

Militant

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth

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STOP PRESS . . . STOP PRESS STOP

THE LABOUR Party Young Socialists' budget has been slashed by £5,000, from £13,000 to £8,000. Every other section of the Labour Party has had its budget increased; the National Organisation of Labour Students' has had its budget raised from £12,000 to £14,000.

These budgets have to be approved by the Finance Committee on 16 December. Send resolutions and letters of protest to 150 Walworth Road, London SE17.

Drop Liverpool enquiry

Probe Tory corruption

LABOUR MP Dennis Skinner spoke for thousands of angry party and union activists when he opposed the NEC enquiry into Liverpool District Labour Party and said that "there should be an enquiry into Johnson Matthey Banking, fraud at Lloyd's and the way the government is attacking working class people".

Never has the British capitalist system been so plagued with scandals. Billions of pounds have been embezzled. The Attorney General has condemned the "quite unacceptable" level of fraud in the City of London.

The Labour Party has never had a better opportunity to expose the cancer within capitalist society. Yet the NEC spends its time hounding Liverpool District Labour Party for its fight to provide jobs, houses and services for people in need.

Suspended

The alleged frauds in connection with Johnson Matthey Bank alone amount to £1 billion (see centre pages). Yet when the Labour MP who has done most to expose this racket, Brian Sedgmore, was suspended from the House of Commons, the leaders of the Labour Party voted for his suspension.

Even greater sums are alleged to have been swindled at Lloyd's of London, the world's most famous insurance underwriters. Even Tory MP's are alarmed at the delay in bringing charges against any of those involved. Liberal MP David Penhaligon has expressed "outrage about how rarely

By Pat Craven

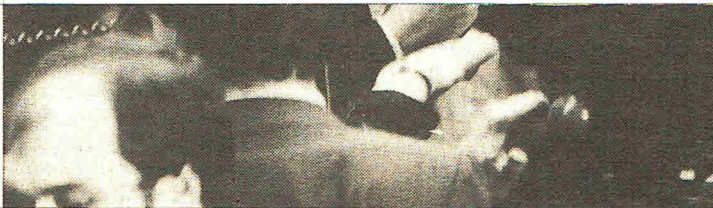
offences in the City lead to anybody landing up in jail".

Yet the Labour leaders seem more intent in charging their own party members in Liverpool who have been carrying out Labour policy and leading a fight against the Tory government for more cash for one of Europe's most deprived areas.

In 1983, 324 cases of serious fraud were reported, but only 37 led to prosecution. The Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions has blamed the difficulty in getting witnesses from the City institutions: "If the witnesses are somehow involved, even in the periphery of the case, then they are reluctant to assist. If they have skeletons in their own cupboards, as many of them have, they are extremely reluctant to give evidence."

It is not just a few 'criminals' involved in milking the economy, but a whole system based on getting as rich as possible as quickly as possible. As Max Hastings put it in the *Sunday Times*: "The line between an active criminal and a sharp, clever practitioner who commands admiration by building a fortune is so fine that most people in the City recoil from making moral

Photo: Dave Sinclair



Stockbrokers scrambling to buy British Telecom shares. Insert: Liverpool City council, building houses for workers.

judgements upon those around them".

The whole system is sick to the core. The Church of England report on the inner cities recognises some of the grotesque inequalities in society today. The Tories complain at the cost of the measures it proposes, estimated to be about £4 billion. But for one 'inner city' that is small change—in the City of London Foreign Exchange market, £34 billion is traded every day.

Impossiblism

What is needed is a fundamental change in the way the country's wealth is

distributed and used. Yet Neil Kinnock, talks of the "impossiblism" of providing even a guaranteed job for YTS leavers, a minimum

Continued on back page

Liverpool Labour Group rally

Defend Liverpool's Labour councillors. Lift suspension of District Party

See page 3 for details

**Fight witch-hunt
send us your cash**

WITH FLEET Street baying for blood, backed up by Labour's right wing, *Militant* needs your financial support to fight back against the witch-hunt.

This week we are asking all readers to put every effort into raising cash to help our work. Make this week a special week of action on "finance for *Militant*"

before taking the Christmas break.

Get out onto the streets with the paper. Tens of thousands of workers want to hear what we stand for. Use the witch-hunt to build our support.

Push up the paper sales, gather in the fighting fund and send in your £10 to help our work on Merseyside!

Photo: Tom Picton (Reflex)

Inquiry could lead to mass purge

DESPITE ALL the reassurances that were given to the Labour Party conference in 1983, it is now clear—as we warned—that the “inquiry” into *Militant* would open the door to a widespread purge of party members.

In the last two years 32 have been expelled, and a further 44 face expulsion. The responsibility for this rests with the former leadership of Michael Foot and Jim Mortimer, with the ‘new right’ gathered around Neil Kinnock and with the soft left who desperately cling to their ‘left’ credentials while supporting the expulsion of socialists.

The attack by the NEC on Liverpool District Labour Party is potentially more serious even than the expulsion of the Editorial Board, because it is intended to prepare the ground for a massive purge.

The expulsions in 1983, Mortimer warned the NEC, “should not preclude Labour Party members from reading, selling, purchasing or writing for newspapers including *Militant*”. But now the right wing, emboldened by NEC actions, are using the sale of *Militant* as a pretext for expulsion.

Right wing Labour MPs can be paid for writing in a Tory paper; people like Frank Chapple can get away scot-free after supporting the SDP, but it is an offence punishable by expulsion to sell a socialist newspaper out

of conviction. The right wing have now even gone to the lengths of circulating a step-by-step ‘expulsion guide’ to encourage the petty McCarthyites in the constituencies.

At the NEC, USDAW president Syd Tierney warned Neil Kinnock that the party has not got the time for a purge. He referred to the 1950s, when there were interminable hearings and appeals and when the Labour Party regional staff spent all their time keeping dossiers on, and “policing” their own members. He warned that a return to those days would lose the next election, but then proceeded to vote for the inquiry.

Let there be no mistake about the course now embarked upon by the leadership: an attempt at a purge *would* plunge the party into civil war and *could* lose Labour the next general election.

The Liverpool inquiry, whose ‘findings’ are already decided in advance, will not be taken lying down by the labour movement in Merseyside or elsewhere. A new purge and bureaucratic restrictions will not be accepted, especially as they will be based on secret mischievous hearsay evidence. In the short term the only result of the suspension of the DLP will be to sabotage the council by-election of 9 January, and the campaign to defend the councillors from the court.

If Neil Kinnock had consciously set out to cripple Labour’s electoral prospect in January and May he would not have acted differently. As one of his aides said on Granada TV, Kinnock “hates *Militant* more than he hates the Tories”. To undermine the Marxists in the Labour Party, the leadership is prepared to ‘play politics’ with the jobs and livelihoods of hundreds of thousands.

Neil Kinnock has capitulated to the pressure of the right

wing who are afraid of coming to office with any commitments to reform. Any demand to improve the lives and conditions of workers is ‘impossibilism’ to these people. Indeed, within the narrow confines of sick British capitalism permanent reforms are impossible.

But Liverpool, and the Marxists in the party are a huge ‘embarrassment’ precisely because they have fought successfully for concrete reforms like jobs, houses and services and because they advocate fundamental socialist change.

They are no less of a thorn in the side of the trade union barons who have failed utterly to protect their members’ jobs, while Liverpool City Council has done so. The trade union leaders demanded a financial package worse than the one achieved—one based on the Stonefrost report, including a rate rise and cuts. They have been left in the position of the blushing union negotiator who demanded less than the employer was prepared to offer.

What was also significant in the NEC decision was the fact that the ‘left’—with a few notable exceptions—have caved in to pressure from the right. Many of those who fought and argued vigorously against the witch-hunt in 1983 have slunk away or are openly backing expulsions.

But despite the wishes of the party leadership, they will not succeed in establishing a regime of thought-control. Neil Kinnock’s assertion that the future of *Militant* in Liverpool is “bleak” and “short term” is almost laughable.

Marxist ideas are an expression of the concrete experiences and political conclusions of ordinary working people. The ideas of *Militant* are not ‘isolated’ from the thoughts of such workers. No attempts to suppress those ideas will ever succeed; on the contrary, Marxism will emerge strengthened.

Liverpool party’s anger over ‘corruption’ charges

AT A time when Liverpool Labour Party members are gearing themselves up for a by-election on 9 January and preparing to defend their councillors from the threat of surcharge and disqualification—also early in January—the Labour leadership have closed down the party.

Party members will be appalled at this shameful action which will sabotage vital campaigns, while a kangaroo court dressed up as an “inquiry” launches a witch-hunt.

The enquiry, set up to investigate the Liverpool DLP, is a forgone conclusion. All the members who sit on the inquiry team were among the 21 NEC members who voted for it and they will be making up the rules as they go along.

It is clear from their comments that they have already decided the “charges”, the verdict and the sentence and only need the farce of an inquiry to provide a pretext for expulsions.

Vicious

The most vicious, lying, scurrilous campaign that the Tory press has ever directed against the labour movement is now directed against *Militant*. The leaders of the NEC and the Parliamentary Labour Party have taken their cue from these rabid right wing papers, repeating the same lies about “intimidation” and “corruption” in Liverpool.

“We know there has been political corruption”, Roy Hattersley parrots, “we know there has been literal corruption, particularly in terms of employment practices... our inquiry is to find those responsible”.

Neil Kinnock has also dispensed with the pretence of impartiality: “It has been clear from a number of allegations made and from a specific report by the full time organiser that there is impropriety... our inquiry

team will be to discover why these occurrences have taken place”.

But Liverpool has for a number of years established a practice whereby the DLP decides policy for the Labour Group and elects the leader, deputy and the committee chairs. Often Labour councillors elsewhere become a law unto themselves once elected and become remote or even contemptuous of district parties.

The sheer size and degree of participation is proof of the health and vitality of Liverpool DLP. When it suits the right wing they condemn Labour Party meetings that are “small” and “unrepresentative”, but they are equally able to turn on their heads and condemn meetings for being too large.

Liverpool DLP has hundreds attending because it encourages wards and trade union branches to send delegates who play an active role. The allegations about visitors voting is completely spurious. At DLP “aggregate” meetings there are generally hundreds of visitors but these have no voice and have only a *consultative* vote after delegates have voted with their delegate cards.

The DLP meetings are always conducted in the most fraternal fashion. No-one would deny that there are heated debates and strong words as in many a party meeting but it is a disgraceful slur to suggest that any delegates are intimidated. Every one of the delegates opposed to the DLP’s policy has had *more* than a fair share of time to put arguments to the meeting, and most have done so.

Peter Killeen, Labour Party regional organiser, attends most of the DLP meetings and sits on the platform. He has *not* once objected to the chairman about procedure or conduct. When asked at the last meeting if he did have any complaints, he curtly told the hushed meeting that he would report

“only to the NEC”.

It is clear from these comments and those of the witch-hunters on the NEC that the inquiry will be based on secret allegations, in other words on spiteful gossip, tittle-tattle and lies, which the DLP and its members will get no chance to answer. Northern Irish “Diplock courts” have been brought into the party.

Expulsions

It will be on these most disgraceful grounds that Kinnock will almost certainly move to expel Derek Hatton, deputy council leader, and Tony Mulhearn, DLP president and to change the rules of the DLP to minimise members’ participation and influence.

But Kinnock should be warned. There are hundreds and hundreds of good Labour Party members in Liverpool who will fight every inch of the way to defend the most democratic Labour party in the country.

The ‘jury’ is picked

WHO WILL sit on the inquiry team?

—All eight members voted for it, and it has a clear majority of right wingers with a proven track record of supporting witch-hunts. There is *not* one member of the team—even including the “lefts”—who can be relied upon to put up any resistance to the expulsions and a generalised attack on *Militant*.

Betty Boothroyd MP (West Bromwich West), Tony Clarke (UCW), Eddie Haigh (TGWU), Neville Hough (GMBATU), C Turlock (NUR), Tom Sawyer (NUPE), Audrey Wise, Margaret Beckett MP (Derby South).



John Cunningham, left, and Neil Kinnock, right, have made unfounded charges against Liverpool Labour Party. Photo: Dave Sinclair.

Labour NEC ends recorded vote

WHILE THE inquiry into Liverpool is bad enough, the other decisions taken by Labour’s National Executive Committee last week will infuriate rank and file members. Worse still was the support given to the right by so-called left wingers.

They voted to abolish the recorded vote at NEC meetings. Where as before any NEC member could de-

mand a recorded vote so the party membership could see how they voted, now, if an NEC member wants a recorded vote, it must be agreed by a majority. This is another step towards abolishing rank and file accountability over the leadership.

The NEC also backed the expulsion of Gerry Dominey from the Isle of Wight Labour Party. David

Blunkett and Tom Sawyer supported the expulsion while Michael Meacher abstained.

But while the soft left and the right wing made it clear they would not tolerate Marxists in the Labour Party, they agreed to “bending” the rules to allow *individual* members of the Union of Democratic Miners to remain party members.

Defend Militant’s rights

WORKERS’ PAPERS have always faced persecution by the ruling class and their collaborators in the labour movement. In 1912 the Tsarist authorities imposed huge fines on the Bolshevik paper, *Pravda* for breaking censorship laws.

In the space of two and a half years *Pravda* was suppressed eight times by the Tsarist government. Each time Russian workers rallied to defend their paper, and large collections were taken at workplaces and at trade union meetings to pay the fines and ensure *Pravda* could reappear.

Now *Militant* has been penalised to the tune of over £10,000 in legal fees for defending TGWU members in disputes with their employer, James White, right wing Labour

MP for Glasgow Pollok. *Militant* has been penalised by the class bias of the legal system weighted in favour of the rich, for the crime of daring to put the workers’ case.

Like the Bolsheviks we are appealing to workers to get donations and collections from their TU branches, workplaces and Labour Parties to defend *Militant*. Do not let our crucial work of supporting workers in struggle and of defending ourselves from witch-hunts, be undermined by the legal costs we have to pay.

Thanks to TGWU 5/909 Birmingham £10, Manchester SOGAT*82 £15, Poole readers £40, Oxford collections £24.50, and Stevenage £12.

By Steve Morgan

No evidence for press slurs over council jobs

RECENT ARTICLES in the *Liverpool Echo* and the *Daily Post* have slandered councillors and elected trade union officials with charges of 'corruption', 'intimidation' and 'jobs for the boys'.

In the worst traditions of the gutter journals not a single shred of factual evidence was produced.

They resorted to their usual mendacious trick of starting sentences with "It is alleged...", "We believe...", or "It has been said...". What is totally unforgivable is the way in which certain Labour leaders like Roy Hattersley parrot these smears.

Liverpool City Council has a democratic procedure of staff appointments which is the envy of trade unionists throughout Britain. As Councillor Pauline Dunlop explained to *Militant*, it is a system with a large degree of workers' control, and is designed to combat corruption.

"The idea of nomination rights amongst the unions is an established procedure". Pauline explained, "Liverpool housing unions have had 50 per cent nomination rights for years, and this was the case even under the Liberals.

Register

"Anyone can get a form from the GMBATU convenors and officials to apply to be put on the central job register. A sub-committee of senior stewards meets to compile this register in chronological order and to ensure that no-one who has taken voluntary redundancy in the past, and no-one who would refuse to join a union goes onto the register. These are the only two reasons why applicants are withheld".

A recent article in the *Liverpool Echo* has aimed allegations of corruption

and abuse of this procedure to create 'jobs for the boys' at GMBATU branch 5 and Ian Lowes, the convenor in particular. In fact Ian is not on, and has nothing to do with the sub-committee that compiles the register.

It is not possible for any individual to know all or even a large number of the applicants because the forms are widely distributed and because of the sheer volume of people who apply.

As vacancies on the workforce arise, applicants are taken from the register in date order. Management conduct interviews whilst trade union representatives sit in to ensure that no discrimination takes place.

Management make the final decision whether to employ the applicant. If they decide not to, the next person is then taken from the register and is asked to apply for the job. It is difficult to imagine how this procedure could be abused by anyone.

Union representatives also make efforts to reduce the possibility of discrimination in advertising. Job Centres are given instructions to display job adverts with the words "Equal opportunity employer".

The union's were quick to respond to reports that women were discouraged to apply for council gardening jobs. The Job Centres were contacted and the situation was put right. The council now employs a number of women as gardeners.

Ian Lowes has also gone out of his way to ensure that black workers in Liverpool have a fair chance to apply for inclusion on the jobs register.

If the Tory/Liberal rags such as the *Echo* make allegations against labour movement elected officials they should back these up with concrete evidence.

By Neelam De Freitas

Liverpool 'left' meets

LIVERPOOL LABOUR LEFT organised a public meeting last week, with John Prescott MP speaking on the party's Jobs and Industry Campaign.

Incredibly, for a group that claims to be left wing, nobody on the platform even mentioned the suspension of the DLP. The organisers refused to allow any discussion claiming the meeting had "nothing to do" with this issue.

But a large part of the audience, including all but one of the floor speakers, left John Prescott in no doubt about their feelings. One TGWU worker said he'd prefer to discuss Labour's plans for the car industry but he had to deal instead with his overriding sense of rage at the way Liverpool Labour Party is being treated...

John Prescott did admit "We spend so much time knocking hell out of each other that we do little to put over Labour's alternative."

adding "I don't think that personalised attacks on party members from whatever quarter, calling them 'maggots' or anything else is helpful".

Workers applauded *Militant* supporters when they called for unity around Clause Four as the only way to win a Labour government and to sustain it. A member of the National Union of Seamen said: "Clause Four is the only alternative, that's why everybody in Liverpool Labour Party joined it."

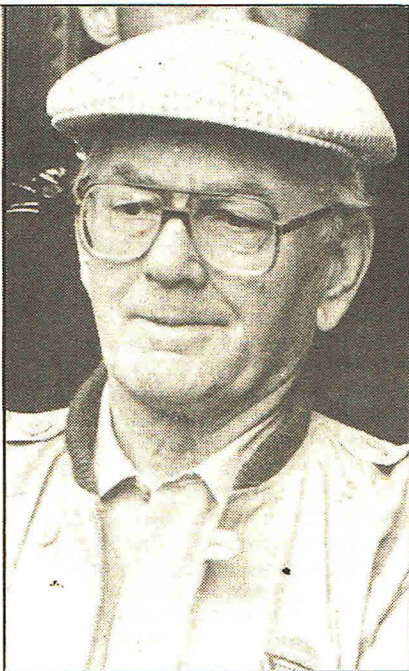
Bill Kerrigan, veteran Communist Party member from the Seamen's Union said: "I feel a deep sense of shame as a Communist Party member at the disgraceful way that Jim Ferguson, a member of my own party, has dragged good socialist councillors in the capitalist courts".

By Richard Venton

Liverpool fights on



Ian Lowes chairman of council workers' joint shop stewards' committee. He has been accused of arranging 'jobs for the boys' but has nothing to do with the committee which handles job registrations. Photo: Dave Sinclair.



Eddie Loyden, MP Liverpool Garston (left) and Eric Heffer MP, Liverpool Walton have both condemned the inquiry. Photos Militant.



Witch-hunt is condemned

TERRY FIELDS, MP, Broadgreen.

"*Militant* supporters are amongst the most hard-working and committed democrats to the decisions of conference and socialism. Our only crime is to heed the warning of the leader and *not be guilty of political amnesia*. In learning the lessons of history we point out that it is not Labour's task to manage capitalism.

"The movement will respond to any attempts to expel good socialists and stand firm on the socialist ideals the Labour Party is supposed to represent."

DAVE EVANS, Secretary, NUR Branch 5.

"Kinnock is causing confusion amongst working class people, whereas *Militant* has done an excellent job in explaining the real issues.

"We may be successful in our fight for another Labour government, but it is clear that it must carry out policies like those of Liverpool City Council."

PETER CRESWELL, Secretary, Liverpool NALGO Branch.

"I am opposed to any such expulsions. There is room in the Labour Party for different points of view, whether they be Marxist or Trotskyist. I personally disagree with Neil Kinnock."

FRANK BOWEN, AUEW.

"The national leadership of the Labour Party should be defending councillors who are standing by Labour Party conference decisions.

"Party leaders are attacking *Militant's* ideas because they know that under a future Labour government they will be facing a similar crisis to that the council is facing now. Similarly Kinnock did not stand firmly behind the miners because if he was head of a Labour government, he would be expected by workers to expand the coal industry, whereas the bosses demand closures."

DEREK HATTON, Deputy Council Leader.

"Instead of enquiring into a Labour Party that is fighting the Tories, the NEC should be enquiring into those Labour Parties who are not attacking the Tories, but who are attacking working people through cuts in jobs and services."

EDDIE LOYDEN, MP, Garston.

"An enquiry into the DLP is absolutely unnecessary and will further split the party. The call for expulsions of DLP members, including non-*Militant's*, is clear indication that the witch-hunt is not just about *Militant*, but against the whole of the left. The Left should resist this attack on socialists."

LIVERPOOL PUBLIC MEETING

Defend Liverpool's Labour, Councillors
Defend the District Labour Party
Lift the suspension

Called by Liverpool Council Labour Group
Supported by Liverpool Labour MPs

7.30pm, Friday 6 December,
James Parsons Hall, Byron Street
(near Central Library)

Speakers:
Tony Benn,
Eric Heffer,
Tony Mulhearn,
John Hamilton,
Frances Curran
and Liverpool MPs

Loans secure house building

LIVERPOOL COUNCIL'S housing programme will be secured for the time being through two £30 million loans from a consortium of foreign banks.

The budget crisis has been settled without any job losses or increases in rents or rates. But the settlement is a setback for the council in its campaign to get back some of the £360 million lost in grants from the government.

There will be unallocated cuts of £3 million and £23.4 million will be taken from capital funds for current housing repair and maintenance.

This means that the budget deficit is wiped out because the council will receive more grant from the government for this year and incur fewer penalties.

The responsibility for this setback lies with the Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock and the trade union leaders who used the distortions and lies of the Tory press in a political attack on the council. They urged the council to accept the Stonefrost report which would have meant a 15 per cent rate rise, or an extra £5 per week for every household.

It would also have meant, without a loan, a form of capitalisation that would have threatened the house building programme. Stonefrost also recommended a combination of rent rises and job losses. The trade union leaders misled their members in Liverpool council's workforce by pretending that the Stonefrost report would be 'painless'.

But unlike the Stonefrost report the financial package ensures that the housing programme will continue for the time being. Repayments for the first loan won't start for two years, but by 1989 repayments for both loans will overlap and will cut severely into the council's capital spending.

The banks have placed stringent conditions by demanding that the loans are repaid in seven years and not the normal ten years on top of charging extortionate rates of interest.

Predictably the Tories and Liberals have accused the council of mortgaging its future up to the hilt.

Shamefully Neil Kinnock has made similar attacks yet the council already has a total of over £700 million loans to pay back mostly arising from previous administrations including the Liberals.

Kinnock's solution of putting up the rates would have amounted to a tax on the working people of Liverpool. Two-thirds of any rate increase would have gone directly to the government.

Liverpool council and the Liverpool Labour Party are not pretending that financial problems have been solved for good. The fight to secure more money for the city's housing programme and public services from the Tory government will continue.

By Ben Eastop

Witch-hunt opposed



Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (Report)

Delegates vote at Labour Party conference where the attack on Liverpool was launched.

AS LABOUR Parties and trade unions meet for the last time before Christmas, opposition is growing against the National Executive's enquiry into Liverpool. The Greater London Labour Party, the biggest party in the country, has condemned the enquiry this week. After hearing Tony Byrne of Liverpool City Council it condemned "the witch-hunt against comrades in Liverpool who have upheld Labour Party policies" and urged "the NEC to withdraw the enquiry and use their energies to attack the Tories rather than socialists, particularly with the May election in view and the run-up to a general election".

The motion was moved by John McDonnell of the GLC and was passed by 19 votes to 13. Those voting against included Valerie Wise of the GLC and Chris Humphries of NUPE, with Frances Morell and Ann Pettifor

abstaining.

Hampstead Labour Party also condemned the NEC's action, and implored Tony Clarke of the UCW—one of the NEC members on the enquiry team who is also a delegate to the Hampstead party—not to aid the launch of a witch-hunt in the Labour Party.

Condemning

Also condemning the action against Liverpool are **Garston, Mossley Hill, Bethnal Green and Stepney, Hackney South and Shoreditch, Hammersmith and Hertford/Stortford Labour Parties**, as well as the 6/612 and 6/631 branches of the **Transport and General Workers' Union**—another labour movement body currently the victim of right wing attacks backed by the Tory press.

At its November meeting, **Coventry North West Labour Party**—not normally considered a 'left wing' party—voted two to one to

back Liverpool City Council's stand, and condemned "those Labour and trade union leaders who repeat the distortions of the Tory media".

Yet despite this growing opposition, the right wing and supporters of the Kinnock leadership are determined to push through their attacks, at whatever cost to the Labour Party. The Scottish local government area committee of NUPE passed a resolution "deploring Liverpool City council" and backing the enquiry. Only the mover was allowed to speak, making comments like "Liverpool council had made workers redundant". It was formally seconded and, despite protests, no one was allowed to speak against the motion.

Expelled

The leaders of the Isle of Wight party are continuing their purge. A fourth *Militant* supporter, Martin Cair, was expelled by 15 votes to 10. One of his crimes was to

sell the paper to the local factory workers. What was significant was that some party members who backed the previous three expulsions this time supported Cair.

• The Victoria branch of Macclesfield Labour Party will have a resolution before its 10 December meeting, calling for the expulsion of two *Militant* supporters. Local party members have organised a protest lobby outside the meeting, with support already promised from miners at Biddulph colliery.

• *Militant* supporter Max Neill is under threat in Morecambe Labour Party. A student at Lancaster University but living in Morecambe, he has had his renewal of party membership opposed and has been asked to attend the next meeting to explain why he sells the paper on Saturday mornings. What the right wing fear is the growth in support for *Militant*. Sales in the area are now reaching over 80 a week.

Purge threat in Leicester party

THE RIGHT wing in Leicester are threatening the biggest attack yet on Labour Party supporters of *Militant*.

The *Leicester Mercury* has reported that up to 14 members of Leicester West Labour Party face expulsion following an anonymous letter to the constituency secretary.

The letter, claims the *Mercury*, is from "a former *Militant* member" and demands action against 14 party members, two of whom are leading NALGO activists. It would be thought that such a piece of spurious hearsay blown up by the local Tory rag would be rejected out of hand by the party officers. Yet the secretary has said the letter will be discussed by the party's executive.

If 14 expulsions go ahead, it will be the biggest purge seen in a local Labour Party

since the war, and will have disastrous consequences, leaving the party split and divided. Party members are angered that the witch-hunt against hard working socialist members of the party is beginning to snowball, diverting more and more of the Labour Party's time and energy away from the real task of fighting the Tories and preparing for the general election.

Fight back

Local *Militant* supporters in Leicester have no alternative but to fight back and defend themselves from such underhand action. They have called a public meeting to answer the allegations:

'Stop the witch-hunt'
Public meeting at the Fosse Neighbourhood Centre, Martle Road, Leicester, Monday 16 December, 7.30pm.

Labour women against expulsion threat

THE NATIONAL Labour Women's council has passed a resolution regretting the statements of John Cunningham and Neil Kinnock that in the event of the government sending in commissioners to displace a democratically elected Labour council they were prepared to lend their support.

"We are further concerned" said the resolution "at hints that there may be expulsions of leading members of the council. This would be met with outrage in the Labour Party, particularly in Liverpool. We urge the NEC to oppose expulsions should this arise."

"We remind the NEC of the Labour Women's Conference policy to oppose all expulsions and witch-hunts."

Setback for right wing

THE RIGHT wing in Mansfield Labour Party received a set-back last week when their attempt to stop eight new applications for membership was defeated.

The Mansfield right wing and the MP Don Concannon, who have already expelled *Militant* supporter Paul Shawcroft, seem determined to carry on their attacks. The party executive passed a resolution saying anyone seen selling *Militant* would be expelled. Concannon added that the chair and secretary of the local LPYS branch should therefore be expelled too.

Meanwhile in Concannon's ward party of Mansfield South East, eight new members including a 15 and 16 year old were eventually allowed into the party, but not before what can only be described as an interrogation about whether they sold *Militant*.

Delegates to the Mansfield constituency meeting last week were greeted by a lobby of Young Socialists, party members, miners and their wives, all opposed to the latest attacks. The lobby had an affect. When the eight new memberships came up, one right winger complained he had spotted one of them selling *Militant*, so therefore all applications should be sent back to the ward. Yet this move was defeated by 29 votes to 28. Unfortunately, however, the EC's recommendations that anyone selling *Militant* should be expelled went through, despite a substantial number voting against.

But while the right wing attempt to block new members, *Militant* supporters are carrying on the work of building the Labour party, in one instance setting up a workplace branch of local busmen.

Party democracy attacked

KNOWSLEY NORTH Labour Party has reacted angrily to the outrageous decision of the party's National Executive to suspend the constituency's reselection process.

The NEC suspended the selection contest due this month as part of their assault on Liverpool District Labour Party, because the favourite in the contest against sitting MP Robert Kilroy-Silk is Tony Mulhearn, president of the Liverpool party.

If the process is delayed until June, under party rules Kilroy-Silk will not have to face reselection. When Knowsley North party was formed through amalgamation with the old Ormskirk constituency, Kilroy-Silk was foisted on the new party by the NEC—the party members are furious that he might escape the reselection procedure for a second time. It is a travesty of Labour Party democracy.

Their anger was shown when, following the NEC decision, supporters of the MP moved at the party's November meeting that the chairman, Jim McGinley, a *Militant* supporter, be expelled. This move was defeated by 50 votes to 30. The lack of support for

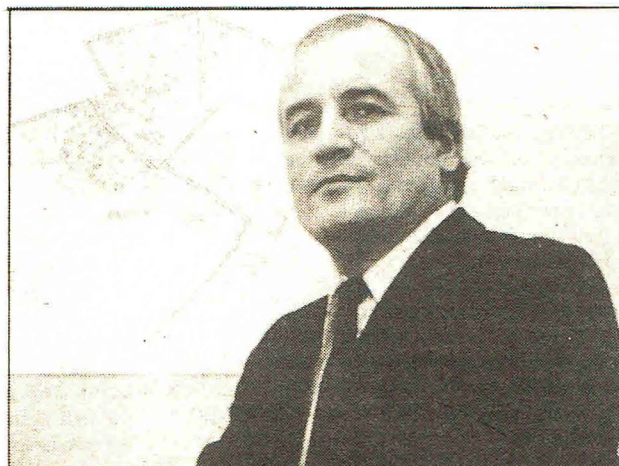
By a *Militant* reporter

Kilroy-Silk can also be seen in the nominations received so far. Mulhearn is the front runner with 19 nominations mainly from trade unions and half of the constituency's ten Labour Party branches. Kilroy-Silk meanwhile has 17, which includes nominations from EETPU branches, the Society of Labour Lawyers and the local Fabian Society.

Paranoid

The third candidate, Keva Combes, leader of Merseyside County Council, has six nominations. One of the nominees, Cherry Field Labour party, were the first to protest at the NEC's suspension decision.

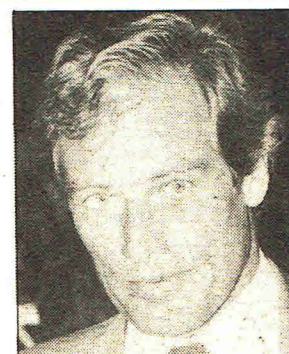
Kilroy-Silk meanwhile is reaching new levels of paranoid hysteria. In the *Sunday Mirror* at the weekend he launched an amazing attack on his constituency party, using language



Tony Mulhearn.

more common to the *Sun* than from a Labour MP. He called party delegates "puppets with no right to attend", said his opponents used violence, and even that the party's minutes were being falsified! *Militant* supporters were called 'maggots', 'thugs', and 'Nazis'.

His venom is not only directed at *Militant*, but at anyone who dares oppose him, including the MPs Eric Heffer, Allan Roberts and Brian Sedgemore. In a reply, Allan Roberts said Kilroy Silk's outburst was "an abusive, gratuitous and vitriolic attack on my integri-



Kilroy-Silk.

ty and that of Liverpool's five Labour MPs. I am now beginning to understand why Robert is threatened with de-selection".

'Stop the witch-hunt' Public meetings

CARDIFF: lobby of Wales Labour Party Executive in defence of Chris Peace—no witch-hunts, no expulsions. Friday 13 December, 12:30pm. Outside Welsh EC meeting, Transport House, Cathedral Street, Cardiff.

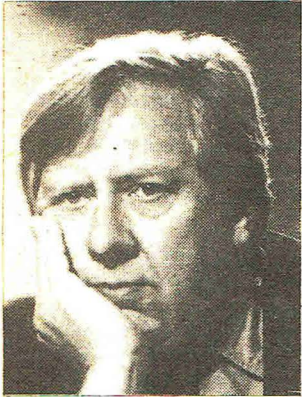
LEICESTER: Monday 16 December, at Fosse Neighbourhood Centre, Martle Road, 7.30 pm.

MACCLESFIELD: Thursday 12 December, Nags Head, Waters Green, 7.30 pm. Speaker Lynn Walsh.

Guts torn out of Britain's workshop

WHILST THE attention of workers everywhere has been focused on Liverpool Labour council's heroic fight to defend jobs and services, Birmingham workers are being told by their Labour council that the future is bright in Britain's 'Olympic city'.

Night after night on local TV the latest installment of the comings and goings of the city council's 'go getting' olympic squad is played out in their 'battle' against the rival bids of Barcelona etc. In the unlikely event that Birmingham gains the 1992 Olympics it will probably mean a few extra thousand jobs albeit temporarily.



Roy Hattersley. Unemployment is over 50 per cent in parts of his Sparkbrook constituency.

But set against the background of the de-industrialisation of the heartland of British manufacturing, it will be but a drop in the ocean.

In the last 10 years the city has lost 49 per cent of all its manufacturing jobs. This in an area where manufacturing accounted for 65 per cent of all jobs.

From 1981 to 1984 the number of jobs in Birmingham fell from 550,000 to 420,000—a drop of 31 per cent. Official unemployment stands at 90,000 or 20.5 per cent as compared to the national average of 13.1 per cent.

Thirty-two per cent of all Birmingham's unemployed have been out of a job for more than two years. In the inner city wards like Sparkhill, (in Roy Hattersley's constituency of Sparkbrook) unemployment exceeds 50 per cent.

Wave on wave of redundancies and closures has taken its toll in the temporary demoralisation of many Birmingham workers. The bosses have been able to take advantage of this on the wages front by keeping wage rises below the level of inflation or even direct cuts. By 1983 earnings of male workers fell to the lowest level of any region in the country.

Only now, in the temporary boomlet, has it crept back to sixth position (undoubtedly this has come about by the bosses meeting the increased market demands not by taking on new workers, but by laying on overtime).

Poverty has been on the increase in the city as well. 32 per cent of all school children in 1985 are entitled to free school meals compared to 17 per cent in 1981.

Only Liverpool has more council tenants entitled to rent and rate rebates. (Liverpool 65 per cent, Birmingham 62.6 per cent, Sheffield 48 per cent).

But it's not just unemployment and poverty that makes Birmingham stand out. Birmingham and its workers face massive problems with housing.

Revealed in the recent government report on housing is the condition of Birmingham's housing stock. It has deteriorated so dramatically that it would cost £74 million to repair all the city's housing. The council alone would need £230 million. Up to 102,000 houses need major renovation and 44,300 have been declared unfit for human habitation. As a result of this the council's waiting list has nearly doubled from 12,000 in 1979 to 20,000 today.

Rate increase

Labour gained power in May 1985 after two years of Tory misrule. Even with a massive 43 per cent rate increase immediately Labour came into office the council spending was still 10 per cent lower in real terms than in 1980/81. Thatcher's government by this time had robbed at least £115 million from the people of Birmingham by not increasing the Rate Support Grant in line with inflation since 1981. On top of this they propose to cut that again by nearly £59 million in the 1985/86 budget.

Labour's proposed budget has already resulted in a £18.8 million penalty clawback from the block grant as a result of two per cent overspending. With rate-capping on top there is no other option available but to either carry through massive cuts in 1986 or take the Liverpool road.

Militant supporters in the Labour Party will be out on the knockers with other Labour Party members in May '86 campaigning for the return of a Labour council. But because of the 43 per cent rate increase in '85 there looms the possibility of the Tories coming back to power.

In their previous period of office the Birmingham Tories were the most enthusiastic supporters of Thatcher's policies of cuts and privatisation, at one stage sacking the entire school meals workforce. Another Tory council will be a nightmare for the people of Birmingham.

The only way to avoid this would be by Birmingham uniting with councils like Liverpool and the other Labour local authorities in a united front against the Tories, demanding a reversal in the cut of the block grant and the correct allocation of the resources to begin to solve the crisis in favour of local working people.

By Bill Mullins
(TGWU West Bromwich District Committee, personal capacity)



Vinnie Brownless leaving Fontenoy's Gardens for the last time (above), and the Brownless family in their new council flat in Vauxhall (below). Photo: Tina Carroll



Schools plan hides education cuts

LYNNE WISEMAN, a mother with three children at secondary school, talked to Jen Pickard about some of her worries about the standard of education in Gateshead.

TWO YEARS ago, several schools in Gateshead were designated to become community schools. The idea was to involve community groups in school life and make better use of the facilities at the schools.

It was a progressive step in that pensioners can now look forward to their weekly dinner served at the school, and enjoy talking to the children. Mothers benefit from the mother and toddler groups being run there. Physically handicapped and able bodied (PHAB) groups also use the facilities. The evening classes covering a wide range of topics are beneficial especially to women who may not otherwise enrol at the local technical college several miles away.

The school children also benefit from contact with others in the community.

But while these developments have taken place, cuts are being made in other areas of education and social services such as nursery school provision and meals on

wheels service.

School students are involved in serving meals, clearing away and washing up and helping with the toddlers. They also help repairing fences and do gardening at school. Certainly there is a need to be trained in these practical skills but there is alarm that school students are being used to cover up cuts in these services.

Slave labour

Is this a way of preparing those at school for the only future this Tory system can offer—slave labour on a YTS scheme?

There is also the question of jobs—if school students weren't doing these 'practical' tasks how many real jobs would be necessary to keep these projects going? Or how many real jobs have been lost because the kids are used as an alternative?

Whilst we recognise the positive side to these developments, the labour and trade union movement, parents, teachers and children must make absolutely sure that these steps aren't being used to cover up cuts in services or in education. ALL children must be given the same opportunity to be involved with the community and not just 'low achievers' who are singled

out while the more academically inclined are left to concentrate on passing exams.

At one secondary school in Gateshead up to 40 per cent of school students from 4th year and up are on a special Department of Education and Science (DES) project. Used correctly for extra staff, equipment and facilities, the money from DES can benefit children whom the system labels as disruptive or 'low achievers'.

But there are aspects to these schemes which we have to question—the school students on this project get a 'lovely' (according to one of the staff) certificate at the end of it, so that they won't leave school with nothing and feel a failure! A DES project certificate labels them, as far as any future employer is concerned, as a failure—a low achiever or disruptive. Yes, a lovely certificate!

The education system is geared to the needs of the Tories and big business—until we change this and offer our children a real choice in education with a job, a future at the end of it—then all these schemes and projects can do is prepare our children for a life on the dole, a life of misery.

'It's like being given a million pounds'

NEIL KINNOCK has claimed that he wants to 'sustain a housing programme that means so much to Liverpool'.

On his recent visit to Liverpool he visited the Brownless family whose lives have been transformed by the council's housing programme.

Militant spoke to Maureen and Vinnie Brownless who live with their six children in Fontenoy Gardens, Liverpool 8. From the window of their old flat they can see the new council house they will be moving into.

'We've lived in this flat for 12 years and its been terrible. There's only one sink in the flat we all have to wash in and in the winter it's freezing cold. We have never had a kitchen before, where we can sit and eat. We've had to constantly replace carpets and settees because the kids dirty them by having to eat in the living room.'

The new house is beautiful. We are over the moon about it. It's like being given a million pounds.

I grew up in a one-bedroom flat just like this one with nine brothers and sisters. We have never had a house before, we can't believe it. Vinnie keeps on going to the window to look at it'.

We asked them what local people thought about the council's house building project:

Labour support

'They are 100 per cent behind it, even non-political people totally support the council. If it went to the polls Labour would get tremendous support. I don't think the Liberals ever built anything. If the Liberals had been in power we wouldn't have got a decent home'.

The Brownless's were bitter when it came to suggestions that the council should cut its house building programme in order to solve its budget crisis which has been put forward by certain trade union leaders:

'The people who put forward ideas of capitalisation have already got their houses. The council must not give in to these suggestions; the people of Liverpool are behind the council and that is what matters'. The Brownless kept their final word for Neil Kinnock and his attack on Liverpool City council at Labour Party conference: 'He should have come to Liverpool first to see just how much the council is doing. Now that he's been here I would hope he would realise the plight Liverpool people are in and show support for the council that is fighting for us'.

By Neelam De Freitas

Answer the attacks—sell Militant

MILITANT SELLERS have been spurred on to bigger and better sales by the new wave of attacks.

Last week, *Militant* was sold at every single pit in the South Wales coalfield. One in four of all the participants in the NUS demonstration in Sheffield bought a *Militant* and 30 *Militant Students* were sold as well.

Gerry McKinley wrote from the Wirral: "...we organised a week of action to boost sales, which included hospitals, workplaces, shopping precincts as well as canvassing for our ideas on the doorstep. On Friday we sold 13 papers in 45 minutes door to door."

"On Saturday we managed four separate precinct sales (Wallasey, Birkenhead, New Ferry and Ford Estate) all at the same time. We will continue with these every week. The week of action was a great success—over 200 papers sold; more regular sales and new supporters gained..."

A letter from Susan Porter of Morecambe shows the true spirit of our young supporters. "At tonight's meeting of the GMC a resolution from Morecambe branch was discussed, congratulating Kinnock on his speech at Party Conference and urging him to put it into action."

"Max Neil who is at Lancaster University but living in

Morecambe, had his application for renewal of membership opposed and will be asked to attend a meeting to explain the reason why he was selling *Militant* on 16 November.

"The reason, I feel, for this local witch-hunt is our recent successes on estate and street sales, also that we are holding a public meeting in support of Liverpool City Council on 25 November organised by the YS."

"The right-wing have made it clear that they will not rest until at least four of us are expelled, but if we are willing to denounce *Militant* then they will think again. Such a small price, they must surely think for their own principles. We have made it quite clear we are not prepared to sell out the ideas of *Militant* at any price..."

In Morecambe sales have risen steadily over the weeks. The old right-wing may hate the ideas of genuine socialists but the sales show that ordinary workers want more.

In North Staffordshire two miners' support groups have agreed to sell the paper in their meetings.

Join in our continuing sales drive. If you are not prepared to sell out the ideas of genuine socialism, then why not help build the sales of the paper that fights for you?

By Gerry Lerner

Marxist Daily Building Fund

Since last week £288

	£		£
Eastern	4382	Scotland West	2840
East Midlands	4435	Southern	5898
London NE	5109	South West	1471
London NW	5307	Wales East	2616
London SE	2895	Wales West	2052
London SW	2367	West Midlands	3299
Lancashire	1060	Yorkshire	2927
Manchester	3229	Humberside	3676
Merseyside	6448	National	1327
Northern	4735		
Scotland East	2541	Total	68613

THIS IS the month of the great slanders. No story seems too far fetched for the Fleet Street hacks to swallow and repeat.

The Tories are afraid of the support we are getting. If we were not a threat to the continuation of capitalism, they wouldn't bother with the outpouring of vitriol we have seen over the past weeks.

How do we answer these attacks? In almost every article having a go at *Militant* now our financial support is a crucial factor. Money talks. Make sure that we answer these attacks loudly with hard cash. The Liverpool campaign hasn't finished, so make sure you play

your part in keeping up our finances.

If you haven't given your week's wage to the Building Fund, or given £10 donation to help the Liverpool campaign, what better time than at the height of the witch-hunt.

This week, we have had donations of £74 from SE London supporters and £137 from South Staffordshire. Coventry have raised £51 and £41 has come from Wales.

Fleet Street is waging a vicious campaign to try and break the influence of *Militant*. Answer them and help break the bosses' daily monopoly.

Militant Winter Draw

Registered Promoter: D Smith, 14 Station Road, Brightlingsea, Essex. £1,000 worth of prizes to be won.

- 1st prize Video Equipment worth £500.
 - 2nd prize Stacking Hi-Fi worth £300.
 - 3rd prize Portable TV worth £100.
 - 4th prize—5 prizes of £20 worth of socialist books.
- The draw takes place on Saturday 4 January, 1986. Price of tickets: 10p (ten pence).

All counterfoils, cash and unsold tickets to be returned to *Militant*, 3-13 Hepscoth Road, Hackney, London E9 by first post Saturday 4 January, 1986.

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.

SWINDON *Militant* Marxist Discussion Group meetings held monthly. Phone Martin on 24796 for details.

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

OUT NOW Banned LPYS pamphlet 'The ideals of October'. Every YS branch should order in bulk. Price 50p, 20p for individual postage. Bulk postage free. Cheques payable to *Militant*, send to L Waker, 3-13 Hepscoth Rd, London E9 5HB.

BIRMINGHAM Xmas rally, Saturday 14 December. Doors open 10.30am. Tickets £2 & £1. Carrs Lane Church Centre, Nr. Marks and Spencers, Carrs Lane, Birmingham. Featuring Liverpool and South Africa. Speakers include: Harry Smith (Liverpool councillor); Bev Simpson (Southern African Labour Education Project). Plus: Video *We Live Like Dogs*, struggles of black mineworkers in South Africa. Video: *Battle for Orgreave*.

And food, stalls, etc. Crèche available.

LIVERPOOL VIDEO 30 minutes on the achievements of the council and how the struggle developed. £5 to hire plus £5 deposit. £10 to purchase. Order from WEG, c/o 3-13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB.

1986 DIARIES 60p, address books 60p, bookmarks 40p, plastic paper sleeves 20p, sew on badges 40p. Cheques to *Militant*, 10 Rodney Ct. Anderson Drive, Sholing Southampton SO2 8BV.

NOW AVAILABLE 1986 *Militant* poster calendar. £1.00 each plus postage and package. 50p each on orders of 10 or more—profit to your area Fighting Fund. Orders to 3-13 Hepscoth Road, London, E9 5HB. Cheques payable to *Militant*.

YOUTH Trades Union Rights Campaign, Christmas Five-a-side Tournament. Appearing these teams and more: ★ Madness ★ Style Council ★ NME ★ DJ's. On Friday 13 December 1985 from 6pm to 10pm. Brixton Recreation Centre London SW9. Tickets £3 waged, £1.50 unwaged. From YTURC, Caxton House, 13/16 Borough Road, London SE1 0AL.

FOURTH GREAT Annual West London LPYS Talent Nite. Saturday 7 December from 7.30pm. Ruskin Hall, Church Rd, Acton W3. Tickets £2, £1 for the unwaged. ★ Also acts still wanted ★ For details of tickets or auditions ring:- 01 840 3445 or 01 993 2324.

MILITANT carrier bags—now reduced. 10 bags for only 50p. Please enclose 25p P&P. Send order to: Fighting Fund, 3-13 Hepscoth Road, London E9.

TED GRANT—*Rise and Fall of the Communist International*. With an introduction by Alan Woods and an appendix. Marxist Studies Series pamphlet No 3. Now available from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB. 80p including postage.

LONDON LPYS Xmas Party. Saturday 21 December. 7.30pm to Midnight. Florence Nightingale pub. Westminster Bridge Road, SE1 (near Waterloo station) £1.50 waged. 75p unwaged. All welcome.



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Also, sessions from the Marxist Weekend School, (£90-£1.25).

Dialectical Materialism—John Pickard. Historical Materialism—Tony Cross. Is Marxism Relevant Today?—Ted Grant. The Origin of the State—Roger Silverman. Is Britain a Police State—Bob Edwards. Black Slavery—Phil Frampton. Black Nationalism—Bob Lee. South Africa: Closing Rally—Martin Legassick.

Add 10p per tape for postage. 10 for £12 post free. All cheques and PO's payable to World Socialist Books. Send to 3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB.

"CHILDREN must educate their parents" (Karl Marx). On 11 October to Steve and Carolyn Edwards, a son, Reed Mathias. Teaching us to fight harder than ever for a socialist future.

ENAMEL Militant badges: now available. Cost £1. Bulk orders (10 or more). Cost 75p each + 25p post and package. Contact: Fighting Fund Department, 3-13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB.

THE WHOLE of the bosses' press has stepped into line to attack *Militant*. The lies are so great it's a wonder the presses don't seize up in disgust.

The Tories and their allies inside the Labour Party and trade unions hope some of the slanders will stick and turn workers away from the ideas of Marxism. However, millions of workers will not be taken in by these stories; they know the true role of *Militant* supporters in the forefront of the fight against capitalism.

To answer these attacks we need to increase our funds urgently. THEY have the whole of Fleet Street at their disposal. WE rely on YOU! One of the best ways to fight back is send us a donation to help us answer back.

Mr and Mrs GJ Carrington of Makerfield CLP sent the following letter to Neil Kinnock.

"I would like to thank you for waking us up to the dangers of authoritarian tendencies within the Labour Party. For the last few years I have not been a very active member of the Labour Party, although I have always subscribed to the views of democratic socialism, and therefore I feel it is now the time for socialists in the Labour Party to put their money where their mouth is."

"I therefore enclose a photocopy of a cheque to the value of £100 made payable to the *Militant* for your perusal. I am also forwarding to them a cheque to

FIIGHTING FUND

Quarter ends 31 January

This week: £3,975

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 London South West	546		1200
2 Southern	419		2750
3 Humberside	409		3350
4 London West	350		3050
5 Manchester/Lancs	228		2150
6 East Midlands	434		4200
7 London East	557		5450
8 Northern	225		3100
9 Scotland East	115		2200
10 Eastern	213		4650
11 West Midlands	175		3800
12 South West	125		3450
13 Merseyside	252		5650
14 Scotland West	88		3050
15 Wales East	156		4500
16 Yorkshire	156		6850
17 London South East	45		2150
18 Wales West	29		2950
Others	4241		5500
Total received	8762		70000

cover one year's subscription for the *Militant* newspaper. I think it obscene for you to encourage a 'witch-hunt' of the best socialists in Britain, namely the supporters of the *Militant* newspaper."

There will be thousands more workers prepared to contribute to our funds after the attacks by the Labour leaders. In the run-up to Christmas, especially this week, we are asking all readers to show their contempt for the attacks by asking everyone you know for a 'Christmas tenner or fiver'. Ask at work, at school, at college, on the dole, ask

relations—they will all be prepared to give if you ask.

In the days before Christmas we also have the best opportunities for selling Winter Draw tickets, the calendars and cards. With socials and parties to celebrate the growth of Marxism the holiday period should mean a fortune raised for our fighting fund.

Give *Militant* the best-ever present—take us to 50 per cent of the target before Christmas. Give the Tories a miserable Christmas. Show them that the more they attack us, the more we grow!

DONATIONS INCLUDE:

Tony Gill, Leeds £50; Jim White, Pollokshields £13; Neil Cameron (12 years) Cambslang £1; G Birks, Middleton UCATT £1; P Moore, Leicester, £2; Yorkshire Regional LPYS school £60.40; J Wilson Blantyre, £2.25; J Houston, Strathclyde NALGO, £5; W Plews, Hull EETPU £4.25; Mrs Nassa, OAP, Gwent, £1.75; B Taylor, East London £2; Battersea readers' meeting, £316; German trade unionist 100 DM. Plus many donations of readers' union expenses.

By Nick Wrack

A new charter of youth rights

THE INTERNATIONAL Year of Youth has come and gone, leaving behind many fine speeches exposing the plight of young people today.

But far from the situation improving, the Tories want to grind youth further down.

The announcement in the Queen's speech of the new offence of 'disorderly' conduct, the introduction of a two-year YTS in March 1986, the abolition of Wages Council protection for 500,000 young workers under 21, make fundamental attacks on youth and workers as a whole.

In Britain today 22.3 per cent (1,237,589) to 16-24 year olds are claiming unemployment benefit (DoE, January 1985). This compares to 9.2 per cent youth unemployment in 1976. 435,049 people have never ever had a job since leaving school.

Beneath these figures lies a terrible reality of drugs, crime and violence created by these conditions. In a recent poll in the magazine *The Hit*, 10 per cent of youth questioned had tried heroin.

The government is very conscious of the time-bomb these conditions are creating. They realise that action is needed to quell the explosions we saw in Tottenham and Brixton.

However, a decaying capitalist economy is totally incapable of providing jobs for youth. Therefore the government is spending millions of pounds to extend job creation schemes to 'mop up' the youth.

There will be pressure on wages of young workers to come in line with the YTS 'wage' of £27.30 on the first year and £35 during the second year. After two years of these wage levels the 'expectations' of young people will be lowered.

These are the reasons why the Tories intend to abolish wages council protection for young workers, to bring their pay down in line with that of YTS.

Two-year YTS

The two-year YTS will be formally 'voluntary'. However, more and more firms are considering not employing people below age 18 except on YTS. For example, glass makers Pilkington have stopped employing under 18s except on its own two year course (first year YTS).

Thus in effect, there will be increased pressure for school-leavers to go on YTS—it is compulsion by the back door.

The labour movement must be alert to the dangers of this development. Firstly youth are being used to undermine wages and conditions of workers as a whole. Secondly, this vast 'army of



This year's lobby of Parliament against compulsory YTS, organised by the Youth Trade Unions Right Campaign. Photo: Militant.

unemployed' youth could be used as a scab labour force against the labour movement. Already in many large towns 'employment agencies' are springing up where the unemployed (mainly youth) go each morning and are given work for that day.

Thirdly, the position of youth in society is desperate. Seeing no future and unfortunately no fight put up by the labour leaders some young workers will become alienated from and even hostile to the labour movement. Some will turn to racism, mindless violence

and perhaps at some point in the future even terrorism.

One disturbing feature of the recent riots has been that the anger of youth has not only been directed against the police but firemen, journalists and ambulance men, all trade unionists.

Action needed

Urgent action is needed by the labour movement to win the support of those youth who might be hostile to the movement, but whose interests lie with it. This can only be done if the movement offers a future for

youth and campaigns on the issues that face young people.

This is why the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign (YTURC) is launching a declaration of youth rights. The declaration outlines eight basic rights for youth on jobs, low pay, drug abuse, political power, education, housing discrimination and entertainment. It should be adopted by the labour movement and used as a basis for campaigns to win the support of all youth by explaining why their future lies with the labour and trade union

movement.

YTURC plans to launch initiatives on low pay, health and safety on YTS and a major union recruitment drive on YTS when the new scheme starts in March.

To do this needs the support of the movement. The declaration should be discussed at every LPYS, Labour Party and trade union branch.

For more information on the declaration of youth rights contact: YTURC, Caxton House, 13/16 Borough Road, London SE1 0AL. Tel: (01) 928 5547.

Portrait of a witch-hunter

CARDIFF SOUTH and Penarth Labour Party is one of a number of right wing constituencies where Militant supporters are under attack.

Three local members of the party are under threat of expulsion for the crime of selling *Militant* outside party meetings. Two of the accused, Andrew Price and Dave Bartlett have a combined Labour Party membership of 30 years, and both are long standing general committee delegates.

What is significant about Cardiff South is that it is the home of former Labour Prime Minister and leading right winger James Callaghan. For the past 10 years he has led a triumvirate which has attacked his left wing critics, in particular *Militant* supporters.

New attacks

His two co-witch-hunters are Lord Brooks—made a peer by Callaghan—who is a former national organiser of the right wing organisation Solidarity, and Bill Tobutt, a full-time TGWU official, and still remembered in Cardiff for his disgraceful role in the 1960s dock strike.

Callaghan received many accolades from the Tory press recently when he announced his retirement after 40 years as an MP. His record in office is worth scrutiny. Today the Kinnock leadership is leading an assault against *Militant*. But as *Militant* has explained,

the renewed attacks are a cover for the leadership ditching Labour's radical socialist policies. Democratically decided policies the movement hoped would be implemented by the next Labour government are now being derided as 'impossibilist' by Kinnock.

It is necessary to look at Callaghan's career as a reminder of what happens when the Labour leadership tries to operate in the confines of the capitalist system, in turn becoming its staunchest defenders.

In the 1960s Callaghan as Home Secretary pioneered blatantly racist legislation which denied access to the country to British citizens from Asia. Before becoming a government minister, he was parliamentary advisor to the Police Federation. This position as apologist for the police is now held by right wing Tory MP Eldon Griffiths.

As Labour Prime Minister from 1976 to 1979 Callaghan presided over the most severe cut backs in social services seen since the 1920s. His government—dominated by right wing renegades like Shirley Williams, David Owen and Roy Jenkins who went on to form the Social Democratic Party—attempted to save British capitalism from crisis by implementing a diluted form of monetarism, with the work-



James Callaghan, Labour Prime Minister from 1976-79. Photo: Militant

ing class paying the price.

These cutbacks along with a rigid pay policy provoked enormous discontent from the labour movement, who the government was supposedly meant to represent.

Wage restraint

In 1978 both the TUC and the Labour Party conference overwhelmingly rejected Callaghan's pay policy. One section of the movement after the other were forced to take strike action to defend their living standards—most of them the lowest paid workers in society, those that the Labour leadership claimed to represent, from firemen to ambulance staff, civil servants to dinner ladies, nurses to refuse collectors.

So too in the private sector, with Ford workers, journalists and lorry drivers taking action. While Labour cabinet members crossed official picket lines, Callaghan saved his criticism for the low-paid strikers.

It is an accepted fact now that Callaghan's disastrous policies lost Labour the 1979 general election. But, although he was no longer leader, Callaghan left his mark on the 1983 election. He handed ammunition to the Tory press on a plate, at the height of the election campaign when he called together television and media representatives to a small election meeting in Penarth and spoke out against the Labour Party's policy on unilateral disarmament.



Low paid hospital cleaners strike against the Callaghan government's wage restraint policy. Photo: Militant.

Subsequently when the Penarth Labour Party branch proposed a motion condemning his action he threatened to resign his seat if it was passed, fighting a by-election against the official Labour candidate. He had used this bullying tactic in 1975 after disquiet about press stories circulating at that time.

Expulsions

Compare this record with that of local *Militant* supporters, three of whom now face expulsion. Despite fundamental political disagreements with Callaghan, when he was

selected by the constituency they provided the necessary support at election times. Yet according to the Tory press, *Militant* supporters are the 'dictators' and 'undemocratic', while Callaghan is the 'reasonable moderate'.

Callaghan is now retiring from Parliament, for a comfortable life on his large farm in Sussex. *Militant* wishes him a long and quiet retirement, and reminds him that while he has departed, the Marxists within the Labour Party remain and are growing in support.

By a Militant reporter

Lifting lid on Ci

IN OCTOBER 1984 the Bank of England brought Johnson Matthey Bank for one pound sterling. You might think it a cheap price for your own bank but JMB had £787 million of outstanding loans and was estimated to be £150 million at risk. The Bank of England had to put together a £250 million rescue operation in conjunction with the other four clearing banks. It has since emerged that JMB was involved in fraud on a massive scale which is being investigated by the Director of Public Prosecutions. This has come about after a long and tireless campaign campaign by Labour MP Brian Sedgmore who talked to Mick Brooks:

WHY DID the Bank of England and in effect the whole financial establishment cover up the fraud issue?

One reason why it has become such a big affair is because a lot of undoubted fraud stems from trade with Nigeria. Although with Johnson Matthey that's only £120 million—I say 'only', that's a lot of money!—there are other banks with even bigger sums involved.

It doesn't matter so much to them, they are bigger banks, they've got a bigger base to absorb bigger losses. If there was an enquiry into this, the role of the other banks would come out.

It's thought by police that there has been £1 billion in fraud. The question is what's happening with these banks—have they reported it to the police and what's going on in the financial world?

You can have a fraud which, but for my work, would have gone unreported in this country, or Nigeria. I know for a fact that the Foreign Secretary has been talking to the authorities in Nigeria about what has been going on.

The Export Credit Guarantee Department (see article opposite) has not only lost money with Johnson Matthey as a result of these frauds, but also lost money from other banks; and yet the public would not know of this...

How exactly did the frauds work?

That's very complicated. I've sent the Director of Public Prosecutions diagrams in case he can't understand it. Some people were anxious to either steal money or avoid paying tax.

It appears that money is 'lost' through a series of complicated tax avoidance schemes. It moves through a series of offshore companies—six or seven of them. When you actually get all the cheques—which is an extremely difficult thing to do—there's been a series of lendings and borrowings.

You can put them in a circle round a table and every lending and borrowing cancels out. So actually there's been no activity at all and the whole purpose of the thing is just to 'lose' money.

The Nigerian stuff is about a vanishing export trade. There are a series of groups of brothers—one in Lagos, one in London, one in Lahore. The one in London would in theory export some goods to somebody in Lagos. He'd get pre-export finance from Johnson Matthey. Actually no goods, or only a fraction of the goods, would go. He'd invent a reason as to why the contract had broken down to the department and say: "Look the contract had broken down for XYZ", which was completely untrue and the ECGD would pay out the money.

Now the money should be assigned to JMB because they had provided the finance for it, but they

'forgot' to assign it. It's like if you buy a very expensive house for £1 million and the building society forget to put a charge on it. It's just nonsense! So the customers get the benefit of the export credit guarantee.

The bank would normally get the money back so they'd be all right. But when the coup came in Nigeria, people who said they would pledge money to repay the bank simply couldn't pay. So when the bank went to the customers—the people who actually owed the money, they said: "Well you've known about all these frauds, we're not going to pay. If the Nigerian Treasury won't fork out, we're not going to fork out".

The Export Guarantee Department were suckered not only in relation to Johnson Matthey but in relation to a lot of other banks. They lost millions from JMB and a lot more from other people...



Brian Sedgmore MP, Hackney South and Shoreditch.

How did the Bank of England get sucked in?

The Bank of England was desperately concerned because it supervises banks and what has emerged is that supervision never took place. The supervising department assumed automatically that banks would be honest...

If the nature and scale of the bank's incompetence came out, the governor of the Bank of England would probably have to resign.

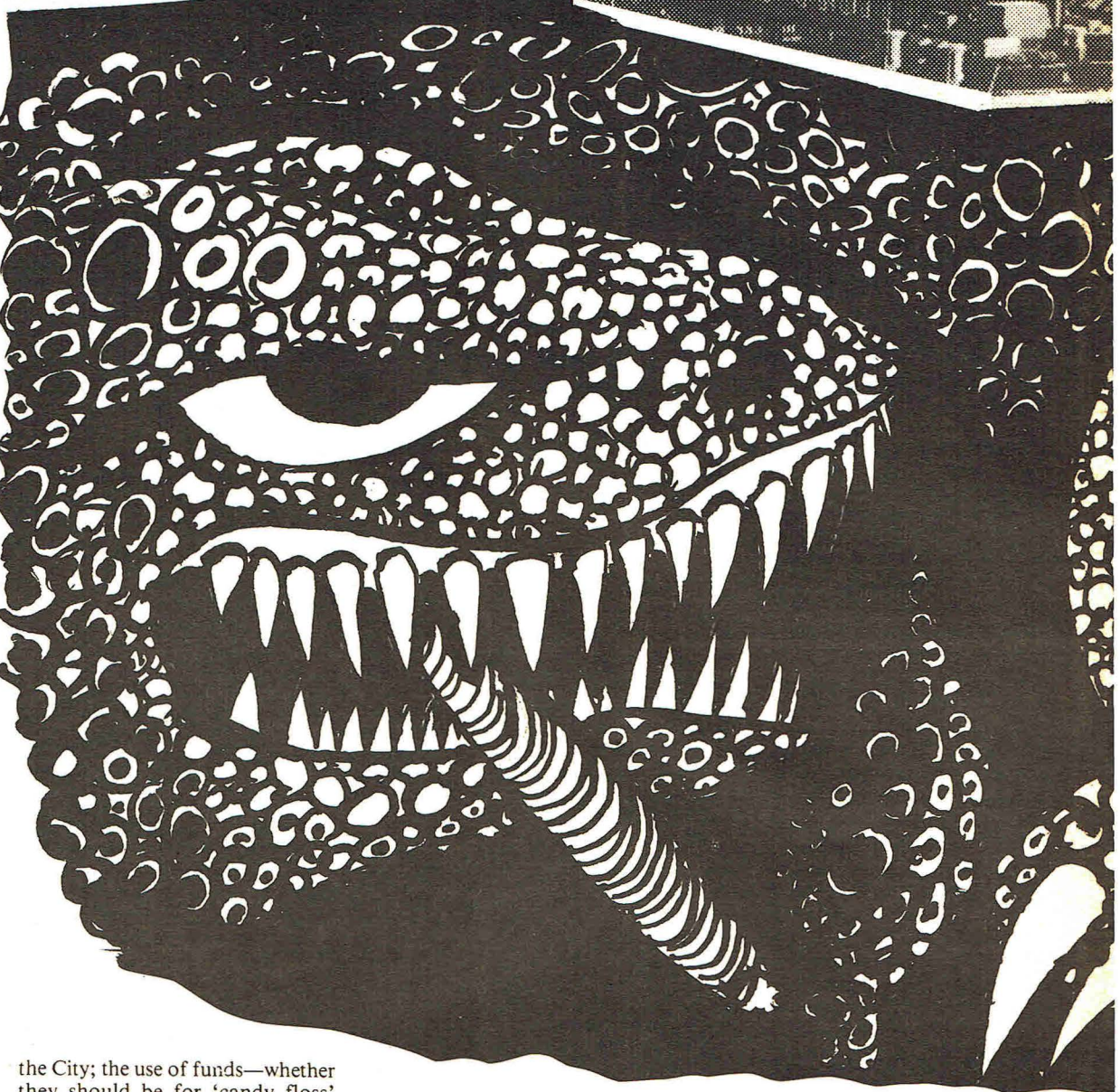
The papers haven't been too helpful?

Investigative journalism has practically disappeared in the 1980s. Newspaper owners may well be involved with stuff like insider dealing and the kind of practices I'm objecting to in relation to the Stock Exchange. They're probably not keen that one gets too deep in to this kind of thing: "Who's going to be in the frame next?" they're probably saying to themselves.

How helpful have the rest of the Parliamentary Labour Party been?

The Labour front bench are officially calling for an inquiry, but the fact that the whole of the press is saying: "Why haven't you got the support of the Labour front bench?" means they haven't made their support that clear.

This is an important issue on a whole series of levels—control of



the City; the use of funds—whether they should be for 'candy floss' projects (see article opposite) or investment; one law for the rich... all big issues. I really can't understand this inability to exploit an issue which will help the Labour Party. However, I shall press them further...

Labour may win the next election. We can't ignore the results of this scandal. We've got to remember what Johnson Matthey was doing is what a lot of banks do. They were putting money into candy floss deals. They were confusing lending money so other people could make even more money, and creating wealth. They don't draw that distinction. Nor does Margaret Thatcher. It strengthens the argument immeasurably that

the clearing banks—even though Johnson Matthey wasn't a clearing bank—should be taken into public ownership.

There are two basic arguments. One is that the banks don't lend to the right kind of projects, they aren't sustaining manufacturing industry. There's too much money going into property and dubious third world projects that are not only damaging ourselves, but also people in the Third World. Too many get rich quick and easy projects. So this strengthens the argument for public ownership.

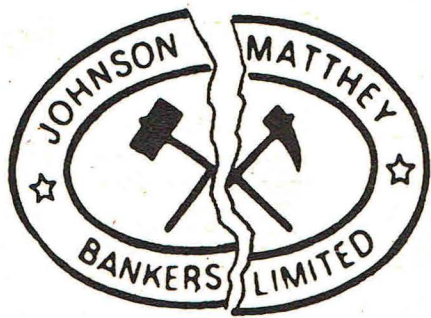
Second, all governments want to control the supply of credit, and why not through control rather

than the winks and nods system we've got? The more one exposes what's going on in the banking system, the more they realise they're politically open to attack and to arguments that there should be major changes in the way the banks are run...

I don't know why I'm investigating for the Fraud Squad. It's not what I'm paid to do. We appear to be better doing the Fraud Squad's job than they are...

Masses of this evidence has been sent on to the government months ago. So the idea that I've been hanging on to it is just nonsense. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's

ty



How £ billion bank fraud can happen

BANKS BORROW money off people and lend it out again at a higher rate of interest. Bank profits stem from the difference between the low rate of interest paid to a depositor with the bank and the higher rate of interest gained from the bank's customers (you probably get charged for the privilege of lending them the money in your current account).

By Mick Brooks

Bank profits are therefore part of the surplus value produced by the working class, but this surplus value has already been divided and sub-divided between the different sections of the capitalist class, who rip each other off by swapping pieces of coloured paper.

Thus the banks syphon off all the idle money in society and lend it out, mostly to big capitalists.

There are two kinds of banks. The clearing banks (who swap each other's cheques) are the well known high street banks such as Lloyds, Barclays, NatWest and the Midland. Their assets come mainly from the deposits of working class people and small traders whose wages or salaries are paid into a bank account. Their managers are proverbially stuffy, sober-suited gentlemen who hand out homilies about 'cutting your coat according to your cloth' more readily than overdrafts when you go to them for a home or a holiday.

The high-flying merchant banks tend to look down on the plodding old high street banks. They are involved in the exotic world of international finance. They borrow from the very rich and the big companies and either float loans for public bodies all over the world by organising bond issues, lend money to multinational corporations or finance trade.

In all this activity they ask one question—"What's in it for us?" Disposing of the money-capital of our society, they are not interested in building up Britain's productive resource. The fraudulent activities Johnson Matthey was drawn into is only the thin end of a very thick wedge of speculative activity—'candyfloss' as Brian Sedgemoor calls it.

World trade is normally oiled by

credit from the banks. Merchants borrow 'till their ship comes in'. Because of the risks involved in international trade which the JMB affair has helped unearth, the government has set up an Export Credit Guarantee Department intended to encourage exports. Instead the ECGD was shamelessly plundered by Johnson Matthey customers in deals where *no exporting took place*.

The JMB affair opens a window on the much publicised world debt crisis. As the *Economist* points out. (23 Nov) "Roughly half the foreign capital lent to the big Latin American debtors since 1979 left them again almost as soon as it arrived." The same seems to have been true of the Nigerian debt mountain. According to Sedgemoor £1 billion of this debt—owed to British financiers alone—was racked up by straightforward fraud.

No goods were imported into Nigeria under these deals either to feed the 90 million population or to build up its industry. The fiddles were mainly based around the Nigerian currency, the naira. Under the corrupt Shagari regime you could get one naira for £1 sterling in a Lagos bank and three naira in the street. What could be simpler than to exchange sterling for black market naira?

This is the kind of creditable foreign exchange deals our august city institutions were up to, all in the name of helping the third world!

The whole issue only came to light with the 1984 military coup. The new regime in Lagos announced they could not repay their debts and JMB's customers little 'money-go-round' suddenly came to a stop. Because they couldn't get their money back they couldn't pay Johnson Matthey back. The Bank of England had to step in and take over £248 million of bad debt.

The whole banking system is rotten. We don't know how many more were tied up in fraud. The JMB affair shows that the whole banking system needs taking into public ownership and workers' control to turn out the nests of all those who use our money against us.

Fraser had a couple of mistresses who needed expensive entertainment. Mahmoud Sipra told us that Mr Abdul Shamgi provided the flat for Mr Fraser in Mayfair."

Abdul Shamgi: "We know that he is an acquaintance of the prime minister, he is a friend of the chairman of the Conservative Party and he is an erstwhile friend of the Minister of State for Defence Procurement. He is held up by the Conservative Party as the kind of immigrant who can come to Britain, make millions of pounds and show how the free enterprise system works".

"Mr Shamgi bought Gomba Stonefield empire in Cumnock in Scotland and he set up a shell of a factory producing heavy vehicles. he received many grants from the Scottish Development Agency. Then, when he had got those grants, he moved the whole operation, lock, stock and barrel to Rochester." (*Hansard*, 8 November).

Sedgemoor went on to detail various other deals entered into by Shamgi. He ended up owing JMB £19 million.

Mahomoud Sipra: The biggest debtor of JMB, owing \$70 million. Sedgemoor provided details of a number of Sipra's activities which if proven in a court would show him to be guilty of a host of frauds. Most centrally he points the finger

at the Bank of England. Sedgemoor alleges Sipra was approached by the Bank of England over a court case he had taken out against them in New York.

"The Bank of England was desperate to stop the action because it reached an agreement with Mr Sipra in June, 'You stop your action in New York'—and I have documentary evidence of this—'and we will not take out a contempt action in the English High Court and we will drop our Mareva action against you'. The whole position is bizarre because the agreement was reached in June, yet the New York court action lapsed on 24 May—such is the brilliance of counsel and solicitors who advise the Bank of England".

"There was another aspect to settling the deal. The Bank of England offered the equity of 1 Chester Terrace to Mr Sipra for £65,000 although there was between £100,000 and £300,000 equity in the property."

Michael Hepker: Sedgemoor accused him of two frauds in South Wales and one on Imperial Tobacco and continued: "What on earth is going on with our society? If I go to the east end of London and pinch 80p out of a till, three car loads of policemen come down. Steal 280 million pence, as Mr Hepker has done, and he sits up in Leeds running a public company".

The principal characters:

(Taken from *Hansard*)—

Ian Fraser, a director of Johnson Matthey bank, he was in charge of their loans policy.

According to Brian Sedgemoor (*Hansard*, 8 November) after a

customer (Mr Melwani) was arrested in Nigeria: "That means that the money had to go back immediately, and Mr Ian Fraser was said to be on the verge of committing suicide. As Mr Melwani was in prison and could not pay back the money Mr Fraser had to desperately invent a profit. I believe that that is one of the reasons why the book keeping started to go wrong at JMB... Anyone who knew that Mr Ian Fraser had been involved in that case did not have to blackmail Mr Fraser but just had to go along and say that they knew about the case, and they would get a loan from JMB".

'Work hard, play hard' seems to have been Fraser's motto, Sedgemoor again: "The Fraud Squad has discovered that Mr Ian

had it. The Attorney General's had it. They haven't had everything because I've been afraid the Bank of England wouldn't play fair and tell the truth. So I've fed that out rather slowly. They get a lot and then provide a defence, and then I feed them some more. I've caught them out several times that way!

It looks like the whole story's going to break now...?

Well I certainly hope so. One admires the resilience of the British establishment to get round almost anything. I've been kicked out (of the House of Commons). Where else but in Britain would you end up by arresting the investigator?

Greece

An explosion of strikes and protests

THE ONE-DAY strike on 14 November was a sign of Greece's biggest crisis since the second world war, comparable to the student rising against the military dictatorship in 1974.

The capitalist parties, twice defeated by PASOK are demoralised, divided and see no way out of the crisis. Immediately following June's election defeat, the main capitalist party New Democracy (ND) split with nine of its newly elected MPs forming the 'Democratic Renovation'.

The capitalist class itself at present is happily standing by and allowing PASOK to carry through a ruthless austerity programme. "If the conservatives had won and tried to apply the austerity there would have been wholesale revolt and they would have fallen. Only the Socialists can pull this off—that is why their responsibility is so great", a leading Greek conservative openly commented.

Counter-reform

There were similar declarations in the bosses' press editorial statements attacking ND for calling demonstrations against the government programme. The one fear that the Greek bourgeois have expressed is that Papandreou may go too far and: "...provoke a situation which may get out of control".

Such fears are more than justified. An explosion of strikes and demonstrations greeted the programme of Papandreou. Greece has been plunged into a pre-revolutionary crisis: all sections of society are searching for a solution. A massive politicisation has taken place with furious discussions on buses, in restaurants and groups gathering on the streets.

In June PASOK was returned to power for the second time with 46 per cent of the vote. Together with the Greek Communist Party, KKE, a clear majority gave their support to a socialist transformation of Greek society, reflected in the PASOK slogan: "for the

By a correspondent

change".

However, rather than carry through such a transformation, Papandreou and the PASOK leadership, under the pressure of capitalism, have adopted a ruthless programme of counter-reform. Public expenditure is being cut, wages frozen for two years and the Drachma devalued by 15 per cent, pushing up prices. The measures have shattered the hopes of Greek workers, and brought them into open conflict with the PASOK government.

Metal workers, civil servants, dockers, taxi drivers and teachers have all been involved in strike action. Reflecting the radicalisation of the middle class, lawyers have been on strike for more than 51 days! Even workers employed at the US NATO base have been in action over wages.

Athens has had two 24-hour strikes in three weeks, one at city and the second at national level. During the days preceding the second strike, students at one college organised an occupation and even established a radio station.

The national general strike on 14 November got the support of over 80 per cent of workers. It was called by both CP and PASOK led trade unions. In Athens between 150,000 and 200,000 demonstrated; throughout Greece marches and meetings were organised. Over one and a half million workers were on strike, making it the biggest since the second world war.

During such a movement the working class feels its strength as a class and draws behind its banner large sections of the middle class. Small shops in Athens were closed and the banners of the doctors could be clearly seen on the Athens demonstration.

Greek workers' strength



Workers on the Athens demonstration during the 14 November one day general strike. A further huge strike on 28 November by public sector workers showed the anger at Papandreou's package.

was clearly reflected in two incidents. After a small clash between strikers and some scabs, police arrested the strike leaders at a public service depot. Over 5,000 workers immediately marched to the court whereupon the police chief released the arrested workers.

In another incident, a policeman drew his gun; he made a big mistake. Straight away he was disarmed by the workers and taken inside a factory where he was "firmly" shown that such actions during such a movement are not welcomed.

Capitalist crisis

SO THE PASOK government finds itself locked in confrontation with its own workers and winning the backing of the very people it

was elected to attack. The reforms promised by PASOK cannot be implemented within the decaying and crisis-ridden capitalist economy of Greece. A break with the rule of the monopolies and a socialist plan of production are essential to implement and maintain such reforms.

The bosses are unable to use more than 70 per cent of industrial capacity, so unemployment has soared to over 350,000. A massive foreign debt is bleeding the country in almost Latin American proportions. Between 1978 and 1984 the foreign debt trebled to US\$12.3 billion; one estimate is as high as US\$18 billion. For the past ten years, 75 per cent of annual borrowing has been taken up with foreign debt.

In such a crisis, any socialist government serious about carrying through its programme would have to break the power of the 200 monopolies which control 70 per cent of the economy—the alternative is to act in their interests by implementing the programme of austerity.

Failure to carry through such a socialist plan will disillusion many of its supporters and probably result in the defeat of PASOK at the next election, and bring into power another government of the right, possibly after splitting PASOK's right wing away from the party. Such a government would rapidly come into collision with the working class, paving the way for the return of another PASOK government.

The bourgeois themselves fear these developments, especially the massive swing to the left which PASOK is starting now and which will grow. As if to prepare for

such a development their one demand on Papandreou is he must "deal with the left of the party or we will face them in power in the future."

But the capitalist class will not be able to return to the methods of military-police dictatorship in the short term. The strength of the working class and its organisations together with the weakness of the capitalist class prevents it.

The current crisis has had an enormous effect on the ranks of the conscript armed forces. At the demonstration in Athens a message of support was read from rank and file airmen and even some junior officers. PASOK and Communist Party members report that political discussions are being undertaken amongst the ranks of the services.

Resistance

Any attempt at a coup would meet the fierce resistance of the working class and win the support of many of the ranks of the armed forces. It would result in a conflict which the bourgeois understand they would have no certainty of winning.

Should the working class fail to carry through the socialist revolution however, after a series of defeats and demoralisation, then in a period of five or possibly ten years such a coup would eventually be posed.

Faced with such a crisis, the Greek masses are searching for a programme which will ensure the carrying through of a socialist transformation of society. They are attempting to transform PASOK and their traditional organisations and equip them with such a pro-

gramme. Notwithstanding the hostility towards Papandreou's programme, workers are remaining with PASOK to fight for an alternative. It will be a process repeated again and again during the Greek revolution.

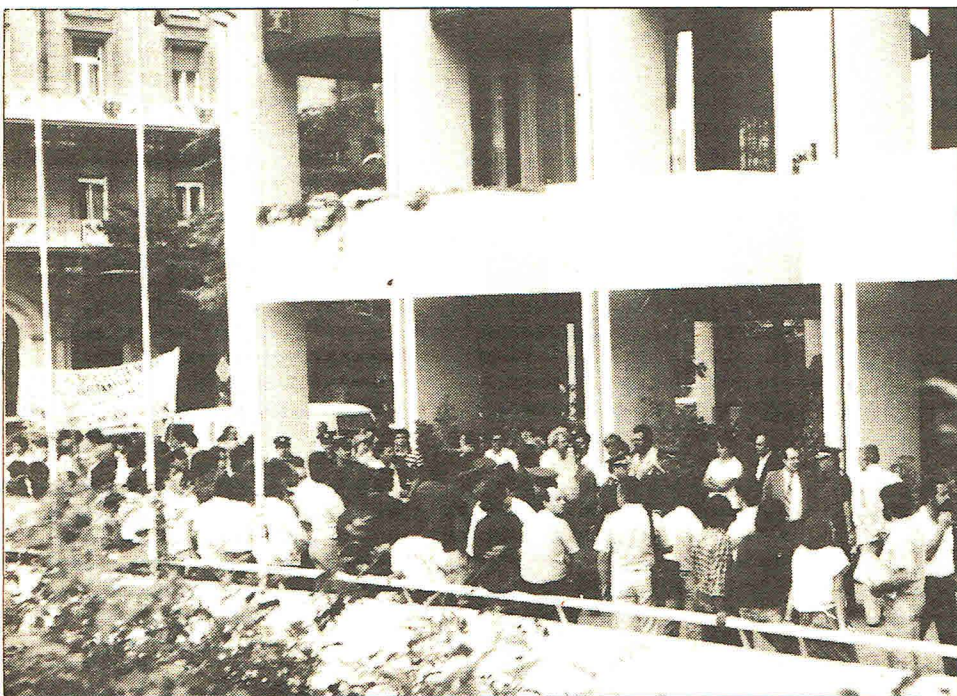
Most workers saw the recent strikes as a protest—an attempt to force Papandreou to change his programme and not to bring down the government. For the working class there is no alternative to a PASOK government.

The central task before the movement's activists is to build support for a clear Marxist alternative to the programme of the PASOK right wing; to draw the workers' organisations together, unify the struggle and offer a way forward on policy and strategy.

A minority of workers, in advance of the mass, have raised the idea of an indefinite general strike, a development which seems unlikely at present. But should it occur it would pose sharply the question of which class is to run society. To resolve such a question a Marxist programme and leadership is essential. The task now posed is to win support for such an alternative.

Organisations which can bring all layers of the working class together are now

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Supporters of the Marxist paper Xekinima lobby a meeting of PASOK's leaders in September in opposition to the austerity programme.

Photo: S Heather

South Africa, Kuwait

New union gives pass law ultimatum to Botha regime



Elijah Barayi on the shoulders of jubilant members of the new federation.

LAST WEEKEND, a conference and a 10,000-strong rally launched the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). This brings under one banner 34 non-racial democratic unions with over half a million members.

Every socialist in Britain should campaign to support COSATU and build direct union links.

After 12 months of heroic country-wide insurrection in the townships led by black youth, the black industrial workers are determined to unite in action at the head of the movement against the bosses and the murderous apartheid regime.

Fighting spirit

The workers' fighting spirit was expressed in the speech of Elijah Barayi, vice-president of the SA NUM and now president of COSATU. Described in the press as "a stalwart of the African National Congress before it was outlawed", comrade Barayi "spelt out the socialist aspirations of COSATU" and declared the workers' intention of nationalising the mines and big businesses on taking power (*Guardian*, 2 December 1985).

He delivered a militant ultimatum to Botha, drawing thunderous applause. "COSATU gives Botha six months to get rid of passes. If that does not take place we will burn the passes..."

"I want to give PW Botha a last warning to get rid of the pass laws and to withdraw the troops from the townships before the country burns".

If carried into effect in a

full-scale national campaign, this ultimatum can provide the focus for the entire mass movement in the period ahead, and help lift union membership towards the million mark. COSATU, together with the youth, in a united front with the UDF, must back up the ultimatum with organisation and power.

While the activists in SA still show themselves tireless in battle, below the surface the mass movement has begun slightly to recede (despite continued eruptions), because of the difficulty of carrying the insurrectionary movement in its present form beyond the flaming township streets. Prolonged stalemate has meant the state gradually (if only temporarily) regaining the upper hand.

The resulting frustration of the fighting youth had begun to open a dangerous rift with unions slow to move into political battle. A COSATU-led campaign to smash the pass laws can now provide a way forward—within the scope of the force presently in the hands of the black working class.

In May, alone at that time, *Inqaba* urged: "... were there now to be a really determined, well-organised and resolutely led mass campaign of pass-burning, the complete defiance of influx control laws,

and attacks on pass courts and records offices, this system could be thoroughly wrecked. However, to the extent that the matter is left to the ruling class to decide, it is most unlikely that they could move to the abolition of these measures". (*Supplement*, issue 16/17, p. 23)

Now the COSATU president has set six months for Botha to scrap the pass laws—or the passes burn.

The regime faces a dilemma. The big bosses and even the President's stooge Council have recently declared in favour of ending passes. But, as we argued, Botha fears to give a signal of weakness to the blacks.

Name the date

Now he must decide: surrender in humiliation to the ultimatum of COSATU, or throw all his force at the unions in a situation which will split the ruling class, the whites, and potentially even the troops.

COSATU leaders must name the date for the passes to burn! May Day would have been a good choice, but it is only five months away. 31 May is the 25th anniversary of the white racist Republic. Better still, 16 June is the tenth anniversary of the Soweto uprising. What better acknowledgement of the youth's role than to set this date for a one-day national general strike and mass pass-burning in the townships? Whatever date, set it now!

How many passes are there in SA? Ten million? Then ten million passes must

burn! The 500,000 COSATU members, the tens of thousands of youth activists, the women at home—all should become campaigners now to prepare the day when the passes will burn.

Preparations should be made to defend the townships on that day with all available means against police and troop attacks. Coloured and Indian workers and youth should be prepared to join one-day strike action and to erect barricades in their townships to draw army units away from the African townships.

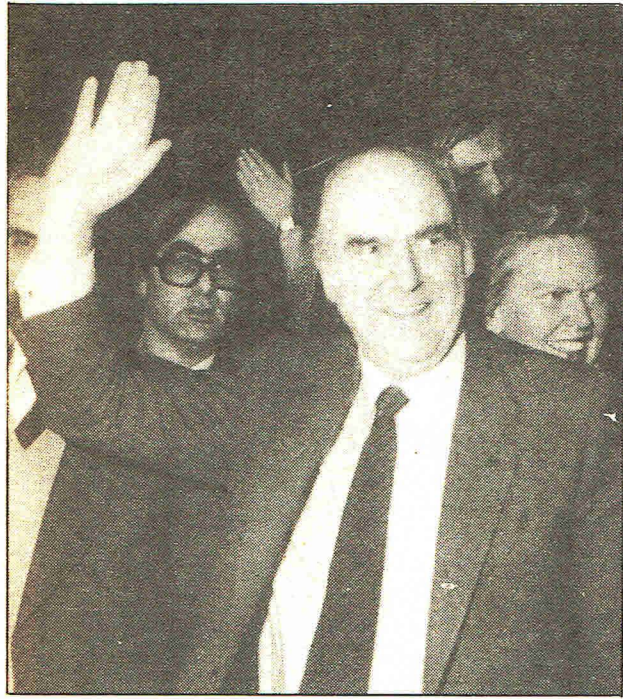
White students should be mobilised to converge on the African townships in order to complicate the position of the police and troops in opening fire.

Mass report-backs in all cities on the COSATU conference should be used to launch this campaign now.

The Commonwealth heads gave Botha "six months" to change apartheid, or face sanctions. That is a "dog with rubber teeth", as workers say.

COSATU's ultimatum is different. It has real teeth, and they must be used or the enormous hopes placed in it will be disappointed. Workers around the world should aid this historic development in the South African struggle in every practical way.

By Paul Storey
(Member of the Editorial Board of *Inqaba ya Basebenzi*, journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC)



Papandreu celebrates after PASOK's election victory on 2 June.

essential, especially given the government's decision to use the laws of the ex-military regime to remove those union leaders who supported the calling of the general strike.

The establishment of Councils of Action, drawing delegates from the factories could help to launch a serious campaign of mobilisations, including the calling of a series of 24-hour general strikes to force the government to abandon its austerity measures and explain a socialist alternative to transform society.

Alternative

By bringing all the various layers of the working class together they could unify the movement and take it on to the next stage of the struggle. Athens Trades Council with approximately 2,000 delegates is the most effective body for such a role. With the other trades councils throughout Greece, they should now constitute themselves as viable Councils of Action, organising similar bodies at area and district level to campaign at every factory and work place.

They should be thrown open to the representatives of the students, small shopkeepers and middle class who are being severely affected by the crisis and looking to the workers' organisations for a solution.

Unfortunately the Greek Communist Party, which has a very powerful position amongst the trade unions, is failing to undertake such a campaign. Rather than organising a struggle to unify the movement the leadership is separating the different groups of workers and calling different groups out on strike at different times.

With many workers looking for an alternative they have limited themselves to attacks against PASOK and vague calls for an extension

of the public sector, coupled with a very hostile attitude towards the rank and file of PASOK.

Due to the policy of the PASOK government, even these limitations of the Communist Party will not stop limited gains in the short term, and the party is expected to increase its position in the forthcoming union elections. However the stand adopted by the leadership

THE DEPTH of the crisis in Greece has been further revealed in the recent riots. However they have adopted a somewhat different course from that reported in the media.

They were provoked by the police, working in collusion with small groups of fascists and attacking students celebrating the anniversary of the 1974 students' movement against the military regime. In the light of this a government minister and PASOK EC member has resigned.

has caused widespread dissent within the CP, especially amongst its worker members.

Under such conditions the ideas of Marxism are winning increased support as workers search out a clear alternative.

If it persists with its pro-capitalist programme of counter-reform, the PASOK government seems set to stumble from crisis to crisis. The enormous movement of the Greek workers at some stage will pause before once again moving on to the offensive. As the process of revolution unfolds, the forces of Marxism can be enormously strengthened to become the decisive force in Greece and resolve the crisis by the socialist transformation of society.

ΞΕΚΙΝΗΜΑ
ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΜΑΡΞΕΣΤΙΚΗ ΤΑΣΗ ΤΩΝ ΠΑ ΣΟΚ

Τώρα το ΞΕΚΙΝΗΜΑ 15ήμερο
Χρησιμοποιεί 1.500.000 το Νοέμβριο

Μόνο με σοσιαλιστικά μέτρα
ΜΠΟΡΟΥΜΕ ΝΑ ΒΓΟΥΜΕ

Cheap labour in millionaire land

PRITCHARDS, the British multinational cleaning company have gained the hostility of many workers in Britain. They control firms like Crothalls. Barking hospital workers were forced into a long strike against them last year.

According to an article in *International Labour Reports*, their activities abroad seem even more unsavoury. Cheap labour is their guiding rule. In oil-rich Kuwait the company recruits thousands of desperate workers from Bangladesh and other Asian countries. Workers were reportedly recruited as hospital messengers and promised

they would be earning about £200 a month. The workers borrowed money for tickets and work permits. In Kuwait they were told they had to work as cleaners on £120 per month—and pay £30 of that for accommodation—a hut 15 foot square shared with six others.

The productivity rate expected is very arduous and workers are prevented from talking to each other. The report claims that workers face assault and intimidation. The threat of deportation hangs over the workers when their two year contract is due to finish and holiday entitlements are

due. Inadequate clothing in the cold winters and inadequate protection against chemicals, no medical facilities on the camps and no right to treatment outside, deduction of wages for sickness, the allegations against the firm are numerous.

The only form of protest possible so far has been to refuse to work hard so that Pritchards lose contracts. Trade unionists in Britain should demand an investigation into what this company, so popular with the Tories, are doing in their worldwide operations.

US air traffic controllers reorganise

Dear Comrades,

Many workers around the world will remember Reagan's sacking of 11,000 air traffic controllers (PATCO) and their leaders being led away in chains.

Four years later, after PATCO was disbanded, Reagan's attempt to smash workers' organisations has rebounded. The air traffic controllers hired to replace the sacked workers are organising a trade union.

The problems faced by air traffic controllers remain and the conditions have deteriorated, it is against this background that the new air traffic controllers are organising.

The disregard by Reagan for the safety of workers and their families both in the air and on the ground was shown recently: two private aircraft slammed into each other, sending blazing wreckage and fuel to the ground. Six people died and half a block of houses were destroyed.

Worldwide, 1985 is already the worst year for deaths in airline accidents. In America this is exacerbated by the sacking of experienced air traffic controllers. A recent Congressional report revealed that near mid-air collisions had almost doubled since the sackings four years ago and that the system was often pushed to its limits.

Members of Reagan's own party, Republican Congressmen, are calling on him to rehire some of the sacked air traffic controllers. However, it will be the new organisation of the air traffic controllers which will solve this dangerous situation.

Yours fraternally
Jim Greer
EETPU

Repression in Ireland

Dear Comrades,

Petty harassment by the army, the police and the Ulster Defence Regiment is a part of everyday life in Northern Ireland, especially if you cross the border.

On Tuesday 19 November, myself and two other Militant supporters—plus the wife of one and their three small children, the eldest five—were very rudely detained by the police at a border checkpoint at Strabane, Co Tyrone, and directed into a shed to be searched. The soldiers who searched the car were polite enough—insofar as people toting guns can be. But three small children were frightened.

We were on our way to a union meeting. In Northern Ireland this unpleasant experience and repression is so much a part of daily life, that it is hardly commented on any more.

Yours fraternally
Anton McCabe
Derry



Everyday life in Northern Ireland. Photo: Philip Jones Griffiths

If you want to know the truth...

Dear Comrades,

On 24 September 1985 the BBC six O'clock news dealt with the Liverpool City Council crisis. It was stated that the GMBATU, TGWU and UCATT "voted" for strike action in support of the council, however, the teachers, NUPE, lecturers and electricians' unions were "against" such support.

This report failed to mention local officials of both NUT and NUPE took the decision not to strike on behalf of their members. Auntie Beeb implied that all those "against" the council's stand had voted.

Consider the media reaction when the NUM executive "denied" their members a ballot during the coal strike—can you imagine the rumpus the Beeb would have made if the local unions of Liverpool council had instructed their members to strike?

I outlined these points to the BBC news editor. The reply, a veiled apology, stated "the programme's introduction could have been handled more appropriately" and regretted that "an incorrect impression might have been inadvertently given".

Yet again the damage has been done. Another piece of media mud has distorted the facts. The working class will never gain a fair hearing within the capitalist media. We must build our own press to counteract these distortions and lies. Forward to a daily Militant!

Yours fraternally
RS Bishop
Middlesex

Letters

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



Neil Kinnock (left) attacking Militant, while Militant supporters attack the Tories.



Photo: Dave Sinclair

Selective investigation

Dear Comrades,

It seems that when democracy does not suit Kinnock and co, they change it. Liverpool District Labour Party is to be investigated with a view to a restructuring simply to reduce Militant's influence in the party and on the council.

Liverpool Labour Party is the most democratic in the country where council policy is determined by the 270 District party delegates. Compare that with Labour-

controlled South Glamorgan County Council. Since being elected this year the right wing councillors have moved to sack teachers despite the overwhelming opposition of county party delegates and the existence of a no-compulsory redundancy agreement between council and unions. Also they are to close old people's homes in order to bring in privatisation by the back door despite union opposition. However I don't hear any talk about

investigation and restructuring in South Glamorgan.

The Liverpool Labour councillors' only 'crime' is to try and defend jobs and services according to the democratic wishes of the party's rank and file. Judging by the antics of both Neil Kinnock and the South Glamorgan Labour councillors you would think that actually was a crime.

Yours fraternally
Chris Peace
Labour Party Wales
Executive Committee
(Personal capacity)

A letter to Kinnock

"I have been a member of the Labour party since 16 October this year. I am a mother of three children existing, just, on my husband's supplementary benefit as he has been unemployed now for four years.

I turned to the Labour Party from the SDP as I felt that as a working class person, the working class party should be able to do more for my family and others like us.

I am disgusted therefore at the stand you are taking against people whose only crime as far as I can see is to be good Labour Party members, canvassing and recruiting members to the

party, raising funds and attempting to carry out the constitution of the Labour Party; clause four, part four. This is printed on the back of my Labour Party membership card and is the main reason I joined the Labour Party.

I respectfully suggest that you hunt out your own membership card, or borrow someone else's and remind yourself of what you have been elected to carry out. If I had wanted Tory policies I would have joined the Conservative Party."

Yours
Mrs L Coulson
Basildon

Supporting Militant

Dear Comrades,

I am a member of the Labour Party and I have been saddened by the attitude of the leadership of our party to the heroic efforts of the Liverpool Labour council. I would like to give Militant my full support in any way possible, to fight expulsions and to fight for socialist policies that are contained in your excellent newspaper.

Yours fraternally
Colin Campbell
Harrogate LPYS

Surplus wealth

Dear Comrades,

According to a recent London Business School report, Britain's pension funds have built up a massive surplus of £50 billion—that is they have £1,000 for every man, woman and child which they will never have to pay back. This money washes around the world's financial markets, providing fat pay-offs for the various institutions which trade in our hard earned income.

Many on the right demand of socialists: "Where will you get the

money to pay for your programme?" Even some Labour Party leaders claim that such basic demands as a minimum wage or grants for the over 16s are "impossible" because we cannot afford them.

At a stroke the nationalisation of the city institutions would provide billions of pounds to provide a decent living wage and investment funds for a democratic socialist plan.

Yours fraternally
Adam Goulcher
Deptford Labour Party

LEFT and RIGHT

Strike? Blame Militant

FROM THE *Sunday Telegraph* (1 December): "Conservative Euro MPs last night demanded an urgent enquiry into claims that a £1 million strike at the Ford car plant at Dagenham last month was the result of a "campaign of lies" organised by Militant Tendency members at the European Parliament headquarters".

It seems our ideas are even sprouting in Brussels.

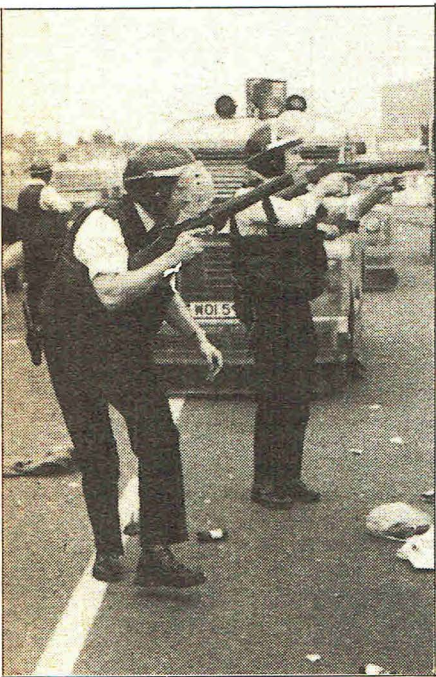
A nice little earner

ONE DAY, Sir Iain Moncreiffe of that ilk, Albany Herald of Arms had a brainwave. Why not design some jewellery for local government dignitaries. Now Lady Penelope Gilbey of the Gilbey Jubilee Collection is making this worthy dream come true.

Designed "for wear by female councillors and wives and daughters of male councillors", her brooch, the 'civic crown' has a coronet in solid silver with a Roman emblem in 22 carat gold and a Latin motto underneath to show you have been well educated. It will cost you £85 and is just the thing for those darlings of the press, local councillors who are sensible, moderate, law abiding and very conceited.



Anglo-Irish agreement



The face of Northern Ireland—repression and poverty.

Photo: Militant

Why socialists oppose NI deal

DAVE NELLIST and Terry Fields were amongst 13 Labour MPs who voted against the Anglo-Irish Agreement in parliament last week. Below, Dave Nellist explains the socialist alternative to the Agreement argued for by himself and Terry Fields in the Parliamentary Labour Party.

THE ANGLO-Irish Agreement, in simultaneously offering no solution to the national question in Ireland, yet at the same time heightening the fears and suspicions of Protestant workers, will lead inevitably to an increase in the poison of sectarianism.

This Agreement is a purely cosmetic exercise which is doomed to failure. The idea that an inter-governmental conference of blue Tories from Westminster and green Tories from Dublin can bring about stability is pure fantasy. If such a conference made recommendations which were then implemented such as curtailing the power of the Ulster Defence Regiment, there would be massive Protestant reaction whipped up by loyalist bigots. If on the other hand it came up with nothing, it would be seen by Catholics as yet another talking shop and would eventually collapse.

Its final net effect will have been to increase sectarianism, and increase the risk of civil war. Faced with these Tory proposals which can only divide workers, socialists must present a class alternative, around which workers can be united.

The Agreement does nothing to alleviate the conditions of Irish working people—Protestant or Catholic, North or South. It does nothing to alleviate the mass unemployment, the poverty, poor housing or discrimination against Catholics. The only jobs that may come will be for a few, top civil servants. The Agreement will not end army or police repression, and will certainly not end sectarianism or violence.

The Agreement does not reflect any genuine desires by the British or Irish Tories for re-unification—as atonement for the partition of 1920/21—but it is an indication of the desire of the British ruling class to wash their hands of the enormous economic drain that a divided Ireland has become.

Government aid, or subvention, to the North of Ireland has increased from £74 million in 1969 to £1,491 million this year. The additional cost of maintaining the army there has risen from £1,500,000 in 1969 to £121 million today—a 16 year period in which 2,500 people lost their lives and 27,500 were injured. If that were transferred to Britain, that's equivalent to 90,000 dead and a million injured.

Estimates by the New Ireland Forum for the years 1969-82 showed the extra security costs, and the compensation for deaths, injury and damage to property as £5,255 million; to which must be added economic costs such as lost output at £3,681 million.

For the South, over the same period, the estimates are £1,019 million, and £1,110 million.

That gives a total for those 13 years of £11,064 million, which in today's prices, and adding four years since 1982, must mean the economic costs of the 'troubles' are about £16,000 million.

Wasted resources

In a rational, sane, socialist united Ireland—freely and voluntarily federated to a socialist Britain—what could have been done with £16,000 million: to offer hope of a real job to the youth of the North and the South, to repair, renovate and modernise thousands of inadequate homes—as common on the Shankhill as they are in the Falls areas.

Capitalist division not only costs lives, but brings poverty to hundreds of thousands—whilst the resources exist to generate a decent future.

But on a capitalist basis, there is no attraction to the Protestant population in re-unification. Southern Ireland has even lower living standards than the North (itself the lowest in the UK). Welfare provision in the South is even more abysmal than this Tory government has so far achieved.

The green Tories of the South have no real desire for re-unification. It's a diversionary tactic—to try to deflect growing anger at the economic mess over which they preside.

The last thing that the green Tories of Fianna Fail or Fine Gael want is a united Ireland with a million disaffected Protestants in the North (a minimum of 10 per cent of them with access to firearms), and a half a million Catholics expecting a better deal.

The crisis ridden capitalist system cannot offer the one thing which could evaporate sectarian fears and make them irrelevant—a better life for all workers. For that is needed the unity of the working class, and a political expression of its own—a party of Labour based on the trade unions, the Trades Councils, the tenants

and other community organisations.

The North of Ireland is the poorest area in Britain—in 1984 the average manual wage was £134.20 (in Great Britain it was £152.60) and basic prices are 6-7 per cent higher in the North.

Unemployment in real terms is 35 per cent—in many towns it approaches 50 per cent. Twice as many workers are unemployed as those working in manufacturing industry. Over a thousand more jobs will go because this government has decided to axe the NI gas industry.

Slum housing afflicts both communities. With the collapse of the textile, manufacturing and heavy industries, any marginal 'advantage' Protestant workers may have had in the past has long since been evaporated.

Sectarianism, like racism, finds its most productive breeding ground in such conditions of despair.

It was the united working classes' struggles against such conditions over 60 years ago that led to the British ruling class of that time to use the weapons of partition, a cold and calculated move to divide and rule. They set up the sectarian statelet of Northern Ireland, not only to protect their material assets in this industrialised region of *then* economic and military importance; but also to act as a barrier to the growing militancy of the Irish workers, inspired as it was by the Russian revolution of 1917.

After the First World War society was in ferment. The Irish workers both Catholic and Protestant, were united in class struggle. The Irish Transport and General Workers Union membership rose from 5,000 in 1916 to 130,000 by 1921. Soviets were proclaimed in areas such as Limerick. The Protestant stronghold of Belfast was paralysed by the great engineers strike of 1919.

Partition

The British ruling class feared revolution. They feared this revolutionary mood would spread to the Clyde, South Wales and Liverpool. Partition was their way of derailing that movement. They used partition to artificially divide the workers. Yet having created the monster of sectarianism, it now refuses to lie down and die.

The past 16 years have seen a whole series of failed 'initiatives' by British capitalism to solve the problems they created. Even the Army itself (in leaked documents in 1979) admitted that its own methods, coupled with the poverty and social conditions, would continually recreate new generations of republican activists. Years of

military presence and repression which has been extended to Southern Ireland and Britain—have all been tried, mainly against the Catholic population. The Army has searched 310,000 houses in the last 13 years.

Bullets cannot solve the political problems of Northern Ireland. The methods of individual terrorism of the Provisional IRA have thrown many of the Protestant workers into the arms of the vicious reactionaries of Unionism, of the Orange Order and the loyalist paramilitaries.

The methods of the Provos have provided an excuse for successive governments to step up the repressive state apparatus—much of which has later been used against struggles by the labour movement.

Most of all, the methods of the Provos have cut across the task of building a powerful and united working class opposition to exploitation and repression. Workers throughout Ireland want to see an end to sectarian violence—but only the strength of the working class itself can achieve this. It was the spontaneous revulsion of workers in Derry, Newry and other towns which led to the partial general strikes and demonstrations against sectarian killings in 1975. 1976 saw the re-birth of labour movement organisations such as the trades councils.

The mood of most workers is still against the paramilitaries—but the trade union leaders of 1985 have so far failed to build on the growing striving for class unity by

creating a party of labour. That task now assumes a crucial urgency. A socialist alternative from the labour movement is not just another or a different approach to the problems of the North. It is the **only** realistic alternative. The common miseries and common class interests of workers in the North provides the only material basis for a challenge to the ideologies of Unionism and nationalism. It is the only basis for the unity of Catholic and Protestant workers.

Socialist policies—the public ownership of major industry under workers' control and management would establish the framework for a planned recovery from the devastation of monetarism, not only in the North, but in the South and internationally.

The creation of a campaigning, socialist party of labour in the North, combined with the breaking of coalition by Labour in the South, could lay the basis for the revitalisation of the working class throughout the island.

With the workers' movement taking on the bosses, in tandem, North and South, the real possibility of the unification of the forces of labour could be created.

Such a movement would challenge, for the first time, the very existence of both sectarian states.

Sectarianism, strife, death and destruction have plagued Ireland for 600 years. Workers' unity and socialism could consign those problems to their final resting place—the dustbin of history.

Militant supporters in Northern Ireland have played a leading role in building the socialist alternative. Below, Young Socialists march through Belfast.



Photo: Militant

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Darfield Main pit campaign for community

OVER THE past few months the National Coal Board have tried almost everything possible to get the men at Darfield Main to close their own pit.

In August the NCB produced and widely publicised a league table of pit costs of coal per tonne. Darfield came bottom nationally with a cost of £454 per tonne.

What the board didn't explain is that this figure was taken for the period when a new face was being developed and encountering difficulties and included the annual holiday. Thus the figure was taken completely out of context.

In fact, up until August production had been around the £40 per tonne mark. Since then it has been under the board's 'magical' £39 per tonne target. However the NCB haven't seen fit to publicise this fact as it makes a mockery of their attempts to close the colliery.

Dubious accounting

In the week ending 15 November 1985 Darfield Main produced coal at £34 per tonne, giving the NCB a profit of £104,000.

The Board then decided to charge Darfield Main £100,000 interest for investment in the new washer at Grimethorpe colliery. Even if you accept this highly

By Simon Duerden

dubious accounting practice, it still left Darfield with a profit of £4,000.

But the question must be asked, if Darfield shuts what will happen to this interest charge? Presumably it will be placed on another local pit, thus helping to make that pit 'uneconomic'.

The struggles of miners at Bold and St Johns collieries against closure seem to prove that the NCB won't shut a pit until they can get the men themselves to vote to shut it, thus giving the Coal Board a massive propaganda weapon.

Articles on Bold and St Johns in previous issues of the *Militant* have explained how the Board will lie, cheat, use blackmail and intimidation to force a closure vote. The Board are now doing the same at Darfield Main.

Despite the fact that the pit was making a profit the Board have attempted to disrupt production and divide the workforce.

Management ripped up the existing contract and imposed a new one, which basically involved more work for less money. They also threatened to transfer

men to other pits until the end of the National Review Procedure if they refused to accept the new contract.

But the union stood firm and the NCB have now partially backed down. However, it is certain that the NCB will try similar tactics in the future.

The Darfield Main and community action group are demanding that the books of Darfield Main colliery be opened up for examination by the NUM and the local community, so that everybody can see what is really happening.

Enormous support

The action group was set up by local NUM members, the Women's Support Group and members of Wombwell Labour Party Young Socialists. It aims to tap the enormous support for the NUM revealed in the mining communities during the strike.

Already hundreds of pounds have been raised through donations and collections all over the country.

We have lobbied the local council, the NUM delegate conference and the first stage of the National Review Procedure and we are intending a national conference organised by action groups nationally.

We have also had one suc-

Marxist elected miners' secretary

MILITANT SUPPORTER, Alan Mardghum, romped home in the Wearmouth lodge secretary election to find a successor to left-winger Dave Hopper who had become Durham Area Secretary.

By Bob Stothard

Mardghum's victory by two to one over moderate Keith Potts is extremely important and has provided a fillip for activists engaged in recent strikes.

There is no doubt that the area Coal Board would have preferred a lodge secretary for the region's largest pit who would have checked support for Dave Hopper.

As it is, Alan Mardghum fills the gap as a high profile supporter of the strike and well-known Labour Party activist.

For Wearmouth management it means business as usual—no let-up in pressure for reinstatement for sacked miners, resistance against closures and tough bargaining rounds.

Other results have also

successful public meeting and have made a campaign video (VHS) which we are taking around the country, to meetings, to build up support.

Support has also come in from local shop keepers. In fact, in Wombwell High Street only one shop keeper doesn't support the campaign.

We have even had support from the local church who found out about the campaign after the curate read about it in a previous issue



Alan Mardghum with the old Chopwell lodge banner behind him featuring Keir Hardie and Lenin—a graphic answer to those who deny the role of Marxism in the British labour movement.

continued the lodge's history of producing good left-wingers who fight for the interests of the members.

On the debit side, it has to be admitted, however, there were instances of left-wingers opposing left-wingers for positions. It could have caused upsets without the organisation of a clearly defined slate.

Alan Mardghum told *Militant*: "I have never hidden my views from the members. The results are good for the left."

"I am proud that the membership have placed so much trust in me and can assure them that at all times I will have their interests and those of the wider working class to guide me".

of the *Militant*!

On Friday 6 December, the second stage of the National Review Procedure meeting takes place and the following day, Saturday 7 December, the Action Group have organised a march and rally.

March and rally

It assembles at 10am at Darfield Main Colliery and goes through Wombwell to a rally in Pearsons Fields car park in Hyde Wombwell

Precinct. Speakers include national NUM president Arthur Scargill.

We appeal to the whole of the labour and trade union movement to come and march with us. The issues are exactly the same now as they were in 1984. If it was right to fight then it is right to fight now.

For further details of the Darfield Main Community Action Group please contact: Marsha Marshall, 17 Rimington Road, Wombwell, Barnsley. Tel: Barnsley 757704.

5,000 march and international dockers support Silentnight

ABOUT 5,000 people demonstrated their support for the Silentnight strikers in a march and rally in Barnoldswick, Lancashire, last Saturday.

By Linden Stafford
(Skipton Labour Party)

Supporters travelled from Scotland, Wales and the south of England. Many trade unions were represented, including the NUM, TGWU, AUEW, COHSE and SOGAT '82. Huge amounts of food and toys were donated.

Silentnight management may have held out against the strikers for six months but they are showing clear signs of anxiety about the effects on production.

The *Sunday Times* has reported that expectations of a bid for Silentnight Holdings are growing, and that the chairman, Tom Clarke: "is willing to sell his 52 per cent shareholding."

"The company has had a difficult time, plagued by a wounding industrial dispute". They also comment that the company "may not have much to

show for its efforts at the end of the year."

After the first appearance in September of *The Silentnight Striker* (a weekly strike bulletin produced by *Militant* supporters and Silentnight strikers), a crop of similar 'bulletins' has sprung up.

The company are bringing out a 'monthly information bulletin' for their workers, called *Silentnight Update*. Although it is clearly intended as a morale-booster for those working inside the factories, its contents reveal more about the success of the strike than the health of the company.

They confess to shop-floor workers: "You have worked under extreme pressure to get out production, especially when the majority of you were learning your jobs or training new starters".

They continue: "Our sympathy goes out to the sales office and mail order staff, who have had to contend with thousands of phone calls from irate customers over the past few months".

Not surprisingly, Tom Clarke's sacking of 500

workers has demolished not only production but also morale.

By contrast, Silentnight strikers have the support of thousands of workers both nationally and internationally.

Charlie Gee, an FTAT convenor, a striker from Silentnight told me about attending a dock workers' conference in Rotterdam where he addressed delegates from Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, Pakistan and the UK.

International donations

After his speech £180 was collected for the strikers. The delegates from Pakistan each donated half a week's wages to the collection.

A Silentnight support group has now been set up in Rotterdam where Dutch workers raised a lot of money for the British miners during the miners' strike.

Tom Clarke and his acolytes will have been further disheartened by the show of strength on Saturday. The rally was address-

Firefighters mobilise for jobs

3,000 firefighters marched in Manchester last Thursday in protest at Home Office plans for a recruitment freeze in four metropolitan authorities and inadequate budgets for the joint boards in Manchester, London, Sheffield and Liverpool. Further protests are planned, culminating in a lobby of parliament. Union policy is for a national strike against any sackings.



Photo: John Smith (IFL)

Silentnight Militant public meeting

'What we stand for'

Friday 13 December, 7.30pm
Town Hall, Skipton

Speaker: Steve Morgan

ed by Labour MP Dennis Skinner and MEP Bob Cryer. A number of Labour MPs are pushing for a parliamentary debate on the Silentnight strike. Let's see if Thatcher stands up for her 'Mr Wonderful', Silentnight boss Tom Clarke.

Donations and messages of support to FTAT Cravendale No 92 Branch strike fund, c/o Ann King, 10 Rainhall Crescent, Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancs.

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Tax workers demand united pay fight

NEXT WEEK'S special pay conference of the IRSF presents the opportunity to the members of the union to formulate a pay claim which will unite all unions in the Council of Civil Service Unions in a fight for one pay claim in 1986.

By Steve Whittle
(Secretary,
Central London
Collection branch,
personal capacity)

For too long the bureaucracy of the union have argued that flat rate rises prevent unity between unions as an excuse for delaying action. The truth is that union leaders can not agree.

Many IPCS, SCPS members would welcome a £20 a week rise but the

reasons behind the flat rate claim have never been properly explained—the poverty wages of the lower grade civil servants.

The plight of low paid workers now forces the left in the union to ensure that the Civil Service union bureaucracy can delay the fight no longer.

55 per cent of all civil servants now earn below the government's own poverty level. Many low paid civil servants have to claim supplementary benefit to make ends meet. The bureaucracy of the IRSF have obviously agreed, in advance with

other trade union leaders, the proposed claim of £10 and 10 per cent.

All branches must support this motion in order to unite all civil servants behind one common claim.

The most important part of the claim is the demand for £104 for all members. It's especially important to young and low paid workers.

However, left branches must make it perfectly clear that pay systems are not the only way to cure low pay in the civil service, indeed they have contributed to the problem.

"Fair" pay systems are

not on the agenda at this time. The bosses and the government use pay comparison to placate the ranks and file and to hold down wages. They compare our bad wages with every other section of poor workers in the white collar industries and don't even hand the pitiful increases which this exercise shows we need.

All civil servants require huge increases just to claw back money stolen by the Tories in the last six years. These rises will not be forthcoming from talks and bargaining.

Members can not base

Inland Revenue Staff Federation Broad Left Rally

Monday 9 December, 8pm
Camden Town Hall,
(Opposite Kings X station)

ALL WELCOME

their hopes purely on the return of a Labour government to power. Hattersley has already promised wage restraint. This has proved disastrous for both workers and Labour before.

Campaign

However, many members still place faith in this type of system. The left must work for a campaign to build rank and file support for the claim and to explain why pay 'systems' will not work.

This campaign must not be like past campaigns, this one must be like the political fund campaign.

Every workplace must be leafleted and mass meetings must take place. The leadership of the unions should be left in no doubt that this year the fight will go ahead.

The IRSF and CPSA rank and file must especially campaign for the flat rate element. It is vital that all members understand the necessity for a struggle this year.

Sheffield steel defeats misleaders

STRIKING steelworkers at Sheffield Forgemasters have forced the right wing leadership of the ISTC into a U-turn in defending their seven week strike over wages, safety conditions and trade union rights. The workers have also voted 675-25 to defy management threats to sack them.

The local labour movement was stunned to hear that after a meeting in London with Forgemasters' management, the ISTC general secretary, Roy Evans, and other officials were instructing their 180 members involved to return to work.

The deal, apparently agreed at the London meeting, didn't even meet one of the strikers' demands.

The ISTC members (who make up the second largest union body organised at Forgemasters) had already been incensed by their union leaders' lack of support.

It had taken six and a half weeks for the strike to be made official and the national leadership had not contacted the shop stewards' committee before meeting the management.

Even the local paper has described the union's recent betrayal as the greatest "sell-out" in the history of Sheffield trade unionism.

At a mass meeting of all



Forgemasters picket line.

Photo: John Smith (IFL)

the unions, packed into the city hall, there were cries of disgust from the workforce, when an ISTC official gave details.

Some ISTC members ripped up their union cards in protest, and work convener Ron Ward was later moved to resign as ISTC branch secretary and from the union itself.

A vote taken at the end saw barely a dozen hands in favour of ending the strike.

The determination of the

men and the anger at the "sell out" tactics, forced the national ISTC leadership to reverse their decision and re-endorse the strike just three days later.

Solidarity

Support for the strikers has been growing daily. Every major factory has started a levy, and support has come from other unions, including local pits, Labour Parties, YS branches, Labour Clubs etc and a

demonstration through the city centre was attended by about 1,000 people.

Despite intimidatory threats from management the steelworkers are now confident of victory. But trade unionists will question the role of the national ISTC leaders in this struggle.

The right wing in the movement are keen to lecture about secret ballots, but on this occasion they were quite prepared to totally ignore the democratic votes of the workers for strike action.

Addenbrookes strike growing support

THE DOMESTIC workers on strike at Addenbrookes hospital in Cambridge are continuing to win support.

By Robin Pye
(Cambridge LPYS)

A documentary film made by Anglia TV exposed the dirty conditions since a private contractor (OLS) was awarded the cleansing contract at the hospital and showed the determination of the strikers to continue the struggle.

Building on support won as a result of the publicity a march and rally was organised on Saturday 23 November in the town centre of Cambridge in conjunction with Cambridge Organisation of Labour Students and Cambridge LPYS.

This met with an impressive response from youth and workers in the town. Speakers at the rally included Sylvia Burton, Addenbrookes striker and Chris Howard, leader of the Labour Group on Cambridge City Council.

In an emotional speech which showed the strain of 14 months spent on strike, Sylvia Burton said: "This is not just a dispute between the Addenbrookes domestics and the Regional Health Authority. It is part of That-

cher's war against the NHS. She's not just out to get your health service either. She will attack your bus services, your schools, your student grants and your dole cheques".

The Addenbrookes strikers are playing their full part in building a fighting labour movement to take on Thatcher. They are taking part in the National Action Committee to fight health cuts and push the health unions into organising an official national campaign against privatisation.

The campaign in Cambridge is growing. Nurses are joining the picket lines for the first time.

Video

After an intervention at a Regional Health Authority meeting where "I love clean hospitals" badges were handed out to authority members (some were refused!), the hospital administration has agreed to talk to the strikers directly.

It is vital to continue building support for the Addenbrookes strikes. A video about the strike is being made. If your trade union, Labour Party or LPYS branch would like to see the video or have a striker come to speak please contact me on Cambridge (0223) 62323.

Teachers' strategy

AT THE general meeting of Leeds NUT, on the 26 November, members voted overwhelmingly for a massive escalation of industrial action to win the full claim of £1,200 for every teacher. The meeting called upon the NEC to:

1) Immediately inform the employers that we would not participate in public examinations in 1986. Thus allowing them sufficient time to arrange invigilation etc;
2) To ballot all High Schools where the NUT is the largest single union for indefinite strike action and approach the NAS/UWT for similar joint action where together we have a majority of support;

3) Authorise local associations to call out those schools where there is a clear majority in favour and

where local action committees believe such action would have the maximum impact;

4) Maintain the present action in all other schools and introduce a levy of members in those schools sufficient to sustain the strike;

5) Resist attempts by Keith Joseph and the government to divide teachers by seeking agreement with the NAS/UWT for joint action;
6) Call a one-day national authorities' conference to endorse this escalation of the action and authorise its implementation.

We urge that every area brings the maximum pressure to bear on the NEC by taking similar action.

By Roy Lewis
(Leeds NUT)

Warwick NUM

MINERS LOYAL to the NUM are fighting the spread of the UDM into Warwickshire.

A Militant leaflet has been distributed in every pit in the area and a new NUM branch set up at Daw Mill. The NCB is prepared to go to any lengths to help the new company union.

The NUM branch at Annersley workshops was prevented from meeting on the premises where it has always met because General Secretary Peter Heathfield was coming to persuade the workers there to stay with the national union.

Baddesley colliery, loyal to the NUM, are putting up a fight. Arthur Scargill visited the area when the NUM branch was due to hold a meeting.
Baddesley miner Steve

Fawcett told Militant: "The branch committee met before the meeting and resolved not to invite him in but at the meeting we voted to overturn the decision by 19 to 18.

Then the losers, including five branch committee men, walked out. I called on those branch committee members who oppose Scargill, to keep the union together, to resign from their positions.

Five branch committee members have now resigned and we will be having elections for their places. The coal board gave three of those who had resigned a day off to visit Lynk. Despite the board's support they still only claim 150 out of 900 in the UDM, although only a small handful at the pit joined the strike last year.

Defend Manchester hospital



Manchester health workers march against closure of North Manchester General Hospital.
Photo: John Smith (IFL)

Militant

Save Darfield Main pit

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South Africa Page 11

Fight Tory union laws

THE TORIES are using their new trade union laws to provoke Britain's largest union into a legal battle to defend its democratic rights.

Tory minister Kenneth Clarke, has accused the Transport and General Workers' Union of carrying out executive elections: "in the full knowledge that they are outside the law."

In response the union has agreed to convene a special one-day rules revision conference to consider changing the method of electing the executive. That may not satisfy the Tories, however, who are inciting members to apply to the Certification Officer to rule that the present method of holding elections is illegal under the Trade Union Act 1984.

Workplace ballots

The general executive committee is elected in two sections, two-thirds to represent territorial areas, at ballots at workplaces or branch meetings and the other third by national committees of the trade groups which represent different occupational divisions.

The Tories are objecting to branch ballots and to the indirect method of electing the 14 trade group representatives, which Clarke falsely claims "appears calculated to favour the left".

Many TGWU members will support these seats being voted for by the whole membership in the same way as the territorial seats.

They will oppose changes

hinted at by the Tories. Workplace balloting is the most democratic form, since it allows for discussion of the candidates in the context of the members' working conditions. Where that is ruled out, because a branch's members work in many different places, the branch meeting is the next best place again because it allows the members to ask questions and discuss what the candidates stand for.

The Tories are trying to move towards postal balloting, where the voting is done at home, away from discussions with fellow trade unionists and influenced only by Fleet Street propaganda!

A "more democratic" TGWU is the last thing the Tories want. Their aim is to weaken this most powerful of unions so that it can offer less resistance to its plans to drive down wages and conditions. Union democracy must be defended!

By Bill Mullins
(West Bromwich TGWU District Committee, personal capacity)

Tory corruption

(from front page)

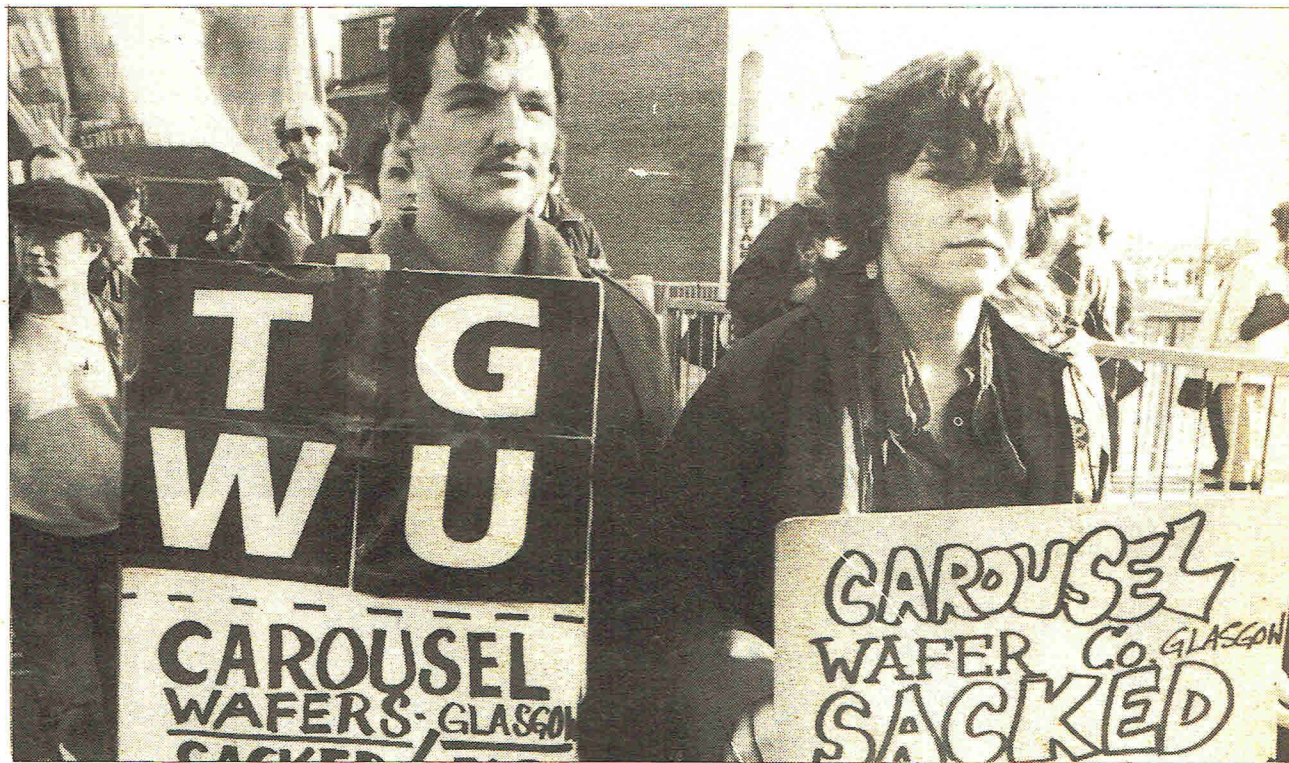
wage and a 35-hour week. Instead of campaigning for a system to make this possible, he is diverting the Party's energies into a senseless purge of its own members.

It is the very people they want to expel, the Marxists, who have best understood the criminal nature of capitalist society and most consistently exposed its incapacity to provide even the most basic of needs for the majority of the population, the workers who produce all the wealth which swills around the City of London.

It is the Marxists who have

campaigned for an alternative programme to bring that wealth under the democratic control of the workers, by taking over the banks, insurance companies and big industrial monopolies so that the economy can be planned and wealth distributed to where it is needed.

That way jobs, decent wages and shorter hours are entirely possible. Far from expelling them, the Labour Party should be adopting the Marxists' programme and taking to the electorate a practical possible alternative to the corrupt system the Tories are presiding over.



T&G members picket Tory conference in 1983. The government want tame unions—and employers like Carousel.

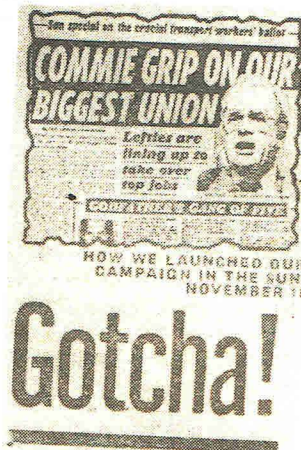
Photo: John Smith (IFL)

Murdoch's charter for tame unions

"T&G SUNK by the Sun" boasted Rupert Murdoch's Tory rag on 3 December. It bragged of its campaign against the Transport and General Workers Union, which it hypocritically claimed, would "give the shop floor a say in its running."

Rupert Murdoch has put forward what are presumably his real views in a draft proposal to SOGAT members at his new London Post printers in Wapping. Strangely enough, he doesn't want "to give the shop floor a say". He wants to give management absolute control over the union.

Murdoch proposes a legally binding document where the union promises "flexibility" in working practices, conditions, duties, and new technology. Manning levels are to be determined by the employer. There should be no closed shop, and no minimum staffing agreements, he suggests.



The Sun 3 December.

The bosses of London Post (Printers) Ltd do not want to recognise chapels or branches, neither do they want "discrimination" against non union members.

Dismissal threat

Management want their right to make practically any decision unchallenged, and they want it enshrined in a document which can be the basis for legal action.

Some of their most hair raising demands are on

union reps. They are only allowed to serve for one year.

"No individual who has received any formal warnings from the employer under its disciplinary procedure will be eligible for election". "If a union representative receives a disciplinary warning he shall cease at once to hold office and a new representative shall be elected to replace him."

Among the possible reasons for disciplinary action proposed are complaints about "attitude". Employees should be able to be dismissed for any "substan-

tial reason" Murdoch believes.

The union and its members are expected to agree not to "instigate, promote, sponsor, engage in, finance or condone, any strike or other industrial action for any reason whatever."

They warn workers "All employees who take part in strike or other industrial action will be subject to immediate dismissal".

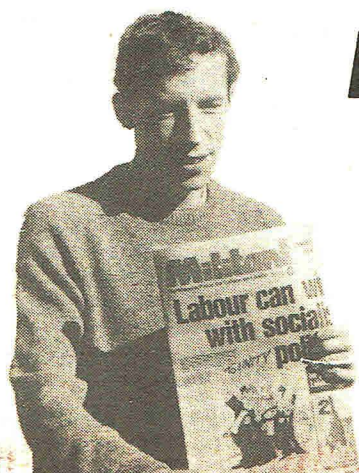
Union reps have a special duty to enforce this section insists Murdoch. Workers will say they have a duty to fight Murdoch.

New SA super union

THE FOUNDING conference of the new South African trade union federation COSATU last weekend was greeted by a rally of some 10,000 workers. They made many far-reaching decisions (see article page 11).

One of the messages of

solidarity read out at the Durban rally was from Liverpool City Council Joint Shop Stewards Committee. Workers throughout Britain should give full support to this new force for the working class in the fight against apartheid and capitalist exploitation.



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