labour Party Young Socialists and members of the Chile Socialist Defence Campaign took part in vigil outside the Chilean embassy to commemorate the twelfth anniversary of the coup which brought dictator Pinochet to power. The seriousness of the LPYS towards international solidarity was shown at a recent rally (above) in support of Chilean workers, addressed by Terry Fields MP and Tony Benn MP. £700 was raised to help in the campaign to build links with Chilean workers and youth.

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

Wales right wing shut down executive

GEORGE WRIGHT, the right-wing leader of the TGWU in Wales, has refused to accept the ruling of the Labour Party's National Agent, David Hughes, that it was unconstitutional to debar Militant supporter Chris Peace from the Wales Region Executive.

Wright said he was not prepared to accept the ruling of a 'vulnerable paid servant' of the party.

Peace, who had topped the poll in his section when elected onto the committee, attended the executive meeting on 16 September even though he had been debarred by the right wing majority because he is a *Militant* supporter. The meeting

was lobbied by 100 Labour Party and trade union members who had travelled from all over Wales.

There has been a deluge of protests about the committee's decision to exclude Peace, including protests from the South Wales NUM executive council (see reports).

However, George Wright and the right-wing argued that their views were irrelevant and that the matter should be referred to the Labour Party National Executive Committee.

It was further moved that all committees of the Labour Party Wales should be adjourned until the matter was resolved by the NEC. This could take months and will

cut across work in the marginals, the fights to save St Johns and Penrhwiweiber collieries, the Jobs and Industry Campaign, the LPYS recruitment campaign and the defence of Liverpool and Lambeth councils. The only winners are the Tories and Alliance parties and other enemies of the working class.

Peace will be writing to the regional organiser asking that the executive be immediately re-convened so that the business of the party can continue.

The right-wing have been forced to retreat. Wright had said previously that they would not go to the NEC and that the Welsh executive would make its own decisions. Now two months

later, they have gone running to the NEC for cover because of the outrage expressed at their undemocratic and unconstitutional behaviour.

The ruling right wing clique on the executive are becoming more and more isolated and desperate. The only decision the NEC can take is to support the reinstatement of Peace. The question of *Militant* supporter Tony Wedlake's position on the Welsh executive can not be discussed until the committee reconvenes. LPYS representative Wedlake was on holiday when Peace was debarred at the Welsh executive's July meeting.

Sheffield expulsions are 'null and void'

THE LABOUR Party's National Agent, David Hughes has confirmed that the proposed expulsions of five *Militant* supporters from Sheffield's Attercliffe Labour Party are 'null and void'.

This is a great victory for the rank and file locally and nationally who have supported the campaign against expulsions with resolutions and letters.

Dispite this the right-wing are pushing ahead with disciplinary action by asking the five plus two others, Jane Hartley and Steve Wishaw to attend committee meetings and answer so-called 'charges'.

These include meetings to

protest at the original, unconstitutional methods used by the right wing to instigate the expulsions. Jane Hartley's case has been brought before the executive because she moved a resolution opposing the witch-hunt at her branch of AUEW-TASS.

Two ward branches of which the two are members have refused to accept the expulsions.

★ In a very successful *Militant* public meeting in Attercliffe attended by 160 people, £307 was raised for *Militant's* fighting fund.

By a Militant reporter

Ranks support Chris Peace

THE RIGHT wing, which has for so long rigidly controlled the Labour Party in South Wales is now having to face widespread opposition to its attempts at suppressing the growth in support for Militant.

The debarment of a *Militant* supporter, Chris Peace, from the Wales Labour Party executive has met opposition from a large majority of South Wales constituency Labour Parties. In ISLWYN party leader Neil Kinnock's own constituency, a motion from the Labour Party Young Socialists was passed condemning the decision to debar Peace and calling for its reversal. It also said that attacks of this kind will only split the party when unity is most needed.

There was only one speaker against—Neil Kinnock. He said that the decision should be left up to the National Executive Committee—this of course has rubber-stamped many attempts by right wing Labour parties to expel or discipline *Militant* supporters so far.

CAERPHILLY the constituency party of George Wright, initiator of the move against Peace, has voted overwhelmingly for the

reinstatement of Peace and agreed to send three delegates to the Wales Labour Unity conference. Before the meeting ended Wright's supporters got up and left when it was clear that they were on to a loser.

As they drove away from the meeting room they blasted their car horns to interrupt the proceedings. So much for democracy—right wing style.

OGMORE constituency party met to discuss the support of member Ian Wells for the "*Militant* Tendency Organisation." This is seen as a move towards the expulsion of Wells. He denies support for any 'organisation' but remains committed to supporting the ideas of *Militant*. The decision on Wells has been postponed—presumably the right wing officers of the party want to collect their 'evidence' of the 'crime'.

Meanwhile the officers have declared that all new members of the party will be vetted. It seems that they want to preempt any fresh opposition to their stranglehold on the party. *Militant* supporters in the constituency however are keen to build the party and not put any obstacle in the way of anyone wanting to join.

Biggest ever weekend school

OVER 400 people attended *Militant's* biggest and best ever Marxist Weekend School last weekend.

Topics under discussion ranged from the Russian revolution to 'Is Marxism relevant today', with sessions on the state, popular frontism, black nationalism and the trade unions, reflecting the rich history of Marxism worldwide.

Those who attended the school showed their support goes deeper than words with the magnificent collection of £1,200 raised at the closing rally on South Africa. £1,500 was pledged during weekend to support the *Militant* in its defence against right-wing Labour MP James White.

What better way to spend your weekend than by learning how to get rid of the system which oppresses you all week! Those of you who missed out, however, look out for adverts in the coming weeks for study guides and tapes of the weekend's sessions.

By Chas Berry

Wales Labour Unity Conference
5 October, 11am
Temple of Peace,
Cathays Park, Cardiff
Credentials £2 from:
21 Manor Street,
Heath, Cardiff

Campaign to save St John's colliery

Coal Board delays decision on pit's closure

A COACH-LOAD of lobbyists protesting at the threatened closure of St Johns colliery in South Wales, including miners' wives, was joined by members of the Labour Party Young Socialists and Militant supporters outside the Coal Board's headquarters at Hobart House, London, on Wednesday 11 September.

South Wales NUM president, Emlyn Williams and national general secretary Peter Heathfield emerged from the meeting to announce that the NCB has backed down from announcing the immediate closure of St Johns. A decision will now be made at the

full meeting of the NCB on 4 October.

St Johns will also be guaranteed the opportunity to appeal under the modified review procedure when it comes into existence, even if the board decides to close the pit.

Moral victory

Lodge secretary Ian Isaac described the decision as "a moral victory both for St Johns and for the national union in its struggle to force the board to implement its promises to allow an independent element in the

review procedure".

A magnificent campaign has been launched by St Johns Lodge against the proposed closure.

An inquiry heard evidence from the Oxford economist Andrew Glyn, and from former NCB geologist, Malcolm Blandford. Its findings, which were positively in favour of retaining St Johns, both on economic and social grounds were put to the board at its meeting on Wednesday and undoubtedly had an effect on the board's decision.

The rank and file of St John's lodge must take credit for stalling the threatened closure,

which now allows time to step-up the campaign and prepare for the next round in the battle.

As lodge chairman, Charlie White, put it: "Over the last few months management have put the boot in. They have attempted to demoralise the men. We've had to bite our lips, turn the other cheek, and swallow shit. But we're still here. The campaign's only beginning—we've a lot up our sleeve."

By Chris Herriot
(Sacked Monktonhall miner)

Two miners speak: Why St. Johns must stay

THE NATIONAL Coal Board have recently suspended the closure of St Johns colliery, Maesteg, the last pit in the area. Chris Herriot, sacked miner from Monktonhall colliery in Scotland spoke to two St Johns lodge NUM members, Bobby Potts and Charlie White.

St Johns is the last pit in Maesteg, and the coal board may still try to close the pit. What will this mean to the community?

Barry Potts: "I think there will be absolute degradation of society within our valley.

"Ten years ago we had four or five pits in our community, employing thousands of people. But now the coal board have whittled it down to just one and it will mean the loss of about 600 jobs, 450 say in the colliery plus 150 to 200 spin-off jobs. When a man is put on the dole he's depriving his family of basic needs which should come to anyone who lives a decent life, not through his own fault—but through government policy.

"So far in my community half the shops in the town centre are already closed or are due to close.

Charlie White, Chairman of St Johns: "We lost 450 jobs already so far because the lodge has accepted the slim-down on the colliery to ensure a future. The loss of another 450 jobs on top of that, would cost the community somewhere in the region of £6 million a year in wages, including the loss of rates, which is about £60,000 a year.

In this age of cutbacks it would mean that in my estate there won't be services to care for the old—hospital services, home helps this sort of thing. What we are going to be losing is jobs in those industries as well, the people who live in my estate who supply the pit industries such as engineering, steel workers and so on—they are going to compound what is already a desperate situation in the community."

You mentioned the independent enquiry that was conducted by St Johns, what effect do you expect that enquiry to have on the Coal Board?

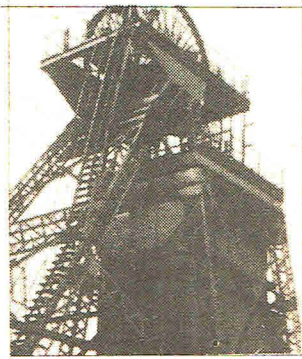
On the Coal Board, absolutely nothing. Their policies are being dictated to

them by the government who at the end of the day are our employers. The government have come out with a policy that says that pits must shut and whether or not we can prove otherwise I think that's the line the Coal Board will have to follow.

We believe that the Coal Board are somewhat embarrassed by the case St Johns has put forward and would in fact be quite happy to see us close before we go to the modified review. They have already taken steps to try and ensure that this happens.

Public debate

This week we were told that St Johns would be 'tried' under the old colliery review procedure which meant that the Coal Board would have the only say in the matter and that we would have no access to the modified review procedure (see article above).



We think they did this because they are scared to come out in the open and argue the case in what would be a public forum. I hope that in any modified review the public would have access—they could hear the arguments debated, after all its their industry, they pay the money that goes into it, and I don't think the Coal Board had an argument to close St Johns.

You say the Coal Board has no argument to close St Johns and it has no economic or social case, why then do you think they are so intent on closing this particular pit?

My own view is that just by chance we happen to be sitting on top of the richest coal field in Western Europe. I mean Margam with its 457 million tonnes of prime coking coal which is next to one of the biggest steel complexes in the whole of Western Europe.

South Wales produces specialised coal, as does



Lobbyists outside NCB headquarters last Wednesday. Immediate decision on closing St John's was delayed.

Scotland, Durham and parts of Lancashire and Kent. Now its all very well to say that you can import coal cheaply but it seems to me, a simple person who just reads the news, that if on the one hand BSC has said the strike didn't affect them, because production records were broken at Llanwern and Port Talbot and then turn round and say the miners' strike cost £310 million because we had to import coal, that the type of coal South Wales produces is competitive with coal from anywhere else in the world.

It's my own view is that this government is trying to privatise anything that is ripe for picking. I personally believe that Margam is one such case. As long as St Johns is there with a workforce that is prepared to fight for what it believes is right, a workforce that is somewhat militant, we are not the kind of people that they would want to employ. Certainly not the kind of people BP or XM or Texaco or Texas Oil or whoever is going to get the franchise would want in there.

So you are saying that it is the coal in St Johns that the government are after, that they intend to privatise the colliery, but in so doing that they wish to clear out the militant membership of the union?

I have absolutely no doubt about that whatsoever, the events in the course of the strike and events since have led to every single lodge official in St Johns being sacked.

Now, they have been reinstated because we threatened to go to the press if they didn't go about it in the right way to show what kind of kangaroo court it was. I don't think this is to

say that we would not have been reinstated. They have systematically over a period of years attempted to demoralise, break down, split and do whatever they could to break the union in St Johns. They haven't managed to do it yet, that gives them great cause for concern because were Margam to go ahead it would be a very powerful pit in South Wales.

What exactly do you intend to do in your battle to save the colliery?

We will go all the way. At every meeting that we've held in the colliery the men have backed their union 100 per cent. The only time I can remember a vote being cast against the union was a solitary miner who didn't think that the union's proposals went far enough and wanted to go back out on strike, and that was within two months of the year-long dispute finishing.

Rank and file

Basically what I am saying is that it should be a rank and file movement of miners in the country. I think that the direction of the union has been somewhat lost. I just think that the leadership have other things on their minds at the moment like how to run the union without any money.

I think that we have a duty to take that up and to carry on the fight, we shouldn't leave everything to our officials all the time. What role has been played by your area leadership?

Everything that we have done has had the stamp of approval of the area executive and the area leadership but we've had to go out and do it first.

Lobby Labour for miners' amnesty

IF YOU support the sacked and jailed miners then come to the Miners' Amnesty Campaign lobby of the Labour Party's annual conference in Bournemouth. Tell your trade union branch, Labour Party, or Young Socialist branch to come as well and bring their banners.

Maximum pressure must be brought to bear on Labour's leaders to get the NUM's demands for reinstatement of all sacked miners and the reimbursement of the unions funds implemented. Kinnock's statements that he is not prepared to guarantee a miners' amnesty has appalled many miners and activists in the movement.

The Miners' Amnesty Campaign urges conference to give overwhelming support for the NUM's resolution and for all resolutions which back demands for wiping clean criminal records of miners arising from the dispute and for the compensation of those miners sacked or jailed. The conference should come out in support of the immediate release of all jailed miners.

BLOC/Miners' Amnesty Campaign Lobby Labour Party conference
Monday 30 September, 8,00am, Conference Centre, Exeter Road, Bournemouth

FIGHTING FUND

This week
£3,730

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 Wales West	1190		2950
2 Eastern	622		3500
3 London South East	364		2100
4 London East	525		3250
5 Southern	884		5400
6 East Midlands	454		3050
7 London West	369		2650
8 Scotland West	516		3750
9 Lancashire	149		1300
10 London South West	117		1200
11 Merseyside	578		6550
12 South West	177		2150
13 West Midlands	355		4700
14 Yorkshire	454		5800
15 Northern	334		4750
16 Scotland East	229		3150
17 Humberside	114		2100
18 Manchester	146		2850
19 Wales East	85		3000
Others	1456		5800
Total received	9117		70000

Get Militant

New sales drive

MILITANT IS planning a special sales' drive to coincide with the Labour Party conference, covering issue 767, published on 27 September.

Workers' eyes will be on the debate around the policies needed for a new Labour government and, of course, on the socialist ideas of *Militant*.

Militant is to the fore in every working class battle, but not just commenting on events. *Militant* supporters have continually campaigned for Liverpool's fighting stance to be taken by all Labour councils, and by the party's national leadership. *Militant* has been the only paper to consistently defend Liverpool's stand, and has

been an important weapon helping the councillors put their case.

The opportunities for building sales of *Militant* have never been better. Reports of new sales' successes come in every week. Hounslow sellers have been showing how it is done. Last Friday they sold 23 at Hounslow East tube, having sold another 10 that morning outside the Bridge Road council depot. For party conference week they will be turning to the Wellington Road estate.

In Birmingham, *Militant* sellers went down to the Tucker Fasteners factory, where the union branch had submitted a witch-hunting resolution to TGWU conference. Seven papers were sold on the first visit.

Now, for the Labour Party conference week, extra sales are being planned in every area, and of course extra papers ordered. Estate sales will be especially important. *Militant's* policies could be featured on the daytime television coverage or on the news, then groups of sellers could be out each evening taking the paper workers want to know about, round to their doors.

Some sellers will be trying street sales, on Friday evening or the late shopping night as well as Saturday. Several unemployed sellers have decided to try town centre sales during the day, making up placards based on the previous day's events at the conference, after all where else will workers read the truth about what went on there?

Militant's sales could double during party conference week. We can win many new readers, and convince more workers to join the Labour Party too. So do not just watch the television conference reports this year.

Get out with the *Militant* paper, help boost the sales and help strengthen the fight inside the Labour Party for real socialist policies.

By the
circulation manager



Militant—consistently giving support to Liverpool.

THIS WEEK'S postbag brought more than double last week's total, making an overall total of £9,117. However, we still need £8,697 each week to get back on target.

If we live up to our past record we could easily exceed our target—but plans for the second half of the quarter will have to be implemented immediately. Many areas are organising new fund raising at "freshers' fairs" and 21st birthday parties for *Militant*.

At one special social in Sussex, a collection for the fighting fund raised £119.10! If you are short of ideas, social events this week range from a 'Curry nite' in Brum to a cycle ride in Skipton.

However, the largest proportion of the fighting fund is raised by simply asking readers and supporters for donations or extras on top of the price of the paper and of course taking collections at workplaces and meetings, such as the magnificent sum

of £115.51 raised at the Leicestershire LPYS summer camp *Militant* readers' meeting which included donations from Rutland and Melton LPYS (£20) and strike pay from G Bates, Leicester CPSA (£29.27).

The youth in particular provided literally a wealth of support ranging from YS donations, such as Littlehampton's £20; to individual contributions such as Alex Robertson of Broadgreen LPYS who sent us £3.50.

There has been no wane in the support amongst rank and file trade unionists reflected in what must be our best-ever TUC conference collection of £885.20 (before expenses).

We appeal to everyone who agrees with our ideas to send us a donation now. Not one penny of your donation will be wasted. It will help us expand so that those same ideas will reach more and more people. With your help we can do it.

Donations

SPECIAL THANKS to:

John Leech, EETPU £20; Harry Prosser, Coventry £5; J Fraser Keresley 25p; T Taylor, Coventry 75p; B Jackson, sacked miner from Keresley, 50p; A Brown, Keresley NUM 20p; Ken Davidson £5; Arthur Beer, Islington OAP £2.50; Alan Buckley, Bristol, £10; E Orpen, NUPE £1; Ian Watt, Glasgow £3.50; Peter Tansley, Castle Donington, £5; Nigel Ball, Mansfield £2; Paul Meadows, Borehamwood £10; E Underwood, Leics COPS, £1.50; Barry Read, Harlow CLP who paid £1 for his paper.

Special thanks also to Pat and Felix, new readers in Freemantle who have surpassed local records, by taking collections and asking for donations.

STOP PRESS:

The Marxist Weekend School final rally included a collection in the *Militant* fighting fund which raised the magnificent sum of £1,212 (this will be included in next week's figures).

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.

LPYS 'Fighting for our future' T shirts (red, yellow and green on white). Available now from Lesley Phillips, 5 Alverstone House, Kennington Park Road, London SE11 5 TS.
M, L, XXL for £4 or for £4.50 get an enormous baggy one! Cheques to: 'London LPYS Campaign Fund' and add 25p p&p.

SCHOOL STUDENTS UNION: recruitment leaflets—£8 per 1,000, stencils for leaflets—70p each, posters—£5 per 50, activists pamphlets—20p each (orders over 20, 15p each). Badges—20p, Stickers—£10 per 1,000. All prices include p&p. From YTURC, c/o 109 Rannoch Road, London W6.

TROTSKY Commemoration Meeting on C-90 tape: Dave Hemson—the Struggle in South Africa. Ted Grant—the life and ideas of Trotsky. £1.25 plus 25p postage. From World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5 HB. Also available: C-90 The Rise of Bolshevism Tape 1. The 1860's to 1890's by Alan Woods. To accompany the articles in the MIR. Also £1.25 plus 25p P&P.

PARLIAMENTARY Selection: Enfield North CLP invites applications for prospective parliamentary candidate. We recognise that white middle class males are already over represented in the PLP. This equal opportunity Labour Party particularly welcomes applications from members of ethnic and minority organisations within the labour movement. Closing date for nominations, first post 6 December. All replies to Secretary, Enfield North CLP, 324 High Street, Ponders End, Enfield, Middlesex.

WEST MIDLANDS Labour Unity Conference. Saturday 21 September 10.30am to 4pm. Speakers include Dave Nellist MP, Derek Hatton, deputy leader Liverpool Council and Ian Schofield (Senior Steward, Rover). Venue Dr Johnsons House, Bull St, Birmingham city centre. £2 per delegate to P Pritchard, 115 Ridgeway, Edgbaston, Birmingham 17.

MILITANT Liverpool Broad-sheet 'Defend our City' 25p (including postage) Orders of 10 or more 10p each. To Circulation Department, 3-13 Hepscoth Rd. London E9 5HB.

MILITANT FF pocket address books, Diaries 60p, plastic paper sleeves 20p, pens 20p, bookmarks 40p plus post to: Militant, 10 Rodney Court, Anson Drive, Sholing, Southampton, SO2 8RU.

CASSETTE TAPES with two issues of *Militant* (one each side). Available fortnightly. £3.50 per quarter, £13 for year.

Now available on cassette: all centre-page articles from issue 730-755. Send either seven blank C-90 cassettes or £6.30 payable to *Militant* tapes, 18 Blandford Grove, Woodhouse, Leeds 2. Phone: (0532) 455936.

MAKE some Fighting Fund for your area *Militant* "No Slave Labour On YTS" stickers now available. Price: £1.50 for 100—but they must be sold for a donation! Send order to *Militant*, 3-13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB. Cheques/POs made payable to *Militant*.

WANTED—FOREIGN stamps, football programmes and cigarette coupons for FF. K McKay, 5c Cedar Place, Barr Head, Glasgow G78 2JT.

MILITANT MINER POSTERS: "Miners unite, no splits". Bulk orders from Circulation Department, 3-13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB. Price 50p per dozen (post free).

"YORKSHIRE" *Militant* badges, enamelled metal badge, red fist on white rose. £1 each plus 20p p&p. Free postage on orders of 10 or over. All proceeds to FF. Orders and cheques to: Mike Gibbs, 37 Lincoln Street, Wakefield. Phone 386845.

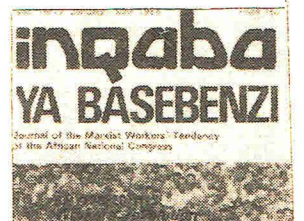
Militant Meetings

ABERYSTWYTH: Weekly *Militant* discussion groups. Details, phone Alan Huyton on 615911.

MILITANT Marxist Discussion Group meetings held monthly in Swindon. Phone Martin on 24796 for details.

CENTRAL LONDON LPYS Disco. Saturday 21 September 8pm. Late bar. The Market Tavern Pub, York Way, (corner of Copenhagen St.), Islington, N1.

WANTED: Co-op stamps. Loose, part or full books for F/F. Send to Circulation Dept, 3/13 Hepscoth Road London E9 5HB.



The latest copy of *Inqaba Ya Basebenzi*, the journal of the Marxist Workers Tendency of the African National Congress contains an excellent perspectives article: *Workers revolution or racial civil war*.

Subscribe now! A year's subscription £2.80, Airmail £7.90. From Inqaba, BM Box 1719, London WC1 N3XX.

Marxist Daily Building Fund

	£		£
Eastern	3015	Scotland East	2238
East Midlands	3350	Scotland West	2546
Humberside	1847	Southern	4095
London NE	3524	South West	939
London NW	4151	Wales East	1960
London SE	2148	Wales West	1546
London SW	2184	West Midlands	2129
Lancashire	606	Yorkshire	1901
Manchester	2658	National	1302
Merseyside	5197		
Northern	3384		
			50,720

This week
£161

REMEMBER ALL that talk about law and order by leaders of the scabs during the miners strike? Strikers could do nothing right in the eyes of the press, but the scab leaders could do no wrong.

But Ken Foulstone, leader of the working miners has let the side down a little bit. He has been jailed for burglary. His children got fed up with him spouting about law and order after he had been bragging about his ill gotten gains from the night shift! They wrote to Paul Foot of the *Daily Mirror* about his illicit activities!

Poor old Ken! Not only has he been jailed but he's lost his job as well—just like

all the strikers framed on riot charges and other offences—except that the NCB have told Ken he will be free to reapply for a job with them when he comes out.

But the press were "unable" to give this widespread coverage because it might prejudice another case going through the courts at the moment. Ken is taking the NUM to court!

If you want to know the truth about what is really going on in the movement, we need a more frequent *Militant*. So keep the money coming in for the Marxist Daily Building Fund. Donations this week include £25 from a reader in Essex, £17 from two supporters, Dave Wilson and Glen Heron from the Houghton/Washington area and £10 from a comrade in Staffordshire.

By Dave Campbell

**LIVERPOOL
A SOCIALIST
COUNCIL**

LIVERPOOL LABOUR

NOW THAT the fight to defend Liverpool City Council is entering its decisive phase, we are printing an edited version of a feature which appeared in a special broadsheet, produced by *Militant* in June. Here is the evidence—jobs, houses and services which the Labour council has defended and expanded since it came to power.

Battle is now joined, as the Tory government moves to try and crush the councillors' courageous stand. It is up to the whole labour movement to ensure that it is the council which is victorious.

Unions back the council

LIVERPOOL local authority trade unions are moving into action to defend the city council.

At a mass meeting of over 450 local authority shop stewards in the city in June, with only a handful of votes against the meeting overwhelmingly backed a six point plan:

- ★ All-out strike action by all council workers if any action is taken against the Labour councillors.
- ★ All sections and branches of the council's union membership to hold urgent workplace meetings to discuss the situation.
- ★ Join in a massive campaign alongside the City Council and the City Labour Party to gain the support of the people of Liverpool, other trade unions and local authority workers nationally, for Liverpool's stand.
- ★ Call on all unions that have either left the Liverpool Joint Shop Stewards Committee or have never been involved to affiliate, to guarantee a united campaign.
- ★ Call on all trade unionists to withhold co-operation with the District Auditors in their attempts to secure information with which to surcharge councillors.

Frank Bowen, vice chair of the Liverpool Council JSSC said: "This plan is now well



Photo: Militant

Transport workers march in support of the council earlier this year.

underway, with mass meetings taking place amongst the workforce. So far there has been overwhelming rank and file support for the council. When the District Auditors turned up on council premises

they received no co-operation from trade unionists, they were shown the door and the locks on the rooms they tried to use were changed".



YOU BE THE J

Build solidarity

THE STAND taken by Liverpool City Council is in the best traditions of the labour movement. Like Poplar council in 1920 and the Clay Cross councillors in 1973, the Liverpool councillors are prepared to suffer personal hardship in order to defend the local communities they were elected to represent.

When the struggle against rate capping began earlier this year Liverpool, in solidarity with other Labour councils, refused to set a rate despite severe misgivings about this tactic. As Liverpool deputy leader Derek Hatton said; "We have always believed that a budget should be published. It is right that the local workers know what a local authority wants to do. It should clearly set out its programme and mobilise support

around it."

Liverpool hasn't drifted into confrontation with the government. Continuing on from its victory over the government last year, at each stage of its campaign the tactics of the council's Labour group have been consciously worked out with the District Labour Party and trade unions.

This campaign must now go into top gear, with mass meetings and mass activity. If one single councillor is surcharged or disqualified from office an all-out strike by the council workforce must take place. Already when the Tories' District Auditors went into Liverpool on Friday 21 June to begin their work of punishing the Labour councillors, they received short shrift from the workforce and were thrown out of the town hall.

How Liverpool has been blitzed by the Tories

JOBS

- Since 1979 Liverpool has lost 55,000 jobs, including a third of the city's manufacturing jobs.
- Under the Liberal/Tory council administration (1975-82) 4,400 council jobs went.
- 60,000 people are unemployed in Liverpool—some areas of the city have 90 per cent youth unemployment.

HOUSING

- Between 1980-83 no municipal family accommodation was built.
- Between 1979-83 under the Liberal/Tory administration rates increased 100 per cent, rents 120 per cent; council rents were the highest in the country outside London.
- 22,000 people are on the council waiting list.
- 20,000 homes need urgent repair work.

Liberals' record

THE LIBERALS, backed up by the Tories and the five renegade 'Labour' councillors, led the opposition to Labour's jobs and houses budget at the city council meeting on June 14. The Liberal 'alternative' would have meant a cut in Liverpool's budget of £37 million—and 5,000 jobs going.

This is in line with the Liverpool Liberals' past record, when they led the council in alliance with the Tories (see table). In an interview with the *Daily Mail* (22 February 1984) Sir Trevor boasted that one of the main achievements of his reign was: "Cutting the labour force from 35,000 to 30,000... it was admin we slashed".

For all their 'community concern' and 'radical' talk, the Liberals are no more than the other party of big business: they are quite prepared to do the Tory government's dirty work for them, the only difference being that they heave a heavy sigh when they cut jobs and services. They recently received a handout of £188,000 from the British School of Motoring—the biggest company donation to a political party in history. Don't be fooled—the Liberals are no more than the Tories' second eleven.

SINCE LABOUR was

- ★ Stopped a three per cent cut in the
- ★ Created an extra 1,000 jobs in day taken on a further 100 YTS train week with proper training and a gua
- ★ Plans a £100 a week minimum w employees.
- ★ Started building 2,369 new muni
- ★ Committed £51 million in grants to ment funds for Housing Associatio to improve the environment of H
- ★ Five new nursery class projects a

LABOUR PREPARES FOR ACTION



ILLEGAL

JUDGE Alan Handman

City campaign

Similarly, moves by the Tories to send in commissioners to take over the running of the council must be met head-on. During Liverpool's fight last year the *Sunday Times* considered the problems commissioners would face: "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 grand office and pretend to run the city".

Workers in the private sector must be involved in defence of the council, with a city-wide general strike. That support is there. On the 7 March demonstration car, rail and print workers marched alongside council workers. That solidarity must be built on to ensure the success of a city-wide general strike.

In the broader labour movement, resolutions of support

must be raised at all Labour Party and trade union branches demanding that the Labour Party and trade union leadership gives firm and clear support to the struggle of these councils.

Solidarity action must be prepared in the form of a one day national strike of all local authority workers with mass demonstrations and meetings.

The National Local Authority Co-ordinating Committee, representing workers from 40 local authorities must immediately put forward its statement of aims, which includes organising solidarity action if commissioners are put into run local authorities or if individual councillors face legal victimisation. Approaches must also be made to all groups of local authority workers not yet involved in NLACC.

lected in 1983 it has

council workforce, saving 1,000 jobs.

y-care facilities, nurseries, etc. It has
es, topping up their wages to £52 a
ranteed job at the end of their scheme.

ge and a 35-hour week for all council

ipal homes.

home owners, £12.7 million improve-
s and Co-operatives and £3.6 million
using Association areas.

e being built with six more planned.

LABOUR HAS begun to carry out its election promise of building new municipal homes—not the rabbit-warren, multi-storey nightmares of the past, but proper semi-detached houses with front and back gardens. Working class people are entitled to quality housing and a decent environment, and the Labour council are determined to provide it.

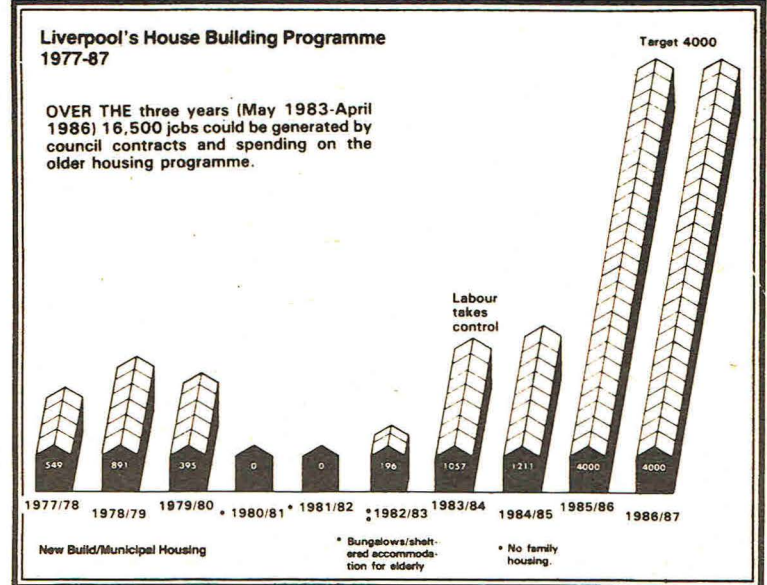


Photo: Dave Sinclair.

Party mobilises support

THE TORIES are beginning their legal attempts to bludgeon Liverpool into line. The 49 Liverpool Labour councillors have been surcharged £106,000.

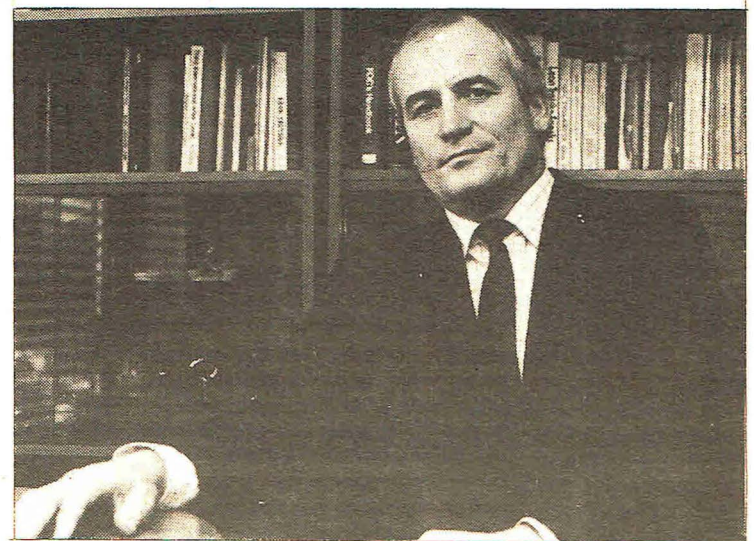
But as far as the Liverpool Labour group are concerned they are not going to be deflected from their duty to defend jobs and services. City Councillor and President of the Liverpool District Labour Party Tony Mulhearn said:

"The District Labour Party has begun its campaign in support of the council. Already every house in the city has been leafleted. Estate canvasses and public meetings are being organised. Stalls with petitions in shopping centres have had scores of people queueing up to sign them.

"We will not be intimidated by this legal threat from the District Auditors, who are acting on behalf of the Tory government. We received a mandate from the people of Liverpool to make no cuts in jobs and services, of creating new jobs and building more homes, and not to increase rents or rates to pay for Tory cutbacks. We intend to carry these policies out.

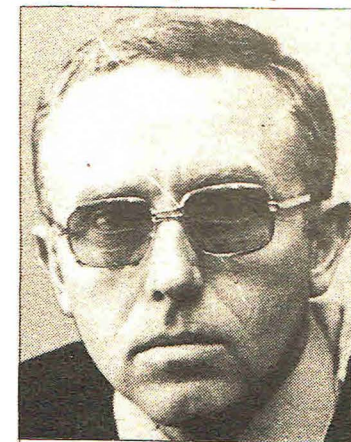
"We are appealing on a national scale to all Labour local authorities, and in turn the Liverpool council trade unions are appealing to their national combines, to mobilise support not only for Liverpool but also Lambeth and Merseyside County Council, who all face threats from district auditors.

"We are also demanding a commitment from the Labour Party National Executive and the



Councillor Tony Mulhearn, President of Liverpool District Labour Party.

Parliamentary Labour Party that they stand by party policy, as outlined in composite 44 passed at



Terry Fields MP Photo: Militant

the 1984 Labour conference. They must back all the councils facing the Tory legal threat".

Liverpool's five Labour MPs—Terry Fields, Eric Heffer, Eddie Loyden, Bob Wareing and Bob Parry support the council's stand. Terry Fields, MP for Broadgreen who only takes a worker's average wage out of his parliamentary salary and gives the rest back to the labour movement, said:

"The elected representatives of Liverpool will not let the people down. They have been let down too often in the past and they deserve better. We are not going to dirty our hands doing the Tories' butchery of jobs and services in an already ravaged Liverpool. Liverpool's people will not be crushed by this or any other government".

Photo: Militant

Argentina

Workers rebuild, but question their leaders

ON 23 May a general strike shook the whole of Argentina. Some 200,000 workers from every area congregated in the 'Plaza de Mayo' Buenos Aires, to protest against government policy.

This was the second general strike in 17 months of Alfonsín's government, due to the serious economic crisis. Inflation and unemployment are ever on the increase. In April, for example, wholesale prices rose so fast that the annual inflation forecast reached 2,525 per cent.

Argentina is approaching a hyperinflationary state, like Bolivia. This would be catastrophic for the economy in general and particularly the working class.

Unemployment is growing alarmingly. The official figure of 15% is false. Vast numbers of unemployed occupy themselves in any marginal activity to survive. The wave of factory closures and sackings is very strong, and the real unemployment figure may be between 30% and 40%. The dictatorship destroyed a third of the country's industry, and Alfonsín has done nothing to reverse this deindustrialisation.

Government incomes policy is a frontal attack on the workers. The monthly wage increases only reach 90% of inflation. In the first quarter of 1985, workers' buying power probably fell by 21%. Struggles are inevitable. The leaders of the CGT union federation were negotiating a social pact called the 'Concertation' for nearly a year but this is now becoming politically unviable. Workers' struggles grew to such a point that the directors of the CGT could not avoid a plan of struggle with big meetings nationwide leading to a general strike.

The Peronist directors of the CGT did not want to put too much pressure on the Alfonsín government, but they had no choice if they wanted to keep control of the union. They do not see the 24-hour general strike as a preparatory step towards more advanced forms of struggle, but as a safety valve to release some of the pressure in a permanent situation of local strikes, which were in any case threatening to take on a national character.

The union leaders in Argentina are a reactionary bureaucracy whose methods have more in common with the Mafia than workers democracy. Beating and murdering of opposing workers' leaders is common practice. Many workers were handed over to the 1976-83 dictatorship. But for historical reasons they still have support.

Saul Ubaldini, (one of the four general secretaries of the CGT), toured the most important cities in the country. He had to respond to a new spirit in the working

By an Argentinian correspondent

class. In one meeting Ubaldini declaimed: "If the government does not change its economic policy, it must go." a phrase later quoted by the Radical Party government to accuse the strike of being 'anti-democratic'. The government launched a big media campaign to break the strike.

The government's panic reached its highest point on the day before the strike. The minister of employment, Barrionuevo, in a televised press conference, threatened sanctions against public sector workers. He said he did not recognise the CGT as the only workers' leaders, they were just one union group out of many. That was why, he said, the strike could not be declared illegal, because there was not one central union calling it!

Ready to fight

The answer to his delirious comments soon came. The strike was a success in Buenos Aires, Cordoba, Rosario, Santa Fe and Argentina's other big working class cities. However the mass meetings were not like the usual Peronist meetings which are just rallies. Most of the 200,000 workers present were trying to listen to what the CGT leader was telling them.

When some group started to play the bass-drums, a tradition at such meetings, the audience demanded silence. Such a seemingly small detail means an entire change of attitude!

Most of Ubaldini's speech was totally ambiguous, but when he said that "The government's fire should not be turning against the people but against the IMF," or "We cannot forget that there are men in the government who clapped when the murderous bombs of June 1955 massacred our people", the crowd cheered their support.

Ubaldini put forward no concrete objective for the fight, but when he repeated his demagogic call for the Radical government to "change its social and economic policy or go", the crowd chanted back "It must go! It must go!"

Discontent with government economic policy amongst the workers has now spread to sections of the middle classes who have progressively been ruined. The government is resorting to mere insults. Alfonsín called Ubaldini a 'crybaby' and said "Argentinians have to choose between two at-

titudes, either to stay lamenting and criticising the government, or to get to work half as hard as their grandfathers did." He blames so-called 'greedy' workers for all the economic problems and punishes them through government policies.

The general strike showed though that workers are ready to fight to change things. They are already fighting a hard internal battle in the unions to displace the UGT bureaucracy, but they still control most of the CGT for their own ends and act as an enormous brake on the movement.

The bourgeoisie knows that this general strike was not due to the union bureaucracy, but had been forced by the growing struggles of the working class. They know the leaders can do nothing but climb aboard the train of struggle, even if they lead from the guard's van rather than the vanguard.

The bureaucracy in fact fear the working class who are putting more and more pressure on them. Their capitalist class instincts tell them that this uncontrollable force must be fought.

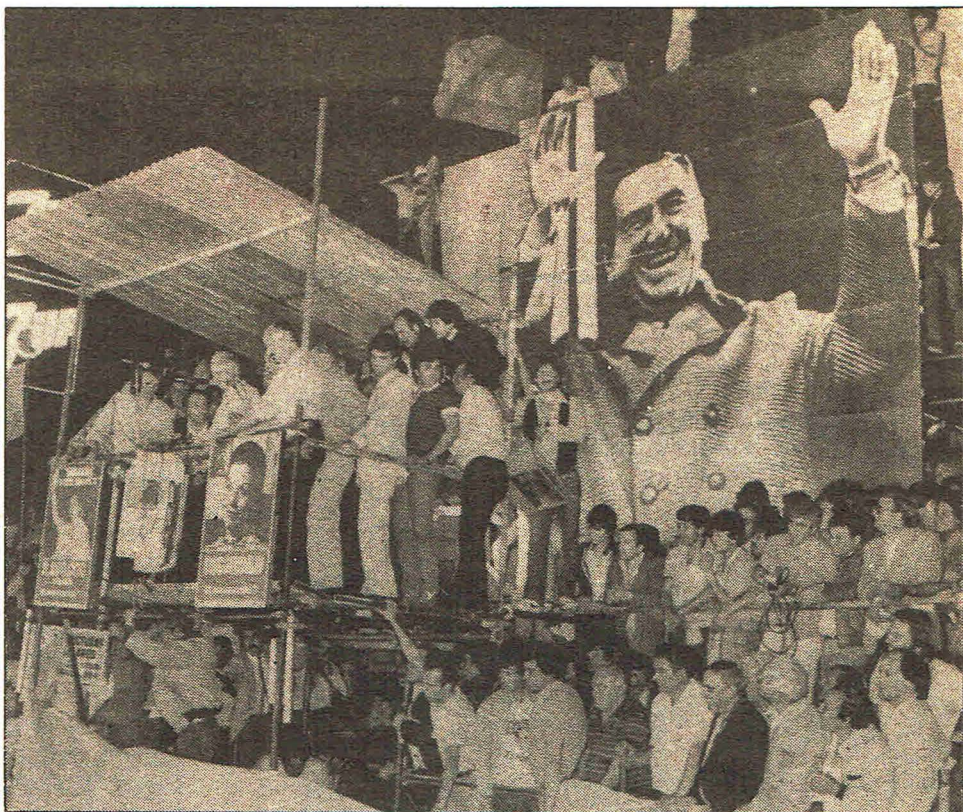
Nonetheless the 23 May strike was a magnificent show of strength by the Argentine working class which is beginning to recover the historical strength which the seven years of dictatorship could not crush, with all its repressive apparatus, thousands of deaths and 30,000 'disappearances'.

The general strike was a landmark. Today the workers have to fight on two fronts; against the bourgeoisie that exploits them, and against the bureaucracy holding back its fight for emancipation. The first steps have been taken. The bureaucrats will return to negotiate with the government, betraying the most urgent needs of the working class. But such experiences are forcing the workers to redouble their efforts to cleanse their organisations and transform them into authentic tools of struggle.

The Argentinian ruling class can no longer satisfy even the most elementary demands of the working class. In the next few years workers will have the clear choice of either submitting to the most horrifying misery or taking power into their own hands.

SINCE THE report above came in from a correspondent in Argentina there has been another general strike and another mass rally in Buenos Aires, on 29 August.

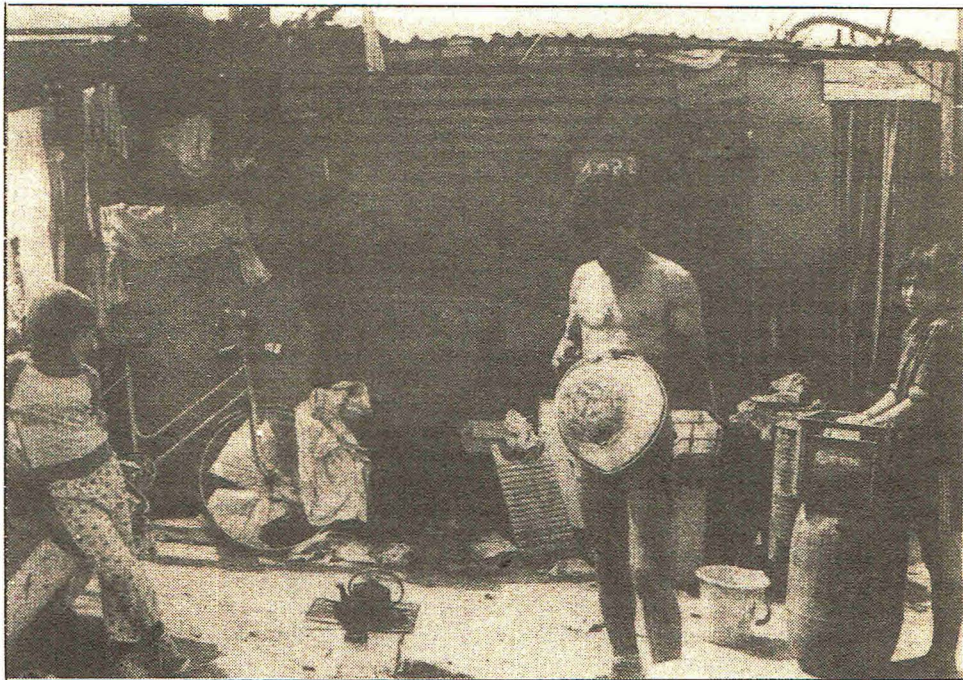
For all the press claims that the Alfonsín government has convinced the Argentinian people of his policies, unemployment, inflation and opposition continue to rise.



Peronist election campaign in 1983 under the leadership of extreme right-wing union leaders.



Protests under the dictatorship about disappearances. Some Peronist-affiliated unions' leaders implicated in the disappearances are still in office.



A shanty town in Argentina.

THE GENERAL strike showed the invalidity of the 'social pact' which the bosses, the government and union leaders were trying to push. The deep economic crisis does not allow the government to give any concessions that can satisfy, even temporarily, workers' aspirations. The government does not satisfy even its own bourgeois backers.

Sections of industrial capitalism complain that credit is too expensive (they pay interest of around 40 per cent per month). As they do not wish to risk their own capital, which they invest in highly profitable financial speculation, the enterprises do not invest and decapitalise very quickly. Investment fell by 17 per-

cent last year and 50 per cent between 1981 and 1984. Government policy favours speculation at the expense of production.

That is why the government faces criticism from Argentinian private enterprise. The economic crisis not only forces each class to defend implacably its own interests, but amongst the ruling class it destroys less profitable productive sectors, and boosts the interests of the parasites. This is leading the country to economic ruin.

No 'harmony'

The entrepreneurs tried to lean on the union leaders to apply the bosses' policy. In exchange, they offer only their 'understanding' of

the hard problems the working class have to endure. Some capitalists even pretended to support May's general strike but at the last minute 'changed their minds'. They wanted to use the strike to pressurise the government towards an even more anti-working class policy!

The CGT leaders, though, were seeking the support of these entrepreneurs to show that 'all the people' were protesting against government economic policy. This is the traditional idea of the Peronist leaders.

These leaders do not seek to transform society; their idea is to try to harmonise the two classes. But reality is breaking this policy of alliance.

The land of coups

“SMALL UNSUCCESSFUL coup in Thailand—no real change”, sounds like an imaginary silly season headline in Fleet Street. But last week’s failed military putsch shows the deep crisis in one of the United States’ main Asian allies.

The failed coup on 9 September lasted a mere ten hours. The insurgents, who had styled themselves a “revolutionary council” failed to gain sufficient support. They were allowed to leave the country in exchange for the safe return of the country’s Air Force commander. Some trade unionists who, voluntarily or otherwise, backed the coup, were less lucky. The rebels said their attempted takeover was due to deterioration in the economy and the social effects of the government’s austerity measures.

There has been a long history of military control in Thailand since the end of absolute monarchy 50 years ago; only three years of “democratic experiment” (1973–76) have been allowed.

Even the present four-party civilian government has an unelected upper house totally dominated by the military. The Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda is a former general.

Thailand has been trying to ape the development of the area’s “wonder economies” South Korea and Singapore. There has been some development of capitalist agriculture but world prices for raw materials are still very low. The main effect has been depopulation of the countryside as the poorest peasants and landless pour into the cities where women and children are used as slave labour in the rag trade.

An estimated 700,000 women between 15 and 25 are forced into the infamous prostitution trade of Bangkok, catering for Western tourists.

Inflation has hit the population hard. The processing of heroin is a staple source of income in parts of Thailand. Corruption is believed to take a third of the national budget with the military’s fingers always hovering over any source of wealth.

Military spending

Even the positive developments, the growth of some industry, has the disadvantage, from the ruling class viewpoint, of developing for the first time a sizeable working class.

Thailand is an ally of the United States, for reasons obvious from the map, the country’s closeness to the deformed workers’ states of Kampuchea, Laos, Vietnam and China. From the days of the Vietnam war Bangkok became a ‘recreation centre’ for American GIs while the USAF built air bases throughout Thailand. Now Thailand is the staging ground for guerilla attacks on the Vietnamese-backed government in Kampuchea.

The guerillas are members of a coalition including the Khmer Rouge, supporters of Pol Pot, whose vicious dictatorship ruined Kampuchea in four years of genocide and famine. If the coalition were to break down the Thai

government say they would support Khmer Rouge alone. The guerilla attacks are supported and financed for strategic reasons by the USA.

The Thai government have put themselves on a war footing, greatly increasing military spending to a current budget of \$1.7 billion, importing huge quantities of American weapons like F-16 jet fighters. The navy and air force are being modernised, and there is talk of Thailand becoming a US missile base.

This not only maintains the importance of the military bureaucracy; it also saps the economy. Despite huge loans and even free grants from a grateful Washington, only one item looms larger than defence in the Thai budget, that is debt-servicing costs, interest on international loans.

The government devalued the currency last November and introduced austerity measures which cut living standards and also halted vital state investment in steel and minerals.

There are obvious splits in both the military and the civilian wings of the ruling class. The coalition itself includes parties based on the military and finance bosses. The capitalists fear a severe recession once the present world boom ends; many have doubts about future developments under the military.

The country is still virtually a military dictatorship. The government regularly declares a state of emergency and martial law in parts of Thailand to give carte blanche when dealing with a small force of “Communist” guerillas.

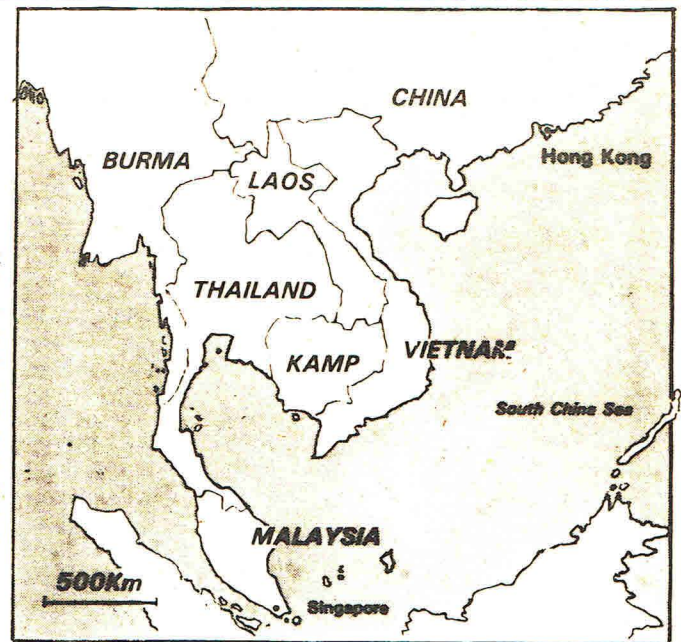
But the Anti-Communist Activities Act has always allowed detention without

trial for 480 days. The Act gives rewards for rebels’ bodies which has led to non-political peasants being murdered for cash. Oppositionists are still charged with *lèse majesté* and jailed for criticising the supposedly “constitutional” monarch King Bhumibol. This is the country Reagan uses to defend “democracy” in South East Asia!

Working class

The ruling class are still uncertain about the balance between repression and democratisation. Fear of a coming explosion forced elections for the lower house, but the upper house, the Senate, is still appointed by the King and comprises 90 per cent military men.

The military are no longer allowed to hold major political posts but soldiers like General Prem merely resigned their officerships. The ruling class are more wary of military coups now, they even fear that radicalised sections of the army could take action against



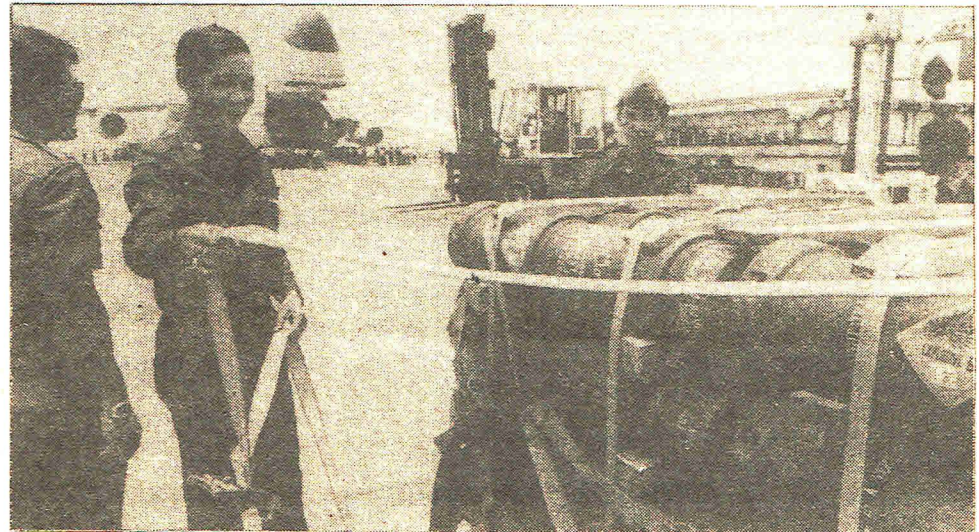
capitalism if social conditions future deteriorate. But they also wonder if their system can survive without military crutches.

The future will depend on the small but growing working class. The small Communist Party of Thailand has been savagely repressed by the regime for many years. The CPT’s former allegiance to the Peking bureaucracy led to their abandonment of the working class for a rural-based guerilla strategy. This has totally failed.

Now that China has given

support for Thailand in its proxy war with Vietnam the movement is even more split. One former CP leader who gave himself up is reportedly now working with the regime.

Thai capitalism has not the resources to solve its problems, while Stalinism, of both Moscow and Peking orientation, is prepared to try to compromise with capitalism. It will be up to the working class to create the leadership needed to end the cycle of economic exploitation and military repression.



Another contingent of armaments from the USA.

South Africa—correction

A PROOFREADING error in last week’s *Militant* gave a misleading impression. The *Inqaba ya Basebenzi* press statement on the African National Congress should have read:

“The way forward is to systematically build the strength of the mass movement round the growing power of the organised black working class, uniting the militant youth and workers

in well-planned nationwide action campaigns against apartheid and capitalism.

“There is no other way at this stage to effectively take the struggle beyond the flaming townships streets and into the camp of the oppressors.”

Unfortunately the omission of the word ‘other’ gives an obviously false impression of *Inqaba*’s position.

Dunnes’ strike

MANAGEMENT AT Dunnes stores in Dublin have denied press reports this week that they had agreed to phase out South African goods in their stores. This has come as a serious blow to strikers at the firm’s Henry Street store who have been on strike for 14 months against the store’s handling of South African goods (see *Militant*, 14 June).

The determination and bravery of the strikers has won workers’ backing in Ireland and Britain and heartened black trade unionists and youth in South Africa itself. Dunnes’ workers have defied intimidation before and despite their disappointment that press rumours were premature, shop steward Karen Gearon said: “Our strike will go on”.

The workers were obeying an official union instruction when they refused to handle South African goods; they need the backing of all workers. Messages of support and donations to: Karen Gearon, c/o IDATU, 9 Cavendish Road, DUBLIN 1.

Militant International Review Special offer

TAKE THE opportunity to buy the back issues of the *Militant International Review* from issue number 10, March 1976 to issue number 29 Summer 1985. Write to World Socialist Books, 3–13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB, stating which issue(s) you want to purchase, at 80p per copy, plus 20p postage and packing (60p postage for five copies or more). All cheques to be made payable to ‘World Socialist Books’.

—These include:—

MIR No 18 Winter 1980
CONTENTS: Forward into the ‘eighties. The forgotten revolution: the Hungarian Soviet republic 1919. Letter from Madrid.

MIR No 19 Spring 1980
CONTENTS: The crisis of Thatcherism. Russia: reform or political revolution? USA perspectives. If sharks were people and questions of a reading worker—Brecht. Jack London: The man, the socialist, the fighter.

MIR No 20 Summer 1980
CONTENTS: Britain’s crisis: are import controls the answer? Forty years since Trotsky’s assassination. Poland’s winter of discontent.

MIR No 21 Winter 1980–81
CONTENTS: British capitalism faces catastrophe. India—the crumbling state. The 1919 Belfast engineering strike.

MIR No 22 June 1982
CONTENTS: Falklands war, what lessons for the labour movement? El Salvador: which way forward for the revolution? Marxism and the state: Who really threatens democracy?

MIR No 23 October 1982
CONTENTS: Labour’s programme ‘82. Crisis in the Soviet Union. International notes—Brazil/Spain/banking crisis.

MIR No 24 November 1983
CONTENTS: Editorial. Labour after Brighton. Grenada invasion. Argentine elections. Book reviews. Latin America on the brink. Letter from Chile.

MIR No 25 Spring 1984
CONTENTS: Editorial. Lenin’s last struggle. Andropov and after. The lessons of the Belgian general strike. George Grosz—the artist and revolutionary. Economic notes. Book reviews.

MIR No 26 Summer 1984
CONTENTS: Editorial. Britain, the real situation. Character of the European revolution. Engels and human develop-

ment. Hanging on the Tories’ coat tails. Economic notes. Book reviews.

MIR No 27 Autumn 1984
CONTENTS: Editorial. The choice before the Labour Party. Letter to the editor. Marxism and the Nicaraguan revolution. The Asturian Commune. Economic notes. Book reviews.

MIR No 28 Winter 1985
CONTENTS: Editorial. Women in revolt. From bureaucrat to dissident. Settling a debt—a short story. Economic notes. A regime on trial. Five letters by Trotsky. Book reviews.

MIR No 29 Summer 1985
CONTENTS: Editorial: How Labour can win. Arms race in the 1980s. Sinn Fein blocks workers’ unity. Part one of the History of Bolshevism. Famine, How India won independence, Spencer’s union, Book reviews. Economic Notes.



Issue number 30 out soon.

Letters

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

Jobs or just hard-up?

Dear Comrades,
Our local free paper recently carried a front page story: "Yobs who scorn jobs". In this article a local estate agent complained that the applicants who came to him for job interviews were "a staggering collection of useless pieces of humanity, one was wearing a silver bomber jacket and the dirtiest jeans I've ever set eyes on. He had come for an interview as a trainee

negotiator. I wouldn't think of employing him to sweep the office."

I'd like to suggest to the estate agent that he try and buy decent clothes and shoes on the money you get from the DHSS. He goes on to say that "youngsters won't conform, accept discipline or knuckle under."

The time when the workers would bow and scrape to the boss have gone. Perhaps he'd like to bring those days back.

Yours fraternally
Chris Williams
Bournemouth

Residential homes

Dear Comrades,
I worked in a residential old peoples home in Blackburn. Last week I was sacked for no reason other than the owner wanted a "change of cook". The working conditions were hazardous and typical of many of these private homes that are opening up supposedly to give care and attention to old people before they die.
For 20 hours a week I took home £30 and was not only expected to cook on ovens in bad repair but to do all sorts of other jobs like answering the phone and the door, and keeping an eye on the old people when the nurses were upstairs.

I had to really badger the owner for protective oven gloves and burn spray and food was often skimped. The inmates pay £160 a week to stay in the home, but I was told to cut ten fish in half for 16 residents. They sleep two to three people in a room and recently when someone died there was no one qualified on the premises to deal with the situation. Hours of the nurses were also cut to take on a YTS worker who had to work a full 40 hour week.

I'd recommend that anyone working in these homes who has been treated unfairly or has witnessed bad treatment or conditions to publicise them and join in with any campaigns to improve them.

Yours fraternally
Jill
Blackburn

Question time

Dear Comrades,
Whilst staying in Derry recently a number of comrades and myself managed to participate in a Robin Day-style question time which was being covered by a local radio station.

After submitting a written question I was called upon to read it out: "Does the panel support the campaign to reinstate the sacked miners?" The panel all answered 'no' and then went into great length to explain why, which in short can be put into one word: "violence".

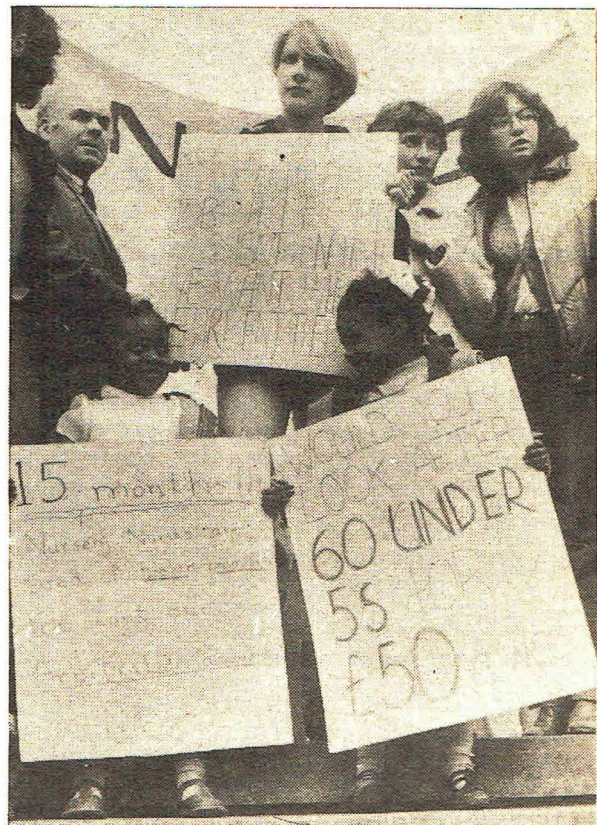
I replied that in Scotland alone around 200 miners had been sacked, many for the 'violent crime' of stepping off a pavement etc. and not one had been reinstated. I

then told of an old miner at Bates pit in Northumberland who, having never been in trouble in his life, was sacked for keeping watch whilst some young ones collected shingle off a slag-heap to warm pensioners homes during the winter months.

To my annoyance one of the panel joyfully branded this miner a criminal who deserved all he got.

If miners are to be sacked for the 'violent crime' of stepping off a pavement or helping OAP's let alone defending jobs and communities, then this Tory government should be sacked for the criminal acts it has relentlessly carried out against our class.

Yours fraternally
Bob Harker
Gateshead East
Labour Party



Nursery facilities are vital to relieve the pressures of child care. But nurseries are increasingly coming under attack due to local government spending limits.

A letter which appeared in the *Daily Express*, Friday 13 September.

Why I can't

I HAVE been a Conservative all my working life, but I cannot feel any sorrow for Patrick Jenkin or his wife on his losing a lucrative job as Environment Secretary. At a time when Mrs Thatcher is trying to win the support of the electorate, especially the unemployed, I cannot see how a picture of Mr Jenkin and his wife bemoaning their fate can help her cause.

I live in Liverpool; not Toxteth, but in one of the quiet suburbs never mentioned on TV or radio. My children are not muggers, drug addicts or football hooligans. My husband has lost his job (along with thousands of others on Merseyside) three times.

We lost our nice life style, but we couldn't go bleating to any newspaper, we just had to get on with it.

To my knowledge Mr Jenkin did nothing for me, my husband, our family or for Liverpool when he was in power. All I can remember was his photograph from time to time in our local newspaper—saying "Liverpool was her own worst enemy," therefore wiping his hands of us all.

Barbara Stephenson,
Liverpool.

PUTTI

AS AN alternative to sive appeals by the relief work in dist be better if ever annuated person au to deduct £1 per wo to be passed on to charity.

This is less th of cigarettes, and of a pint

will be ever of parti

democratic

Acts of despair

Dear Comrades,
We only have to look at West Germany to see how the world crisis is affecting family life in a country where the workers supposed-ly have it so good.

In West Germany, which has one of the worst records of child abuse, a recent survey showed that several hundred children were battered to death last year. Although only 30,000 cases of child abuse were reported, it was estimated that the real figure was a staggering 1,500,000 being exposed to some form of child battering.

At any one time over six thousand children are being

treated for regular alcohol abuse. A university study showed that one in four children aged between 10 to 15 years had considered suicide! The rate of suicides amongst children has gone up 25 per cent over recent years.

However, it was the last paragraph of the report in *The Times* which graphically portrayed the real picture of life for workers in West Germany. "Every week there are reports of 'family tragedies' where mothers or fathers strangle or shoot their children and then kill themselves in acts of despair over the future".

Yours fraternally
Julie Harris
Poole

SDP hypocrisy

Dear Comrades,
The SDP in its recent conference has condemned members of the NUM who, in their struggle against the Thatcher government, broke a series of unjust laws. The SDP also condemned the stand of Liverpool City Council against the government. Delegates said that the way to change laws (if you think them unjust) is through the ballot box.

Do they condemn blacks in South Africa who are members of the outlawed ANC? Do they condemn the suffragettes when they broke the law on their way to winning suffrage for women? We would hope not since they do claim to be Democrats!!!

What would they have the miners do? Sit back and say 'We cannot have an effective strike—it means breaking those Thatcher laws. We will just have to wait for five years 'till the next Labour government'?

The Liverpool councillors—should they postpone their struggle as it means breaking the law—or should they live up to their election promises?

It is obvious how we should answer the questions. The hypocrisy of the SDP is obvious—break unjust laws in the name of democracy so long as it doesn't happen here in Britain in 1985. Their philosophy is that the class struggle must be kept as far away as possible.

Yours fraternally
Tom Brown
Mossley Hill LPYS

Student protests

Dear Militant,
When school students struck for half a day against conscription onto YTS, Kinnock called them 'dafties'. Perhaps he thought school students were too young to be political.

I wonder what he thinks of the black South African school students boycotting their lessons. They are no older, in fact some are as young as six, but Kinnock dare not insult people who risk their lives to fight against apartheid in the same way as he insulted youth in

Britain. Capitalism puts no age limits on its victims, in whatever country they are. If you're old enough to suffer under the Tories, you're old enough to fight back.

Yours fraternally
Dave Warren
Swansea Labour Party



Desperate for money...

A PARTLY disabled man, desperate for work after six years on the dole and applying for hundreds of jobs, has offered one of his kidneys in exchange for a job: "...I thought it was worth a try in my despair". He explained: "...I would give my right arm to work normally... but its loss would make me helpless. So I wondered what I had to offer that anybody else might possibly make use of which might help me as well".

...and money for free

NO SUCH problems for James, Marquis of Blandford, heir to Blenheim Palace and 11,500 acres of Oxfordshire. On his return from a holiday in Switzerland he is in for a pleasant surprise. He is due to inherit his great-grandmother's trust fund of over a million dollars. At last Jim will be financially independent of his father.

Using some initiative

SEVERAL SCANDALS have erupted over corruption amongst Chinese Communist Party officials. One incident occurred when Hainan, a poor island near Hong Kong was allocated vast amounts to build up a modern infrastructure. Instead, over the next 14 months the money was used, amongst other things, to buy 90,000 cars (more than China as a whole imports annually), three million TV sets and 250,000 video recorders. Banks on the mainland were involved as well as the navy which was shipping the 'merchandise'. It seems that party officials have their own interpretation of China's recent turn towards 'individual enterprise'!



GMWU women on strike against working in asbestos dust. Health and safety conditions for many workers have been undermined over recent years.

Health and safety under attack

Dear Comrades,
At my workplace Freight Rover, a worker who had been injured was receiving treatment at the surgery, during which the nurse received a phone call from the production manager, asking if the worker was

ready to continue working as his absence was affecting production and this was just not on.

This is just one instance in a long line of attacks on our health and safety standards. When one production worker collapsed on his job the stretcher bearers who were sent didn't even know how to set up the stretcher.

At one time there were three surgeries covering a plant with over 2,000

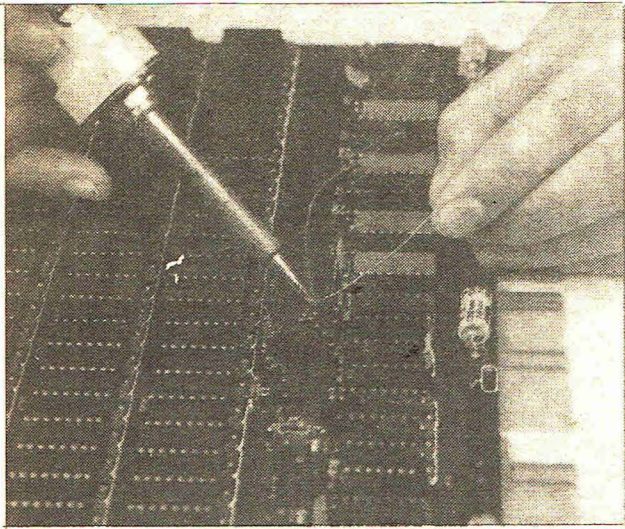
workers, now there is just the one.

These attacks are not going on unopposed, there is growing discontent on the shop floor, which must be channelled through the union by workers becoming active in their branches and joining the fight for a society where the health and safety of workers is the priority.

Yours fraternally
Charlie Taylor
Freight Rover worker

Photo: John Sturrock (Report) II

What technology can do and the system can't



THE MOST noticeable thing about the information technology (IT) industry is the mass of information telling of the great crisis it is in. A large computer would be needed just to keep track of the data detailing the industry's problems.

It is widely recognised that the slump in IT will continue for some time to come—with world-wide implications.

The computer revolution, often described as the third industrial revolution, has massive potential to increase production. At virtually the same time it has shown up the limitations of private, ie capitalist production.

Its easy enough to describe what capitalism hasn't done with new technology: it hasn't addressed any of the huge social problems which exist nationally and internationally.

For instance, it hasn't used technology to alleviate illiteracy. Not only do we have a 'surplus' of teachers but computers would be ideal for a crash programme to eliminate illiteracy.

Poverty in the UK and worldwide increases as does disease. Yet worldwide there are massive food mountains and means to produce food and medicines are underused. The advance in technology in these fields could facilitate a campaign to wipe out starvation and many endemic diseases.

The firms making millions out of 'scarcity' have no interests in eradicating these scourges. The largest computer retailer, Computer Land, even took out advertisements explaining why it wasn't giving anything to Ethiopia. It didn't believe in short term palliatives! Of course it's also part of the long term problem.

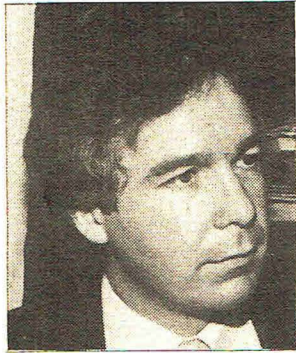
They resist any reforms or improvements for the millions of workers in the industry. On the contrary the industry is noted for its anti-trade unionism; making huge profits in good times and laying off workers in bad times.

Skills and conditions are constantly under attack. They actually see new technology as the way to cut costs in every field, including people's livelihoods.

New technology is by definition an advanced form of production or communication ie. a tool. Skills and benefits should be commensurate.

Instead the strategy is to de-skill, smash unions and introduce casual labour. This is even going on in the newly privatised British Telecom.

It hasn't lived up to the expectations of even the theorists of the private market. It was the small entrepreneurs in the Sunrise (hi-tech) industries which



By Phil Holt
(National Communications Union, national executive, personal capacity)

were to lead the UK out of its industrial decline.

One such Thatcherite hero, Sir Clive Sinclair, has now gone bust after making millions. Crisis rocks the industry with shares falling in most firms.

At one time there was even a danger that BT would be broken up into smaller firms to match this philosophy.

Ironically, such is the crisis, that government, in the form of Lord Lucas has called for mergers to beat off the giants in the international competition.

Rationalisation is taking place all over Europe including the software industry. New technology can see 'one-of' inventions enriching an individual but such is the scale of research needed, coupled with massive levels of investment, that any one who gets too big for their boots soon comes to a sticky end. Lord Lucas estimates that a turnover of at least one billion pounds is needed to "stay in the game."



Sir Clive Sinclair.

The latest figures even show that despite a growth in IT of about 20 per cent, jobs have barely increased by a few per cent with many firms using casual women labour, few per cent, with many firms using casual female labour.

Because of the philosophy of the government (determined by capitalism's short term needs) cuts in education

programmes of all sorts in new tech; schools, universities, MSC, research projects etc are adding further to the growing skills shortage in this field.

Within every multinational there are world plans of production. IT makes it easier to plan and allocate resources.

Capitalist planning is needlessly complicated by the national variations in currencies, stockmarkets, taxes, legal fees, competition etc.

Using computers, tax avoidance becomes easier; movement of capital and goods to take account of varying international factors to make profits—all computerised in to-days world.

Firms like General Motors realise the need to merge with this industry for all sorts of factors—automation, research and more effective world planning.

Although already spending six billion dollars on data processing (with 10,000 such staff worldwide) General Motors has recently bought the computer services company Electronic Data Service (EDA) for two and a half billion dollars, indicating the importance of hi-tech in selling cars. It also has a joint venture with a Japanese robot company.

Arms research

Most governments are heavily investing in new tech but for the worst possible ends—weapons systems, nuclear and non-nuclear.

The US is building a massive computerised nuclear command installation. "Our" navy has invested millions in new computers as have the police which has brought about a *de facto* national police force. Evidence shows that many civil liberties are being abused as a result.

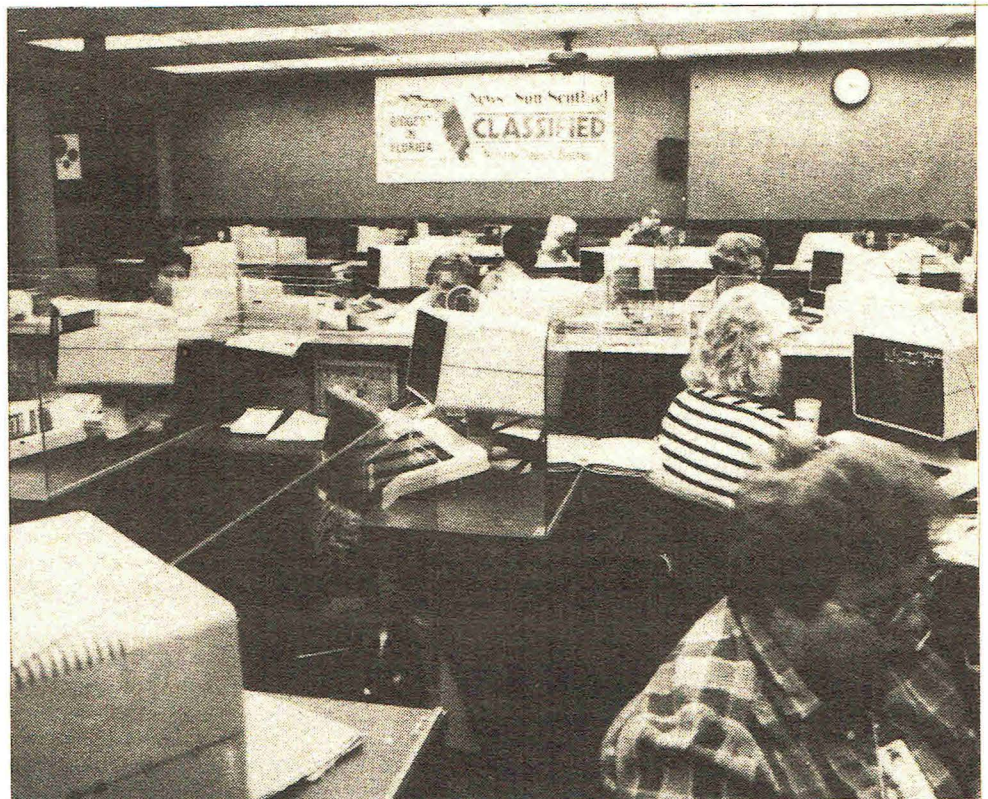
Apart from the huge waste there are major repercussions in the direction of vital resources. The Star Wars project (\$26 billion) and similar European projects are drawing valuable scientists away from commercial and social research.

One positive response to this trend is that organisations of scientists are being formed here and in the US to campaign for the peaceful use of technology.

Top US scientists have stated that it is impossible to write software (the controlling computer intelligence) for such a project as Star Wars. They believe only those who see it as a "grave train" will participate.

The Reagan administration wants to develop this programme in a way that whole industries, universities and communities will be so locked into it and financially dependent on it that it will be irreversible.

They intend to draw in as many countries as possible to make the process unstoppable internationally. All this will be directed by the



New technology in the printing industry is rapidly replacing old typesetting systems. Job losses and greater flexibility follow, but is society as a whole benefitting?

US government and the Pentagon. Is this just the crazy illusion of one senile B-movie cowboy? Nothing could be further from the truth.

As we have said, new technology requires continuing massive investment to develop. Each monopoly needs large projects with massive financial backing which only governments can supply.

It is part and parcel of the present impasse that this coincides with the designs of right wing governments who constantly point to the dangers within and without as a means of diverting attention from the crisis.

In this period of acute decline capitalism can only sustain new technology by endangering the whole of mankind. The multinationals' fundamental interests are tied into increasing military budgets.

In past editions of *Militant* we have given some of the facts and figures explaining and analysing the international crisis of private ownership of the means of production on the one hand and the national state on the other and how new technology does not escape these contradictions.

But socialists also need to explain how a plan of production based on social ownership could utilise the wonderful new technological developments.

As Marx explained over a century ago a new social system develops within the womb of the old. What is happening now, in its negative form, has the merit of demonstrating the massive potential which could be harnessed in a planned socialist society.

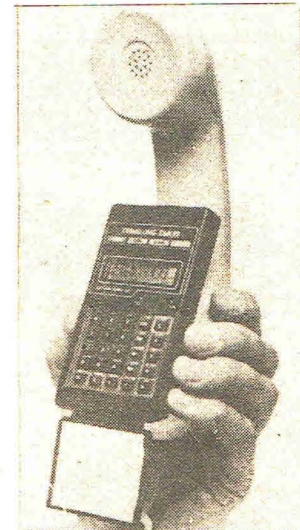
Planning on a world scale: huge complicated world projects; projects vastly complicated because of the many conflicting interests of each capitalist firm or country, or complicated because of the

inherent nature of weapons systems which have to travel so far, so quickly, and react to each other in micro-seconds with destructive force; hi-tec can handle all of this.

Less money, effort and complexity would be required by a socialist plan of production using hi-tec than to meet the present requirements of anarchic capitalism.

Resources could be matched to needs. Wheat mountains to Africa! The enormous military machines as instruments of construction not destruction. There are many projects awaiting such a plan and such resources.

In the field of medicine, computers could not only provide invaluable medical data-bases to assist doctors but projects like a national re-callable cervical cancer screening scheme.



These days you can carry a phone box in your pocket.

In the field of education and research potential is limitless. A world plan would eliminate the huge duplication in research and products (digital telephone exchanges are a good case in point).

Standardisation could enable systems to co-operate with each other. The lack of

standardisation is a cause for great concern and holds up much co-operation and integration even where capitalism desires it. It is the complexity of the conflicting interests which is holding up standardisation—possibly indefinitely under capitalism.

Computerisation of transport systems to identify the quickest and most effective routes would save billions.

Safety

The wiring of factories, offices and homes for IT application could introduce all sorts of safety systems, access to educational and entertainment schemes for the housebound and many services and schemes only just developing.

Robotics could take the drudge and danger from many occupations.

Recent reports have shown that under capitalism, due to faulty human planning the desire to cut costs, computerised safety schemes which go wrong are usually due to incorrect human planning in the first place. This is often because people are not fully trained. Even in military and aerospace systems many specifications were wrong in the first instance.

Social planning using vast databases is possible and is less complex than military or multi-national capitalist planning.

Resources could be directed to socially useful hi-tec projects which could not only rid the world of its social evils but make it a safer place in every sense.

Socialism would cost less than capitalism ie. be more efficient, and bring more benefits to people the world over, co-operating in the use of technology to intergrade and develop all socially needed processes.

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Year long dispute continues;

Teaching Keith Joseph a lesson

THE BREAKDOWN of the Burnham committee meeting last Thursday (12 September), when the local education authority employers actually reduced their offer to 5.8 per cent from the six per cent offered informally before the meeting, marks a decisive new stage in our pay dispute.

The SDP are whistling in the wind: calling for teachers to call off their action while Sir Keith Joseph's new offer is considered—an offer that fools no one except the SDP.

In fact the determination of teachers has hardened over the summer break, contrary to the expectations of the employers.

One obvious factor has been the 'Top People's Salaries Review Body Award'. The head of the Department of Education and Science is to receive an additional £14,500 per year (taking the salary over £60,000) while this same official acts to restrict teachers' pay increase to some £600 per year.

Hardening

The effect of teachers' new determination can be gauged from the more militant stances adopted by the teachers' unions.

The second largest union, the NAS/UWT, has at last fallen into line with the NUT and rejected any deal for the 1985 claim based on conceding conditions of service in exchange for extra money.

Even the more polite professional associations, such as AMMA and the NAHT, are beginning to consider action of a sort. And about time too!

The main burden of the fight, however, is still being carried by the NUT—the union whose salary policy effectively determines the campaign through its majority on the teachers' panel of Burnham (soon to be lost).

Thus the NUT leadership

By Bob Sulatyki
(West London NUT, personal capacity)

has a particular responsibility in this battle, and must resolutely uphold all aspects of our claim.

That means no linking of pay with assessment or conditions of service, a £1,200 pay increase for all teachers and restructuring to dismantle the present unfair and divisive salary structure.

Correctly, the NUT leadership has maintained the first aspect of this policy—for the time being at least. Unfortunately, however, there has been a considerable degree of backsliding over the actual claim itself.

The NUT leadership has apparently decided that as long as the 1985 settlement matches inflation and does not "further erode the relative salaries of teachers", then the task of actually making up the 34 per cent lost in salaries since 1974 can be consigned to longer-term consultations.

The result has been that the union side on Burnham, led by the NUT, have actually dropped down to 6.9 per cent as an acceptable figure for 1985. This is according to the press. There are no denials from the leaders of either the NUT or the NAS/UWT.

Union members are also concerned that the 'flat rating' aspect of the claim has apparently been discarded as the union side's claim has been lowered.

Could this be because 6.9

per cent of a global sum translated into an *across the board* increase would still mean low-scale teachers doing relatively well, but would result in the head teachers doing relatively badly?

Considering the traditional dominance of head teachers' interests in the NUT, this suspicion is rapidly gaining credence.

It is therefore imperative, especially following Thursday's debacle at Burnham, that the NUT clearly and unambiguously return to the £1,200 claim for *all*; the policy agreed by the union special conference last autumn.

The local education authorities are caught between the teachers' claim and government refusal to make up the difference.

Although claims from the LEAs that they are unable to afford more than 5.8 per cent can be viewed sceptically in many cases (particularly when the pleas come from Tory authorities who then go on to argue that even 5.8 per cent can only be paid for by teacher redundancies), there is nevertheless some truth in it.

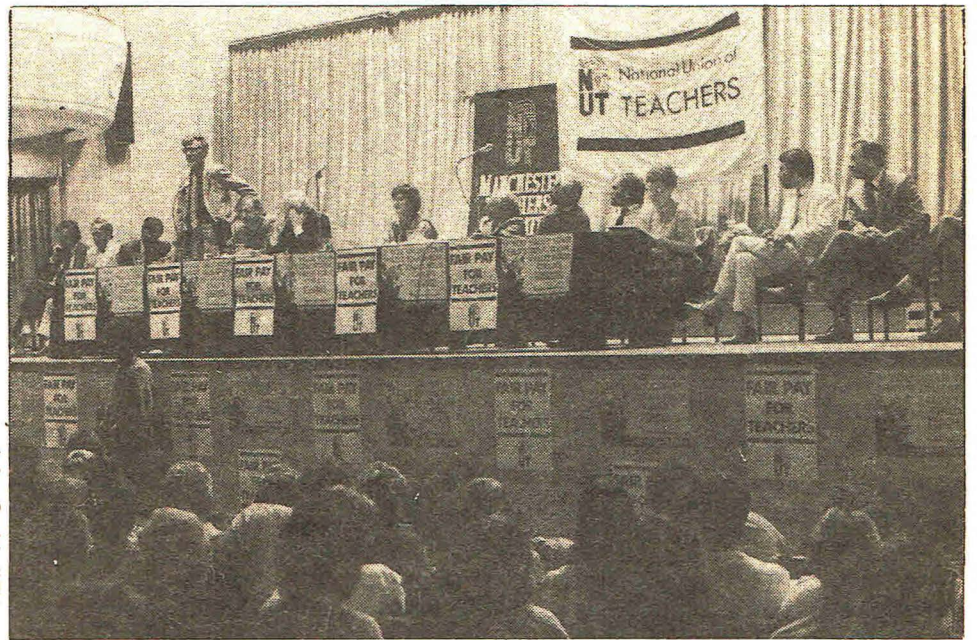
Purse-strings

As argued in previous articles in *Militant*, it was always naïve to believe that such a claim was simply a battle between the unions and the LEAs; particularly with falls in central government grants, penalties and ratecapping. The government control the purse strings of the LEAs.

This, at least, seems to have been recognised, and the ridiculous policy of exempting from action LEAs who gave pious expression of support for the claim has now been abandoned.

If the government is the target of our claim, then all

John Smith (IFU)



Kev McKie, of the college lecturers' union, pledges solidarity at a teachers rally in Manchester.

the more reason to ensure national action is pursued.

Joseph insists, however, that there can be no money from central government without agreement on 14 contractual points.

He insists that *temporary* pay improvements are only to be financed through acceptance of a *permanent* deterioration in our working conditions. This is the essence of the much vaunted "Joseph package".

The money talked about, some £1.25 billion over four years, represents *less than two per cent* on the current pay bill over the next four years! Some bonanza!

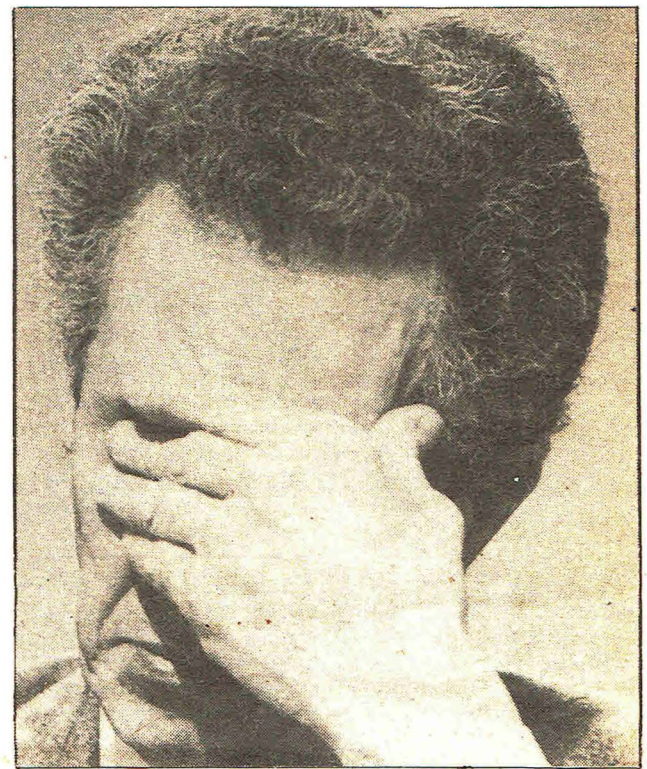
Despite the pleadings of the LEAs, he is prepared to release none of this money to make up the difference for the 1985 claim—even with the teachers' side lowering their claim to the rate of inflation!

In this light, the union campaign must be stepped up. The NUT ballots on the extension of withdrawal of goodwill and half-day strike action are welcome, but are still too little.

Further, by balloting on 'goodwill' there is once again an implicit acceptance that such duties are contractual—a view we must completely reject.

Pressure from schools and local associations is necessary to ensure that the current action is escalated to meet the needs of the situation. Given the success of the levy in the summer we should press for:

a) A regular, national levy to sustain the action.



Keith Joseph—contemplating defeat?

- b) A programme of escalating one-day guerrilla strikes and a one-day national strike, organised jointly with the NAS/UWT and the EIS in Scotland. The development of much closer links with these unions.
- c) Ballots on three-day and extended strike action in areas which request it.
- d) A reconvened national conference to restate the claim, to discuss the strategy and tactics of the dispute and to implement rule changes which will facilitate the escalation of action (eg. on sustentation).

The all-London half-day

strike on 24 September is an indication of things to come. But in many cases the battle has hardly begun—despite the campaign being continued over the entire year.

We must soberly and realistically assess the balance of forces in this dispute—turning to the parents, the public sector unions and the wider labour movement who are our natural allies in the campaign.

With such a campaign and strategy we will be able to win a famous victory in this dispute.

AUEW

BROAD-LEFT candidate for President of the AUEW, John Tocher, was in Keighley West Yorkshire recently, to meet engineering workers.

Local Broad Left and BLOC supporters saw this as a crucial part of the campaign to get Tocher elected. With about 2,000 AUEW members in Keighley, several meetings had been arranged.

Preparations included letters and leaflets to shop stewards and union branches. Factory visits, a meeting with retired members and an evening BLOC meeting, all gave AUEW members the opportunity to hear John Tocher speak. They discussed wages, new technology, union democracy and leadership.

At one of the factories he visited, Keighley lifts, about



John Tocher meets Keighley Lifts convenor Craig Walsh (second left), branch secretary, Steve Davidson, (centre) and other AUEW members.

90% of the workforce turned out to hear him.

The retired members' meeting, not surprisingly, raised the traditions of the past and history of the union, with personal experience of one of the members present going back to the great engineering lock-out of 1922!

After Tocher had spoken, one veteran remarked it was 30 years or more since he'd heard a rousing speech like that!

With recent victories for the left in the union, and several important positions coming up, the election of

Tocher as President would be an important step in undoing the damage the right-wing have done to the AUEW.

The Broad-Left must be active in extending the campaign for John Tocher on the shop floor, and build its own support at the same time.

A victory for Tocher would be a victory for the working-class as a whole.

By Ralph Quigley
(Auew Branch President, Keighley No.1 & delegate Bradford DC)

Black out Silentnight

THE FIGHT is still on at Silentnight bedding company, as the strike enters its fifteenth week.

It is now two months since 500 workers were sacked for taking strike action over a pay claim, after management had broken a no-redundancies agreement.

Lobbying of the TUC Conference in Blackpool by members of the Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades union from Silentnight brought wider publicity and support for the strikers.

Pressure is now being mounted on the FTAT leadership to demonstrate a clear commitment to winning the fight. Colin Christopher, FTAT assistant general secretary, will be attending a mass meeting called by shop stewards this week.

One victory has already

been achieved by the strike. At Lay-e-zee, in Batley, West Yorkshire—part of the Silentnight group—over 70 production workers (about half the workforce) have now joined FTAT.

It is vital at this stage that trade unionists throughout the country, particularly members of the TGWU,

make sure they are giving the sacked Silentnight strikers their full support, through blacking Silentnight products, holding up raw materials, and ensuring that no union member cross FTAT picket lines.

An official 24 hour picket is still being maintained at both depots, in Barnoldswick, Lancashire, and Sutton, West Yorkshire.

By Linden Stafford
(Skipton Labour Party)

Rally in support of Silentnight strikers Saturday 21 September Market Square Keighley

Speakers include: Pat Wall, President Bradford Trades Council, FTAT President Phil Davis. From 10.30am to 12.30am.

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Murdoch in print battle?

A STONE'S throw from the Tower of London riot equipment is being stockpiled, barbed wire and new security systems introduced.

Workers are bussed in and out of a massive, brand new printing plant in the Wapping area of East London to produce a secret newspaper called the *London Post* that never sees a newsagent's counter.

The London EETPU press branch secretary gave a detailed report of going's on at press baron Rupert Murdoch's News International site at their last meeting.

Trade union representatives have been barred from even looking in the door. A fleet of vans owned by TNT, a 24-hour delivery service, are reportedly ready to move newspapers produced there.

In response to these developments the *Sun* chapel put a motion to the branch which was unanimously carried. Its main points were: prepare for strike action; cooperation with *The Times* chapel; a fighting fund to be set up; a mass meeting as soon as possible.

The branch feels strongly that Murdoch is preparing to move his titles out of Fleet



Scene from mass picket of Eddie Shah's scab print plant at Warrington.

Street to the Wapping plant in order to circumvent the union's present veto on new technology and working practices at the site.

It was reported at the meeting that Murdoch is coming to Britain at the end of September. It has since been rumoured that he will arrive by the end of the week.

It is likely that he intends to preside over confrontation with the unions. The entire print and trade union movement must prepare now

for the battle we may be plunged into. We need a comprehensive strategy and determined leadership to put it into action.

- ★ No selling jobs
- ★ United union approach
- ★ Mass meetings throughout the industry, prepare for action
- ★ Rank and file pressure on all the print union leaders to resist blackmail or divisive tactics by the bosses. Stand firm!
- ★ Resist legal blackmail
- ★ Appeal to the TUC to

honour section 5 of the Wembley agreement—for solidarity action in defence of any union under attack

- ★ National blacking of the companies of any Fleet Street proprietor breaking agreements with the unions
- ★ Prepare for mass picketing to shut down any plant to which a Fleet Street title is moved without union agreement and immediate one-day national print strike.

North East shipyard jobs

THE DECISION Scott Lithgow to axe 1,000 of its 2,300 workers has hardened the resolve of the Swan Hunters workforce.

Trafalgar House which owns Scott Lithgow is one of the companies tendering for the rich pickings of Swans after privatisation.

For three weeks the workers' strike at Swans on the Tyne has been solid. Every day between 600 and 700 pickets from the four yards turn up for picket duty. The picket line is a gauntlet 30 to 40 yards long of two lines of pickets.

While the vast majority of staff refused to run the picket gauntlet, management and a few scabs under police protection have gone in.

Canteen staff are standing firm on the lines. Last week management had the audacity to open the side door asking the women if they wanted to come in to cook meals for the staff! They were politely told where to get off.

Even the apprentices, despite being intimidated by management, are making collections for workers.

Under threat of losing their jobs if they don't cross picket lines, they immediately looked to the union for guidance.

Last Monday 120 apprentices were taken to the yard gates by shop stewards and applauded by the pickets in order to re-assure them.

The strike, however, is still "unofficial". There is an urgent necessity for the unions involved to recognise the strike for both financial and practical reasons. The dispute must be spread to other shipyards and sectors of industry.

A £100 donation to the Swan's fighting fund was passed by Wallsend GMC after being proposed by members of the LPYS and an emergency resolution was also passed for Labour Party Conference.

By Ed Waugh

Pit battles continue

Polkemmet, Scotland.

WITH THE usual phrase, "hopelessly uneconomic", the coal board announced the closure of Polkemmet colliery, despite evidence produced by an enquiry and the subsequent 'Cooper' report which indicated the pit could be recovered in 12 to 15 months employing 750 men working 15 years' reserves of coal for an investment of around £13 million.

During the strike the pit was sabotaged by NCB management who, after the NUM had withdrawn safety cover, switched off the power to the pit, allowing the flooding to begin.

95 per cent of Polkemmet's coal was used by Ravenscraig. It is obvious that the announced closure of Gartcosh, with the likely closure of Ravenscraig in two to three years, is directly linked to the Polkemmet issue.

The initiative of West Lothian district council in calling a public enquiry is to be applauded. But the fight for the retention of Polkem-

By Joe Owens

met must now be linked with the campaign over Gartcosh and Ravenscraig and the British Leyland factory at Bathgate.

Miners, steelmen and carworkers must link up, working together explaining their case on the housing schemes, at factory gates, union branches, on the shop floor and with the shop stewards.

A mighty campaign using the pooled resources of the NUM, ISTC, AUEW and the STUC would have a major effect on overturning these decisions.

It is estimated that to close

Polkemmet will cost nine times more than to keep it open. With 21.9 per cent unemployment in West Lothian rising to over 50 per cent in some areas this campaign is crucial.

The closure of Polkemmet is indeed highly uneconomic for the unemployed, badly housed and needy in this area.

In 1951 there were over 30 collieries in West Lothian employing over 12,500 men, Polkemmet is the only one that remains. West Lothian has been devastated by closures.

The area stands as a testimony to the fact that the working class can now no longer afford capitalism. Let's close it down with the stamp "Hopelessly uneconomic".

end to it.

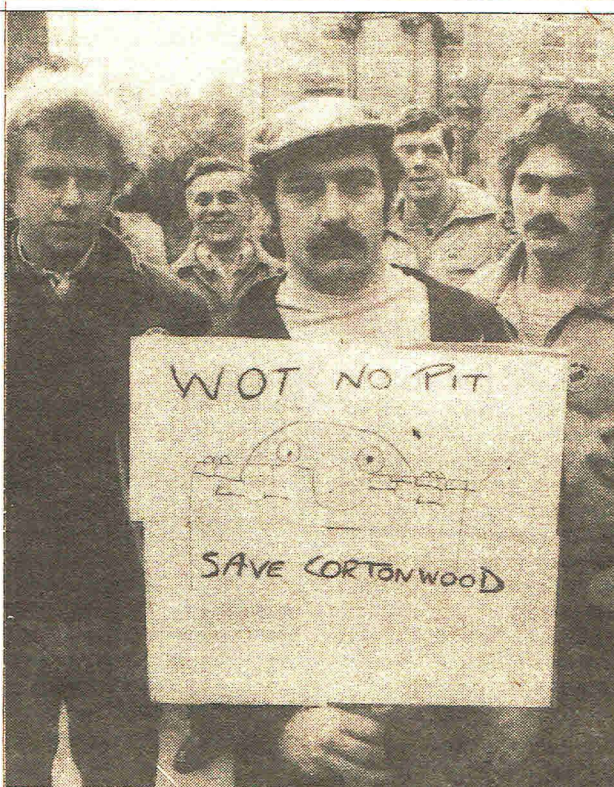
"The coal board are playing cat and mouse with us. What's the point of having a tribunal if they don't abide by the decision of it.

"This is just a start, we'll follow this up with perhaps a 24 hour strike, or maybe an overtime ban, if it comes to it we'll carry on til we drop.

She also sent a message to Neil Kinnock: "He should be as true to his class as Thatcher is to her's, and make sure the miners are reinstated."

By Mick Whale
(Coventry SE Labour Party)

Cortonwood, Yorks



At Cortonwood, which prompted the national strike, the fight against closure continues.

CORTONWOOD NUM has decided to take the fight against closure further.

In response to the NCB announcement that the pit was to close a mass meeting was called. Around 300 men attended and voted overwhelmingly to continue through the review procedure.

Most men realised that if we are to stay in the industry job security is needed. By accepting closure they would have accelerated the closure programme which would mean those being transferred could face the prospect of fighting for their job yet again.

It was mentioned that it could help Darfield Main's case if we accepted closure

because they could mine a small parcel of our coal.

This argument didn't hold water because that parcel of coal would only have three faces. The only way to help Darfield is for us to stand firm and fight together.

To make a serious attempt to halt the closures needs a step up in the campaign work. The best way to achieve this is for all the threatened pits to link up and start building unity.

Although the strike is over the fight goes on and the threatened pits have to lead the fight.

By Gary Ironmonger
(Cortonwood NUM delegate, personal capacity)

Barnsley, Yorks

RECENTLY MEMBERS of Barrow NUM in the Barnsley area were transferred to the new Barnsley Main colliery.

At Barrow it had been custom and practice that when it was necessary to change down from a three shift to a two shift shearing system, the team who had to come off the face would be drawn out of a hat to ensure fairness.

But management declared that the custom and practice no longer applied here. This was despite the workforce and management being virtually the same. Even the wage slips still say Barrow on them.

A strike broke out when chargehands came in and announced who would come off the face.

At our union meeting only one man wanted to return to work. Management claimed that 16 miners were scabbing but we believe only three didn't come out.

At first management refused to meet us. After several days lost we went back on the basis that the unions would alternate with management in providing the lists.

But the real attitude of the Coal Board was shown by one official who said: "All bingo playing will stop at this pit".

By a Barnsley Main NUM member

Keresley, Coventry

ON TUESDAY 17 September miners at Keresley colliery, Coventry went on a one-day strike in support of amnesty for 11 sacked miners at the pit.

Les Styles, one of the sacked miners explained: "Last September, Mr Smith the pit manager said the only chance we had of getting our jobs back was to win an industrial tribunal.

"He said that he had enough information to make sure that we didn't win. Unfortunately for him, out of the 11 blokes who went to the tribunal, six won.

"But Mr Smith has gone back on his word and has refused to reinstate the six. Nev Bond, the miners'

spokesman said: "This strike has had a fabulous response. On the morning shift only four have gone in, which makes it near enough 100 per cent.

"One of those was a canteen worker. Even people scabbing during the strike came out for this strike. If this doesn't win", said Les Styles, "we'll still carry on, possibly with further action."

Sylvia Jackson, the wife of one of the sacked miners, on the picket line with her daughter, aged 10 told me: "This strike has had a better response than we thought. The waiting and not knowing what's going on is driving us nuts. There's no

Militant

MERSEYSIDE TRADE Union and Labour Campaign Committee Conference. "Defend local councils under attack". Saturday 21 September 11am to 4.30pm. Central Hall, Liverpool. For credentials contact Andy Pink, Conference organising Secretary, Central Support Unit, Liverpool City Council, Room 41, Municipal Buildings, Dale Street, Liverpool L69 2DH. Telephone 051-227 3911 Ext. 517

Liverpool, Lambeth

Solidarity is the key

Lambeth

EVERYDAY LIFE in Lambeth is becoming a nightmare for more and more people. 27,000 unemployed are chasing 369 jobs. 20,000 people are on the housing waiting list. Two-thirds of Lambeth's households are claiming supplementary benefit.

Poverty is now rife in the area. Lambeth shows its problems in many ways, for instance, it has one of the highest rates of mental disorder in London.

Labour councillors are prepared to defend the community and confront the Tories so the unelected District Auditor has sent them a bill for £3,970 each. Already large amounts have

been raised for the Lambeth Fighting Fund, showing the support that exists for the council and its stand.

To strengthen this growing support, a thorough-going campaign throughout the workforce and community is still required. Concrete links must also be built with Liverpool and other local authorities.

Mass meetings

Mass meetings are urgently needed to explain the issues and involve the workforce and community in the campaign whilst preparing them for whatever industrial action is necessary to defeat the Tories.

Lambeth has faced the brunt of Tory attacks and cuts for years. Given a decisive lead the workforce and community will rally round the council and drive the Tories back.

By Mark Bygrave
(Lambeth NUPE)

GLC

AT A special branch meeting, GLC NALGO members at County Hall passed an emergency motion expressing solidarity with Liverpool and Lambeth councillors.

The motion moved by *Militant* supporter Ted Watson was passed unanimously. It pledged to call upon members to support the 24-hour strike on Wednesday 25 September, to coincide with the stoppage called by Liverpool Joint Shop Stewards' Committee and to support further strike action before and during the court hearing.

In the event of any Labour councillors being disqualified from office, it pledged to call for all-out action until such a time as those councillors are reinstated. It also called on members to raise the necessary finance to conduct

an appeal against the arbitrary decision of the district auditor.

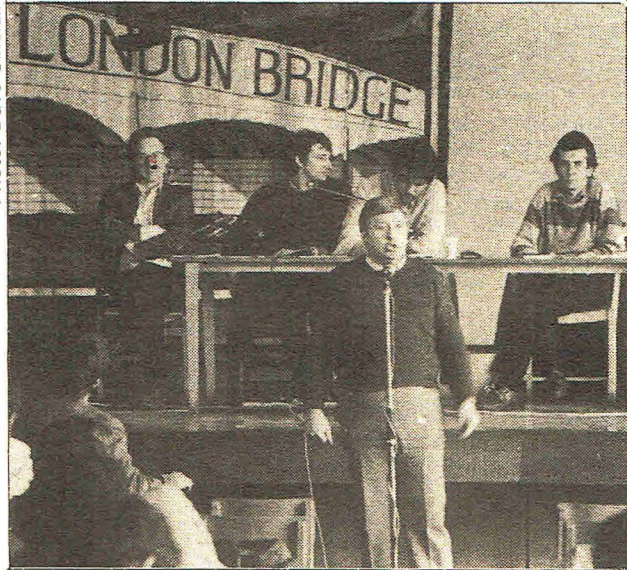
By Andrew Lambirth
(GLC-NALGO)

Salford

AROUND 700 council workers, tenants, Labour Party and LPYS members lobbied Salford council Labour group after the Labour controlled council (which has a Tory budget) proposed compulsory redundancies in the direct works department.

The mood for action was strong with people shouting slogans for the council to stick to its socialist principles and 'do a Liverpool'.

David Cohen convenor of Salford JSSC, summed up the feeling: "All local authority workers should stand behind Liverpool."



The inaugural meeting of NLACC in March.

NLACC

THIS SATURDAY, the Merseyside trade union and labour movement committee conference will be discussing building solidarity with councils under attack. The surcharge of Liverpool and Lambeth and the strike moves in Liverpool give this a new urgency.

The National Local Authorities Co-ordinating Committee (NLACC) has a vital role in this solidarity work. NLACC was set up this March as a national combine, particularly to fight the threats of rate-capping on council jobs and services.

Mobilisation

Now will be the time to mobilise; organising speakers from Liverpool and Lambeth in every council workers' depot; fighting for solidarity action, and ensuring that the campaigns in the surcharged areas do not run short of cash.

The last few days have shown the value of solidarity. The local authority workers' pay offer would

still leave us in the low pay bracket, if we accept it. But the offer, higher than other workers have got, was due to the struggles of the teachers and Liverpool. The Tories don't want a third front!

Liverpool and Lambeth are fighting for all council workers. But their support at Saturday's meeting and through NLACC.

STOP PRESS: Stewards of local government union GMBATU voted 193 to five to back strike action in Liverpool. UCATT stewards voted 54 to four. Dockworkers, private building workers and transport workers have offered support from the private sector.

Liverpool youth

THE MOOD of Liverpool Council workers is one of determination. We realise the enormity of the battle against the Tory government to defend jobs and services.

The Education Department workers are mainly young. They realise that



LPYS members back Liverpool council. As in the miners' strike, young workers will be in the forefront of the battle.

should the Tories win, their jobs will be amongst the first to go. Over 70% of the council's budget is spent on education. The council is the biggest employer in Liverpool; there is little or no prospect of finding alternative employment.

Union rights

The council has taken on over 100 YTS trainees, but instead of using them as cheap labour, each trainee has full trade union rights and rates of pay, is subject to proper health and safety regulations, receives proper training and a guaranteed job at the end of the scheme.

Alan Kearns, aged 16 who works in the Education Department, is one of those 100 YTS trainees. He said: "If the rates rise by possibly

up to 90% then businesses will move or close down and there'll be even higher unemployment.

"Mine and all the other YTS trainees jobs will be in the firing line. My dad works in the cleansing department. He is prepared to go on strike, because he's 47 and he'll probably never work again if he loses.

"Most people who left my school last summer are on the dole or slave labour YTS schemes—only one or two have jobs. If the council goes down there will be riots, more violence, more drugs and other things. We've got no choice but to fight."

By Emy Onuora
(Liverpool NALGO Education Dept, personal capacity)



**BECOME A
Militant
SUPPORTER!**

Send to 3/13, Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB.

Name
Address

SUBSCRIBE!

BRITAIN & IRELAND	EUROPE (by air)	REST OF WORLD (by air)
13 issues . . . £5.00	26 issues . . £11.00	26 issues . . £16.00
26 issues . . £10.00	52 issues . . £22.00	52 issues . . £32.00

Name
Address

Make cheques payable to *Militant*, and return to the Circulation Department, *Militant*, 3/13 Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB.

Donate

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

Sell

I would like to sell _____ papers per week (minimum 5) on a sale or return basis.