

Militant

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth

25p

ISSUE 782 24 January 1986

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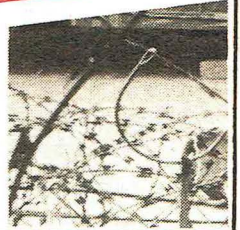
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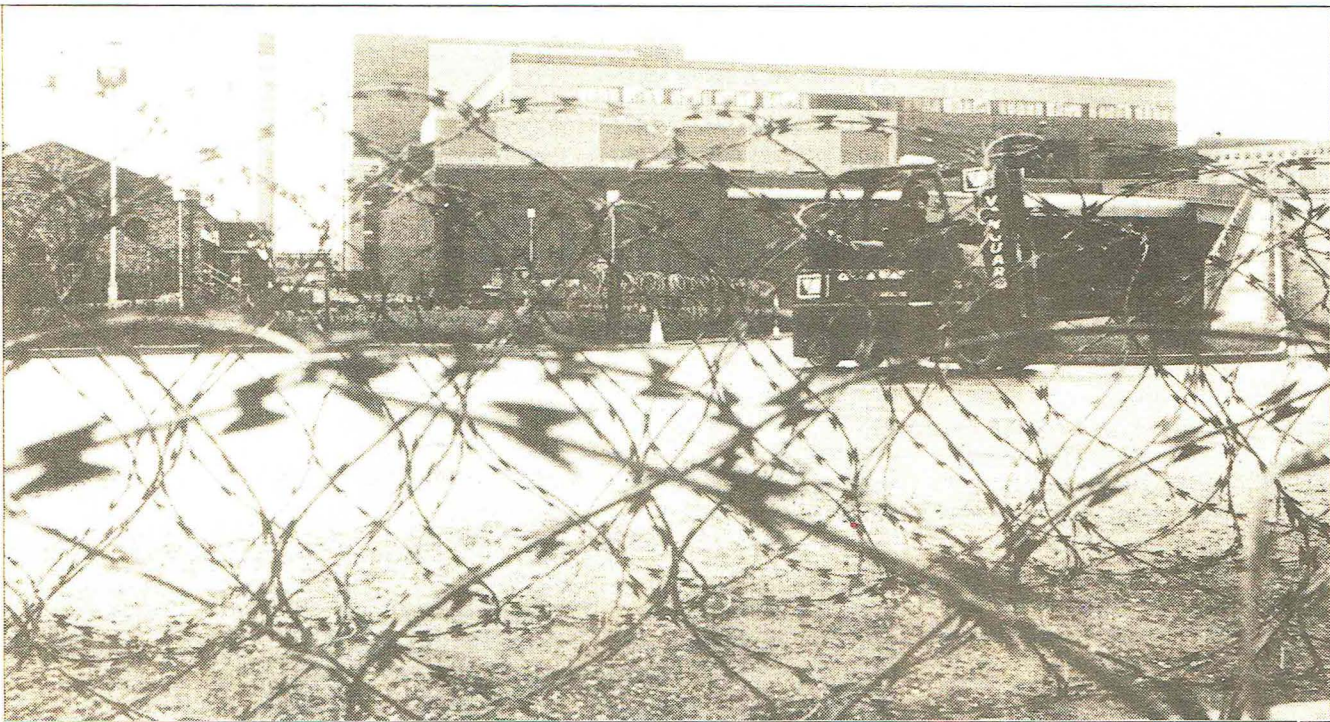


Photo: Militant

PRESS BOSS Rupert Murdoch knows what he wants... a future free from union strength, workers' rights and bargaining power—free so that he can make a lot more money.

He also knows that to get it will mean a war—to destroy rights won by print workers over the centuries. And he is well prepared.

His massive new printing plant at Wapping is surrounded by rolls of barbed wire, strewn across the ground like a First World War battle field. Along one side is a 25 foot high wall. Along the other sides are high, pointed metal fences, with more barbed wire.

Inside is Murdoch's private army of blue-uniformed, strutting security guards, suspicious of anyone approaching the site.

As we got near to the fence our own photographer was threatened by a screaming guard. Immediately half-a-dozen 'Blueshirts' were moving towards the fence speaking on their radios, as the guard kept shouting.

The whole scene is like something out of a James Bond spectacular. In the ruins of Britain's once teeming docks lies the gleaming new fortress of multinational, big business power. Its guards ready to repel any workers whose jobs have been destroyed.

Just down the road is the docklands 'enterprise zone' where Toryism rules and union rights suppressed. This will be the future under the Murdoch regime, and the future Thatcher dreams of for us all. The print workers and the trade unions must put an end to it now.

By Militant reporters

MURDOCH HAS made himself clear: No Concessions. The print unions have a clear mandate for strike action. The fight must start now!

- A united fight by all the print unions.
- For a complete shut down of Fleet Street.
- All Fleet Street union rank and file FOC and MOC committees to run the strike.
- 24 hour national print strike.
- Conferences of FOC's and MOC's throughout the trade to discuss action.
- If any union is fined or its funds sequestrated by the courts an immediate national print strike to be called.
- TUC to mobilise maximum support including industrial action.
- Expel the EETPU immediately from the TUC unless they stop their strike breaking role.
- Defend the closed shop.
- No redundancies.
- Maintain Manning levels.
- Nationalisation of the press facilities under workers' control and management.

Strike for union rights

Join the lobby No purge

NEXT WEDNESDAY 29 January, up to a thousand angry Labour Party members from all over the country will protest outside Labour's National Executive Committee meeting.

By Bob Wade

They are angry that socialists in Liverpool have been the victims of a time wasting, divisive 'inquiry' for the crime of fighting Tory cutbacks.

Last year Liverpool's Labour City Council challenged the Tory government head on. Alongside Lambeth councillors, they put their personal livelihoods on the line by defying Tory law, building new council houses and creating jobs.

Despite their courageous stand they were undermined by an alliance of the Tories, the Liberals, the SDP and the press—and scandalously

the Labour leadership. In December, egged on by Fleet Street, the Labour leadership gave credence to all the lies and smears thrown at Liverpool by launching an inquiry into the City's District Labour Party.

On Wednesday they will deliver their verdict. It is clear from the press that the right wing will use it as an excuse for expulsions of those who dared to stand firm against the Tories.

The Labour leadership should be backing those in the party who have had the courage to take on the Tories. Last week Lambeth councillors were defending themselves in the High Court against the threat of surcharge for defying Tory legislation. The leadership were silent. Next week Liverpool takes its turn to go on

Continued on back page

Send in your tenners

WITH JUST over one week to go to the end of the fighting fund quarter we need a massive effort from all our readers to raise the cash we need.

Ask every single friend, relation and workmate for a donation to our fighting fund. Ask for £20, £10 or £5.

Nationalise Westland

LEFT WINGER John Tocher, the AUEW Broad Left's candidate for president has put forward the demand that Westlands is brought into public ownership by the next Labour government.

"Workers at Westlands are very concerned for their jobs," he said. "Obviously a deal looks better than a closure but the only real guarantee is for the company to be taken into public ownership."

In the dispute over the future of Westlands there has been little consideration for the fate of Westlands' workers.

The company is at present threatening to make 461 workers redundant. Westlands workers are being made to pay for years of mismanagement.

In preparation for this the local press has been conducting a scurrilous campaign suggesting that the workers

Photo: Militant



John Tocher.

are inefficient and lazy.

As the shareholders scramble for the best pickings Westlands workers have been given little alternative but to fall in behind the American option which they see as a better guarantee of future work.

There has been little guidance from TASS, the main union, which has merely been praising the virtues of the European capitalists as opposed to the Americans.

Bristol South left win

THE RIGHT-wing former Labour Chief Whip, Michael Cocks has been defeated in the reselection contest for parliamentary candidate in his Bristol South constituency.

He was defeated in the final ballot by 'hard left'



Dawn Primarolo.

Photo: Report

candidate Dawn Primarolo by 15 votes, who was previously secretary of Tony Benn's old constituency party of Bristol SE.

The selection of Primarolo reflects the dissatisfaction with Cocks' record which has been one of boycotting meetings and refusing to work with the party.

Primarolo has indicated that she would accept the wages of an average skilled worker should she become MP.

Bristol South is the only Labour seat at present in the south west and lies in one of the most working class areas.

The defeat of Cocks marks a new stage in the development of the party which is keen to go out and win a victory for Primarolo in the next election.

Berks cancer scare: Labour inquiry now

PUBLIC CONCERN has been mounting in the Berkshire village of Burghfield after reports of high incidences of cancer on a Yorkshire TV programme.

The programme claimed that the level of leukaemia and lymphatic cancer in the villages of Aldermaston and Burghfield, close to the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment was ten times the national average. This is a thousand per cent increase in the past few years.

A meeting of over three hundred called for a public inquiry, which was opposed by the local Tory MP McNair Wilson who was heckled in the meeting.

Concern

Last year it was reputed that the AWRE was pumping radioactive water into the River Thames at Pangbourne. A sign warns bathers not to enter the water.

Local concern is also centred on the Royal Ordnance Factory at Burghfield, a top secret establishment which assembles atomic weapons. The factory has been erased from the Ordnance survey map. It was claimed by the Yorkshire TV

programme that a stream near the site was contaminated.

The Tories have promised that there will be a study into the incidence of cancer, but local residents are not confident that this will be conclusive.

Even a public inquiry would be hamstrung by the official secrets act but the labour movement must conduct its own inquiry which would get support from workers inside the Burghfield factory. Members of the TGWU at the ROF Burghfield are following the example of the Sellafield workers and are threatening strike action if their demands for stricter safety precautions and for an environmental allowance are not met. At present the lower grade workers only get £70 for a 39 hour week.

The next Labour government must pledge itself to dismantle the nuclear weapons establishments and to re-employ all workers in the same skills and at the same rates in the production of socially useful products.

By a Militant reporter

Blunkett moves expulsion call

SHEFFIELD COUNCIL leader David Blunkett has moved a resolution calling for fellow councillor and Militant supporter Paul Green to be expelled from the Labour Group.

Paul Green was expelled by the right wing in Sheffield Attercliffe Labour Party last year, purely for supporting Marxist ideas. The NEC only narrowly backed the expulsion by one vote.

Amongst those voting against was Blunkett, despite previously abstaining on other expulsion votes and backing the inquiry into Liverpool District Labour Party. Blunkett has been playing a balancing act between his support for Kinnoch and trying to maintain his credibility as a

left winger.

Paul Green continued attending Sheffield Labour Group meetings with much support including that, he presumed, of the council leader. This month after advice was sought from labour headquarters, National Agent, David Hughes informed Sheffield of the 'intent' of Labour's rules. But his reply showed that it was not actually unconstitutional for an expelled member to belong to a Labour Group.

Yet this did not stop Blunkett moving Green's expulsion from the group on Monday. Despite having the gall to say he was working against the witch-hunt, Blunkett said they could not set a precedent

for the rest of the country to follow. Preparation for the expulsion of Hatton and Mulhearn in Liverpool perhaps?

After a two and a half hour debate in which 16 out of the 20 councillors who spoke supported Green, the group narrowly voted to expel Green by 27 to 22 votes.

Blunkett had said he had 'no pleasure' in moving the motion. Crocodile tears are not enough. Such bureaucratic expulsions only aid the right wing and play right into the hands of the Tories. Local rank and file Labour Party members have been incensed by the decision and will increase their determination to have Paul Green reinstated.

Stab in back from LCC

Photo: Militant

AS THE Liverpool City councillors enter the law courts this week facing the threat of bankruptcy and debarment from office for the crime of fighting Tory laws, they have been stabbed in the back by the Labour Coordinating Committee.

The LCC—Neil Kinnoch's little Sir Echoes on the so-called soft left—have released a lengthy document full, according to reports in the press, of unsubstantiated claims of rigging and favouritism by Militant supporters in Liverpool District Labour Party. Such accusations have already been answered time and time again by the District Labour Party, city councillors and Liverpool Militant supporters.

Defeated by the Marxists politically, the LCC have now jumped on the witch-hunting bandwagon of Labour's right wing and the Tory press.

No doubt they hope their 'evidence' will prompt Labour's NEC to take action against the City Council and Liverpool DLP.

Unable to answer the ideas of Militant, they hope organisational measures and expulsions will settle the score.

The LCC have plastered their claims across the current issue of Tribune and another little-heard-of magazine. So much for the NEC's inquiry being 'internal'! The Tory press are delighted. Why bother with the expense of sending their hacks to Liverpool to stake out the City's embattled councillors when the LCC



Jane Saren at the Labour Party conference (far right) sitting with Labour's front spokesmen before she attacked Liverpool council. She was censured by her party, Riverside, for her remarks.

will do their dirty work for them.

The majority of Liverpool Labour Party members will judge this 'evidence' by its authors, namely Paul Thompson, Paul Lally, Mike Allen and Jane Saren.

Doctor Thompson is chairman of Merseyside LCC and late of 'Big Flame'. He was absent from the Liverpool Labour Party scene until his reappearance last year—was it to join with the majority of Party members in the struggle against the government, or more to do with joining in the attacks on the City Council?

Lally is a member of the lecturers' union NATFHE. It is hoped his concern for 'democracy' extends to demanding why his union did not hold a ballot on the question of strike action last year.

Allen is a prominent grouping yet has never rais-

member of the 'Labour Left' ed these allegations on the Liverpool DLP executive, of which he is a member.

Saren—who has come a long way since her days in the Scottish Labour Party split off—will be remembered for her attacks on the Council at last year's Labour Party conference. Her party, Riverside, were so disgusted with her comments that they censured her when she returned.

Labour Party members will also note that this 8,000 word dossier must be the largest 'political' document this group have ever produced, such is their interest in the issues that affect Liverpool.

Tribune has refused to allow Militant to see the dossier, while Fleet Street appear to have full access to the LCC's allegations, so Militant will have to answer the LCC's claims in a future issue.

Red Wedge gets on the road

RED WEDGE is being launched this Saturday in Manchester as their nationwide tour gets underway. Besides music from Paul Weller, Billy Bragg, the Communards and Junior, the tour is to build support for Labour, but also make the Labour leadership aware of the issues that affect youth and what they want to be done. As Billy Bragg put it in the NME: "It's the meeting of the Labour Party and the punter that we want to pull off."

Thousands will be going to see Red Wedge—Young Socialists and local branches

of the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign must make sure they are there with plenty of leaflets and papers to get the message across.

The tour dates are:
Manchester Apollo, Saturday 25 January;
Cardiff St Davids Hall, Sunday 26 January;
Birmingham Odeon, Monday 27 January;
Leicester De Montfort Hall, Tuesday 28 January;
Bradford St Georges Hall, Wednesday 29 January;
Edinburgh Playhouse, Thursday 30 January;
Newcastle City Hall, Friday 31 January.

Civil war rages in South Yemen

MEDIA REPORTS on the civil war in South Yemen have been blatantly nationalist. Nostalgic for the days when Britannia ruled the waves, they have concentrated on the role of that expensive plaything the Royal yacht Britannia in rescuing British citizens.

Most mention of the fighting has merely gloated about the two "Marxist" factions at each others' throats.

South Yemen used to be a British protectorate based on the port of Aden which had a strategically important position at the mouth of the Red Sea; it was a coaling station on the route to Bombay. The local people overcame 128 years of British rule in 1967 after a war of liberation in which both the former president Ali Nasser Mohammad and the rebel leader Abd-al Fattah Ismail were involved.

The country is small (2 million population) and poor. Until recent discoveries of gold and oil there was none of the wealth of some neighbouring oil states. The port of Aden with a sizeable working class was declining. Under pressure of the masses and the failure of capitalism, what little there was of capitalism and landlordism was abolished and South Yemen moved into the Soviet Union's sphere, being used as a Russian naval base for operations in Ethiopia.

Now so called socialist factions are settling a dispute in the fraternal language of tanks and machine guns, as Stalinist states have done in the border conflicts of Vietnam and Kampuchea, Russia and China.

Nasser Muhammad's government, backed by the USSR were trying to soften relations with their capitalist, often reactionary neighbour. Yemen, Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries. The Soviet Union are a conservative force, anxious to maintain stability in most parts of the world but particularly in the Middle East to aid diplomatic negotiations with the USA.

The forces round Ismail are more hardline Stalinists who want to unite all the Yemen under a Stalinist regime. This basic divide is deepened by splits between different tribal groups in the mountain areas. If Ismail's forces, seemingly backed by many of these tribes, do win, pressure from the USSR would most likely dictate the same policies as Nasser Muhammad's regime.

Capitalism has been uprooted in South Yemen but the working class and rural poor have been politically expropriated. The interests of both factions are separate from those of the working class.

The only solution to the conflicts and problems in the Middle East is a socialist federation of all states. The Stalinists are an impediment to this cause which can only be carried out by the conscious initiatives of the working class.

By Roger Shrivess

Militant fights back

Meetings
planned
nationwide

IN RESPONSE to the unprecedented attacks being made against *Militant*, members of the paper's Editorial Board are touring the country to answer the lies of the Tories, the press and their echoes in the Labour Party. Where no venues or details of speakers are listed, see local *Militant* sellers for details.

London

London LPYS conference: Saturday 25 January. Speaker—Alan Woods.
Brixton: Weekend of 1–2 March, 12.45pm London Labour Party conference fringe meeting, Brixton Recreation Centre, SW2.
Tooting: Thursday, 30 January, 7.30pm, Wheat-sheaf Pub, Tooting Road, Tooting Bec, SW17.
Hounslow: Wednesday 5 February, 7.45pm, Hounslow Manor School.
Woolwich: Wednesday 5 February, 7.45pm, Clock House Community Centre, Defiance Walk, Woolwich SE18.
Tottenham: Thursday 13 February, 7.45pm, Tottenham Library, High Road, N17.
Haringey: Saturday 15 February.
Ealing: Tuesday, 18 February, 7.30pm, Ealing Town Hall, High Street, W5.

Scotland

Edinburgh: Monday 3 February, 7.30pm, Assembly Rooms, George Street. Speaker—Ted Grant.
Fife: Tuesday 4 February, 7.30pm, Woodside Community Centre, Glenrothes. Speaker—Ted Grant.
Dundee: Wednesday 5 February, 7.30pm, Royal Hotel, Union Street. Speaker—Ted Grant.
Glasgow: Thursday 6 February, 7.30pm, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street. Speaker—Ted Grant.
Motherwell: Friday 7 February, 7.30pm. Speaker—Ted Grant.

Wales

Cardiff: Monday 3 February, 7.30pm. Speaker—Peter Taaffe.
Llanelli: Tuesday 4 February, 7.30pm, Parish Hall opp. British Legion. Speaker—Peter Taaffe.

Northern

Ashington: Saturday 1 March, LPYS Regional Conference fringe meeting. Speaker—Clare Doyle.
Newcastle: Saturday 17 May, Labour Party Regional Conference fringe meeting.

THE FOLLOWING have passed resolutions opposing either the inquiry into Liverpool District Labour Party or the continued witch-hunt against *Militant*:

Constituency Labour Parties

Scotland: Glasgow Shettleston, Leith, Edinburgh West, Pentlands, Edinburgh Central, Clydebank.
North West: Garston, Mossley Hill, Withington, Blackley, Manchester Central, Rochdale, Preston, Littleboro' and Saddleworth, Bootle.
North East: Sunderland North, Wallsend, Executive of Blyth CLP, Gateshead East.
Yorkshire: Sheffield Hillsborough, Sheffield Heeley, Hemsworth, Pudsey, Leeds North West, Leeds North East, Barnsley West and Penistone, Bradford North.
East Midlands: North West Leicestershire, Nottingham East.
West Midlands: Birmingham Ladywood, Birmingham Perry Barr, Coventry North West, Coventry North East, Coventry South East.
Eastern: Harlow, Hertford and Stortford, Bedford, Luton North, Hertsmere, Colchester.
London: Bethnal Green and Stepney, Hammersmith, Hampstead, Brent East, Deptford, Feltham and Heston, Hackney North and Stoke Newington, Hackney South and Shoreditch, Vauxhall, Ealing Southall, Uxbridge, Greenwich, Hayes/Harlington, Islington West, Holborn and St Pancras.
Southern: Fareham, Poole.

District Labour Parties

Besides the obvious opposition of Liverpool DLP, also Manchester City, Basildon, Brighton, Thamesdown, Bristol and the executive of Greater London Labour Party.



Thousands of rank and file Labour Party members and trade unionists are opposed to the witch-hunt. Go to the *Militant* Readers' Meeting in your area and get active in the fight for socialist policies. Photo: Militant

South and South West

Reading: Thursday 30 January, 7.45pm, St Mary's Church Centre, St Mary's Butts.
Bristol: Thursday 30 January, 7.30pm, Shepherd's Hall, Old Market Street. Speaker—Jeremy Birch.
Yeovil: Friday 7 February, 7.30pm, White Horse, St Michael's Avenue.
Bath: Tuesday 4 February, 7.30pm, Friends' Meeting House, York Street. Speaker—Jeremy Birch.
Newton Abbot: Thursday 6 February, Community Centre, Kingsteignton Road.
Poole: Sunday 9 February, 7.30pm, Quay Hotel, The Quay.

North West

Rochdale: Monday 27 January, 12.30pm, Rochdale Technical College.
Rochdale: Monday 27 January, 7.30pm, Brunswick Pub, Bailee Street. Speaker—Keith Dickinson.
Burnley: Wednesday 29 January, 7.30pm, The Swan, St James Street. Speaker—Keith Dickinson.
Preston: Thursday 30 January, 7.30pm, Trade Union Centre, off Ribbleson Lane. Speaker—Keith Dickinson.
Oldham: Wednesday 5 February, 7.30pm, St Andrews Parish Hall, Middleton Street.
Liverpool: Wednesday 5 February.
Blackpool: Saturday 15 February, 7.30pm, LPYS Regional Conference fringe meeting, Winter Gardens, 7.30pm.
Blackpool: Saturday 15 March, North West Labour Party Regional Conference fringe meeting.

Youth Sections

A total of 89 Labour Party Young Socialist branches and eight college/Labour Clubs have already condemned the action.

Trade Union Organisations

NUM Lodges: Bold, Sutton Manor, Wearmouth, Darfield Main, Houghton Main, Allerton Bywater, Coventry, Armthorpe, Linby, Wearmouth Mechanics, Seafeld SCEBTA, Kent NUM Area Council.
TGWU: 6/612, 6/631, 6/51, 6/552, 1/552, 1/1347, 1/874, 6/171, 1/6, 9/8, Tilbury Docks and Riverside, Blackburn buses, 1/146, Pork Farm.
NUPE branches: Wirral District Health, Gateshead, Guys hospital stewards, Paddington and Kensington, Tower Hamlets, Liverpool caretakers, Brighton local government, Dudley, Edinburgh southern hospitals, Northumberland, Camden, Hammersmith and Fulham Health.
AUEW: Cardiff No 9, Manchester South shop stewards, Blyth, Kilnhurst, Skipton, Keighley No 1, Tyne Junior Workers Committee.
GMBATU: No 5, No 24, No 40, Glasgow Cleansing Workers, Rosyth Dockyard, Lanarkshire Gas.
AUEW - TASS: No 11, Manchester East, Barnsley, Sheffield and Precision Metals.
NUR: Liverpool No. 5, East Ham, Willesden No 1, Bedford and Luton.
ASTMS: Liverpool Shipping, Royal Insurance, Manchester Com-

Yorkshire

Leeds: Sunday 26 January, 7.30pm, The Grand Hall, Grand Theatre. Speaker—Ted Grant.
Mexborough: Tuesday 28 January, 7.30pm, The Old Masons. Speaker—Cllr Paul Green.
Sheffield: Saturday 1 February, Yorkshire Regional LPYS conference fringe meeting. Speaker—Rob Sewell.
Maltby: Wednesday 5 February, 8pm, Maltby Library. Speakers—Rob Sewell, Geoff Bright.
Hull: Thursday 6 February, 7.30pm, Trades and Labour Club, Beverly Road. Speaker—Rob Sewell.
Grimby: Friday 7 February, 7.30pm, Central Library. Speaker—Rob Sewell.
Bridlington: Saturday 1 March, Yorkshire Regional Labour Party fringe meeting.

Midlands

Nottingham: Tuesday 11 February. Speaker—Steve Morgan.
Mansfield: Wednesday 12 February. Speaker—Steve Morgan.
Derby: Tuesday 13 February. Speaker—Steve Morgan.
Chesterfield: Wednesday 19 February.

Eastern

Stevenage: Thursday 30 January, 7.30pm, Stevenage Leisure Centre.
Luton: Tuesday 28 January.
Peterborough: Thursday 30 January.
Norwich: Saturday 1 February, Local Government conference fringe meeting.
Harlow: Tuesday 4 February.
Colchester: Saturday 15 February, 7.30pm, Colchester Labour Club.

Manchester

Tuesday 28 January
Free Trade Hall
7.30pm
Speakers:

Derek Hatton

(Deputy Leader, Liverpool City Council)

Keith Dickinson

(Militant)

community Workers, Bradford, Southampton Insurance.
NALGO: Liverpool, Southwark, Camden Housing, Harringey.
Trades Councils: Harlow, Coventry, Swansea, Newcastle.
Others: Bakers' Union National Executive, Bakers Union North West region, CPSA Longbenton, CPSA South West Regional Committee, NCU London Centre GMO executive, East of Scotland USDAW, EETPU Rosyth Dockyard, EETPU East Kilbride, Liverpool City Council JSSC, Rolls Royce Joint Staffs TU Committee, Highroads COHSE, Manchester Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Workers, USDAW (Capital Holdings), Poole and Swanage UCATT, Camden UCATT, Camden DHSS CPSA, Holloway Road UCW, Westminster NCU.

Westland—pawn in bosses' power game

THE PUBLIC strife within the Tory Party over the Westland affair has given workers a revealing glimpse of the greed, deceit and hypocrisy of the ruling class. Behind their facade of respectability, and statesmanship lies the reality of businessmen, politicians and top civil serants motivated by their own self interest. Only their greater interest in protecting their wealth and power from the workers forces them to patch together a public face of unity and common purpose.

It is revealed that a top DTI civil servant, leaked the Solicitor-General's letter to Heseltine, which accused him of an 'inaccuracy'. Clive Ponting, sacked from the top echelons of the Defence Department, describes: "brutal inter-departmental disputes, meetings held with opponents excluded, meetings not held at all when the Prime Minister is likely to lose, doctoring of the minutes of meetings and ministers using the lobby to spread damaging stories about their colleagues."

Heseltine, who now denounces all such practices when carried out by Thatcher, was as prepared to use them as any. It was he who insisted on the prosecution of Sarah Tisdall and Ponting under the Official Secrets Act for daring to reveal what was going on within his department. Yet through this dramatic blow-by-blow account of cabinet meetings he has revealed far more government secrets in the past two weeks than they ever did.

Trade and Industry Secretary Leon Brittan was revealed to have first denied in Parliament that he had known about a letter from Sir Austin Pearce, Chairman of British Aerospace, then was forced to admit that he knew of it. He was then accused of making veiled threats to BAes chief executive Sir Raymond Lygo that their participation in the European consortium bidding for Westland "was against the national interest".

The following day, Lygo provided an extraordinary example of how the ruling class tries to paper over its cracks, when he contradicted his own carefully documented account of the meeting with Brittan and claimed that there has been a 'misunderstanding', and that it had not been suggested that BAe was acting against the national interest.

The real motive behind Thatcher's backing for the Sikorski/Fiat bid was revealed when Brittan told *Weekend World* that he had told both Lygo and the chairman of GEC, his former cabinet colleague Jim Prior, of American protests over the cash aid that European governments were giving to the Airbus project. The American capitalists were threatening retaliation against 'unfair competition'.

The role of Thatcher and Brittan in the affair is as spokesmen for finance capital US big business, prepared to undermine their own class allies in the European aircraft industry and sell off a section of British industry to a US multi-national, in order to keep on good terms with the American ruling class. Heseltine on the other hand speaks for British manufacturing capitalists.

It is not just the Tory ministers who have fallen out. The big capitalists themselves have been drawn into the

public conflict. Millionaire helicopter operator, Alan Bristow, increased his shareholding in Westland to 14 per cent in order to back the European bid. Lord Hanson, whose Hanson Trust is the eleventh biggest company in Britain, worth £3 billion, bought 15 per cent of the Westland shares on Monday and Tuesday. They were only worth £8.4 million, yet he paid £10.7 million for them and used them to back the Westland board, the Tory government and the American bid. Hanson was made a life peer in 1983, the year in which his company donated £82,000 to the Tory Party. In 1984 Hanson received £490,000 in pay and dividends.

This is how the fate of the Westland workers is determined, in a cynical battle for money, power and prestige by a handful of tycoons and their political friends. Neither the workers, nor even the small shareholders count for anything in their calculations.

As Dave Nellist MP said in Parliament, nationalisation of a company like Westland, and its incorporation into a renationalised British Aerospace, under democratic workers' control and management is the only way in which the helicopter industry and its workers can be safeguarded. Compensation should be solely on the basis of need for the small shareholders.

For the Labour Party and the trade unions, the message of Westland is that no real lasting reforms of British society will be achieved when the country's wealth and power is concentrated into the hands of the Bristows and the Hansons, the Priors, Heseltines and Brittans. Only on the basis of public ownership and democratic planning of industry can a future be assured for the workers who create the wealth that these people squander.

Labour fights attacks in North West

THE CAMPAIGN to defend Labour Party democracy in Merseyside and the North West is gaining support.

The Merseyside Labour and Trade Union Campaign Committee called a meeting of Merseyside Labour Parties on Sunday to discuss the suspension of the St Helens party and the reselection contest in Knowsley North.

A resolution opposing the investigations, enquiries and suspensions which are taking place on Merseyside and against expulsions was passed unanimously.

A lobby of the NEC meeting on 29 January will be organised with buses from St Helens, Knowsley and Liverpool. The Merseyside Labour and Trade Union Campaign Committee will also organise a national anti-witch-hunt conference in Merseyside in March.

At Preston Labour Party's January meeting a resolution "congratulating our prospective Parliamentary candidate (Audrey Wise) and the NEC for



Labour Party members protest outside the venue of the NEC inquiry into Liverpool District Labour Party on 8 December. Photo: Militant.

organising the inquiry into Liverpool" was rejected. Many delegates were angry that their 'left wing' candidate for the next election, Audrey Wise, as a member of the NEC had backed the Liverpool inquiry. Wise, like many of the soft left, also now appears to be having se-

cond thoughts over the attack on Liverpool. She told the meeting "I'm not sure that I want to be congratulated over my role in the inquiry into Liverpool".

A resolution from the LPYS condemning the witch-hunt and expulsions was carried by 25 votes to 10.

● Bootle and Crosby Labour Parties have both condemned the inquiry, while a resolution at Southport Labour Party calling for sales of *Militant* to be banned at Sefton District Labour Party was defeated.

Lessons of SNP success

THE LESSONS of Labour's defeat recently in a Motherwell Council by-election must be learnt as another crucial test looms.

Labour lost the safe seat of Fallside to the Scottish National Party on January 9, when there was a 23 per cent swing to the SNP. The results were SNP—1003 votes and Labour—737. In the last election the Labour majority was 656.

The by-election arose after the resignation of the sitting Labour councillor following allegations that he used his position to get his father a council house. While this may have affected the Labour vote, the Labour Party didn't really get to



The major issue in the Motherwell by-elections—the threat to the Scottish steel plants. Photo: Steve McTaggart (IFL)

grips with the SNP campaign, who raised the opportunist slogan of 'Save Scottish Steel', and bused in party activists from as far away as Edinburgh. While Labour had a good candidate in William McLaughlan, its campaign never really got off the ground.

There is no room for com-

placency, a new election in Muirhouse ward, following the ill health of the sitting Labour councillor, will be held in three weeks time. Labour's campaign must be launched without delay, in particular giving a socialist alternative and strategy for the steel industry.

London women's conference

THE LONDON Labour Party Women's conference overwhelmingly backed a resolution opposing the Liverpool inquiry and the witch-hunt.

The conference on 18-19 January, attended by nearly 200 women party members, also supported a call for direct links to be forged with South African trade unions.

The major upset of the conference was the removal of Ann Pettifor from the London Labour Party executive. It is the result of growing opposition to the constant organisational approach of Pettifor and her supporters of the Womens Action Committee, while many felt she had not come out clearly against the witch-hunt.

Defence funds launched

TWO CAMPAIGNS are under way to raise funds for legal costs incurred by Labour Party members fighting the witch-hunt in Stevenage and Cardiff.

In Stevenage 10 members of the Labour Party were forced to resort to the High Court after unconstitutional attempts by the right wing to expel them. In Cardiff South and Penarth Labour Party—the seat of former prime minister Jim Callaghan—party members Andy Price, Dave Bartlett and Dianne Mitchell have been expelled and are now taking their case to the High Court.

It is not without irony that these victimised Labour Party members have found more justice in the capitalist courts than in the 'star chambers' of the right wing.

Legal costs though will run into thousands of pounds, so money is much needed. In Stevenage the **Defend The Ten** campaign was launched with a public meeting which raised £120.

Further donations should be sent to the campaign secretary at 146 Durham Road, Stevenage, Herts, payable to the 'Defend the Ten Campaign'.

In Cardiff donations at

the rate of £50 a day are coming in for the **Cardiff South Legal Defence Fund** from all over South Wales, along with invitations to speak at labour movement bodies. The campaign is asking that the right wing be allowed to speak as well, so the issues can be fully debated before the movement. The right though have yet to take up this challenge.

The Cardiff right wing have now set up their own financial campaign. Right wing constituency secretary John Smith has even accused the three expelled party members of initiating legal action to cause financial embarrassment to the party! Such remarks are incredible given the recent revelations that Smith himself negotiated large sums of money from international banker Sir Julian Hodge to finance Cardiff South MP Jim Callaghan's election in 1974 (see *Militant* 781).

One of the expelled, Andrew Price, has explained that any section of the movement can examine the funds of the Cardiff South Legal Defence Fund—he has challenged the right wing to say who is financing them.

Leeds LPYS probe police harassment

LABOUR PARTY Young Socialist branches in Leeds have launched a campaign against police harassment, following the surveillance and arrest of *Militant* sellers.

Last summer after a Friday evening paper sale a *Militant* supporter was followed by an unmarked car down a back street and then questioned by two plain clothes police.

The start of the new year has brought more harassment. On 4 January Martin Wright and Gordon Nardell were arrested while selling the paper near the city rail station. They were held for five hours—then released without charge.

The following Saturday

two more, John Brayshaw and Steve Steward, were arrested. They were among a group of five selling *Militant* on the traditional pitch of Lands Lane, in opposition to a group of fascists selling racist papers nearby. Needless to say the fascists were left untouched. At the station, John Brayshaw was questioned about his political views. After threats by police that they would be held until Monday morning, they were eventually released, again without charge.

The LPYS campaign will urge the Labour controlled West Yorkshire Police Authority to bring pressure on the police to cease this political harassment.

Dave Cotterill answers smears

THE *MIRROR*'S frenzied attacks on *Militant* have now stooped below the level of the gutter.

It has attempted, in its issue of 17 January, a disgraceful piece of character assassination on Dave Cotterill, using unnuendo and personal vilification.

Dave Cotterill gives his answer:

"The *Daily Mirror* has acted in the worst traditions of gutter journalism. Photographs have been secretly taken of me; my flat has been stalked out; friends of mine have been harassed, and I believe my mail has been interfered with.

"This character assassination is a further attempt to attack and undermine the *Militant* newspaper.

"Incredibly the *Mirror* accused me of privileges in obtaining a 15th floor flat. Could it be that jealous *Mirror* journalists would like to swap their modest abodes for my two bedroomed flat?

"Liverpool has thousands of hard to let properties, most of them high-rise flats. Five people previous to me turned down this 'plum' flat. In some cases flats can be allocated within weeks. I waited nearly four months for my allocation. At the time I was living with two other adults and a child in a two-bedroomed flat which was clearly overcrowded.

"The *Mirror* asserts that the tower block is mainly housed by the elderly. Yet the lifts only go to the 14th floor, so what use is the 15th floor to the elderly? Out of the last six housing allocations two others have been single people.

"The *Mirror* were given these facts, but chose to ignore them. Even more disturbing however, is that the *Mirror* has somehow gained access to private and confidential documents concerning my rent rebate and my housing application. In what secretive manner has this been obtained? It is true that I receive a rent rebate, as do tens of thousands of other people of Liverpool.

"The *Mirror* have furthermore tried to assert that my flat is used as a 'secret HQ for the World Book Club.' This is completely ridiculous.

"The *Militant* has an office in Liverpool, known to everyone. There is no need to use my flat as a 'secret' office, and it is not used as such. They speak of gangs of helpers moving files, documents and ledgers. Being unable to afford a removal firm meant that three friends helped me move all of my furniture and personal effects, none of which relate to the World Book Club. This was no mean feat when the lift stops at the 14th floor and all your possessions have to be carried up one floor and along a lengthy corridor.

"*Mirror* journalists on their blood money, living in comfortable surroundings, wouldn't know anything of this".

Scandal at The Mirror

SECRETIVE, unscrupulous, undemocratic, just a few of the expletives thrown at *Militant* in yet another *Mirror* tirade. But perhaps the hired pen who dutifully bashed out this "comment" (21 January) should have applied them to his boss?

Secretive? Who owns Maxwell's great organ of truth? What are its financial links?

Soon after buying up *Mirror* Group Newspapers, Maxwell transferred ownership to the Pergamon Holding Foundation, reportedly owned by "Maxwell family interests in France". The foundation, the centre of Maxwell's business octopus, is incorporated in Liechtenstein. The laws of this tiny tax-haven statelet provide a cloak of secrecy for tycoons with a strong aversion to public scrutiny of their books.

When will the *Mirror* be telling its readers all about Maxwell's business secrets? Or would the truth be too painful?

Doubts

Unscrupulous? What is Maxwell's record in business and politics?

In 1969 Maxwell tried to sell his Pergamon Group to the US company, Leasco. The deal fell through because of doubts which emerged about its profits and accounts. A subsequent investigation by the Board of Trade declared in 1971 that "Mr Maxwell is not in our opinion a person who can be relied upon to execute the proper stewardship of a publicly quoted company".

When *Mirror* Group

By Lynn Walsh

Newspapers were up for sale in 1984 most journalists saw Maxwell as "the least desirable proprietor around". Now he's the boss most of them have knuckled down to bashing out the Maxwell line.

If there are any conscientious investigative journalists left on the *Mirror* we would ask them: when are you going to tell your readers about Maxwell's record in business and politics? Why don't you report his current business activities and his attempts to determine the policy of the Labour Party?

Undemocratic? How does

Maxwell champion democracy?

"I am the proprietor, 100 per cent", proclaimed Maxwell on his first day at the *Mirror*, smashing the journalists' call for a say in the running of the paper. "There can be only one boss," proclaimed this great democrat, "and that's me".

He soon made it clear that he would dictate the paper's editorial policy, with a far from democratic line on some issues.

On a visit to Poland in 1985, for instance, Maxwell broadcast his support for the authoritarian dictatorship of the Stalinist bureaucracy headed by Jarulselski. He had no sympathy for the struggle of Polish workers for an independent, democratic trade union.

"The problem of Solidarity is now solved", Mr Maxwell said on Polish radio.



Robert Maxwell.

Photos: Dave Sinclair

Mirror Group's companies.

The totalitarian disposal of the 'problem' of workers' rights would be reflected in his paper: "We certainly will be devoting less space to Solidarity and more space to improving trade relations within Great Britain and Poland".

Was this broadcast reported in the *Mirror*? When will the *Mirror* be reporting on Maxwell's own business involvement in trade with the Stalinist states?

When will the *Mirror* be explaining to its readers why a supporter of Jarulselski, Kadar and company is so virulently opposed to Trotskyism—genuine Marxism, with an unrivalled record of struggle against totalitarianism and in defence of workers' rights?

Leaving Warsaw airport, Maxwell told reporters that he had suggested to Jarulselski that Poland should adopt a very small percentage of unemployment

to boost the economy. Sacking workers is high on Maxwell's list of 'solutions', as his record shows—and as trade unionists at the *Mirror* Group are only too well aware.

Full extent

"We are getting under *Militant*'s skin," claims the *Mirror*. Not at all! When fans of General Jarulselski praise us, then we will start to worry.

Unfortunately, millions of workers have yet to realise the full extent of the *Mirror*'s lies, distortions and political hypocrisy.

For the time being, Maxwell has a bigger press than us. But every time the *Mirror* attacks us we gain new readers and receive more donations.

Every broadside from the *Mirror* reinforces the determination of our supporters to change the system which Maxwell stands for.

Lessons of the Liverpool Old Swan by-election

LABOUR'S DEFEAT in the Liverpool Old Swan by-election followed a vile campaign of lies, distortion and smears in both the local and national press against the Liverpool Labour Party, and in support of the SDP.

The result, however, was not a crushing defeat for the Liverpool Labour Party or a rejection of the policies of the City Council. It was not "clearly due to the anti-*Militant* backlash" or "a definite protest against Labour" as alleged by Ian Williams in the right-wing *New Statesman*.

The SDP campaign was a scandal. They reproduced filth from the *Liverpool Echo* with headlines like "GANGSTERS RUN OUR TOWN HALL".

They were assisted by the whole of the national press. The *Daily Express* devoted a whole editorial calling for Labour's defeat and the *Daily Mirror*, on the very day of the election, published sensational and entirely groundless allegations about the conduct of deputy council leader Derek Hatton (see last week's *Militant*).

Most significant, however, was the scandalous attitude of Labour's national leadership to the City Council and its decision to hold an inquiry into the District Labour Party. They not only did not give a word of support to the Labour candidate in the by-election, but actually provided the SDP with ammunition to use against Labour. Leaflets were distributed which quoted an abusive attack

made on *Militant* supporters in Liverpool by Labour's leader Neil Kinnock when he said: "to understand these people, you would need to see a psychiatrist".

Old Swan has never been a safe Labour seat. It was Tory in the 1960s and Liberal in the 1970s. In 1967 the Tory candidate won with 2987 votes and in 1973 the Liberal polled 3266, more than Labour has ever polled. Labour only won a seat in the ward for the first time in 1979, with 3202 votes, holding it in 1983 and 1984 with 2662 and 3126 votes respectively.

Even if Labour had repeated its best ever vote it still would have lost this time, because of the collapse of the Tory vote from 887 to 506, a drop of 43 per cent, and a cut in the vote for the 'Independent Liberal' from 518 to 216.

Owner occupiers

Nor is the ward the type which normally votes heavily for Labour. Only 20 per cent of the residents are council tenants. The high percentage of owner occupiers have gained less direct benefit from the council's policies. It is not one of the 'priority' areas and so there is less visible evidence of the council's achievements than in some of the more deprived districts.

The media attacks and the temporary setback in the City Council campaign to save jobs and services, caused primarily by the opposition of the Party's national leaders, con-



Labour candidate Anne Holinshead.

fused many voters. Many former Labour supporters must have abstained.

Hundreds of middle-class voters on the other hand, inflamed by the hysteria generated by the SDP and the media rallied behind the SDP candidate.

In all these circumstances the 2358 vote for Labour was exceptional. These were voters consciously given, in the teeth of ferocious opposition from all sides, to a local Labour Party which stands squarely for Marxist policies. Given the silence of the national leadership and their well-publicised hostility towards the Liverpool councillors, these voters could be under no illusions that they were voting for anything other than support for the City Council.

Still more voters could have been won to Labour if the local Party activists had seized every opportunity to counter all the smears and lies on

the doorsteps. While the candidate and local activists waged a good campaign, leaflets should have been produced and public meetings held specifically to answer the media and SDP smears against the council and *Militant*. Councillors should have been taken round to convince voters that the council was defending their interests.

The Tory media will always be hostile towards a Labour Party which stands for socialist and Marxist ideas, but by taking the issues head-on, their pernicious influence can be overcome.

These 2358 voters are a solid base for the building of a mass socialist Labour Party in the ward in the years ahead. By the time of the May elections, or in any by-elections caused by the disqualification by the courts of the present councillors, the potential will be there for Labour to take their policies to the doorsteps and win Old Swan back for Labour.

But that task will be made far harder if the Party's national leaders continue to sow confusion by attacking and abusing the local Labour leaders. There must be more pressure from the ranks nationally to force the NEC to call off the inquiry into the DLP and abandon any plans for the expulsion of any Party members. Instead they must throw their weight behind the struggle to defend jobs, homes and services, waged by the City Council.

By Richard Venton

FIGHTING FUND

This week: £941

Quarter ends 31 January

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 London South West	1186		1200
2 London West	1761		2750
3 Scotland West	1909		3800
4 East Midlands	1458		3050
5 Humberside	1032		2150
6 Southern	2446		5450
7 London East	1403		3350
8 London South East	916		2200
9 Eastern	1322		3450
10 Manchester/Lancs	1344		4200
11 West Midlands	1381		4500
12 South West	594		2150
13 Yorkshire	1552		5650
14 Northern	1178		4650
15 Wales West	625		2950
16 Scotland East	567		3100
17 Merseyside	1088		6850
18 Wales East	393		3050
Others	6729		5500
Total received	28882		70000

JUST ONE week to go. All efforts must now be made to reach our end of quarter target. All readers should be asked for donations to help us defend ourselves from the witch-hunt and to expand our paper.

If your Labour Party, ward, trade union branch, womens section or LPYS has passed a resolution against the witch-hunt then make sure you ask for a donation and also take around the "Defend Militant" petition. One supporter in Barking raised £15 at her ward with a petition this week and another collected £5.66 from local authority workers on a petition in Milton Keynes.

Take the petitions around your workplace, school or college. Ask everybody who buys the paper and others to give us cash. Loads of people will be prepared to part

with £5, £10, £30 or £50—if they're just asked.

If you have a Militant Public Meeting in your area, use the week beforehand as a special drive to raise cash with petitions—either to help reach our target for this quarter or to get the next one off to a great start. Supporters can bring donations they have collected to the meetings and hand them in at the collections. Show Labour's right-wing the enormous support for Militant with the biggest ever collection at public meetings.

Red Wedge

Make sure you're also having a party or other social event to finish the quarter with a bang. By the way anyone who hasn't yet redeemed their IOU outstanding from the Albert Hall Rally should aim to do so by the end of the month.

Lastly 'Red Wedge' concerts are taking place around

the country this week. If there is one in your area make sure all supporters are there with rattling tins, petitions and stickers. Supporters could make literally hundreds of pounds from extras and the sale of stickers outside the concerts. More "No Slave Labour on YTS" stickers as well as 'Support Liverpool's Socialist Council', 'Get Militant' and 'For a Socialist South Africa' are available from this office.

DONATIONS INCLUDE: £5.66 collected on petition sheet—taken around local authority workers in Milton Keynes, £50 from John Davidson, Harrow; £21.70 from Dave Beale, Chorley, £10 from Purbrook LPYS, collections at Portsmouth Poly Students Union £12, Birmingham social £41.85; Southampton social £48.77; A Beer £1.85; R Rantin £10; and M Wilde £21. Special thanks to Kate Birch (aged 9) who raised 61p selling cakes.

By Steve Morgan

Sell printworkers the truth



Print workers on the march against attempts to break their unions.

Photo: Militant

IF THERE is one section of the trade union movement you can guarantee will not get fair coverage of their dispute in the bosses' press, it has to be the printworkers.

As they enter a dispute on which their future depends, Militant has a key role in keeping them informed and giving them a strategy to win.

Sellers in London sold over 100 papers in Fleet Street last week. One Fleet Street casual worker was able to sell over 20 on the basis of the major articles. Even if you can't match those sales, selling at any local paper will yield results. It does not matter how anti-union your local rag's editorial policy may be, the workers will be interested in the truth.

Other star sales of the week include 30 at the launch party for the Red Wedge tour. Have you made plans to cover the concert in your area?

Militant sellers in Mansfield have been selling at their local bus garage for many months. Over a long period workers had bought an odd copy of the paper, so they decided to consolidate these occasional sales into regulars. A list was drawn up of everyone who had brought the paper and they were all approached. Over 30 papers are sold there every week now.

If you can match that, phone Militant's circulation department and we will report your sale. Help spread your ideas on how to spread Militant's ideas throughout the country!

By Dave Fryatt

Marxist Daily Building Fund

THOUGHT OF buying up shares in Westlands recently? You may have missed the boat (or is it plane) by now if you want to make a quick killing. Of course, even if you had managed to buy any, they wouldn't have provided you with any security.

What you can still do, however, is invest in your future by buying your share in the victory of socialism. You don't need to contact your broker or investment advisor. Just write your cheque out to the Marxist Daily

Building Fund and send it in straight away.

How much will it cost? If you have not given a week's wages to the Building Fund over the past year to help us clear the way for a Marxist Daily paper, do so now. If you have, why not send a tenner into help with our campaign in Liverpool. What better investment for the future.

By Dave Campbell



Coming later this month

ONLY 30p!

In the battle to prove what we really stand for, can any Militant supporter afford not to buy one? Order your copy now from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB.



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.

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.

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.

READ THE truth about the Merseyside labour movement in Mersey Militant. Individual subscriptions £7.50 for six months (26 issues) £3.75 for three months (13 issues) Bulk orders (minimum 10) 12p each including post and package. Send cheques to 2 Lower Breck Road, Liverpool 6.

WHAT IS the programme of the French Tories? How do Marxists in France approach the Socialist and Communist workers? The answer to these questions, plus plenty of information, facts, figures on the situation in France can be found in the Marxist paper L'Avance Socialiste. Number 11 out now. Subscriptions £10 (by cheque, for 12 issues). Send to L'Avance Socialiste, BP 70, 75662, Paris, Cedex 14, France.

'Jailed by Mugabe' Copies available from Zimbabwe Trade Unionists Defence Campaign, 28 Martello Street, London E8 3PE. 30p each. In March 1985, 14 trade unionists and socialists were detained while working to democratise the trade unions in Zimbabwe. Some were tortured, allegations were made that they were planning a general insurrection. Read how socialists responded to the state attack.

1986 MARKS the fiftieth anniversary of the Spanish civil war. The Spanish revolution was one of the most heroic struggles of the century. To mark the occasion we have brought together some existing material covering the momentous events of 1936 and the lessons of the disastrous policies of Popular Frontism pursued by Stalin. A ideal introduction for all socialists. Contains: The Spanish Revolution 1931-37 by Peter Taaffe and Ted Grant. The Lessons of Spain by Leon Trotsky. Marxist Study Guide. Popular Frontism. Articles covering French Popular Front 1936, The Spanish Revolution and Chile—Lessons of the Coup. Plus the Spanish Revolution by Alan Woods—C 90 tape. Available from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB. Only £2.25.

MILITANT Latin American Day School. Saturday 22 February. Kingsway Princetown College, Sidmouth Street WC1. Near Kings Cross Tube. Main session: Peter Taaffe, Chile on the brink. Commissions on Nicaragua, guerillaism and the armed struggle in Latin America, The Latin American revolution, The Popular Unity government in Chile 1970-73. Main session begins 10.30am. £1 (50 unemployed).

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.

LONDON LPYS conference Militant Readers Meeting. Hear Alan Woods, Mark French, Saturday 25 January 6.30pm. The Library Hall, North Peckham Civic Centre, Old Kent Road, SE15.

LONDON LPYS Anti racism rally Sunday 26 January 2pm. North Peckham Civic Centre, Old Kent Road SE15. Speakers include Tony Benn MP, Bernie Grant, Groce and Jarrett family support group speakers and Labour Party Young Socialists. Entrance free.

LONDON LPYS 1986 regional conference. Weekend of 25/26 January. Starts 10am. North Peckham Civic Centre, Old Kent Road, London SE15. Lively political discussions for 1½ days. Disco Saturday night 8-12pm. Speakers include Eric Heffer MP, Andy Bevan, Silentnight speakers, YTURC. Visitors tickets £2. All welcome.

Labour students must tap will to fight

STUDENTS ARE becoming politically orientated as the cuts in education, especially the further education sector, and declining living standards are taking their toll.

Last December's National Union of Students' conference reflected a polarisation along party political lines and an increasing groundswell of support for the labour movement.

But the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS), the largest group within the NUS leadership have failed to take advantage of this mood.

With an upsurge in labour movement activity and the protestations of students against the first round of cuts in 1981 NOLS was propelled into the leadership of the students' union at the 1982 conference.

The pressure of *Militant* supporters at the 1979 NOLS conference had forced the leaders to stand independently of the Left Alliance (an alliance of Liberals, 'Communists', and independents) for the first time in 1980.

At first this move was only nominal, with NOLS standing for just two positions. By 1982 NOLS was still reluctant to stand a majority slate on the grounds that to do so would offend Liberal and Tory students, but stood for seven positions on the 19-seat executive. To the surprise of the NOLS leaders they won all seven seats overwhelmingly including the presidency, and the executive.

Broad alliance

But despite this obvious desire of students to forge links with the labour movement, NOLS continued with the policy of 'broad alliances' or pluralism.

It also led NOLS to formulate a false policy of lobbying Tory and Liberal MPs in the belief that the 'honourable gentlemen' would see reason and stop cutting education.

The recently announced government cuts in grants, social security and the slashing of 18,000 polytechnic places, show the futility of such an approach. The absence of a leadership of NUS prepared to organise an effective fightback has encouraged Thatcher and the Tories to see education as an easy target in the drive to cut public expenditure.

But students themselves have been prepared to defend themselves, particularly when the labour movement has been on the offensive. In November 1984 at the height of the miners' strike, students reacted angrily to attempts to introduce means-tested tuition fee charges, an increase in the parental contribution, and the abolition of the £205 minimum award. Despite only one week's notice, an estimated 250,000 students took part in a day of action on 21 November. During the following week 35,000 students marched through London and there were 180 arrests after police intervention.

Faced with this move-

Photo: Militant



Students demonstrate in London in 1983 against cuts. There is a huge potential for support for Labour students if they take an independent, socialist stand.

ment, and pressure from parents on back-bench Tory MPs, Lawson retreated on the proposal to introduce means-tested tuition fee charges. However the increase in the parental contribution and abolition of the minimum grant went ahead.

The main factor in this minor victory for students was the pressure brought to bear on the Tories by the miners' strike. They feared the possibility of a split in the Tory party at the height of the strike.

Unfortunately the NUS leadership failed to take the opportunity to break with the past policy of pluralism, and forge links with the Labour movement to force major concessions from the Tories. Instead NUS accepted the Tories' U-turn, proclaimed a major victory and resumed the policy of peaceful cohabitation. The massive movement which had erupted was demobilised into small regional demonstrations.

However, based on their own experience, and drawing conclusions from the miners' strike thousands of students now understand the need to pursue a determined struggle and to link with workers to force concessions from the Tories.

Discontent with NOLS strategy was reflected at the 1985 Easter NUS conference when Andy White, a Labour Party member and a member of the Left Alliance, defeated the NOLS candidate Lesley Smith in the election for *VP education*—NOLS' first election defeat in three years.

Miners' strike

NOLS is now faced with a movement which has been politicised by the miners' strike, and the events in South Africa, and which is prepared to struggle to stop any further attacks. The immediate response of the NOLS leaders has been to attempt to stamp out all disagreement in the organisation, by the most undemocratic and bureaucratic measures. However this approach has only heightened the contradictions inside NOLS and further weakened its base among students.

The December NUS conference brought out many of these processes. Student activists are looking for a clear lead. The Left Alliance, which has been seen by many as the major opposition force inside NUS, is in a process of decline, with the *Morning Star* faction look-

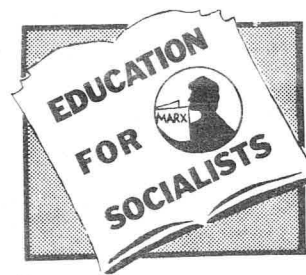
ing for an alliance with NOLS. The move to the left has pushed the idea of a 'broad alliance' into the background so that NUS is becoming clearly delineated on party political grounds.

The support for Derek Hatton, who topped the poll as guest speaker at the conference and support for the struggles in South Africa showed the increasing politicisation of students.

The latest government attacks contained in the Fowler review, will undoubtedly lead to an increase in activity among students which could even dwarf the events of November 1984. Such a movement will once again test out the ability of NOLS to lead students nationally.

Unless NOLS learns that student activity must be linked to the power of the labour movement, then they will suffer further defeats at the next NUS conference. It is the responsibility of *Militant* supporters in NOLS to intervene to ensure that NUS develops a fighting socialist leadership.

By Simon Kezic
(South East Wales
Students' Association
Area Convenor,
personal capacity)



Planning your discussion group

MARXISM IS an indispensable weapon for workers in the battle to change society. It gives a consistent theoretical explanation of the struggles in society, and enables the working out of a programme capable of giving real leadership.

In this column, which will become a regular feature of *Militant*, we will be suggesting topics for local Marxist Discussion Groups, together with suggestions for further reading. Our aim will be to provide a balance between issues of topical interest, historical and theoretical issues, and the international struggles of the working class.

As far as possible, we will suggest anniversaries and topics to enable the advance planning for local discussions, producing speakers notes on various subjects.

The Anglo-Irish agreement and perspectives for Northern Ireland.

The elections take place on 23 January. There is a danger, in the short term of a heightening of sectarian tensions, yet the Labour leaders in Britain continue their support for Thatcher's policy, while trade union leaders in Northern Ireland say nothing. What is a socialist approach? How can the question of the border be posed in a socialist manner?

Suggested reading: Ar-

ticles in *Militant* (especially 775 and 777) and *Militant Irish Monthly* (especially December/January). *Militant International Review* No 31 (due out any time) contains a major article by Peter Hadden on the agreement (80p). Northern Ireland—A Marxist Analysis (75p), Speakers notes—outline headings for a speech, questions for discussion, and reading suggestions—send an SAE.

What Militant stands for.

A new, updated edition of this explanation of *Militant's* programme is due out in early February. A discussion on it is vital as a preparation for taking the pamphlet to wider layers of workers.

Additional reading: *The Transitional Programme* by Trotsky 30p. *Capitalism at an Impasse* by Ted Grant 40p. *Capitalist Crisis: Tribune's alternative strategy or socialist plan* by Andrew Glyn £1.00.

The Spanish revolution.

1986 is the 50th anniversary of the election of the Popular Front government in Spain (February), and the outbreak of the civil war (July). Why not have two discussions—one now on the period up to and including the election of the Popular Front, and one in July, perhaps a public meeting on the Spanish Revolution and the civil war.

Suggested reading: *Lessons of Spain* (Trotsky) (30p), *The Spanish Revolution 1931-37* (Taaffe and Grant) (70p), *Marxist Study Guide on Popular Frontism* (30p), Cassette Tape (C-90) Alan Woods on the Spanish Revolution (£1.25). These are available together as a special pack for £2.25 post free.

Also *The Spanish Revolution 1931-39* by Trotsky. (£7.25).

Looking ahead... April/May is the 70th anniversary of the Dublin Rising 1916, and the execution of James Connolly... 2-9 May is the 60th anniversary of the General Strike.

Order books, tapes etc from World Socialist Books. Orders under £5 add 25 per cent for postage, £5-£10 add 10 per cent, over £10 post free.

Schools' decline in Coventry

I'M GLAD to see that Croxteth Community School has been saved by Liverpool Labour council. In Coventry a so-called Labour council is closing schools, like Bell Green and Binley Park.

These cuts and the teachers' strike mean that parents discuss politics at the school gate far more now.

My little girl brings home books from school dated 1958 and even before, which we have to sellotape up to keep them together. Sometimes I can't tell the difference between these books and books we've bought from jumble sales.

Overcrowded

The schools are overcrowded, with 45 or more to a class. If they put less children in the classrooms they'd have better education, and go into more skilled jobs when they leave school, like in the boom when there were apprenticeships going.

I'd like Margaret Thatcher or Prince Charles and Princess Di to send their kids to schools with classes this size!

I explain to parents who complain about the teachers' strikes that teachers are overworked and underpaid. How can they read properly under these conditions?

When my kids come home they tell me what they have had for dinner and they tell me literally everything—"ten chips, twenty peas and one sausage"! They spend about 41p per child on them.

For many kids this is their only meal. They are treated like animals, because the dinner ladies have to feed three hundred kids in one hour, so they're looking over the kids' shoulders to whip the plate away and get the next one a seat and a plate.

By Julie Smith
(Coventry South East LP,
Women's Section)

Only socialism can safeguard democratic rights



A reply to Chesterfield Labour Party's statement of aims

WITH THE participation of Tony Benn, Chesterfield Labour Party has adopted a programme, published in *Militant* last week, which they want to give the widest circulation throughout the labour movement. This is a praiseworthy effort, as there is not sufficient discussion and debate on the issues facing the working class in Britain and internationally and on the programme that must be adopted to serve their needs and interests. Therefore Chesterfield Labour Party has done the whole movement a service by adopting this programme.

However, while the programme is a step forward in comparison with the right wing of the movement, and even of the official left of the Labour Party in the past, there are many gaps and inconsistencies in the document. Therefore, TED GRANT, political editor of *Militant*, in a two-part article offers a criticism of the policy offered in certain parts of the document, while of course agreeing with many of the points.

The programme maintains: *that there are certain rights which should be won and maintained*, including *"the right to expect that any government in power will work for peace and justice"*. The working class might as well talk of the right to expect that pigs might fly.

The class struggle to which Chesterfield Labour Party commits itself arises because of the role of the ruling class in peace and war. Their aims are the monopoly of power and the ownership of the means of production and life. The Tories are working for "injustice" in the interests of their class. Their policies are dictated by the interests of capital and capitalism which they try and disguise as the "national interest".

Workers can expect only blood, toil, tears and sweat while the ruling class maintains itself in power. Power, profits, privileges, income and prestige of the ruling class determine the policy and actions of any capitalist government.

Intent to deceive

The pretence of the ruling classes in capitalist countries to be interested in freedom and democracy either at home or abroad is intended to deceive the workers and the middle class.

When there is a threat to their rule and their profits, they would oppose democracy and instal a military police dictatorship if they could get away with it.

The Tory government has introduced legislation limiting the rights of the trade unions. This is to weaken them and let the employers put the boot in against their employees. They want to reduce the real wages of the working class.

Through this legislation they gave the possibility for Eddie Shah

By Ted Grant

to smash the NGA at his firm in Warrington. Thus the rapacious multi-millionaire Murdoch is now prepared to try and smash the print unions. Maxwell is also using this legislation passed by the Tories.

The anti-trade union laws are an example of how far the ruling class is prepared to go in defence of their system. 'Democracy' and 'freedom' are very concrete things: the right to strike, organise, freedom to print, free speech and freedom of assembly were not given to the working class graciously by the ruling class, but were won by the class struggle of the labour and trade union movement.

These rights are threatened by the laws which the Tories have passed and the new ones they are preparing to introduce. In addition the Tories have taken advantage of the stupidity of the terrorists to militarise the police. The deprivation they have presided over because of the crisis of their system and the inevitability of protest movements and strikes, led them to prepare brutal repression as the attacks on the miners and mining areas showed when they were on strike.

The police are stock-piling riot shields, water cannon, rubber bullets, CS gas, armoured vehicles and other instruments of 'argument'.

The abolition of trade union rights was enforced at Cheltenham GCHQ. There is no measure which the Tories are not prepared to take in defence of profit and privilege. They only hesitate because of the inevitable resistance of the labour movement.

All the liberties which the population possess are guaranteed only by the power and strength of

the labour and trade union movement. 'The price of liberty is eternal vigilance'.

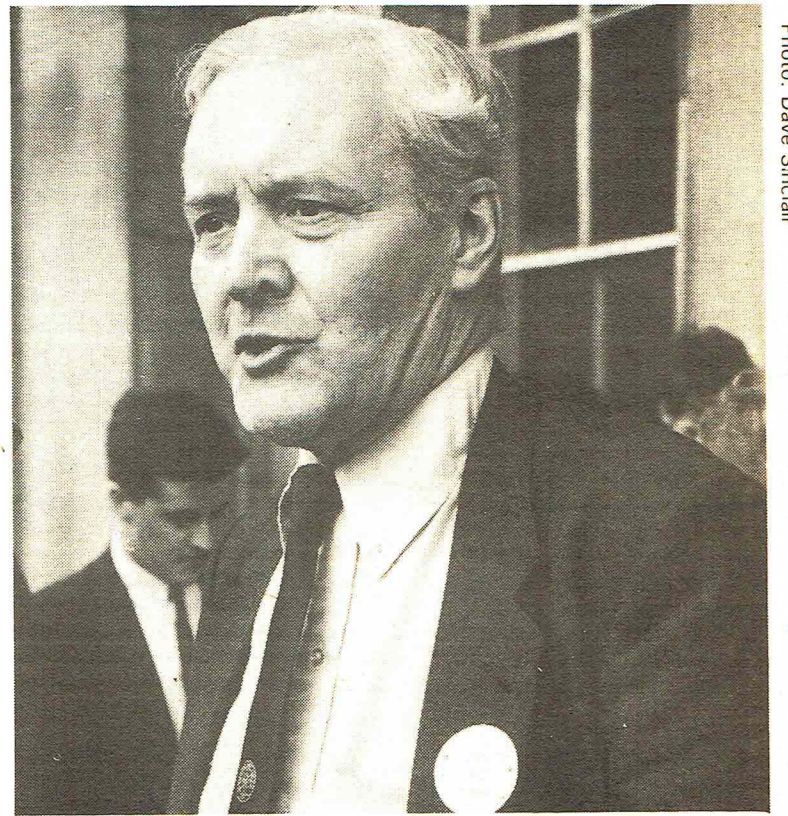
The rights, defended in the statement of Chesterfield Labour Party, are in reality elements of the new society of socialism. Democracy and freedom can only be guaranteed in a planned economy when industry and state are controlled by the working class. This will begin with an eight hour day, four day week with £120 minimum wage for all. It will rapidly pass to a six hour day, four hour week and so on. This would really provide a genuine basis for democracy, when workers in every section would have *time* to run industry and the state.

Four-day week

The mass of the population would participate in the accounting and control of society. That would be real democracy, not the position today, where as Trotsky said: "Everyone can say what they like, so long as the real decisions in society are taken by monopolies and big business." When this is threatened, they can, as all history shows, dispense with all the trappings of democracy.

Asia, Africa and Latin America demonstrate this tragically. There capitalist democracy has largely disappeared, because the contradictions caused by the crisis of world capitalism became unbearable and because of the poverty inflicted on the masses by the ruling class. The ruling class can switch from "democracy" to dictatorship as easily as they would transfer from a non-smoking to a smoking compartment on a plane or train so long as the decision would depend on them.

Capitalist democracy is only the cheapest and most efficient method



Tony Benn MP in Liverpool.

of deceiving the working class into believing that they decide the issues in society. Only the working class can guarantee and extend all the liberties wrested and won over centuries of struggle. The "equal rights for women and ethnic minorities"

can only be gained inside and outside the labour movement by the active workers standing firmly for these rights. They can never be guaranteed by capitalist laws, nor artificial rules which separate black workers from white workers.

Many times reformist leaders both of the right and the sincere lefts have criticised the Marxists in the Labour Party by maintaining that they are "impractical" and "unrealistic". But in reality it is only the Marxists that have their feet firmly on the ground. While fighting and supporting every struggle for another penny an hour or one minute off the day and improved conditions generally, at the same time Marxists consistently point out that under the system of capitalism it is not possible to maintain these rights indefinitely.

The ruling class pretend they stand for freedom while limiting the rights of the workers and trade unions. They pretend this is to benefit the individual workers. In reality it is to defend the monopoly capitalists against the workers. It is to benefit the Eddie Shahs and Murdochs, to reduce their workforce to serfs at their command. This applies to both white collar and blue collar workers. It applies also to small shopkeepers and small businesspeople, who big

business pretends to support and help.

On the pages of *Business News* and the *Financial Times*, the *Economist* and other financial papers sometimes they blurt out the crude calculations of the capitalists and the Tory government, which is nothing but the executive of the ruling class and big business and finance capital. In the editorial of *The Times Finance and Industry* section of 13 January they say: "... what this means is that a



Photo: John Harris (IFL) II

doubling of unemployment, other things being equal... will be associated with a drop in real wages of 10 per cent.

"... The problem is, how to cut real wages? The standard view, certainly in the Conservative Party, is that excessive growth in real wages is closely linked to the exercise of monopoly power by the unions..."

Thus the government pass anti-trade union laws to try and cripple the unions to make them tools of the employers and the government.

The rights which were gained by the labour movement were gained by the struggle of the working class in a period of the upswing of capitalism. When capitalism was in the downswing, they turned to the maniacs—Hitler, Mussolini, Franco and in Britain Mosley—for the purpose of trying to smash the workers' organisations.

Headlong growth

There was an economic upswing between 1950 and 1975 probably greater than any in the history of capitalism. This, for the workers in the developed countries though not in the undeveloped countries, meant that the ruling class could afford certain reforms in conditions, wages and living standards. This was on the basis of a headlong growth and development of capitalism. Now with capitalism in decline, the ruling class can no longer afford to give concessions to the workers. The system is in a state of crisis even when conditions of so-called "boom" are taking place.

These reforms were gained, but only within the limits of capitalism. The capitalists even tolerated measures of nationalisation because they thought that through the "mixed-economy" it would be possible to avert the slumps of the past. That illusion is maintained now only by Labour leaders of the right and unfortunately also the left.

Under conditions of capitalist decline the capitalists have been looting the state with denationalisation and cutting down the reforms which were gained by a seventy-five year struggle of the labour and trade union movement. British capitalism is under a condition of irreversible and terminal decline. The continuation of the system offers a nightmare prospect in front of the working class and the mass of the population. Far from granting new reforms the capitalists are already trying to take back the old reforms and will continue on those lines.

Even in France which is one third richer in industry and has one third more wealth than Britain, French capitalism was incapable of allowing a programme of reform as put forward by the Socialists and Communists even though they nationalised all the banks of France. Very rapidly the Socialists in France had to do a somersault in policy and carry out the opposite to the programme on which they won the elections.

The Socialist/Communist government attacked even more severely the conditions and the

rights of the workers than the previous Tory government had done. This followed a year of initial reforms. Not being able to maintain these on the basis of capitalism, they had to turn to counter-reforms. A similar process has taken place under a left socialist government in Greece and the right-wing Socialist governments in Spain and Sweden.

What this proves is that it is impossible partially and gradually to reform capitalism and prepare the way for socialism. Most of the left Labour leaders have had the untenable position that it would be possible over a period of 50 years of Labour governments to transform capitalism into socialism and achieve the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy. It was always utopian to believe so, but under conditions of capitalist crisis it is absolutely impossible.

In fact, none of the rights itemised in the Chesterfield statement are fully enforced today and were not under the Labour governments of the past.

Any government which accepts the basic system of society as it exists at the present time is compelled to obey the laws of capitalism. In addition, as in France and other countries, they face the sabotage and implacable hostility of big business, which uses their control of the economic resources of society for the purpose of forcing Labour governments to carry out Tory policies rather than carry out even the reformist policies which they are putting forward at the present time.

This is not because of the wickedness of the capitalist class. It is because of the nature of class society and the insane contradictions long ago predicted by Karl Marx, in which the system finds itself at the present time. Thus we get cuts in living standards because society can produce much more than was ever possible in the past. We must tighten our belts and eat less because too much food can be produced. They cut clothes production because they produce 'too much clothes'. Steel production which goes into six per cent of products has been slashed by almost 50 per cent. Contradictions of this type could take up the whole of the pages of *Militant*.

Insane logic

This is the economics of the madhouse, but it is the insane logic of capitalism which we are facing. Because he is caught in the constraints of accepting the basic economic domination of big business and finance capital, Neil Kinnock has refused to guarantee full employment in advance for a new Labour government. This is because he accepts the basis of capitalist society which can no longer give full employment and the right to work.

Of course, it might be said that in the paragraph in the statement on the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy the document recognised this. However, while the formula is a



Photo: Laurie Sparham (IFL) II

Trade unionists have always had to struggle for every right—GCHQ workers (left) fighting for the right to remain in trade unions. Farmworkers (right) commemorating the historic struggle of the Tolpuddle martyrs.

creative one and a good step forward, nevertheless Nye Bevan also put forward vaguely the demand for the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy. But the commanding heights of the economy include the 200 monopolies, banks and insurance companies (now even less with mergers, making the job of taking over the economy even easier) which control 80 per cent of the wealth of Britain.

The nationalisation of these 200 monopolies must be under workers control and management. This would involve a plan of production involving trade unions, the shop stewards committees, small business people and the entire population in the running of industry and the running of the state. Without the nationalisation of these 200 monopolies, it is not possible to control or to plan the economy, it is not possible to guarantee even the minimum reforms which are being put forward by the labour movement.

Any government which accepts the basic system of society as it exists at the present time is compelled to obey the laws of capitalism.

Despite Thatcher's phrasemongering about the importance of small business, in reality there has been an enormous concentration and centralisation of capital which was spoken of by Marx in the past and which has been enormously speeded up in the course of the last five years. Not a single right put forward in this document could be guaranteed for any length of time unless there is a complete transformation of society.

Capitalism works by taking the surplus created by the working class and ploughing it back into industry. In this way over a period of more than a century they developed industry, technique, science and the economy as a whole. Now the productive forces have grown beyond the limits of private property and the nation state the capitalists can no longer take the surplus extracted from the workers and plough it back into industry because already they can only use 70 per cent of productive capacity in slumps and 80 per cent of productive capacity in booms. What capitalist in his right senses is going to invest to create further capacity when he cannot sell the goods which he already produces?

In Britain under the Tories in reality they are not even investing in new machinery to make up for

the depreciation of the machinery which has taken place over the last ten or fifteen years. They are destroying steel plants, chemical plants, textile plants, shipping and shipbuilding facilities, which could have been used to enormous advantage with a plan of production.

In different ways both the right wing Labour leaders and the Tories have the same policy. The Tories have the policy of aggressively trying to bind the unions hand and foot in order to give the capitalists a free hand in destroying the gains of the workers. But the policy of right wing Labour leaders for a future Labour government is not much different. They are advocating an incomes policy, which means cutting the share of the workers while increasing the profits of the capitalists.

This is in the vain hope that the profits of the capitalists will be increased while a market is provided by state expenditure and that the capitalists will then invest. In the Labour government of 1974-79

where an incomes policy was in force, it did not result in a massive increase in investment as Healey and the Labour leaders believed.

The capitalists refused to invest because the market was further cut by the measures taken by the Labour government in reducing the workers' share by incomes policy. The wages for the workers did not go up in accordance with the increase in prices. The cut of state expenditure of £8,000 million introduced by the Labour government meant that that market was also cut and therefore, although their profits were increased the employers did not invest in industry, but on the contrary invested in everything else but industry.

They have turned capitalism into a gambling casino. The capitalists have become completely reactionary. They are pure parasites not investing more than a minimum of the surplus produced by the workers in industry while the greater part is invested in service industry, in tourism, in currency exchange speculation, stock exchange speculation, horse racing, land and antiques—everything but the development of industry and the production of real wealth in the form of machinery, buildings and consumer goods.

One glaring example is that there

are 500,000 building industry workers rotting on the dole while the demand for decent housing has never been greater. Bad and insanitary conditions, slum housing, inner-city decay and disease, a rotting infrastructure where roads, railways, sewers, bridges are decaying and yet the capitalists are not prepared even to invest in this necessary basis of capitalist society.

Many left trade union leaders and Labour leaders, together with the Stalinists, in spite of the experience of other countries where majority Labour governments have been established refuse to recognise the realities of the situation. They will not face the facts. A Labour government not taking over the 200 monopolies would inevitably become an instrument of big business for the purpose of holding down the wages and conditions of the workers.

The Chesterfield document calls for "The right to useful and satisfying work," but it would be impossible to abolish or even ameliorate unemployment except for a very temporary period, possibly the first 12 to 16 months. Then the crisis would catch up with them and unemployment would increase enormously. Unfortunately in the five years of the last Labour government, unemployment doubled, from 750,000 to one and a half million.

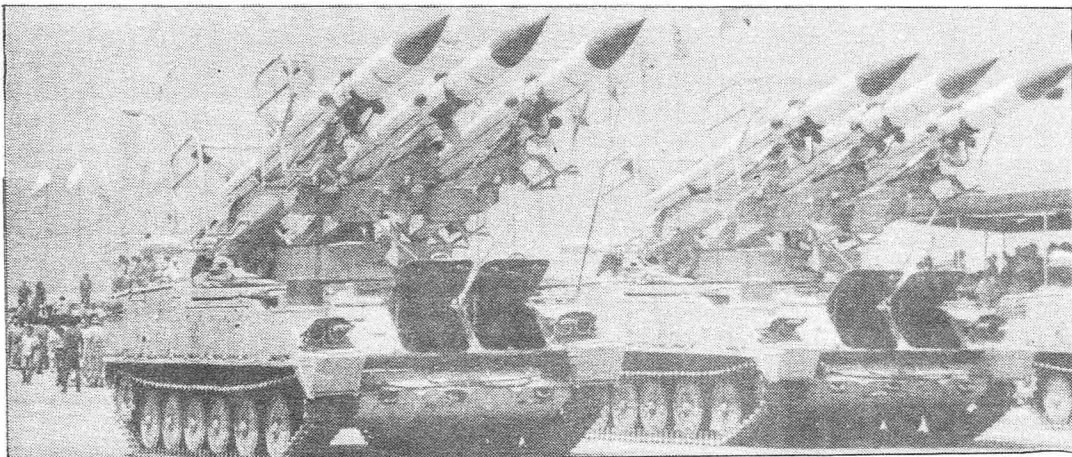
Thatcher of course has more than doubled it again.

No government which is not prepared to tackle this problem can hope to change the economic situation or to give all workers a job to which they should have an inalienable right as the Chesterfield document says. Such a right is impossible under capitalism. It is not only under Tory governments that unemployment has increased. It has increased in Greece, Spain, France, Greece and Sweden—all countries which have majorities and in most cases big majorities for the socialist parties.

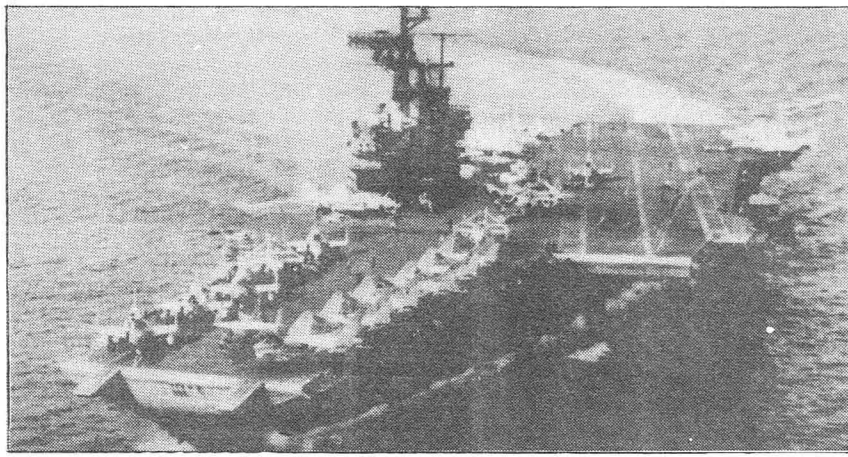
The only way to deal with this problem is to understand its root causes and convince the working class of these causes. It is necessary to put forward a whole series of demands such as the TUC has formally adopted for a 32-hour week, a minimum wage and the other demands carried by Labour Party conference and the trade unions, but not a single reform can be maintained for any length of time so long as capitalism has control of the economic basis of society.

(To be continued next week)

Libya, Bangladesh



Huge arms spending has given Libya a powerful defence system.

US aircraft carrier *Coral Sea* in the Mediterranean.

Why Reagan attacks Gaddafi

US BATTLESHIPS and aircraft carriers have been moving threateningly into Libyan waters as part of Reagan's 'retaliation' moves after the terror attacks at Rome and Vienna airports.

The American government has already announced the stepping up of economic sanctions against Libya. By 1 February all US citizens in the country have been ordered to leave on pain of criminal prosecution. Many are quitting reluctantly given the high wages they enjoy. But US imperialism found little backing for sanctions and even less for military action from the capitalist powers of the EEC.

Many countries have huge deals with Libya, still rich from its oil production. But Common Market leaders fear that Reagan's constant threats of attacks could push Libya openly into the arms of the USSR.

Reagan has accused Li-

By Roger Shriver

byan dictator Colonel Gaddafi of being responsible for the attacks in Rome and Vienna; he described Gaddafi as "evil" and "flaky" (crazy). Marxists oppose terrorist actions like those at the airports. The slaughter of innocent travellers does not aid the struggle of the Palestinians in whose name it was carried out; on the contrary it aids reaction. By casting the victims of repression in a bloody role it allows US imperialism and its allies in the Middle East area to justify even bloodier 'revenge'.

Militant has always stressed the importance of fighting

for the rights of the Palestinian people through mobilising the mass movement on the West Bank and Gaza starting with strikes and protests and an appeal to the Israeli workers who are paying an ever increasing price for successive governments' military adventures.

But Reagan is not making any moral stand against terrorist activity. There are few dictators anywhere who can match the violence he aids and encourages. The US government backed Israeli bombing of Tunis last October when 70 civilians died.

In 1973 Israeli planes shot down a Libyan airliner in the desert killing about a hundred people. In 1981 Reagan sent a fleet into the Gulf of Sirte and shot down two Libyan planes. In 1983 US ships patrolled off Libya's coast to warn Gaddafi not to interfere with imperialist plans for the desperately poor capitalist state of Chad.

Gaddafi is a dictator. He is ruthless with any opposition. No effective trade unions are allowed in Libya and opponents can be gunned down at home or abroad. But Reagan can parley quite happily with megalomaniacs when they are "on the right side". Libya has infuriated the American ruling class because the regime's anti-imperialist rhetoric occasionally takes an active form.

Until 1969 Libya had one of the most right-wing rulers in the Arab world. King Idris was corrupt and pliant. The USA and Britain had massive oil interests together with airbases and garrisons. The oil wealth grew possibly



ten fold in the '60s, but the conditions of the people had not improved. When a military coup overthrew Idris in 1969 the new regime threw out US and British bases, and foreign owned banks were nationalised, starting a process of state takeovers.

The regime immediately doubled wages and started to use the oil wealth partly for a series of welfare schemes, which won the support and kept the loyalty of the Libyan masses. Much of the rest went to military spending to bolster influence for Libya. Gaddafi started intervening in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Oil riches

These moves worried the imperialist powers, raising social expectations in the area. In the 1970s oil shortage, Gaddafi and other oil producers forced prices up, transferring wealth for some years from the oil consuming advanced capitalist countries to the OPEC countries, mostly former third world areas whose agricultural imports had suffered from worsening terms of trade with the west. New industries started to be built, new roads etc appeared, even schemes to irrigate sections of the desert started to transform Libya.

Officially Libya is an Islamic state offering an alternative both to capitalism and to "godless communism". The armed forces have been able to use Libya's enormously increased resources to force massive changes through the mechanism of the state. The regime has been able to go well beyond the limits of capitalism which so restrict other North African and Arab countries.

What many western leaders fear is that there is no real basis or point of support for capitalism any more.

More and more industry has joined the banks in state

control. Libyan capitalism already weak in 1969, has virtually disappeared. Only a small section of foreign oil remains privately owned. Gaddafi uses socialist phraseology to win support. But the working class is still very much a minority in Libya. The country has imported foreign skilled workers in oil and other industries. At the same time, the country's resources, excluding oil, are still too small to allow an easy transformation of society on a national basis.

There is no check on the actions of the regime. Repression of opponents is widespread and savage, including public executions and cloak and dagger assassinations. The government is violently nationalist, threatening the small Jewish community as "inevitably Zionist", expelling Egyptian and Tunisian workers because of Gaddafi's conflicts with their rulers.

The Libyan government's present actions and the potential for further radicalisation, though, worry the US government and other capitalist powers. What effect would an American attack have? Would it crush Gaddafi or just push Libya into the Soviet Union's arms?

Reagan possibly hopes that his job will be made easier by Libya's growing economic problems. The OPEC countries benefitted from the oil shortages of the mid 70's but the economic crisis they helped to precipitate has now boomeranged on them. The price of oil has slumped as recession bites into demand; the oil shortage has become a glut. Many economic experts fear a further price drop in the next period. Libya's oil revenues have halved since 1982.

Food shortages are reported in the shops while government spending on arms (25 per cent of the budget) grows. US strategists

hope that withdrawal of American oil experts will harm the economy even though Libya is offering large inducements for replacements.

There have also been press reports of increased divisions in the army; reports of assassinations and coup attempts and of Gaddafi's hand picked revolutionary committee members being sent in to monitor the performance of leading officers.

Without a doubt growing problems will increase the possibility of action against Gaddafi. But US imperialism will have enormous problems if it tries to keep alive capitalism, which now has little or no basis in Libya, particularly in a period of crisis like this.

Working class

Although much of the opposition to Gaddafi, both internally and in exile, is reactionary, the working class has grown with modernisation. Student demands for an end to repression reflect the changed reality of Libya. The distortions of Gaddafi's rule are based on the delay of workers' revolution particularly in the advanced capitalist countries with the material basis for a higher development of society particularly a large powerful working class.

For all the objections to Gaddafi's rule, workers will condemn any attacks by US imperialism. US airpower cannot blast out the demand for socialist solutions to the problems capitalism created in the area. Workers and the poor of North Africa and the Middle East will not always be restrained by the fetters of nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism.

The ideas of class unity and a fight for a socialist federation will gain an echo in this war-ravaged area. That would mean the end for US imperialism and for Gaddafi's dictatorship.



Reagan faces a dilemma.

Dictator's 'democracy'

THE MILITARY dictator of Bangladesh, General Ershad has copied his brother in arms Pakistan's General Zia in introducing a fake form of 'democracy'.

He has promised elections by April. But he won't resign beforehand, and there is no guarantee of ending martial law afterwards. Ershad has called elections before and gone back on his word. He did precisely that last April.

The leader of the biggest middle class opposition group, the Awami League has threatened to boycott the elections as "military rule under the guise of democracy". They say they "would rather fight on the streets" than go into those polls.

Ershad has only gone this far because of intensive pressure particularly from the working class which has retained its strength despite the dictatorship. There has recently been a strike by 200,000 jute mill workers and 40,000 government professional workers. Such militancy pressurised the regime to allow some trade union activities such as fighting for a 650 tak daily minimum wage (about £1). Workers cannot forget that

he promised a minimum wage in 1984 to stop a threatened strike. They never received the concession.

Ershad had last year imposed a 10 month 'ban' on politics. It ended on 31 December. On 5 January opposition parties called a dawn to noon general strike which got huge support. There was considerable rioting and more than 600 people including children were arrested to stop picketing.

Recent history proves that nothing short of the power of the working class leading the impoverished masses can smash the dictatorship for good.

Unfortunately the workers' organisations such as those connected with the Communist Party have failed to realise this and to try to mobilise that power consistently and politically. This allowed Ershad to toss the opposition to one side last year. In the interim the dictator has tried to build his own personal power base and his own party.

All these manoeuvres will come to nothing though, when the mass movement translates its militancy into a clear political attack on dictatorship and capitalism.

Quick rise in profits, quick fall in jobs

CAPITALISM HAS become a huge obstacle to the development of society. The idea of a Channel Tunnel, which in principle could add enormously to the wealth of Britain and France could turn into a nightmare of unemployment, both in the short and long term, for workers in Kent and Northern France.

In the article below Martin Cock looks at the proposals put forward. The labour movement has a responsibility to fight for a socialist alternative transport policy which puts the interests of working class people above those of a handful of shareholders.

THE IDEA of a fixed link, beneath the English Channel, has been around for almost 200 years.

A number of projects have begun and then stopped. In the most recent in 1979, no more than a few dozen yards were dug.

As soon as the Tories put out tenders in 1985, big business rushed forward with ideas, including many of Britain's largest firms. Amongst those backing just one of the four proposals are: Taylor Woodrow, Wimpey Construction, ICI Fibres, Trafalgar House, Tarmac, Costain, Balfour Beatty, Midland Bank, National Westminster Bank, Barclays Bank, Sea Containers, British Steel, British Telecom and British Shipbuilders.

Rate of return

The four consortiums competing with each other have each spent millions on advertising, surveys, glossy brochures and plans. They can see the possible profits. A survey by stockbrokers Phillips and Drew thinks: "to provide an adequate return on venture capital... would involve... a trading profit of over £800 million per annum for the Channel Tunnel Group's scheme and around £1,800 million for the Euroroute Scheme".

The proposed spending of all four schemes is over £2.5 billion, two of them well over £5 billion. Despite a 33 per cent slump in investment in Britain's manufacturing industry since 1979, until investment no longer covers depreciation, huge sums can still be spent on a white elephant.

Capitalism believes desperately needed hospitals, schools, repairs of roads and sewers etc, are not 'possible'. But James Sherwood, Chairman of Sea Containers (a major backer of the 'Channel Expressway' proposal) says: "The banks are falling over themselves to back up this project. For once, they have a project in two stable economies guaranteed a decent rate of return."

But even these spending estimates are bound to be underestimates. Similar massive schemes have, almost without exception, cost substantially more than originally envisaged. The Thames Barrier, projected at £250 million, cost more than £400 million.

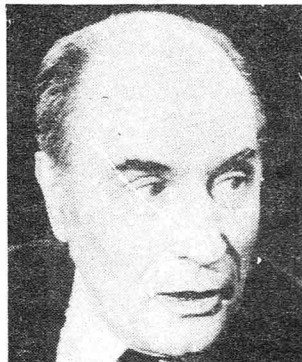
If history repeats itself, governments in Britain and France would be forced to use public money to prop up

a failed private 'enterprise' adding to the burden of a diseased capitalist system.

Ramsgate, Dover and Folkestone, as well as other ports such as Felixstowe and Newhaven depend on the sea trade like Liverpool did in the past. Their removal would be a disaster, particularly for Dover, where 12,000 people work in the harbour. Coupled with the threatened closure of the nearby Kent coalfield, it would push up unemployment, already at 24 per cent in Thanet.

The north of France faces similar problems, with an unemployment rate already over 20 per cent in a traditional, highly industrialised area, decimated by lack of investment and the 're-modernisation' policies of Mitterrand.

None of the consortiums have been prepared to guarantee redundant ferry and harbour workers new jobs on construction. The labour will be brought into the area and then jobs will



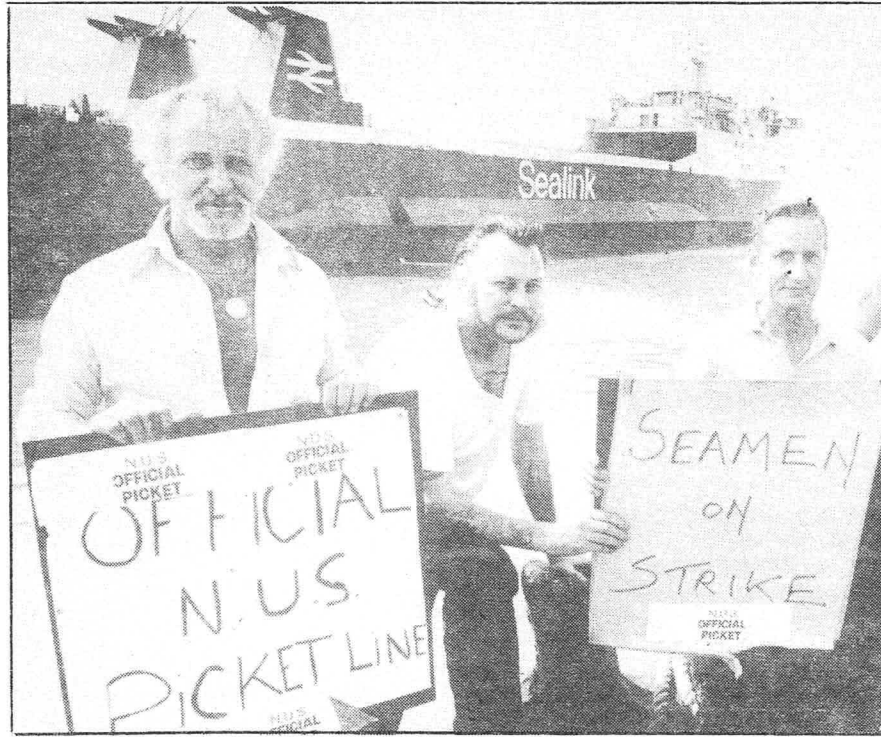
President Mitterrand.

only be temporary, as the scheme finishes in six or seven years. No figures have been given for the jobs likely to be created by construction and subsidiary and supply industries. The total number of jobs could well be considerably less than those lost.

In the mistaken belief that it would create thousands of jobs and regenerate steel and allied industries, many unions have taken a strong position of support. The rail unions nationally support the schemes and propose a rail only tunnel, hoping it will regenerate British Rail.

But the main rail-only link, the Channel Tunnel Group proposals, would mean trains passing through custom controls etc at London straight to Paris. This profitable London to Folkestone line would become a target for privatisation, the first step in the dismantling of BR.

None of the four consortiums have made any commitment to maintaining trade union rights in the



French and British workers must unite to save jobs



Ferry workers jobs have been at risk for years. The bosses of Sealink and other ferry owners will try to cut even further into employment.

Tunnel, although press reports suggest the bosses prefer a road tunnel, because of the threat of industrial action of a rail tunnel.

Internationalist alternative

The opposition to the fixed channel link can degenerate into nationalism however, based primarily on the propaganda of local Tories and Liberals. The National Front in Kent says the Channel Tunnel will let Europeans enter Britain more easily. Socialists and trade unionists must put forward a clear internationalist class alternative to this blatant xenophobia.

Nor can socialists ally themselves with the bosses' campaigns. Flexilink's adverts come from the major ferry companies to protect their profits. They have no common interests with the seamen and dockers etc. James Sherwood, head of Sealink has threatened to sack 2,500 workers if his European Expressway scheme is not adopted.

The principle of a cross-Channel link is not necessarily a bad idea. However, the

labour movement nationally must totally oppose all of the four bosses' schemes and their mad scramble for increased profits.

In a capitalist economy the Channel Tunnel would be of no benefit to the working class. However, under an internationally planned economy, with the workers having democratic control, we could examine the whole problem of transport between Britain and the Continent.

Union leaders in the rail, ferry, port and road haulage industry in Britain and France must work out a common socialist alternative. Socialists would welcome a scheme by a Labour government involving nationalised industries under democratic workers' control and management. This could be part of an integrated international transport policy and an overall socialist plan.

A Socialist Federation of Europe would ensure jobs could be created for workers who lose their jobs after the building of a Channel Tunnel, rather than simply throwing workers on the dole.

- ★ No to the Tories' plans for the tunnel.
- ★ Guaranteed jobs and retraining when the Channel Tunnel opens.
- ★ For a socialist international alternative worked out by trade unions and working class parties on both sides of the channel to safeguard existing jobs and create new ones.
- ★ For a reduction in working hours to 35 hours a week maximum in the affected marine industries with no loss of pay.
- ★ Nationalise the Channel Tunnel Group and all major contractors and subsidiaries under workers' control and management.
- ★ Renationalise all privatised industries such as Sealink.



Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report II)

Tories ignore drugs danger

LAST YEAR (1985) saw the highest number of drug seizures by customs staff and at the same time the highest number of registered drug addicts.

In peak times at Heathrow and Dover we only have the manpower now to stop one in 400 passengers coming through. With a tunnel or bridge, with the estimated increase of traffic, nobody knows what will happen.

At present it is almost accepted that we only catch smugglers who make mistakes. Without extra staff and increased training, the results would be catastrophic!

There have been no

government assurances that customs staff will be increased, and with their record it seems very unlikely that they will do anything to stop 'the evil tide of drugs' coming into this country.

No consultation has taken place with ordinary customs officers, who are almost without exception opposed to the tunnel.

What we need is a joint campaign with the seamen, dockers and all affected groups to work out a common policy of opposition to the 'fixed link'.

By Rachel North

Seamens' Union must protect jobs

MEMBERS OF the National Union of Seamen based on Dover and other cross-channel ports have already started to suffer from the prospect of a fixed link even before a decision has been announced.

Employees of the now privatised Sealink, have been threatened with instant loss of all jobs on their cross-channel ferries, if any scheme other than the one backed by their own bosses is chosen.

No-strike deal

The other ferry owners, Townsend Thoresen, kept their fleet in Dunkirk for three weeks over Christmas and New Year with 2,000 workers deliberately locked-out in an attempt to cow the NUS into submission, force a no-strike agreement and pave the way for a running

down of manning levels and conditions in anticipation of the fixed link.

Unfortunately, because of the failure of the local NUS leadership to provide an alternative, the seamen voted 3-2 to accept the 'new grievance procedures'. What is needed is an injection of new blood into the union's Port Committee to become a vigorous, campaigning body that defends workers' interests first rather than cooking up deals with the management.

If the proposals for a fixed link are to be successfully opposed, it will need a massive campaign, spearheaded by the NUS. If the fixed link become inevitable, however, pressure will have to be built up for guaranteed jobs for all seamen made redundant by the new cross-channel monopoly.

By Andy Roberts

Educated for the dole

Dear Comrades,
Recently I applied for a job as a research assistant in microbiology at a London college. I'm well qualified both academically and workwise (five years experience). Not a very common job, surely not many applicants, you say. The reply... Sorry, we've had over a hundred applicants, no interview.

As they say, we have the best educated dole queue in

Europe! I've been unemployed for two and a half years. I'm labelled 'long term unemployed'. Personally, I'd call it 'terminally unemployed'. You feel depressed all the time.

Messrs Kinnock and co tell us we will have to wait for socialism. Well Neil, here's a message from one of the seven million below the poverty line: We can't wait for socialism, we need it

If the Labour Party nationally took up Liverpool's stand, stood on the policies put forward every week in *Militant*, we would have a massive victory at the next election and be able to nationalise the top 200 monopolies and use the wealth of society properly.

Yours fraternally
AJ Hammond
Kent
A moaning minnie
(personal capacity)

Battle of Westland

Dear Militant,

Over recent weeks the corruption which abounds in the multi-nationals and the way in which the bosses use their puppets in parliament has been exposed in the farcical scenes at Westland Helicopters.

Michael Heseltine and Leon Brittan have consciously put their very lucrative political careers on the line, and for what? Neither minister has even mentioned the workforce, and entered into an obscure political row over an issue which is of no great concern to anyone bar a few wealthy shareholders and the old boy network of big business.

Both ministers must be feeling the benefits

of very generous expense accounts and have strong tips about future vacancies on various boards of directors. Why else would they bring their cabinet positions into doubt by causing a great deal of embarrassment for Mrs Thatcher?

While the great technological wizardry of the modern era transmit reports of such political skulduggery around the globe, the workers at Westland continue putting nut to bolt knowing full well that nothing will change.

Yours fraternally
Jon Heddon
East Surrey LPYS

Fight gas sell-off

Dear Comrades,

1985 saw many 'incentives', including the bonanza BT sale. More of the same is on offer this year.

Perhaps JMB can make a comeback in 1986 and invest in the next great capitalist 'incentive' scheme—the cheap sell-off of gas.

As a NALGO member, where around 40,000 of my brothers and sisters will be affected by the Tories butchery, I am delighted to see a joint NALGO-Labour Party campaign with a series of rallies being launched against this.

However, up to date the role of the respective leaderships has been hardly inspiring. The Tories won't be stopped with words, the only language they understand is a united struggle.

The diversity of the union membership, the way it is spread out, the lack of any real national campaign in the past, shows the size of the task. Every member has to be reached, workplace meetings etc have to take place to gear up for action.

The joint campaign already exposes weaknesses; Kinnock and co are saying, 'Let's fight the gas sell off but if the campaign falls down we won't do anything to correct the position if we get in government'.

This means that the thousands of workers who will be kicked onto the dole as the capitalist vermin chew the industry to bits for the sake of quick profits will remain out of work. Also, the campaign is very late, almost an excuse for no idea how to organise. You get the impression that neither leaders really want to do anything anyway.

For NALGO this quite clearly raises the flag of affiliation to the Labour Party. If NALGO had already done this then pressure, along with the whole of the public sector, could have been exerted internally. A union with 750,000 members is not to be taken lightly.

The NALGO EC have to give a lead in preparing the membership for heavy battles. They must come out in favour of affiliation to the Labour Party. The miners and Liverpool City Council have shown the way. It's time to fight.

Yours fraternally
Gary Nightingale
Kent County NALGO
(Personal capacity)

Letters

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

Tories' incentive to work

Dear Comrades,

I came across an article in the *Sunday People* by John Smith which describes the lives of working people in Singapore. This is a country that Thatcher held up as a model for Britain to follow when she visited the area.

This journalist visited Singapore and described the conditions there: "One thing which impressed me about the people of Singapore is that they are a hard working crowd. They have to be. There is no dole or welfare system. Lose your job and you have to find another one quickly because the

unemployed get no hand-outs from a government headed by strongman Prime Minister Lee-Kuan-Yew.

"The result is that people are seldom out of work for long...Willingness to accept the most menial jobs in order to survive means that Singapore has an unemployment rate of only four per cent."

If this is what Thatcher and the ruling class has got in store for us then forward to socialism.

Yours fraternally
L Bleasdale
Liverpool 4

Sounds familiar

Dear Comrades,

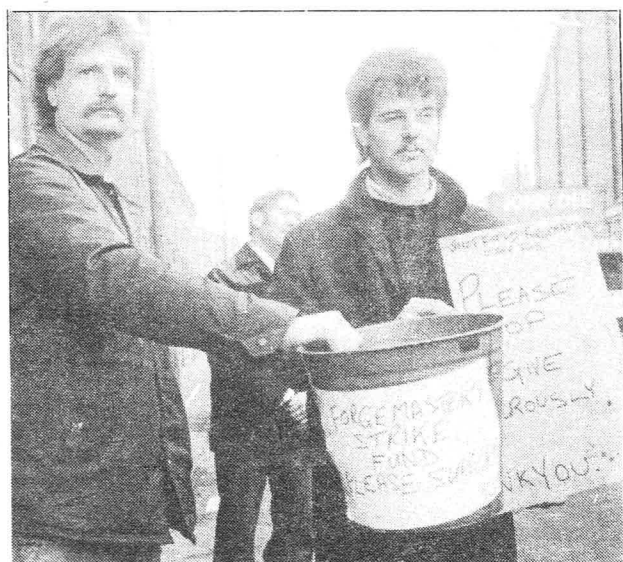
Despite the almost prohibitive cost, I managed to see the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of "Nicholas Nickleby" in Stratford. It seems that things have not changed much since the novel was written.

Nicholas applies for a job as a secretary to an MP. When he arrives the MP's constituents are haranguing their MP for not carrying

out their wishes and leave in disgust at his refusal to resign!

Nicholas is told the endless list of duties he would have to fulfil as secretary to the MP but is shown the door when he asks the MP: "...While I'll be doing all this, what will you be doing?" "Get out...you charist!" the MP replies. Unfortunately, Dickens does not raise mandatory reselection as an answer.

Yours fraternally
Paul Sherry
Coventry



Forgemasters picket line.

Praise for Pompey

Dear Comrades,

I am not a supporter of the *Militant*. But I would like to thank the militants at Portsmouth Poly for their help in organising support and fundraising for the Sheffield Forgemasters strike.

For people who are so far away from the dispute to show the support they did for their comrades in Shef-

field is a lesson to those in the labour movement who are sitting on their backsides and letting the steelworkers fight alone.

Thanks
Richard Haliatt
Sheffield
Student at Portsmouth Poly, son of a striking steelworker

Hypocrisy of hatchet journalists



Photo: Dave Sinclair

Journalists have spent months and thousands of pounds in Liverpool in an attempt to discredit the city council. All the council is really guilty of is providing decent homes

Dear Comrades,

The two *World in Action* journalists responsible for interrogating Derek Hatton made great play of Derek's alleged 'misuse' of council vehicles.

These journalists hired a car from the Manchester branch of the biggest British car rental firm.

Whilst the journalists were in the office they declared jokingly that their mission was to make a programme that would get them "On the chimes of News at Ten".

Working for this firm, what is really scandalous is that although it is not specifically anti-trade union, it nevertheless treats the workers shamefully with a 50 hour working week for a take home pay of £80 to £90, with no recognised lunch hour and poor

conditions.

The hire of the car to do the demolition job on Derek would probably surpass most workers' monthly wage packets. Granada TV, the Labour Party, NUPE and even the Transport and General Workers Union have national accounts with this company.

Is it all right for two journalists, presumably union members to hire an expensive car from a non-union firm, rather than a council deputy leader to legitimately go about his work?

Perhaps *World in Action* will do a documentary on the appalling wages and conditions in the car rental industry and grill our managing director.

From a car-hire firm employee
Manchester



Mick Brooks.

Commodity markets explained

Dear Comrades,

Just a few words to congratulate Mick Brooks on his recent article dealing with the question of commodity markets. The de-mystification of buffer-stock and speculation constitutes a major addition to human knowledge (mine at least).

Yours fraternally
Sean Sweeney
Deptford

LEFT and RIGHT

Wassitcalled?

GORDON WILSON, SNP member of parliament for Dundee East recently raised in the house what he described as a "crucial matter" for debate: "...the problem of Gart—er." It seems the matter was so 'crucial' that the name of the steelmill escaped him.

Part-time butcher

WILL THE imminent closures in the steel industry affect the likes of the Chairman of the British Steel Corporation? Bob Scholey's salary has risen steadily from £28,000 in 1974 to £60,000 in 1985. What's more since 1983 it's only been a part-time job.

Fleet Street crisis...

Why journalists must support printers against Murdoch

THE BATTLE of Wapping provides the best chance yet for Fleet Street print unions to forge unbreakable links and repel the onslaught by millionaire newspaper proprietors.

But, as SOGAT and the NGA prepare to take action, the National Union of Journalists seem in danger of letting this opportunity slip away.

NUJ General Secretary Harry Conroy, while continuing to discuss with the other print unions a joint approach, has said he would be willing to enter separate negotiations with Murdoch if concessions were offered.

That would be a great mistake. Murdoch, owner of News International, can see the chance to further isolate the NUJ from the other print unions.

He is banking on journalists' traditional animosity to "uppity production workers" who some regard as having offered little help in past disputes between journalists and management.

This long-standing bitterness has led to disastrous actions by the NUJ and NGA in the provinces, from which only the newspaper owners have benefitted.

Murdoch can see the chance to push through his union-bashing plans at Wapping using these traditional divisions. He has left the door to the negotiating room open to the NUJ and the electricians' union while dismissing appeals from the NGA and SOGAT.

Some journalists may feel that the Wapping dispute has little to do with them—and that Murdoch has his long-term interests at heart.

Some have voiced anger at what they see as attempts by other print unions to poach their jobs.

On both counts, these journalists are misguided. Murdoch wishes to sweep away an entire section of the print workforce and destroy hard-won union rights.

Strategy

He does not wish to see an agreement like the one set up by the NUJ and NGA in the provinces. And a glance at his proposals for the mythical *London Post* clearly shows how little Murdoch thinks of his journalists. Murdoch demands:

- A no-strike deal, legally binding;
- No closed shop;
- Management right to confirm union officials;
- Total job flexibility;
- Complete management control of employment.

If he succeeds in smashing the power of the NGA and SOGAT, the NUJ will be in the front line of the production process, blindfolded and unarmed.

The print struggles in the United States indicate what will happen if the NUJ stand aside now. There, the employers ruthlessly pursued the installation of new technology systems.

In many of the battles, the journalists took no action—and saw the destruction of collective organisation, including their union, the

By a Fleet Street
NUJ member

Newspaper Guild.

Too late, the print unions sought to amalgamate—but the bosses had cut jobs and smashed effective organisation in the short-term.

In Britain, the groundwork for unity has already been prepared in the provinces.

The NUJ and NGA provincial newspapers' agreement seeks to protect union rights and jobs. There will be no poaching.

The far-sighted agreement is based on these principles:

1. NUJ/NGA linking arrangement in any office where direct input new technology is introduced.



Journalists' union general secretary Harry Conroy talking to *Mirror* boss Robert Maxwell at the TUC. Conroy has said he would be willing to separately negotiate with Murdoch. Journalists will pay a high price later if they stand by while the other print unions are smashed.

2. Both unions committed to maintain and increase trade union membership.

3. No compulsory redundancy with introduction of new technology.

4. Access to new technology confined to trade unionists.

5. No wage cuts, no deterioration in conditions, wages "levelled up" when possible.

6. Joint chapels set up in new tech areas.

This should be the basis for joint action by the Fleet Street print unions, a way forward which benefits workers.

Fleet Street journalists may tend at times to see themselves as elite professionals not subject to the same economic laws of capitalism as other print workers.

But if they allow Murdoch to carry through his plans—and other proprietors to follow his lead—they will learn a bitter lesson.

Murdoch once promised to make his journalists the best paid in Fleet Street, with the best conditions. He has not done so—but he has built his media empire from their unpaid labour.



The new News International plant at Wapping near Tower Bridge. It has been designed as a fortress to house a massive scab print operation.

Photos: Dave Sinclair

End divisions in *The People*

NOW THAT Murdoch has thrown down the gauntlet by opening his press at Wapping the unions have to respond in a united way.

However, even in the last couple of weeks we have seen the old divisions persisting and a disastrous example of misleadership in a Fleet Street dispute.

When 29 workers at the *Sunday People* were sacked the SOGAT '82 clerical branch came out on strike.

Here was an ideal opportunity to draw the Maxwell workers into the battle looming with News International. But the SOGAT leadership refused to make it official and ordered them back to work.

Casuals (members of Lon-

don Central SOGAT '82 branch) and members of SOGAT '82 machine branch (the old NATSOPA before amalgamation with SOGAT) who refused to cross the picket lines were then also sacked.

By last weekend all the workers were reinstated except the FOC and Deputy FOC of the Machine Branch, a blatant act of victimisation by Maxwell.

However, when machine branch members set up picket lines on Saturday they were crossed by members of SOGAT clerical who had originally been on strike!

Such actions seriously weaken future battles, causing mistrust and ill feeling. While this was going on the SOGAT leaders agreed that all copies of the *Sunday Peo-*

ple should be printed in Manchester! It is not surprising that there is cynicism amongst a layer of activists.

But the battle won't wait—success for the Tory press barons depends on breaking the unions. Their orchestrated campaign is not being countered in action.

Fleet Street has a tradition of militancy and it is vital that steps are taken immediately to inform and involve the membership of all the unions.

The strike ballot has shown huge support for action. Rank and file print workers have demanded all-out action throughout Fleet Street. That is the way to defend jobs and pay.

By Dave Webb

Scottish print threat

OVER THE past few months there has been intensive activities in a factory sited in one of Glasgow's run down inner city areas. Rupert Murdoch's *Sun* print centre, acquired several years ago, is being prepared for operational readiness.

It is a facsimile printing plant initially designed to print the *Sun* for Scotland. Most of the recent work seems to be in the field of security to protect it against some outside threat.

This ties in with the experience of people interviewed for the jobs. Pat Hanlon, a local EETPU official, is involved in the recruitment of workers. The application forms, bearing his name, go through him. He sits in on some of the interviews conducted by an agency in hotels in the city and at the plant.

Questions asked covered subjects such as previous

union history, attitude to flexible working practices, and willingness or otherwise to be driven through picket lines in protected vehicles. Membership of the EETPU is posed as being a necessary condition of employment.

Scabs

All the signs point to the assembly of a single union scab workforce designed to cut across current trade union agreements in the print industry.

One printing machine engineer recruited left when he was told he was being sent on a course to learn to make plates for the printing machines. Other applicants have been told they will be expected to do everything, sweep the floors, work the machines, load lorries etc.

Local print workers in the *Daily Record/Sunday Mail* and *Glasgow Herald/Evening Times* plants view the

developments anxiously and are determined to halt Murdoch's plans.

The *Sun* has not made a big impact in Scotland. It sells about 280,000 against the *Daily Record's* 700,000. It is a totally English paper.

But if it was printed up here, with a Scottish slant it could begin to hit the *Record*. The *Record's* owner, Robert Maxwell has just taken over personal running of the Scottish operation, perhaps an indicator of his concern.

Despite denials he will be looking for job cuts and cost savings.

The task for Scottish print workers must be to unite with the struggle in Fleet Street, despite past differences, in order to protect their own jobs, conditions and union organisation.

By Ronnie Stevenson

Civil and Public Services Association conference

Civil service pay—no Tory way

ON THURSDAY 23 January CPSA, the Civil Service union will be meeting in London to discuss the recommendation of Alistair Graham and the right wing NEC that the members should accept the Tories' proposals for a long term pay system for the Civil Service.

These proposals do not meet the needs of low paid Civil Servants, who have seen their standard of living cut by 25-30 per cent over the last five years.

The Tories' proposals are rigged to ensure the perpetuation of that low pay.

They would ensure that Civil Servants' pay was com-

By Steve Dunk
Revenue Section,
personal capacity)

pared only with that of other low paid workers.

They positively prevent the possibility of recovering the money lost over the last five years and go on to offer the sop of arbitration. If this was ever used it would

almost certainly be set aside, judging by the limitations with which it is surrounded.

If the system were accepted it would leave the government with almost complete freedom to do what it wished whilst protected from criticism by the façade of an agreement with the unions.

Claim

The urgent need of Civil Servants is for a pay settlement which tackles the question of low pay, which starts to recoup the losses of the past 5 years and which pro-

vides a decent standard of living.

The Broad Left's propose a pay claim of:

£104 p.w. minimum wage;
Abolition of incremental scales, £20 p.w. if that is better;

35 hour week;
6 weeks annual leave for all.

This will not however be achieved without a strong and decisive CPSA leadership which believes in the membership, nor without unity amongst the Civil Service unions.

Alistair Graham's support for the government's proposals on pay, like his sup-

port for the anti-democratic proposals for a merger with the SCPS, rejected by Conference 1985, show how out of touch he has become with the views of the membership.

Strike votes

He claims CPSA has never come near reaching a majority vote for all out strike action, ignoring the fact that it did so in 1981. Both he and the right wing NEC of the time turned their backs on that membership decision.

Militant supporters will

argue for the rejection of the government offer and for a pay claim and strategy which meets the members' needs. We are sure the conference will support that position.

In those circumstances Graham will yet again have lost a major policy position to which he has allied himself.

Since that has been the case with every major policy position he has supported, Militant supporters say he should now resign as General Secretary, and make way for a G.S. who will support union policy and defend the members' interests.

Right wing's bitter split

POWER AND responsibility seem to affect the National Executive Committee of the Civil and Public Services Association in a very strange way. For the second time in two years the ruling group on the NEC has split.

In November 1984 it was the Broad Left, in December 1985 it was the turn of the right-wing.

Letters written at the end of December from Kate Losinska and Marion Chambers and replies by Peter Desmond-Thomas reveal glimpses of life within the "moderate" group of CPSA which paint it as a cross between Soap and The Texas Chainsaw Massacre.

Or, as Peter Desmond Thomas (now ex-immoderate) says: "...the world of Kafka's Castle, where the goal posts are constantly moved."

"...the only crime that I seem to be guilty of is winning a vote!" and: "there has not been a fair 'trial', neither has the business of expulsion been dealt with democratically...I, like you, am a member of an organisation, yet as far as I am aware we have no constitution, no laid out *ting our officers.*" (my emphasis BB)

The crisis in the moderate camp is highlighted by the number of members voting on their candidate—11 votes to 9. This section of the membership has about 20,000 workers.

The Broad Left numbers its supporters in hundreds and decisions are taken at its National Conference, attendance at which can be upwards of 250 and where all officers, nominees and decisions are decided openly and democratically.

In the course of this letter Desmond-Thomas lets slip an important point which Militant supporters made in 1984 when the CPSA Broad Left was split by the Communist Party.

He quotes right-winger Charlie Elliot as saying: "...our victory in the '85 elections was largely if not

Desmond-Thomas on the treatment of Womersley: "...the constant vilification of her has struck me as both absurd and paranoid. None of the charges against her have been spelt out and proved. They are all character assassination by insinuation..."

wholly attributable to the split within the left." Exactly what Militant said the very week after the split.

The new "Democratic Moderate Group" spawned by this rift will be no better than the one from which it was unceremoniously kicked

out. In turn, victim of their own undemocratic practices, they will be doing the same.

Meanwhile, as Mr Desmond Thomas ends his letter—"...One wonders who's next for the chop; John Billouin? Jonathan Bruce? David Groves?...If we fail to patch up our differences we will all be back at our desks next May."

The desire to escape the fate of ordinary CPSA members should be noted. And hopefully, Mr Desmond-Thomas, this time will be correct.

By Bill Boyle



CPSA President Kate Losinska armed with 'Moderate' propaganda. She and friends "take a week off every year" to take the 'Moderate' message out to the members.

"...this is just one of a series of acts of disloyalty organised by Pat Womersley to advance her own position... We believe our record... entitles us to make this matter a breaking point... Mrs Womersley only joined us from the Left 10 years ago.

Kate Losinska has "invited" fellow right winger and Presidential challenger Pat Womersley and her co-thinker Peter Desmond-Thomas to leave the 'Moderate' group. The letter, co-signed by Marion Chambers (CPSA vice-president), demands to be notified by 20/12/85 "...whether you are with us or whether you wish to take your chances with Pat Womersley.

"We want to make it absolutely clear that Pat Womersley will on no account be part of our group. We intend to "fill the gaps" with other sensible people."

The last reference to "fill-

"Mr Desmond-Thomas is a very recent convert to the Moderate cause. He was only elected this year, yet he has sought to challenge group decisions and has taken on his own line on occasions."

ing the gaps" comes from a previous decision to also ditch Mr Peter Desmond-Thomas from the moderate slate of candidates for the NEC.

This results from the decision of right wingers within the Department of Employment Section of CPSA to ditch John Butcher in favour of Desmond-Thomas as moderate candidate for DE Chairman.

Desmond-Thomas replies:

This split in the right has occurred because of the political dead-end they are in. They have no answers on low pay, new technology or job losses. As the members turn on them, they turn in upon themselves.

The culmination of this process is Pat Womersley's challenge for CPSA President.

The whole episode smacks of autocracy, despotism, lack of democracy, intrigue and cliquism. With no right to face their accusers two members of a group with no formal constitution are summarily expelled, even though they have been loyal to the group's discipline, a

discipline which they so hypocritically denounced when the Broad Left held power.

They show themselves to be a tiny organisation, ruled from the top (where have we heard these particular criticisms before?) using dishonest personal attacks under the cover of politics. They didn't even send Pat Womersley or Desmond-Thomas a copy of the letter "expelling" them.



Doreen Purvis.

1,600 MEMBERS of Newcastle Central Office turned out to their mandating meeting held on 20 January. The reason for the bumper attendance was the appearance of general secretary Alistair Graham.

In a series of press statements Graham had attacked the branch for its lack of democracy and had singled out Militant supporters within the branch for particular condemnation.

The response was to invite Graham to a branch meeting and deal with the issue in front of members rather than through the media.

The point of the meeting

was to discuss pay. Graham insisted on speaking in support of the settled pay system on offer from the government.

It was a doom-laden speech which concentrated on the inadequacies of the system rather than any advantages it might have.

Graham said that this was an opportunity which should be grabbed rather than to seek unnecessary action and conflict.

The alternative of all-out strike action was heavily stressed as he cast grave doubts on the likely response of members to such a call.

A tough debate followed. Graham's recommendations



Alistair Graham.

were overwhelmingly rejected.

Having seen the General Secretary in action, some members did not stay around to hear the debate on democracy.

Branch defended

Those who remained heard his attacks roundly condemned and his record of the general secretary attacked. One after the other, ordinary members got up to defend the Central Office's record on democracy.

Finally, Graham was told in no uncertain terms to go away and do the job he was paid for—defend the pay

and conditions of members rather than attack activists.

The response to the meeting has been overwhelming. Some members who had never previously attended a union meeting, have rung the branch office to congratulate us and to say that in future they will certainly be attending union meetings.

So much for Militant supporters 'boring' people away from meetings.

By Doreen Purvis
(Newcastle Central,
Branch Secretary,
personal capacity)

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Ford vote against offer-for-strike

Dagenham

THE RESULT of the Ford Motor Company ballot over this year's wage claim shows an overwhelming rejection of the company's derisory offer by the membership.

In the Bridgend engine plant we had a massive majority for rejection on a mandate for industrial action up to and including all-out strike. The result was 1,094 in favour to 222 against.

Despite all the propaganda put out in the plant by Ford and in the Tory owned media the 'wonderful' offer, that we have turned down is: three per cent increase this year and six per cent next year, spiced up by an extra four per cent should the men accept the far-reaching efficiency proposals put forward by the company.

These proposals would mean a definite reduction in head count in the plant as well as virtually taking away any opportunity for the union to safeguard our

By Clive Owen
(T&G 4/6 branch chairman, Joint Works Committee member Bridgend Engine Plant, personal capacity)

members, because one of the proposals is that each employee has to sign an individual contract of employment to signify acceptance of the efficiency proposals.

This has been the first year in the history of Ford Motor Company that the acceptance or rejection of the annual wage claim has had to be decided by a ballot. It is a ballot forced onto our members by Ford, hiding behind the anti-union legislation of this Tory government.

Tory eyes were also on our ballot boxes, confidently expecting the major unions in this country, the T&G, the AUEW and the EETPU, to be turned over by their members.

After much hard work by the Joint Shop Stewards Committee to inform the men exactly what this deal entails, the members have been able to see through this dubious offer especially the far reaching effects of job losses.

The members have realised that the only protection afforded to them is the strength of the trade union organisation, and not the cost-cutting employers or a hopeless Tory government.

The Tory tool of a secret ballot has backfired. It is a clear warning to the Ford Motor Company that the men will not be bullied and frightened into accepting such a derisory offer and are prepared to fight for a decent living wage with no strings attached.



Bridgend

FORD WORKERS have overwhelmingly rejected a so-called pay offer in ballots at all the plants in the country.

The media have distorted the issue by claiming that Ford workers have rejected a 15 per cent increase in wages. The truth is that we have rejected the strings attached to the offer.

Management want to tear up 20 years of agreements by introducing major changes in workshop practices and the eradication of demarcation.

I am a mechanical fitter in the Central Shop of the body plant. Management's proposals would mean that I would be forced to take on

other workers' jobs.

They would include doing semi-skilled jobs, despite having done a four year apprenticeship, and also to cover other skilled workers' jobs such as that of turners and electricians.

The overall aim of management is for a massive reduction of manpower. They have tried to convince the workforce by calling shop meetings to explain the deal.

At the meeting I attended there were a few workers who were unsure on whether to vote for rejection or acceptance, but on hearing management's attempt to explain their case, were in no doubt that rejection was the

only road to take.

The union leaderships have now been given a clear mandate from the rank and file, and must prepare for all out strike action to force management to back down.

Ford workers are in a strong position. Car sales are up, and 250 workers have been taken on for the first time in at least seven years. Also the company are planning to increase production of the Sierra.

Ford bosses thought after the miners' strike they would be able to give us a hammering. The ballot results give a clear indication of the mood that has developed, and that Ford workers are preparing to strike back.

By Colin Adams
(AUEW, Fords Dagenham)

United fight at Forgemaster



Forgemasters mass meeting votes for united action.

ALAN ANDERTON talked to Arthur Millward, shop steward at Forgemasters steelplant, Sheffield.

You are now in the 13th week of the dispute, what is the present position?

A meeting is taking place between the unions, the management and ACAS. We are cautiously optimistic. Picket lines are being maintained and only the staff are going in, (recent reports suggest that ASTMS staff may be preparing to take solidarity action—Ed) that's 95 per cent support.

What are your plans now? We want to fix up visits all over, especially to other steel plants. We want to build on the links we have made, for instance with the Gartcosh

lads, who came to Sheffield and we marched along with them.

I'm not surprised Thatcher didn't meet them—but at least the march did highlight the situation for all British Steel men and Tory policies on steel have led to even Tories in Scotland deserting Thatcher.

We are standing firm—the pressure is on Forgemaster's management to settle this dispute.

The major achievement so far has been the establishment of a Joint Shop Stewards Committee across all Forgemaster plants. The rivalries in the past between public and private sector and competing companies have been cut across.

Secondly the struggle itself has educated the workforce—we know that we depend on other workers to win this, and we will support other struggles in the future.

We have also been made aware that although this is a trade union struggle, it cannot be divorced from politics. It's Thatcher's policies that are to blame.

I'd like to thank *Militant* for its accurate reporting of the dispute and the help that the supporters of the paper have given us.

Any donations, speakers, information etc contact the dispute centre at: AUEW House, Furnival Gate, Sheffield S1 3HE. Telephone Sheffield 79042.

officials are present, but talks are going ahead anyway. Shop stewards say there will be no agreement until everyone can go back to work as a permanent employee, and no compulsory redundancies can go ahead.

A mass meeting has been called on Thursday afternoon giving news of the talks with management.

By David Kaplan
(Gorton LPYS)

Fairey engineers out

A STRIKE affecting 450 manual workers, mainly AUEW members, out of a total workforce of 900, started on Tuesday at Fairey Engineering Limited in Stockport.

The strike is against compulsory redundancies. Management said that they would give out the names on Monday 20th, but in fact were given out during a secret ballot of the workers

over what action to take on Friday 17th.

The vote turned out in favour of strike action. As well as the redundancies, management is calling for 43 workers to go on a fixed-term temporary contract with a monthly review, and also a signed contract of total flexibility of shift work.

Management has not allowed any talks to go ahead while full-time union

Teachers' militant mood

THE NATIONAL Union of Teachers' recall salaries' conference held at Wembly on Saturday indicated the profound radicalisation that has occurred in the NUT.

No dispute in the history of the NUT has been, in the words of general secretary Fred Jarvis, "so bitter, prolonged and widespread in its effect" as the current pay battle.

And still the mood remains solid, indeed more solid than ever, as the 79 per cent vote in favour of ballot II calling for further half-day action demonstrates.

But you will find no mention of this example of democratic balloting in the Tory media!

Nonetheless, conference missed an opportunity to press the battle forward in the manner now necessary. In particular with the other teachers' associations apparently prepared to deal with ACAS over trading pay for conditions of service (talks the NUT has rightly withdrawn from) the situation demands a more radical approach.

Conference was not given the opportunity to discuss what our claim has actually become.

Are our negotiators still pressing for £1,200 for all

Militant teacher

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teachers? Or are we now calling for the recognition of the much-vaunted 'four principles' as a basis for settlement.

The four principles in fact seem to add up to a pay increase of some eight per cent or so, with a vaguely defined commitment to a future restoration of Houghton relativities.

The Executive used its full weight to squash those amendments which sought more specific forms of escalation.

Amendments calling for a programme of escalation, involving one day's strike a week and the institution of a strike levy, were narrowly lost.

The amendment calling for a ballot to withdraw co-operation from examinations was lost as well.

However, the fact that the recall conference only rejected this by five to four, when the same delegates had voted three to one against it last Easter, highlights the militancy.

One victory, however, over Executive opposition, was the calling of a one-day

national strike; a long overdue measure given that the dispute has lasted a whole year.

The most positive feature of the conference was the desire for unity—especially with our colleagues in the NAS/UWT.

Over the heads of the Executive, an amendment designed to put this into practice was narrowly passed.

It is a sign of the growing maturity of NUT members that they are able to see the distinction between the NAS leadership, who seem only too keen to settle at any price, and the NAS rank and file.

Rank and file unity between NUT and NAS members will be the best defence against any immediate sell-out by the NAS leaders—and will point the way to one single TUC affiliated union for all teachers in the future.

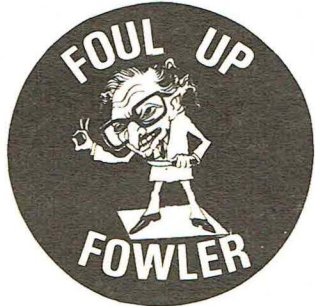
By Bob Sulatycki
(Delegate—West London Association, personal capacity)

Militant

Inside...

CPSA feature—pg 14
National Union of Students—pg 7
Libya—pg 10

Stop benefit cuts



What Fowler will mean:

In the next year:

- The right of students, including those in the FE colleges, to claim supplementary benefit in the short vacations will be lost.
- All FE students to lose the right to free meals and travel.
- All students in halls of residences will lose the right

to Housing Benefit all year round.

- All students will lose the right to housing benefit in the short vacations.

By the academic year 1987/88

- All benefits including housing benefit and social security will be cut *all year round*.
- All unemployed youth including those in the FE colleges to lose £5.50 in benefits.

“THE SQUEEZE on university finances has now become intolerable and the last straw was the decision to give a two per cent increase in student grants coupled with removing benefits”.

By Simon Kaplan
(NOLS NC, personal cap)

This protest was not from some student leader but by Tory MP and former education minister Rhodes James. But if Tory MPs find the situation intolerable, students facing cutbacks on every front find it unbearable.

The government's two per cent 'increase' for student grants is bad enough—given the rate of inflation it is really a 3.5 per cent cut. Yet it is accompanied with cuts in benefit for students, as the Fowler Review extends into student finances.

The removal of the right to claim benefits—to be introduced in gradual stages until October 1988 (see chart)—amounts to 20 per cent cut in student incomes. Benefit losses will mean that in one year students will lose £1,105 in London and £840 elsewhere to their incomes. While some students will lose up to a thousand pounds, as 'compensation' the Tories are to replace the lost benefit with a flat rate derisory pay-

ment of £36 a year—and even this will be means tested!

It is the first step to removing the right of students to claim benefits during the long summer vacation. How are students meant to survive? With four million on the dole trying to find work for just two or so months is impossible.

The latest cuts are part of the Tories two-pronged attack on students. Education minister Keith Joseph attempted to introduce loans for students. This was then to be followed by the Fowler Review, putting the squeeze on benefit to force students to take up the loans offered by Joseph. However, Joseph's loan plan failed in 1984 after widespread student protests which alongside the miners' strike forced the government to back off.

Yet the Tories are pushing ahead with stage two, hitting

at student benefits as part of their general cutbacks in public spending, regardless of whether students even have the loans to 'turn to'.

The Tories' long-term strategy is to diminish public sector involvement in education, turning it to depend on funding by commercial and business interests, available only to the well-off. It is an attack on the basic right of education for all.

Opposition

But there will be massive opposition to the Tories' plans. Students will be joined by pensioners, single parent families and the unemployed in being forced below the poverty line by the Fowler review. The Labour leadership of the National Union of Students has a duty to direct the anger of university, higher and further education students towards the labour movement, the body that can unite and organise all the sections of society hit by Fowler's plans.

The NUS has called for 'days of action' on 24 January—all student activists should involve members of the public sector



Photo: Militant

Benn speaks to CPSA Broad Left

TONY BENN will be addressing a lunchtime meeting of the CPSA broad left at the union's special pay conference on 23 January.

He will be speaking to the meeting with John McCreadie, the Broad Left's candidate for general secretary.

Benn has a long association with the trade union broad lefts and has spoken on many of their platforms.

McCreadie is a full-time official of the CPSA and will be making a strong challenge to Alistair Graham's disastrous five years in office where he has been singularly unable to deal with any of the problems the union faces.

This meeting will be the launching point for the left's challenge to regain control of the executive in the May elections.

No purge

Continued from page 1
trial—yet they will have to look over their shoulders watching for attacks and witch-hunts from behind from Kinnoch and the right wing.

To face victimisation, intimidation and threats from the Tories for opposing their policies is expected. To find it coming from the Labour leadership is outrageous. Stop this witch-hunt, drop the inquiry—now! Assemble 8.30am outside Labour headquarters, Walworth Road, London SE17, on 29 January.

Organise for

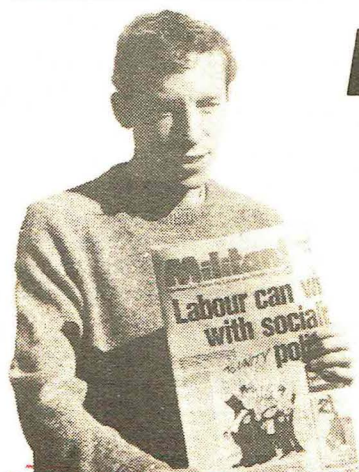
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BROAD LEFT ORGANISING COMMITTEE

19 April 1986
Sheffield City Hall

and civil service unions, directly affected by the Tory cutbacks. This can form the basis at local level for joint student and trade union action against the Tories.

What is clear is that the NUS leadership's current 'non-party political' approach is ridiculous. If the NUS leadership campaigned for joint action with the labour movement, including industrial action, alongside urging support for the Labour Party in local and national elections, they would gain enormous support from students as well as bringing effective action to bear on the Tories.



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