

Councillors condemned

-for defending jobs, services

IN AN act of unparalleled class spite, three High Court judges have declared 80 Labour councillors guilty, in effect, of providing jobs, housing and of opposing cutbacks.

By John Pickard

The councillors, from Liverpool and Lambeth, have been surcharged and banned from holding public office for five years.

The total costs per councillor, including legal charges awarded against them, will be about £4,000 each. Some of them will face the loss of their homes and bankruptcy, with a devastating effect on their families.

As the verdict was announced, John Hamilton, Liverpool Council leader and 40 years in the labour movement, was in tears. Some of the families and children of councillors, present in the High Court, were visibly stunned.

This judgement is the result of a clear political decision by unelected district auditors and judges to make a public example of councillors who had the courage to fight for the working class people they represented, against savage Tory financial cuts.

Mr Justice Corfield made an almost personal attack on Lambeth Council leader Ted Knight, accusing him of having "reached the pinnacles of political perversity".

Mr Justice Russell, quoting from an earlier case statement by Lord Brandon, said "it is entirely wrong for such a majority to regard themselves as bound to exercise their discretion in relation to that policy in accordance with their election promise, whatever the cost and other considerations may turn out to be".

The rate of 14 June in Liverpool, he said, "was made by councillors



"We have been found guilty of building houses and creating jobs"—Derek Hatton.

who regarded their mandate commitment as binding upon them irrespective of the deficit that was created".

In the main judgement, Lord Glidewell said in reference to the severe social deprivation in Liverpool and Lambeth, that "however great our sympathy for those in need this is an area into which we may not enter. Considerations of this kind play no part in our decision".

There were gasps of astonishment even amongst some of the lawyers at the openly political nature of some of these comments. There were even some interruptions, but in an atmosphere both intimidating and oppressive, most councillors and their families were

shocked into silence.

This vengeance wreaked on the councillors sets a precedent for other attacks on Labour representatives. Labour councillors in other authorities may now be surcharged. Moreover, the Lambeth and Liverpool councillors may themselves face further consequential private actions which could lead to further massive charges five or ten times bigger.

The councillors have been given 28 days to appeal to the House of Lords before the decisions come into effect, but given the astronomical cost of justice it may not be possible for the 80 to appeal.

Tony Mulhearn, president of Liverpool DLP, commented after-

NEC Lobby

LAST WEEK'S move to expel 16 Liverpool Labour Party members and disband the District Labour Party has provoked angry protest and intense interest in *Militant*. In Glasgow, our biggest ever public meeting attracted 1,300 to hear Derek Hatton.

Next Wednesday, the 16 have been summoned to appear before Labour's national executive. To rally support for them and bring pressure to bear on the NEC to drop their threats, there is to be a mass lobby of the party headquarters, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17, at 8.30pm on 12 March. Every party and trade union activist is urged to come and make this a mighty show of strength.

wards, "this verdict was predictable, but it is no less of an outrage. The judge referred to the social conditions faced by workers in Liverpool, but he has swept these aside in making his blatantly political judgement. We will continue to fight for the people of Liverpool."

"We have been found guilty," said Derek Hatton, Liverpool Deputy Council Leader, "of building houses, creating jobs and improving conditions. The people will not accept this verdict."

As we go to press, all the indications are that the labour movement in Liverpool and Lambeth will not

(Continued on page 3)

Northern Ireland

THE SECTARIAN one-day strike in Northern Ireland on 3 March against the Anglo-Irish agreement was a warning to the labour movement. The massive intimidation and violence against the Catholic population poses a real danger to all workers.

The press coverage of the strike has been misleading. The feeling in the Protestant areas was strong enough to ensure almost total closedown of industry and commerce even without the intimidation. Unionist party leaders Paisley and Molyneux have since distanced themselves from the violence but they are largely irrelevant; they neither called the strike nor could they control the situation.

One example of the increased sectarianism was an attack on a factory in Lurgan. It was partly burned down after being besieged by a crowd of loyalists, when Catholic workers reported for work.

Loyalist leaders plan more activity. In Portadown the ultra-sectarian Apprentice Boys plan a march on Easter Monday and may march provocatively through Catholic areas. There are rumours of a three-day strike later that same week with possibly, all-out action if the Thatcher-Fitzgerald agreement is not scrapped.

There were around 170 complaints about the inactivity of the police during Monday's stoppage. Even though loyalist snipers attacked the RUC in outbreaks of rioting, many police were chatting to the pickets in the midst of blatant intimidation.

The Dublin government and the 'moderate' SDLP hoped the agreement would encourage a police force which could be trusted by the Catholic population. They also hoped to reduce the support for the Provisional IRA but a new bout of sectarianism and new cynicism about the police could push many in the Catholic areas into the arms of the Provisional IRA even though their methods offer no answer to workers in Northern Ireland.

The organised working class is the only force which can stop a renewed growth of sectarianism. But the labour movement's leaders have failed to offer any lead.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) opposed the strike, only because it was 'political'. Socialists would not object to a labour movement action against this Tory agreement which gives nothing to any worker, Catholic or Protestant.

The ICTU proposed that workers should work throughout the stoppage, but for that to be successful, the question of defence against the bigots and paramilitaries must be taken seriously.

Socialists will be proposing a conference of all trade unions in Northern Ireland to propose a socialist alternative to the failed plans of the Tory governments in London and Dublin.

The capitalist parties and sectarian paramilitaries can not solve the problems created by imperialism and capitalism in Ireland. The working class organisations must act now before sectarianism gets a new bloody grip on the people of Northern Ireland.

London Labour backs councillors

THE ANNUAL conference of the London Labour Party last weekend rejected by 432,000 to 175,000 an emergency resolution deploring the disbandment of Liverpool DLP and the disciplinary action against 16 members.

With the replacement of long-serving left wing chairman, Arthur Latham by Kinnock supporter Glenys Thornton, this reflects a sharp shift to the right.

This is the logical outcome of the inglorious retreat of Livingstone and other London 'lefts' over the ratecapping fight last year. However, the right wing should think twice before they get too elated over this result. Most rank and file delegates were in no mood to tolerate witch-hunts. Many trade union delegations were split down the middle.

The NUPE delegation totally ignored London Divisional conference policy and voted against the emergency 'because of the wording'.

The TGWU also voted against its own policy. These two unions alone have 214,000 votes, enough to have swung the decision the other way.

It was significant that when Bexleyheath moved a resolution offering full support to Kinnock, conference voted to remove the resolution from the agenda, as many delegates felt they could not support it, but did not want to be seen as openly opposing the party leader.

An indication of the support of the rank and file for the Liverpool and Lambeth councillors came when a resolution was passed by an almost 5-1 majority, supporting "the stand taken by Lambeth and Liverpool in the fight against ratecapping". It added that "their fight is just and courageous", pledged "to campaign and fight for any surcharged councillor" and gave "full support to any other Labour council in London which takes a stand against ratecapping, with either a deficit budget or by not setting a rate, in the coming year."

A petition against the witch-hunt was signed by many delegates and the *Militant* public meeting, addressed by Terry Harrison of Liverpool DLP, attracted 90 delegates.

By John Bulaitis
(Beckenham Labour Party)

Tories let old freeze

By Lynne Faulkes and Chandra Dasgupta
(Hackney South LP)

A COUPLE of old age pensioners in Hackney recently were faced with a quarterly electricity bill of £300. They were given a £2 subsidy towards it.

Little wonder that so many reports are hitting the headlines today that pensioners are freezing to death because they dare not switch on heaters. What a condemnation of the government and their system!

The terrible plight of pensioners shows just what capitalism means—on the scrapheap, often condemned to the worst housing, clothed from jumble sales or charitable handouts,

constant worry about making ends meeting—many OAPs would rather starve or freeze than run up debts.

Bad weather makes things worse, forcing them to stay at home, desperately trying to keep warm, aggravating illness and disability.

It has been estimated that for every degree below average in winter, there are an extra 8,000 deaths. During February, the central England temperature was 5°C below normal. In one week (ending 14 February) there were 650 more deaths than in the previous (mild) week.

What many who work among the

elderly find galling is that in many other countries with worse winter climates, such as Canada and Scandinavia, there are nothing like so many deaths or emergencies among pensioners due to the cold.

Michael Meacher has called for a programme of insulating homes and a special £5 weekly heating benefit paid throughout the winter to all old people. In the current economic climate, and with this callous Tory government, even that minimum demand is unlikely to be agreed. Some cynic recently commented that Thatcher is probably hoping more will

die, so they don't have to pay out the pensions.

But surely what Labour should be demanding is a decent basic pension for all, to ensure they are free from worry and hardship, and able to feed, house and clothe themselves well and cope with the additional problems of bad winters without handouts.

But that demands a socialist policy. And the leadership is at the moment too busy witch-hunting and trying to please the media and big business than to even try to solve the plight of pensioners.

Labour students' strangled conference

THE COMMENT by chairperson-elect Ben Lucas that "there is no doubt that this conference has been a democratic one" was greeted with gales of laughter by sections of the National Organisation of Labour Students conference.

In the run-up to the conference, 24 delegates who supported the ideas of *Militant* were ruled out by the unaccountable conference credentials committee.

Discontent

Together with other left wing delegates who were ruled out for political reasons, these delegates would have tipped the balance against the Kinnockite 'Democratic Left' who control NOLS.

Under their leadership, NOLS is grinding to a halt. For the second year running the number of delegates to the conference has fallen, and discontent against the manoeuvres of the leadership has grown.

Their right wing ideas were shown up in the debate on the Fowler Review. Vicky Phillips, NOLS candidate for NUS president opposed the idea of industrial action by DHSS workers to defeat the government's proposals.

Party condemns evictions

THE ROW over the privatisation of Spencerbeck council estate by Langbaugh Labour Council has taken a new turn. After months of trying to get the Labour group to drop its eviction procedures against tenants who don't want to be moved, Langbaugh District Labour Party issued a press release condemning the council for its action.

The district party has been forced to speak out publicly on the matter because of the damage being done to the party as a result of the council taking tenants to court to



Labour students lobby their conference to protest at undemocratic manoeuvres.

She said this would "harm the people we are trying to protect".

During the debate on the print strike the Democratic Left opposed a call for organised support for SOGAT picketing, despite the fact that a SOGAT speaker had appealed for

this to the conference the day before.

The issue that caused the most controversy was the inquiry into Liverpool DLP. Many delegates were shocked that NOLS had participated in the report making unfounded allegations against Liverpool Labour

Clubs. They were even more horrified that the NOLS officers refused to publish what evidence they had submitted.

The political bankruptcy of the NOLS leadership was demonstrated at a Clause IV/Democratic Left fringe meeting which Peter Hain

(LCC supporter) was scheduled to speak at. When *Militant* supporters entered the room, the meeting was abandoned!

By Julie Frost
(Polytechnic of North London, NOLS NC in a personal capacity)

Olof Palme's assassination



Olof Palme.

SWEDISH WORKERS have been deeply shocked by the assassination of Social-Democrat leader Olof Palme last Friday by an unknown gunman. Now the employers, who disliked Palme intensely, are cynically calling for "national unity"—and a low wage agreement! Workers feel that their leader has been silenced; the ranks of the movement must not be silenced also. The massive demonstrations in honour of Palme show the potential for uniting workers on a programme of fighting the bosses' wage-cutting policies.

Conference centre strike against GLC

THE GLC's Brixton Recreation Centre which provides a wide range of sports and cultural activities for local people was the venue of this year's London Labour Party conference. Since the centre opened 11 months ago members of staff have had problems with the management and allege:

★ That black members of staff have been called "niggers" and "monkey" by known racists in the management.

★ Female staff have been told to put their work before their children.

★ Female workers were refused permission to use the toilet.

★ A general disregard of health and safety of the workforce, in particular a casual attitude to a number

of serious attacks on members of staff.

In the ten days leading up to the conference, one worker was sacked and two suspended, with total disregard for the GLC's own disciplinary procedures. Several workers were fined (some in excess of £100) for alleged lateness. The union representative's desk was removed with his papers and possessions and the union room was taken over by management.

On top of this came threats and intimidation and the workers were forced to prepare for strike action on the second day of the conference.

Clearly embarrassed by the situation, the GLC leadership agreed to the workers' immediate demands. Sacked

and suspended workers were reinstated. Fines were removed. It was agreed to set up a joint inquiry of GLC councillors and trade union representatives into the allegations listed above. The workers gained a complete victory.

The GLC leadership has made a lot of noise about its anti-racist and anti-sexist policies, yet they have allowed this scandal to develop under their own noses. The labour movement in London and nationally expects urgent action from the GLC to ensure that none of the incidents are repeated.

By John Bulaitis

Worst witch-hunt in 27 years

THE DECISION of Labour's National Executive Committee last Wednesday to present charges against 16 members of Liverpool District Labour Party was taken in a fashion akin to the show trials of Stalin's Russia.

The 'evidence' against the 16 was withheld, yet the NEC members were asked to vote for expulsions *in principle*. In the case of six individuals the inquiry team was split four-four on whether to take action. Yet the document nevertheless recommended they be interviewed.

Tony Benn commented that it was "the worst witch-hunt of my 27 years on this executive."

Audrey Wise, in moving the minority report, said of the Liverpool Party members: "No-one in this room has faced such pressures, apart from perhaps the miners' representatives." She said that none of the 'breaches' mentioned merit disciplinary action and emphasised that "many of those critical of the DLP went out of their way to warn against expulsions." She warned against moving into the realms of informers and that action taken on the basis of people giving their opinions about other people's ideas was a dangerous precedent.

Biased report

Michael Meacher, who voted against the report, asked: "is this the signal for an open ended purge of *Militant*?"

Frances Curran attacked the completely biased nature of the report, and demanded evidence to back up such outrageous allegations as: "A number of employees of the campaign support unit were also working on behalf of the *Militant* tendency."

She warned against any expulsions and pointed out that the balance of evidence taken by the inquiry actually favoured the District Labour Party. Therefore any action taken would be opposed and resisted within Liverpool, and create civil war in the rest of the party. She added that the NEC had better produce some evidence against the 16, which had so far been miss-

By a Militant Reporter

ing, otherwise it would face 16 High Court injunctions.

But, Tom Sawyer was clearly the man wielding the knife. Described as "the bravest man on this NEC" by Tony Clarke of the UCW, he claimed to have produced a balanced report. He described how *Militant* was based on a pyramid of lies, how employment procedures in the City Council give preference to *Militant* tendency members of the workforce. He admitted that he had once spoken on a *Militant* platform, but stated: "I am ashamed of it". In his opinion: "People did have to choose between *Militant* and the Labour Party".

In complete disregard of the 48 Liverpool councillors facing legal action for defending jobs and services, Eddie Haigh of the TGWU claimed that it was not the councillors that saved the council jobs, but the leaders of the trade unions such as John Edmonds of the GMBATU.

Tony Clarke (UCW) found "deceit from start to finish in Liverpool." Betty Boothroyd offered the helpful comment that "the Labour Party was not a pigeon club."

Tony Benn however supported the right of the DLP to discuss politics. He said: "The people on trial today are the NEC. We will not be proud in a year's time when we remember we spent a whole day discussing this while Thatcher is on the run."

With a General Election looming, ordinary party members will echo his comments. The 48 Liverpool Councillors, standing in the dock, like the miners before them and now the printworkers, for the crime of defending jobs, have the support of the working class of Liverpool behind them. Any action taken against their leaders will never be forgotten or forgiven.

Maxwell's vile smear

AN ARTICLE in Robert Maxwell's *Sunday People* on 2 March 1986 revealed once again the despicable level to which the gutter press will stoop, to vilify those who fight to change society.

Of the appointment of Carol Darton from Toxteth, "by Liverpool's Red Derek", as secretary of Merseyside Action Group (MAG), it complains that she "had no academic qualifications" for the job and that "her appointment was not put before the full council for approval".

MAG is an independent, black group which applied to the city council for a grant in order to pay for a secretary. The application was successful and Mrs Darton was given the appointment by MAG's executive, not by Derek Hatton.

The whinings about academic qualifications are typical of those who have no understanding of the daily lives of Liverpool's blacks.

Darton's long-standing involvement in community work in Toxteth, her experience of life in the area and her commitment to the job are far better credentials than pieces of papers.

The paper had no basis for its allegations and scandalously resorted to digging-up and printing Carol Darton's police record. *Militant* supporters do not condone criminal activities, but recognise that in the misery and despair created by the economic system, compounded by the Tories' disastrous policies, crime is a part of life in many working class districts of Britain.

It is hardly surprising that Maxwell with his millionaire life-style should fail to understand that and dredge up details of past offences to try to discredit a woman who has taken up the fight to end the misery of those she has grown up amongst.

By Neelam de Freitas

Going for a million

BETWEEN NOW and the Labour Party conference, a campaign is being launched to get a million signatures to the following petition. *Militant* is confident that if the petition, the paper and an explanation of what we stand for is taken to every union conference, every Labour Party meeting, every street and estate paper sale and at work and in everyday life, a million people can be convinced to pledge their support. The petition will be presented at the conference in Blackpool at which any who are expelled will appeal to the delegates for reinstatement.

Send for your copies now.

Appeal to Neil Kinnock and the Labour leadership.

No witch-hunt!

Attack the Tories NOT the socialists!

★ At a time when Thatcher is on the run, when the Labour leaders should be concentrating all their energies on attacking the Tories, it is a disgrace that measures are taken to divide the Labour Party.

★ It was the internal divisions and witch-hunting in 1983 that allowed Thatcher to win the general election. Such a repeat performance would be disastrous.

★ That is why Tebbit, Thatcher and other Conservative leaders—backed by the Tory press—are calling for mass ex-

pulsions in the Labour Party. It is certainly not for the good of Labour!

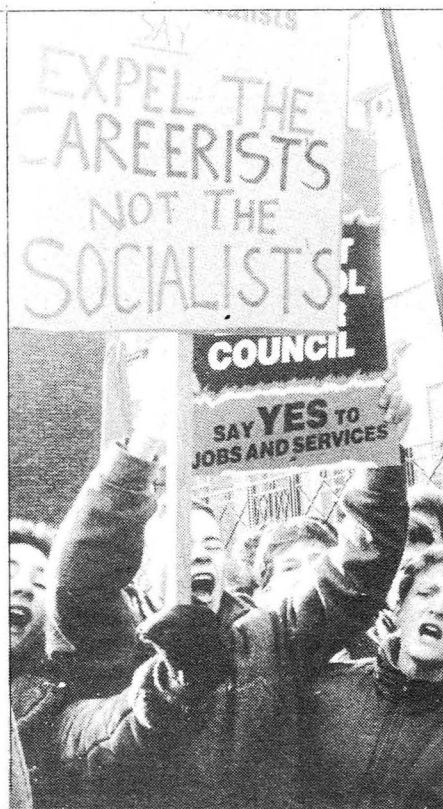
★ We, the undersigned, therefore, call on Neil Kinnock and the National Executive of the Labour Party, in the interests of unity, to:

a) Lift the ban on Liverpool District Labour Party.

b) Drop all expulsion proceedings against Derek Hatton, Tony Mulhearn and other Labour members in Liverpool.

c) Drop the witch-hunt against *Militant* supporters and the left in general. Reinstatement expelled socialists.

d) Mobilise the entire movement to return a Labour government at the next election committed to socialist policies.



Liverpool backs 16

THE NIGHT after the NEC's decision to disband the Liverpool District Labour Party, the Liverpool Labour Group of councillors called a meeting for party members. Over 400 turned up for what Neil Kinnock has described as an unconstitutional meeting.

Eric Heffer gave an account of what took place at the NEC meeting and explained why he is opposed to witch-hunts and expulsions. Labour councillor Jimmy Parry then moved a resolution condemning the decision of the NEC to disband the DLP and set in motion procedures to expel socialists. It called for wards and constituencies in Liverpool to refuse to recognise the expulsions.

By Josie Aitman

A MEETING of Tuebrook ward, whose members include Josie Aitman, Tony Aitman and Roger Bannister, three of sixteen named by the NEC for probable expulsion, overwhelmingly refused to recognise the expulsions of these good socialists from the Labour Party.

IN A vote of confidence, Felicity Dowling was overwhelmingly re-elected by Speke ward to stand for council in the May elections this year.



Councillors From Page One

take this decision lying down. They will not be prepared to accept a legal coup removing duly elected councillors to impose a Quisling regime without electoral support or credibility. In these two areas there is absolute bitterness and indignation at this latest example of Marcos Thatcher's dictatorial methods.

There are already reports of council workers walking out on strike in protest. Shop stewards' meetings have called on all local authority workers in their areas to take industrial action to show their outrage.

responsibility for this shameful judgement. They abandoned Liverpool and Lambeth and particularly the former, when they needed all the support possible in their fight against the Tory government.

While the Tories are using the courts to crucify councillors, Kinnock is misusing the Labour Party constitution to do the same. On the same day that this judgement was made, a Tory minister announced the diversion of £500 million from the cash-starved inner-cities to the Tory shires. What were the Labour Party and trade union leaders doing?

The general secretary of the Labour Party was busy cooking up charges to expel some

of these councillors from the Labour Party, while GMBATU leaders were interviewing Ian Lowes, Liverpool Joint Shop Stewards' chairman, to discipline him. This is no less of a disgrace. The witch-hunt against *Militant* supporters in the Labour Party and trade unions must stop now.

The Labour Party and trade union leaders must come into line with the feeling of the overwhelming majority of the rank and file and back the councillors. For a change, they must go on to the offensive against the Tories using this issue to rally massive support against Thatcher's jobs massacre and against the whole rotten system.

Militant

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

Subverting policy

THE CLIMATE of McCarthyism now being engineered inside the Labour Party is not an organisational issue but a political one. Behind the wave of expulsions and inquisitions, there has been a marked shift to the right in the policy of the party leadership, abandoning most of the radical policies agreed by annual conference.

The commitment to renationalise those industries plundered by the Tories has been all but shelved. Tory anti-trade union laws will be replaced by new laws embodying many of the same principles. The cuts in government expenditure on health, education and housing will not be restored.

More recent speeches by Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley have leaned more towards the economic policies of the Social Democratic Party than to a party of socialism. Neil Kinnock for example, has extolled the virtues of President Franklin Roosevelt's so-called 'New Deal'. He has praised Japanese capitalism with its higher industrial productivity and modern technology as if it were a simple matter of just imitating them.

Roy Hattersley has made even more revealing comments about the next Labour Government. The wage demands of the unions, he said, "have to be consistent with the general economic aims that the Government is following." (*Financial Times*, Feb 19). More openly than ever, Labour's front bench is talking about a new incomes policy to hold wages down below the level of price rises. "I think we will have to be tough", the deputy leader went on, "...we cannot go back to the old days when we were weak-minded on these things—we can't do it on pay, we can't do it on investment, we can't do it on public spending."

In another policy speech reminiscent of Tory monetarism, Hattersley explained that the next Labour government will put the fight against inflation above all other areas of policy, including employment, and public spending. No wonder Peter Jenkins, *Sunday Times* columnist could write, "Light is scarcely visible these days between Roy Hattersley and Edward Heath."

Political commentators, noting this relentless subversion of Labour's fundamental aims and conference policies, have speculated that the leadership of the Party are consciously preparing for a minority government and are preparing the ground for a deal with the SDP. "Implicit in everything Messrs Kinnock and Hattersley are doing", wrote Bruce Anderson in the right wing *Daily Telegraph* (March 5), "is a bitter regret that the Left succeeded in driving out the Social Democrats."

The whole orientation of the Labour leadership is towards a manifesto without a grain of socialism. What makes this so tragic is the fact that this policy of managing capitalism better than the Tories, is utopian. Just like Labour's Industrial Reorganisation Corporation of 1964-70, or the National Enterprise Board of 1974-79,

the proposed National Investment Bank will only tinker around the fringes of a capitalist system in deep crisis.

Without taking full control of the levers of the economy, by public ownership and democratic control of the big industrial and financial monopolies, there can be no question of planning industrial recovery, investment or jobs. On a capitalist basis, the economy is on a hopeless slide to industrial decay and disaster, with the consequential squeeze on living standards. The whole logic of the policy now being formulated by Kinnock and Hattersley is leading towards a Labour Government of counter-reforms.

As if in anticipation of that, the Party leadership are doing their best to put a wet blanket on, or denouncing as "impossibilist", any specific commitments for reform. The attack upon the marxists in the Labour Party is taking place precisely because they could form the nucleus of a huge opposition inside the labour movement to a Labour Government that cut living standards. Under such conditions, many workers would come to the conclusion that fundamental social change is the only way out of the impasse and Marxist ideas would become a central factor in the trade unions and the Labour Party.

It is in anticipation of this, and an attempt to forestall it, that the capitalist class and the Tory papers are goading Labour's right wing into expelling marxists.

But they will find that ideas will not be suppressed. When its "time" has come, no power on earth can destroy an idea. In 1973 Tony Benn, anticipating a Labour victory, said, "The crisis we inherit should be the occasion for fundamental change, not the excuse for postponing it." But excuses were made in 1974 as they had been ten years before. The presence of a Marxist tendency will ensure that the excuses will not be accepted again.

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

NUPE members back party democracy

AT LAST Wednesday's lobby of the NEC, NUPE activists were allowed inside Labour Party headquarters to speak to deputy General Secretary, Tom Sawyer.

They told him that members of the union were in desperate need of a Labour victory at the next election, and that his support for the witch-hunt would lead to Labour being split from top to bottom.

They pointed out that "Even management in Tory controlled areas allow employees the right of representation by a trade union official or a friend. Is it right that those accused will have no right to cross-examine those who make allegations against them?"

By Steve MacKenzie
(NUPE)

On trial—for selling Militant

ON FRIDAY 21 February Llanelli GMC voted by 22 votes to 17 with four abstentions, to expel "members of Militant" from the Labour Party and prohibit the sale of the paper in Llanelli.

When NUR delegate, Wayne Saunders, asked what a "Militant member" was, no one was prepared to answer. Saunders went on: "Last year I was sacked for

fighting for my job, one of few workers to suffer this in a nationalised industry. That shows my commitment to the Labour movement. I don't expect to come to a Labour Party meeting to be put on trial for selling and supporting a socialist newspaper."

By Muriel Browning
(Llanelli Labour Party)

In Brief

STEVE ARNOTT, a member of Glenrothes LPYS is now under threat of expulsion from Central Fife Labour Party.

He spoke on a public platform in defence of Liverpool City Council and against the witch-hunt.

Central Fife CLP has now instructed its executive committee to investigate his possible expulsion. But leading shop stewards and trade unionists in the area have signed a petition opposing the move.

WESTMINSTER NORTH General Committee passed a resolution which "...call(ed) on the NEC to respect the constitutional rights of Bradford North CLP and endorse Pat Wall without further delay."

LEEDS CENTRAL CLP also overwhelmingly supported a resolution which called for Pat Wall to speak at their next GMC meeting if he was not endorsed by the NEC as Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Bradford North CLP. The resolution also called for no expulsions and for a lifting of the suspension of Liverpool District Labour Party.

THE OVERSEAS Telegraph branch of the National Communications Union passed a resolution to inform the General Secretary of the Labour Party of its total opposition to the suspension of Liverpool District Labour Party; the branch's support and admiration for Liverpool City Council's socialist policies and called on the Labour Party at all levels to concentrate their efforts on opposing government attacks on workers.



Lobby of NEC 26 February

Photo: Tommy Carroll

'Militant fights back' public meetings

NO AMOUNT of organisational manoeuvring can stop the growth of Militant which is based on the support of thousands of workers and has been built over decades.

Attendances at our Militant Fights Back public meetings now runs into thousands and our campaign is only just beginning.

Look out for meetings in your area and don't miss the mass rallies. Show your opposition to witch-hunts by attending the fringe meetings at the Labour Party regional conferences.

MASS RALLIES:
Edinburgh—19 March. Speakers: Derek Hatton and Peter Taaffe.
Newcastle—20 March. 7pm. Admission 50p. Speakers: Derek Hatton and Peter Taaffe. Newcastle City Hall.
Birmingham—24 March. Speakers: Derek Hatton and Peter Taaffe.
Bristol—12 April. Speaker: Derek Hatton.
Islwyn—17 April. Speaker: Derek Hatton.

READERS MEETINGS:
North West
Blackpool—Saturday 15 March. 1pm. Labour Party Conference fringe meeting. Lecture Hall, Central Library, Queen St. Blackpool.
Withington—Friday 14 March. 7.45pm. Withington Town Hall, Lapwing Lane, Withington, Manchester. Speakers include: John Clegg, Labour councillor Burnage Ward, and Phil Frampton.

Blackburn—Tuesday 18 March. Speaker Lynn Walsh, Militant Editorial Board.
Burnley—Wednesday 19 March. Speakers include: Cheryl Varley and Lynn Walsh.
Manchester—Friday 21 March. Civic Hall, Stretford. Speaker Lynn Walsh.
Chorley—Tuesday 18 March.

YORKSHIRE
Castleford—Tuesday 18 March. Speaker Steve Morgan.
Doncaster—Monday 7 April. Speaker: Cheryl Varley.
LONDON
Waltham Forest—Monday 10 March. 7.30pm. Lea bridge Library, Lea bridge Rd, E10. Speaker: Jeremy Birch.
Forest Hill—Tuesday 18 March. Speaker Nick Wrack.
Putney—Wednesday 12 March.

EASTERN
Grays—Tuesday 18 March. 7.30pm. Room 2. Thameside Theatre, Grays, Essex. Speaker: Martin Elvin.

SOUTH AND WEST
Margate—Saturday 22 March. Southern Labour Party Conference fringe meeting.
Exeter—Saturday 15 March. South West Labour Party Conference fringe meeting.
Oxford—Tuesday 25 March. Cawdy Community Centre. Speaker: Kevin Ramage.

MIDLANDS
Cannock—Sunday 16 March
Stoke on Trent—Saturday 15 March. 6pm. Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke on Trent. West Midlands Labour Party Conference fringe meeting.

Skegness—Saturday 15 March. East Midlands Labour Party Conference fringe meeting.

SCOTLAND
Perth—Friday 7 March. Labour Steering Committee against the witch-hunts meeting. Scottish Labour Party Conference, Perth.

The poison of racism

Labour must lead the fight back

THE NATIONAL Front and other right-wing groups have been responsible for the disturbing increase in racial attacks on school children. It is not only the greater frequency of the attacks that is alarming; many are increasingly violent.

★ A young boy, Minar Ali was recently ambushed in a corridor and stabbed with a razor blade at Daneford School in London's East End; four boys were later expelled.

★ At Langdon School in Newham a 16-year old Asian boy was stabbed with a screwdriver as he left school.

★ A 13-year old Asian girl was followed home, ambushed and beaten-up by a gang of 40-50 youths at Little Ilford School.

AFF, a group recently formed to monitor racial attacks claims that the NF is gearing its recruitment policy towards the 12-18 age group. Newham Monitoring Project say the increase in racist attacks in Newham has been accompanied by increased NF activity, distributing leaflets etc. outside schools. An investigation in the *Observer* shows that the NF and BNP have been active around schools in London, Bradford and Manchester where some of the worst racial attacks have been recorded.

These claims are confirmed by teachers at schools where such attacks have taken place.

In January over 50

By Neelam de Freitas

Bangladeshi children staged a two-day strike to protest against continuous racist attacks at Morpeth School in the East End.

One incident clearly shows the danger of fascist ideas. There were violent clashes between Asian and white youth in January after leaflets were distributed by the BNP outside a school in Bradford. In both cases it is clear that black and Asian youth will not tolerate racist attacks in their schools.

These scandalous and cowardly attacks on school children have barely been reported in the Tory press. Yet a minor, isolated incident at University Community School in Liverpool recently was blown out of all proportion with front-page coverage in the local and national press and banner headlines such as: "Whites flee the school of fear" (see *Militant*, 21 February).

Many anti-racist campaigns have been set up around the country to counter fascist activity. But the defence of school students from racist attacks can not be left to these bodies alone. The labour and



The threat of fascism on the NF rally in Barking.

Photo: Dave Sinclair

trade union movement must link up with and fight alongside such initiatives.

They must expose the right wing groups' propaganda and the role of the press in spreading such filth. They should also be campaigning bodies offering a bold socialist alternative to the social deprivation, such as mass unemployment, which generates fear and gives false credence to the poisonous ideas of racism.

Barking youth counter fascists

TWO PEOPLE are being charged after a stabbing incident last year in Barking. The incident occurred during a series of scuffles when a gang of fascists tried to turn the town centre into a "whites only zone"!

Earlier this month the National Front held a "free Joe

Pearce" rally in Barking. Pearce is a fascist presently serving a prison sentence for inciting racial hatred. Mobilising from the whole of London and Essex, the NF managed to turn out 20-30 thugs.

A counter-demo organised by Barking YS and the

recently formed 'Anti-Fascist Action' attracted 150 local youth. This marched to where the fascist meeting, surrounded by police, was being held and had their own highly successful rally. The fascists were eventually escorted out of town by the police.

Foul up Fowler!

THOUSANDS OF students in Merseyside showed how to organise the fightback to the proposed cuts in the Fowler Review, in a recent day of action organised by the local students' organisation, MASO.

The day began at 6am with a hundred pickets reporting at Liverpool University. Students, staff and even Principals ensured that eight of the FE Colleges never opened their doors, the other three letting in only those taking exams.

At Mabel Fletcher college the Principal even went home to fetch coffee and sandwiches for the pickets. Liverpool Polytechnic had already been occupied since the night before.

At 11am 5,000 students, pensioners, CPSA, NAT-FHE and NALGO members joined the MASO demonstration. Due to the enormous enthusiasm for the march even the Federation of Conservative Students sabbatical officer was obliged to attend!

The day ended with a rally of 3,000 held at the Empire and addressed by Councillor Tony Mulhearn and sabbaticals Barbara Cunningham and Cheryl Varley. If this was repeated in every area, involving workers and students, the Fowler Review would have a very short unhappy life!

Come to YS conference

COME TO the 1986 Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) Conference this Easter.

Thousands of young workers, students, school students, YTS trainees and unemployed will be meeting in Bournemouth from 28 to 31 March to discuss the problems we face in Thatcher's Britain.

Do you want to stop the Tories turning young people into sweated labour? Do you want to join a campaigning socialist youth movement? Do you want three days of discussions,

discos, theatre, bands and a chance to meet young socialists from all around the country?

If so, book now. Three nights in a hotel, meals, travel and a visitors ticket for all conference events will cost you £50. A group of LPYS members will be travelling from your area and will be organising to ensure every young person who wants to go can afford to get there.

For more information contact Andy Bevan, LPYS, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT.

Photo: Dave Sinclair



On the school students' strike last April in Liverpool. Youth must organise against the Tories. Come to Bournemouth this Easter.

Welcome the Hull Young Socialist marchers

ONLY FOUR weeks are left before Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) National Conference. YS branches in Hull are well-prepared.

They have produced a "Youth Charter" to help raise support for socialist ideas in the local labour movement. Five YS members are marching 300 miles to the conference in Bournemouth, to highlight the plight of youth in Tory Britain and to raise money for the YS.

Workplace visits and local

publicity have gained the planned march enthusiastic backing. Already the Yorkshire NUM, TGWU Region 10, Hull West CLP, Hull Women's Council, and branches of the AUEW, NUPE, GMBATU and UCW have supported this enterprising activity.

The march was launched by 50 YS members at a public meeting in Hull addressed by Pat Wall.

After a press conference on 1 March, the marchers arrived in Goole accompanied by Labour

Party and YCND members. On the Sunday, the marchers reached Staniforth near Doncaster where they stayed at the Miners' Welfare.

The rest of the route will take them through Sheffield, Chesterfield, Mansfield, Nottingham, Loughborough, Leicester, Coventry, Rugby, Northampton, Milton Keynes, Luton, Hemel Hempstead, Watford, London, Slough, Reading, Basingstoke, Winchester, Southampton, Ringwood to end in Bournemouth on 28 March.

Young Socialist branches around the country can help the campaign by providing meals and accommodation for the marchers, by organising welcoming receptions, press conferences etc. You can even support marchers for a leg of the march and canvass for sponsors for the march.

For further details contact Neil Ware, 18 Carnaby Grove, NHE Hull or ring 29165 and ask for the "Youth March".

Tory bigot turned away

JOHN CARLISLE, a right wing MP, believes amongst other things that Asian parents should have to pay for their children's English lessons. He thinks that the oppression of non-whites in South Africa is nothing but a myth.

This man was invited to address a meeting by Bradford University's Federation of Conservative Students. He was however, prevented from speaking by 80 angry demonstrators.

Contempt

The Tory students, who obviously have nothing but contempt for the University Ward's 72 per cent Asians, have issued yet another invitation to the MP.

Labour students, linked with the black and Asian community and local labour movement bodies should ensure that racists are not given a platform. If Carlisle returns to the University he will get a similar reception.

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.

INTERNATIONAL Women's Day Demo. Women's march and rally. Saturday 8 March. Assemble 5pm Lower Thames Street (Tower Hill end) March moves off 5.30pm. Rally at Wapping 6pm. Sponsored by SOGAT, NGA, WAPC. *Militant* sellers to meet 4.30-4.45pm at Tower Hill tube.

A Charter for Women Workers: So much was the success of *The Charter* that thousands of additional copies had to be produced—Get your copy now! Bulk order available from A Bannister, 55 Lunt Road, Bootle, Merseyside L20 5EZ or World Socialist Books 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB. Price 40p & 15p&p.

BERMONDSEY LPYS Public Meeting. Expel the Tories, Support the Printers. Speakers: Derek Hatton (Liverpool City Council); Frances Curran (Labour Party NEC); John Bryan (Southwark Council) plus Print worker. Wednesday 12 March 7.30pm, Spa Road Library, Spa Road.

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

LIVERPOOL City Council benefit featuring *The Redskins*, *The Lloyd Collection*, *Hello Sunset*. Guest Speaker: Derek Hatton. 10 March at Pickwicks. Tickets £2.25 in advance, £2.75 on door. Contact Cathy, Linda, Sylvia on 051 709-4360.

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. Contents: *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 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB. Only £2.25.

May Day Greetings

We invite your organisation to place May Day greetings to the labour and trade union movement in *Militant*. *Militant* is read by thousands of labour movement activists in Britain and internationally.

Send your greetings of solidarity with the labour movement. Help build a paper that fights for socialism. The closing date for copy is 22 April.

Prices. Semi-display 3 column centimetres £6. 6 Column centimetres £12. Display 1/16th page £20. 1/8th page £30, 1/4th page £60. Cheques to *Militant* Publications, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

"Militant fights back" meetings

Midlands

WEST MIDLANDS Labour Party conference, Sunday 16 March, during Conference lunch-break. Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent. Speaker Tony Mulhearn.

COVENTRY *Militant* Readers Public Meeting. "Stop Car Industry Witch-hunts" Wednesday 19 March 7.30pm. Speakers: Ian Schofield (sacked Range Rover senior steward) and Cllr Phil Hollifield. Venue Tile Hill Social Club, Jardine Crescent Coventry.

South

Margate: Saturday 22 March, Southern Labour Party conference fringe meeting.

OUT SHORTLY. New edition of *Inqaba ya Basebenzi*, Journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the African National Congress. Price £1 plus 20p postage from: Inqaba, BM Box 1719, London WC1N 3XX.

BOW & POPLAR Marxist Discussion Group: 'Where is the Labour Party going?'. Monday 17 March, 7.30pm. Speakers: Dave Fryatt (Bethnal Green & Stepney CLP) and Paddy Little (Bow & Poplar CLP), both in personal capacity. At Burdett Flowerpot, Perkins House, St Pauls Way, London E14.

ALL LONDON meeting: Thursday 13 March, 7.30pm. 'Northern Ireland—the socialist alternative', Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, NW1. Speakers—Joe Higgins (Irish Labour Party Administrative Council, personal capacity) and Peter Hadden (Labour and Trade Union Group secretary).

PARTY and disco for the printers. Amersham Arms, New Cross Road, Nr New Cross BR and Tube. 8pm Friday 7 March. £2 waged/£1 unwaged/striking printers with union card—free. Deptford LPYS. All proceeds to striking printers.

MILITANT collecting tins—available from Fighting Fund department, 3-13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB. Cost £1 each or 75p each for order of 10 or more. Please send 25p post and packaging (50p for bulk orders).

Getting the message

TAXI DRIVER: "Did you see the news tonight on *Militant*?"

"No, what did they say?" "I didn't catch it all but they're trying to get them out of the Labour Party. I'd like to get hold of their paper".

The taxi driver was speaking to Caroline Cairns of Glenrothes who, to his surprise, was able to oblige with a copy on the spot.

Thousands of people read their first copy of *Militant* as sellers got out on the streets and the estates to answer the media and Labour's right wing.

On Wednesday evening after the NEC, Peckham supporters sold 23 copies on the Bells Garden Estate. West London sellers sold 40 including 20 in Uxbridge and North Shields *Militant* supporters sold 31 on a local estate. Other supporters decided to make their successful sales into a regular weekly event. Bedford sellers sold out of *Militant*.

Seller of the week was Sharon McDermott, who the right wing are trying to expel from Attercliffe Labour Party. She sold 33.



Outside Labour's NEC meeting.

Cannock answers Kinnock

MEANWHILE, street sales went equally well. In the mining community of Cannock Chase in Staffs, 50 copies of *Militant* were sold on Saturday.

At the same time Glasgow supporters sold 45 in the Easterhouse shopping centre and on Wednesday

afternoon 24 were sold on the streets of Sunderland.

Militant is going down well in the Labour Party too. Nearly 50 were sold at the Yorkshire Labour Party Regional Conference and another 50 at the London conference, despite many people already having copies.

Finally, outside the London *Militant* rally last Tuesday a NUR member was passing on his way to his union district committee. He wanted to

become a supporter and sell *Militant*. In fact he bought six copies on the spot to sell at his meeting!

Keep up the good work comrades! Always carry a copy of *Militant*—you don't know when you'll meet a taxi driver or rail worker. Continue to build the sales and in particular pencil in Wednesday 12 March as the date of the next NEC meeting on the Liverpool inquiry as the opportunity for even bigger and better estate sales.

Hard cash against right-wing's purge

AS A result of the witch-hunt, workers around the country are rallying to support *Militant* with hard cash.

The hundreds of resolutions opposing the lunatic actions of the right wing make it clear that the overwhelming majority of Labour Party and union activists are dismayed by the NEC proposals.

Workplace and union branch donations and collections like the £7.50 collected at AUEW No 2 branch Coventry, should be made urgently to help us reply to press and right-wing lies. Constituency parties, Women's sections, YS's should all be asked to back us with finance as well as resolutions.

Rallies

Those who have already passed resolutions are sending us cash, like the £5 from Coventry NE CLP and £10 from SOGAT, Huyton.

With the massive expansion in paper sales, we ask each buyer to contribute. We appeal to regular buyers to make regular weekly donations, and to the thousands of new supporters and sellers, we appeal for substantial donations.

The magnificent £2,240 raised at the London *Militant* Rally the night before

FIGHTING
FUND

This week:
£3,359

Quarter ends
30 April

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 London West	838		2900
2 London East	870		3500
3 London South West	327		1500
4 London South East	356		2200
5 Southern	452		3100
6 East Midlands	378		3050
7 West Midlands	514		4500
8 Manchester/Lancs	418		4200
9 Humberside	218		2350
10 South East	207		2400
11 Yorkshire	471		5600
12 Scotland West	237		3850
13 Wales East	91		1450
14 Merseyside	366		6900
15 Scotland East	164		3200
16 Eastern	127		3450
17 South West	87		2150
18 Wales West	122		3150
19 Northern	50		4550
Others	926		5000
Total received	7220		70000

the NEC met shows how our supporters will respond. Another £100 was raised in rattling tins. £32 from two collectors. The other regional rallies and the hundreds of meetings should be a focus for fund-raising.

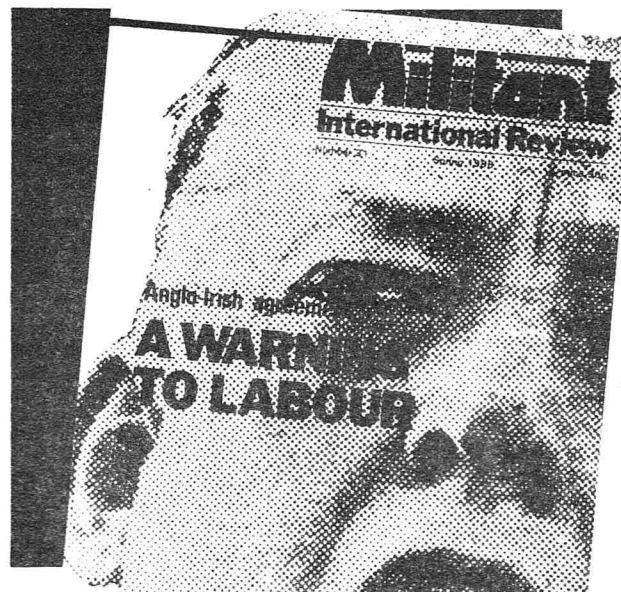
The right wing will rue the day they began this witch-

hunt. It can be defeated if we get the money and resources to expand our campaigning. The answer to the witch-hunters is the production of

a more frequent paper; this in turn will serve the movement and help campaign for a socialist Labour government.

DONATIONS include: Billy Jackson, (sacked miner, Keresley) £1.10; Martin Quinn, SOGAT £7.50; Steve Collins, Littleton NUM Power Group £5; Tom Elsdon, Chorley £45; Jim Gelanny, Preston UCATT Branch Sec £20; John Atkinson, GMBATU Newcastle £5; Neil

Seery, Bellshill £1; Iain Neil, Motherwell £1; Ian Moldaczek, Coventry £2; John Linehan, Coventry £2; Pauline Cromer, Broadgreen £3; Yorkshire YS Conference £116; Southern YS Conference £303. Special thanks to Gareth Ingham for £2.49 collected cleaning shoes!



Militant International Review. New edition out now. Price 90p from local *Militant* sellers or plus 20p post and package from *Militant*, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

Marxist Daily Building Fund

Don't forget to send in your tenners to the Marxist Daily Building Fund to produce all the material we need and bring a more frequent paper nearer.

Latin America day school

OVER 100 people attended a London *Militant* day school on Latin America on 22 February.

Peter Taaffe covered the heroic struggles of the workers against the Chilean dictatorship, the isolation of Pinochet and the prospects for revolution. A lively discussion followed.

In the afternoon the school split up into four groups, discussing: Nicaragua, the Popular Unity government in Chile, guerrillaism and insurrection, and the Latin American revolution.

An evening's entertainment of Chilean and English folk music brought to an end a very successful day. We hope to see further meetings on this vital area.

Here come the money men

RUPERT MURDOCH'S Fort Wapping stands in the centre of a formerly-proud London dockland in the borough of Tower Hamlets.

For five miles along the bank of the Thames stretched London's dockland, providing thousands of workers with jobs. The most extensive part of the dock's complex was contained in the horseshoe-shaped bend in the river, known as the Isle of Dogs.

Until the closure to merchant traffic in the late seventies, 15,000 worked here. All are now gone. All that was left was a legacy of unemployment, and deteriorating housing and health care.

It is an area rich in the traditions of the working class. The dockers' tanner strike in 1888, the birth of what is now the GMBATU, the heroic fight of the Poplar councillors and the defeat of Mosley's blackshirts, all took place in Tower Hamlets.

But now the local workers face a new threat. Get-rich-quick property sharks, city financiers and anti-union print bosses are all homing in on the deserted warehouses and wharves. Enticing them in is the London Dockland Development Corporation, chaired by former right-wing Labour MP Bob Mellish.

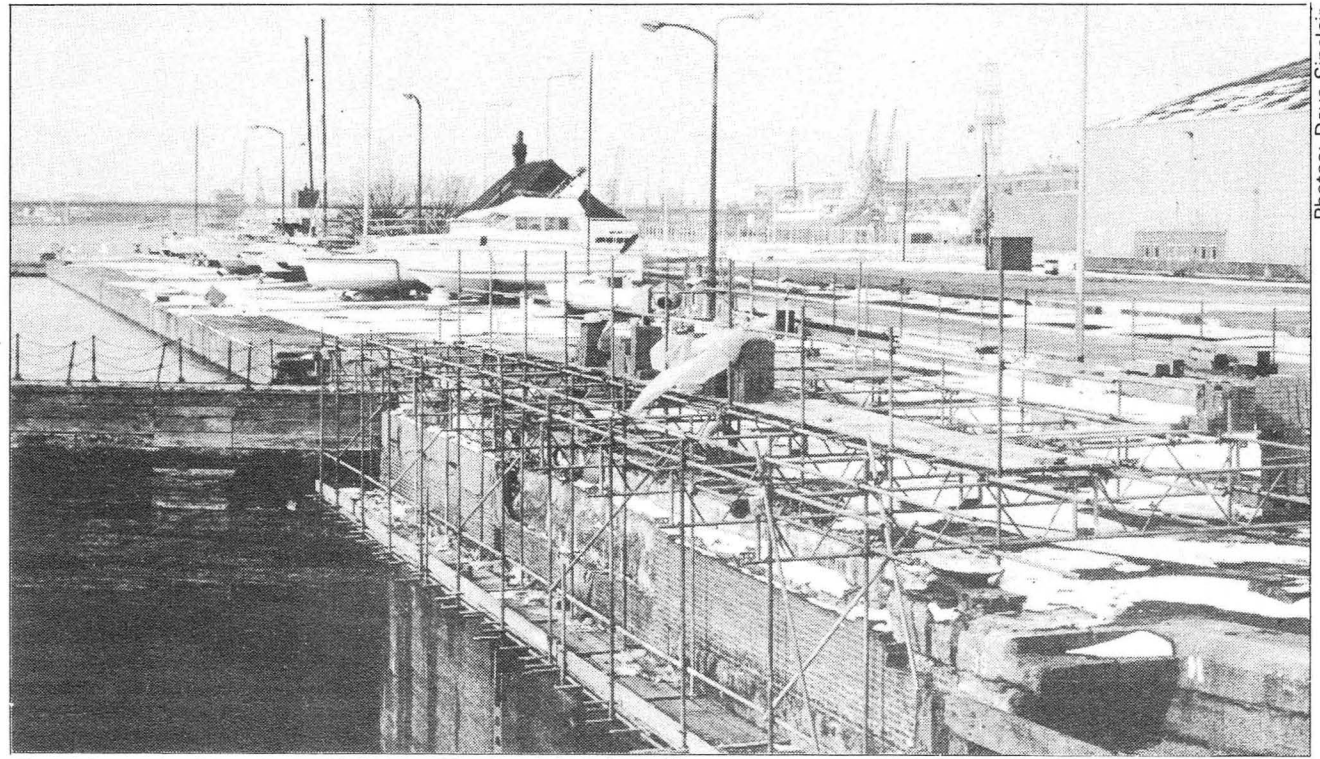
From St Katherine's Dock near Tower Bridge to the Isle of Dogs, the LDDC has been offering a free enterprise zone, with incentives like

Articles by Steve Amor
(Millwall Labour Party)

rate-free leases. Three years ago, one acre of derelict dockland fetched about £57,000. Now the value of available land has soared to £375,000.

Two up two down dockers' terraced cottages have now become very fashionable residences. Private semis are being thrown up in anticipation of the influx of well-paid executives. But as for the locals living on the council estates, how can they hope to compete in this property race?

An Isle of Dogs residents' spokesman described it as "another Hong Kong. A massive gleaming financial centre, surrounded by a shanty town".



The Isle's new yacht marina, with Canary Wharf and the private Mercury Telecommunications premises in the background.

Photos: Dave Sinclair

Canary Wharf— for fat cats only

THE LATEST development for dockland is the Canary Wharf project, the new 'City of London' to be built on the old northern West India Dock.

It will include three 850 feet high tower blocks, surrounded by a huge office complex with squares, courts and lakes. A new circus will be built the size of Trafalgar Square, and all enclosed by waterside walks.

Health cuts

The LDDC's justification for Canary Wharf is that a new financial and banking centre: "cannot be accommodated in the City of London without the city tearing itself apart at enormous cost." So instead the people of the poorest inner-city borough are having to pay the price.

An independent report by health workers in the borough (*Taken bad—the state of health in Tower Hamlets,*

1985) has exposed the effects of the private capital being injected into the area. "The LDDC," it states: "has cut practically all support to health funding in docklands.

"Although claiming credit for the continuing programme of health centre developments, in reality funds for these centres were handed over to the District Health Authorities under the old Docklands Joint Committee, and the LDDC has not contributed to their construction costs.

"The failure of the LDDC to provide revenue funding for health services is also seriously jeopardising those gains that have been made".

The local people on the Isle of Dogs are becoming increasingly angry about Canary Wharf. The LDDC and its big business friends are making big decisions above their heads about the fate of the area, its environment and most of the homes they live in.

Sold over our heads?

LOCAL TENANTS are already starting to organise against another threat, from the Tories' new Housing and Planning Bill. It gives local councils sweeping powers to privatise whole estates without the approval of the tenants.

Tenants could be forced to accept whatever a council offers them in another part of the area, while the estate is sold off. Then under private enterprise the estate would be gentrified, and put way beyond the reach of ordinary people's pockets.

Or an estate could be sold to private companies with the tenants still in residence. No doubt rents would be jacked up, and the limited accountability of a local authority landlord taken away.

At a meeting organised by Millwall Labour Party and Barkantine estate tenants' association it was agreed to fight back. Local people want to stop the big business carve up of dockland, and to fight for the right to decent homes for local workers.

The edge of the abyss

IN TOWER HAMLETS eight out of 10 people live in council housing, and a report has estimated that 7,000 of the dwellings are unfit for human habitation. A further 20 per cent are classed as unsatisfactory.

The borough also has the highest percentage of children in households dependent on supplementary benefit, and the highest number of overcrowded

households in the North East Thames Regional Health Authority area.

"Of all the flats I have seen," a health visitor wrote to the local housing department: "the majority have been in a fairly poor state of repair. Many have broken windows with rotten frames, areas of plaster coming off the ceilings, and come winter they are quite damp, causing frequent coughs and colds.

As many families are on social security, adequate heating becomes a luxury they cannot afford".

Homeless scandal

But many people in the borough have no home at all. 1,700 people are living in hostels for the homeless, which have been a traditional feature of life in this area. However it took a cam-

paign by local residents' groups and media coverage to expose the scandal of Princess Lodge, a hostel in Limehouse. 900 people were found to be living in this one building, privately managed by landlords.

15,000 are unemployed in Tower Hamlets. On the Isle of Dogs male unemployment is as high as 30 per cent and for young people 60 per cent.

75 years ago Jack London the socialist novelist wrote of the workers of this area as the 'people of the abyss'. Capitalism in the eighties is pushing them back down.

Party adopts fighting policy

TOWER HAMLETS is an overwhelmingly Labour area, and the borough council has a responsibility to protect the standard of life of ordinary workers from big business exploitation.

Unfortunately the council has traditionally been dominated by Labour's right. They have failed to stand up firmly to the private developers or to oppose the attacks on services by central government. The door has been opened for Liberal gains this May.

But now the Tower Hamlets Labour Party Local Government Committee has adopted for this year's election manifesto, the fighting stance adopted by Liverpool council last year. This programme includes:—

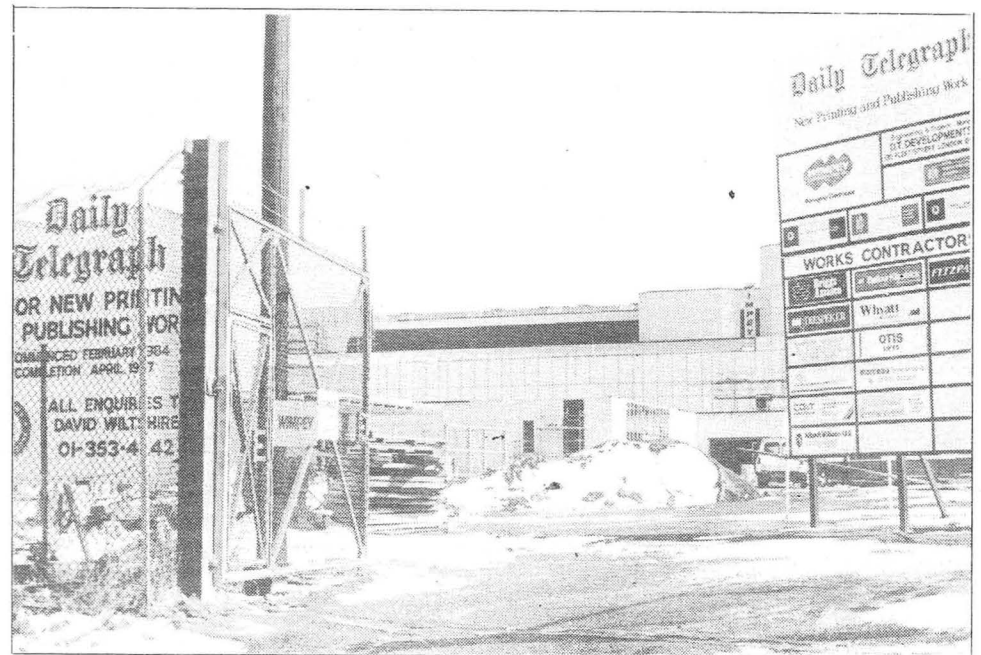
★ A real no cuts budget including the filling of vacant posts.

★ The creation of new jobs including a training programme for young workers.

★ The creation of a capital works direct labour organisation, and the maximum use of the existing DLO.

★ A crash capital programme of housing rehabilitation and new building.

Local workers are determined that the Labour Council implements these policies to the full.



The Daily Telegraph aims to follow Murdoch to the East End.

Manhattan transfer

THE STORY started in a pub on the Isle of Dogs.

A London based market research firm Dewe Rogerson invited eight hand-picked "typical" islanders out for an evening's drinks. The chat turned out to be a two hour question and answer session.

The rather bemused islanders were given £10 each for their opinions about the proposed "Wall Street on water" development on Canary Wharf, about the takeover of the island by finance capital and the "gentrification" schemes in general.

Then the researchers dropped their bombshell; they

wanted the Isle of Dogs to change its name! Locals were indignant. Ted Johns, secretary of the Association of Island Communities told the press: "They will have an awful lot of trouble trying to put this 'dog' to sleep".

He explained that although the Isle of Dogs is an 'odd name' it has been used for centuries; nobody quite knows the reason but local people love to theorise about it. "To change it would be like calling the Tower of London 'Dallas Tower' because it suits the Americans". He added "What are they going to call the island, 'Manhattan Two'?"

One name has been seriously considered, Jamestown, the name of the first American town, already in use for a luxury housing development at Blackwall Basin.

Dewe Rogerson denied the discussion had anything to do with a name change. Their spokesman Kevin Soady said: "We are handling public relations for the Canary Wharf developers and we commissioned the qualitative research. It was a one-off market research exercise, the results of which are for internal use and confidential". Translated into vernacular English that means it's a bleedin' liberty.

By Julie Morgan
(Millwall Labour Party)

Miners' Strike '84-85

Bitter the

THE PATH of history, like that of struggle, does not follow a straight, uninterrupted line. It is conditioned by leaps and catastrophes, victories and defeats. The most important thing for the working class is that the lessons of each and every struggle are understood and assimilated.

The path of struggle which the miners took in 1984-5 is one every section of workers will have to tread in the future. As capitalism moves deeper into crisis the ruling class and their representatives will launch further attacks on the working class. They will attempt to take away past concessions won by the workers in order to safeguard their economic and political interests.

One year after the miners' strike the issue of pit closures, job losses and the destruction of communities still dominates in the coalfields. We look back not to reminisce, but to draw the necessary lessons to ensure victory in the future struggle.

Thatcher and her class intended to break the back of the NUM and in doing so to demoralise the rest of the trade union movement, hoping for an 'industrial Falklands', a short sharp victory over the miners.

Coal stocks were built up and plans made for its mass importation. £10 billion was spent switching power stations to dual oil and coal firing. Scab haulage firms like Yuill and Dodds in Scotland, employing mainly non-unionised and previously unemployed drivers were primed for their role in transporting coal by road.

The regulations for social security payments to strikers were changed and a centrally controlled national police network set up. Ian MacGregor, a notorious union breaker from America, moved from the destruction of the steel industry to chair the National Coal Board.

Meanwhile the Tories prepared the legal ground with a series of



Ray Chadburn, Notts NUM President.

parliamentary legislation designed to shackle the movement hand and foot to judicial dictat.

1984 dawned, spring approached and the scene was set for confrontation. The Tories, having backed down in 1981 to allow themselves more time to prepare, were determined revenge would be exacted on the miners for their defeat of the Heath government in the early '70s.

In 1981 the Yorkshire Area of the NUM had voted by 80 per cent to fight the closure of any pit. Cortonwood pit had been guaranteed at least another five years production. In a deliberate act of provocation the pit's closure was announced early in 1984.

All the anger and frustration that had been building up in the Areas during the course of the overtime ban and the willingness to struggle displayed in the eight-week Monktonhall strike finally burst to the surface. **The strike that the cynics and faint-hearts from the right wing to the ultra-left had predicted would never happen, exploded into life.**

WHATEVER else can be said about the year 1984-5, it has ushered in a new epoch of struggle. Nothing, politically, socially or economically, will ever be the same

again. It marked the beginning of a new, decisive stage in the historical reckoning of which the last word has yet to be spoken.

For hundreds of thousands of the working class, older workers, youth and women, the veil of illusion which the system creates was ripped from their eyes. A priceless political awakening has been gained. Acting as a catalyst for the burning hatred of workers for the Tories, the dispute affected almost every layer of society.

Like a stone thrown into a pond, the ripples spread out and galvanised wider sections of the class. Whole new sections of workers were blooded in struggle.

Millions of pounds were collected for the miners in the unions, workplaces, meetings and on the street. Support groups were set up in many towns and cities. An opinion poll towards the end of the strike indicated that despite the campaign of the media against the NUM and its leaders, 40 per cent of trade unionists supported the miners.

Leadership

BUT IN every struggle the decisive factor is the role of leadership. Millions of workers are organised in the labour and trade union movement. The leaders of the movement have enormous power and authority. Yet despite this they were unable or unwilling to give the assistance necessary for a miners' victory.

The excuse of leaders on the left and right was that they couldn't deliver. They attempted to shift the responsibility for their own failure to explain, persuade and mobilise on to the shoulders of the rank and file. **The opposite was the case. At any stage of the dispute even a hesitant call from the tops of the labour movement would have provoked a massive response.**

Instead these 'statesmen' preferred to play the part of neutral arbiters seeking conciliation between both sides. They misunderstood or did not wish to understand the nature of the conflict—a fundamental conflict between the interests of capitalism and the working class.

Without the pressure of the rank and file, the right wing TUC leaders would certainly have sold out the strike in its infancy. But what of the left leaderships? With the honourable exceptions of the seamen and the rail workers the campaign generally amounted to no more than a series of circulars and vague calls for blacking of coal without practical steps to see it implemented. Despite their genuine willingness to help the miners they lacked the most elementary understanding of tactics, strategy and methods to carry it through.

Both the dockers and the rail workers were in or near to action during the miners' strike. Thatcher personally intervened in the rail pay negotiations in order to head off the opening up of a second front. The TGWU alone has the power to cripple British capitalism. Unfortunately its machinery was never fully turned towards decisive action for the miners.

During the dockers' strike when the Tory press were screaming about 'states of emergency' a bold move to link the two disputes would have fundamentally shifted the situation. The Tories were on the rocks. But the opportunity was allowed to slip.

In November 1984, after the British Leyland strike yet another chance was lost. Having been fined £200,000 under the Tories' anti-union legislation the TGWU leadership, instead of organising all-out strike action in defence of their funds and in solidarity with the miners, sat back with folded arms and watched the sequestrator plunder their funds.

THE LESSON of leadership applies to the National Union of Mineworkers as much as to any section of the movement. Undoubtedly the miners' leadership stand head and shoulders above the rest of the trade unions.



NUM President Arthur Scargill.

Above all, Arthur Scargill's unbending will to struggle, in the face of appalling personal abuse and character assassination, was an inspiration to mining communities in every Area. Likewise, the leaders were inspired by the sacrifice and courage of the members and the mining communities.

However, the whole course and outcome of the strike proves that these qualities in themselves are not enough. Basic tactical and strategic mistakes were made by even the best NUM leaders.

The decision to pursue discussions with other trade union leaders, rather than issue clear calls for solidarity action, using the immense reservoir of ability within the union to approach and win over other workers to concrete support, did not achieve the necessary ends.

The demand for a 24-hour general strike was never taken up. Despite the enormous surge of support for the GCHQ workers' defence of trade union rights resulting from a similar call, the left leaders continued to argue that the members would not struggle.

If the NUM, with all its authority and respect, had made such a call, over the heads of the TUC and other right wing leaders if necessary, to the rank and file it could have won an earth-shaking response.

The decisive period came in the weeks after the TUC. The Tories were in a panic over the potential effect of Congress decisions and pushed the button on movement of scab coal stocks. Conferences, rallies, factory and workplace

meetings should have been organised. Teams of miners could have travelled the country explaining the need for solidarity action and the 24-hour general strike.

It would have given the working class a taste of its decisive power in society. It would have served as a warning shot across the Tories' bows and a warning of further wider action. The union chose instead to rely on TUC resolutions and general calls for support. **DECISIVE ASPECTS** of the dispute cannot be ignored. It is to the eternal shame of the NACODS' leadership that they failed to come to the aid of the NUM, preferring instead to negotiate a separate deal with the NCB, a deal which the Tories proceeded to rat on.

Nottinghamshire and the ballot issue must receive serious analysis within the union and the wider labour movement. Yorkshire was once a right wing Area. Only through systematic campaigning and explanation did the left eventually win a majority. There is no fundamental difference between miners in Yorkshire or Nottinghamshire. The only real difference is that the left in Notts have never organised effectively to break the power of the right.

Nottinghamshire

But one third of the Notts miners came out at the height of the strike. With different leadership the majority would have fought alongside the other Areas. **It was the lack of a mass, national, campaigning Broad Left in the NUM that left Notts open to the right wing.**

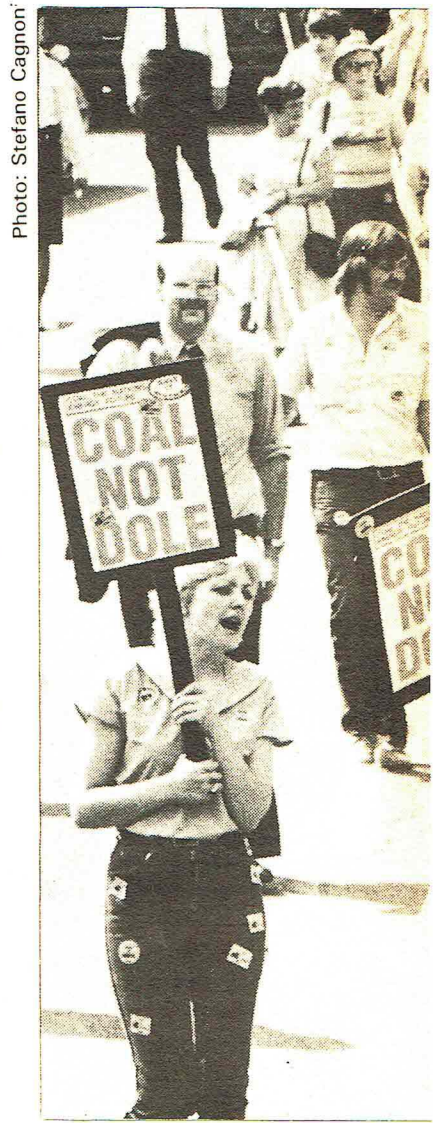
Given the historical traditions of Spencerism and decades of past right wing leadership special attention should have been given to Notts. Generally speaking, the left stayed outside.

The failure to carry out that work meant that the launching of mass pickets into Notts with the start of the strike was disastrous, resulting in the bitterness between striking and working miners.

No one can blame those miners, especially the youth, who went into Notts to appeal for solidarity. The fault lies firmly in the lap of the leadership. Orderly picketing teams should have been sent out, armed with propaganda material explaining the issues and showing how to campaign amongst the working miners.

Each group should have been prepared with the careful methods and fraternal arguments necessary. Mass picketing can be a vital focus of activity in any important dispute. But the failure to win over the majority of Notts miners shows that it should *always* be accompanied by mass propaganda and agitation among non-strikers. **THE FOCUS** of our opponents arguments then turned towards the question of the ballot. The Tories and the right wing hypocritically donned the mantle of 'democracy'.

To pose democracy as an abstract question is false and deliberately misleading. For the labour movement the main question is what tactic achieves and maintains the greatest unity in pursuit of working class interests.



Miners' wives march through London in

In the run-up to the strike, if an adequate campaign had been waged, a majority could have been won in the union for industrial action. It was lack of confidence in the membership that led to the 'rolling strike' strategy.

Once the fight had begun, however, and the majority of miners voted with their feet, the burning need to strengthen unity became the paramount consideration. Given continual failure to win Notts over, a ballot should have been called after the National Conference decision to reduce the majority required to 50 per cent plus one. A majority in that ballot would have won the majority of Notts miners to the strike.

Instead, Notts remained aloof from the struggle due to the treachery of mis-leaders like Lynk



NUM leaders accompanied by nurses and

Photo: Stefano Cagnon

Heritage



August 1984.

and Prendergast—the eventual outcome being the emergence of the scab UDM.

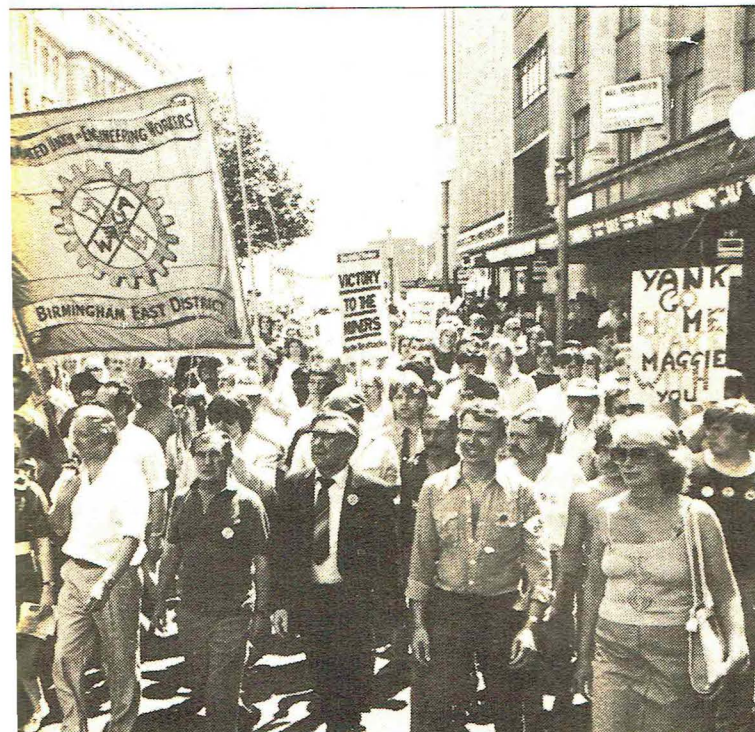
Labour leaders

A FINAL consideration must be the role of the leaders of the Labour Party. Their failure to give full backing to the strike and use their position to counter the propaganda war waged by the media and against Arthur Scargill in particular will never be forgotten in the coal fields.

Memories of being advised to comply with the rulings of Tory judges, of a grudging and late visit to a picket line by Neil Kinnock, the refusal to support the reinstatement of sacked miners; none of these will ever be erased from the minds of miners and their families.

The culmination of this came with the disgraceful attack on the strike and Arthur Scargill at the 1985 Labour Party conference as Kinnock also attacked Liverpool City Council and *Militant* in grovelling to the media and some illusory electoral 'middle ground'.

The labour movement owes a tremendous debt to the NUM. If Labour wins the next election, which appears the most likely outcome, it will be a direct result of the 1984-5 miners' strike. Thatcher won but at such cost that her government has only staggered on. Further damage to the Tories caused by the Westland affair has put them on the ropes. Bold action by Labour and the trade unions now could finish them off.



Engineers at Sattley Gate demonstration during the strike.

- ★ Build a mass, democratic Broad Left
- ★ Amnesty for all sacked miners
- ★ Regular election of all Officials on face-workers' pay
- ★ A Four day week with no loss of pay
- ★ Workers control and management of the NCB



Miner arrested after the battle of Orgreave. Photo: Sheffield Newspapers

'The phoney war?'

THE MINERS' strike of 1984-85 marked a decisive end to previously passive roles for many working class women.

The wives, girlfriends, sisters, daughters and mothers of miners were not prepared to sit at home as their men fought for jobs and pit communities. They joined the picket lines, addressed public meetings, raised funds and set up practical support stations. They won the admiration of workers throughout the world.

While the NUM has yet to formally recognise the great contribution of the women, by conferring Associate Membership, many feel this is sure to come in the future. *Bob Harker*, of Gateshead East Labour Party, spoke recently to one such woman.

EDNA DINNING, chairperson of the Gateshead Miners' Dependants' Support Group which fed and clothed over 500 miners and their families, reflects for a moment on the vital role the group played.

"As far as the decision to organise and set up the group goes, the endless collections, sleepless nights and generally day to day headaches, there's no regrets. **If the lads were to come out tomorrow the Gateshead Support Group would be there, only this time we'd be better organised because we'll have learnt through the experiences of '84 and '85.**

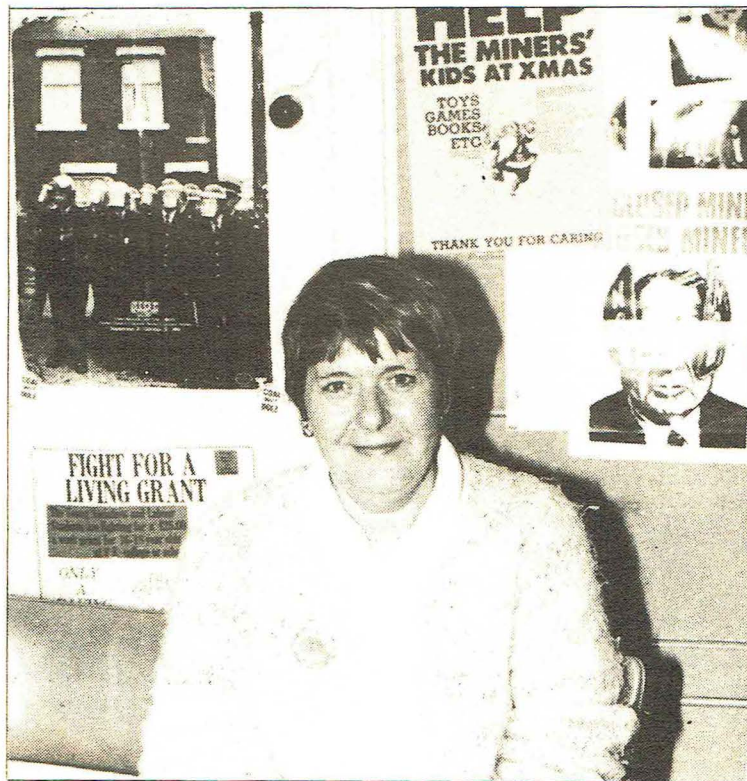
'Like a family'

Speaking from her home in Wardley on the outskirts of Gateshead where closure has already engulfed the nearby Monkton Coke Works, she turns from the window and continues. "The only regret Bobby lad, is we lost the round and now Monkton's fallen to the butcher's axe". And then more towards Thatcher than to me she adds in a bitter whisper, "Aye, but the battle's far from lost. **If she (Thatcher) thinks the NUM has fallen for ever then she's sadly mistaken**".

She apologises for "forgetting to offer a cup of coffee" and for the few moments the kettle's boiling we cheerfully chat about the time the group first got together in an upstairs room of a local club.

"It were funny," she says, "but I'll never forget when one of the lasses came in and said there was some sort of reporter chap outside wanting to do an interview. We all thought you were from the *Sun* or some other rag like that and when you popped your head round the door we were just about to chase you".

Handing over the coffee she



Edna Dinning.

Photo: Dave Pearson

laughs, "It's a bloody good job the first thing you said was 'I'm sympathetic and on your side'."

Turning to the many activities of the group during the strike, the collecting of the food from the wholesalers in vans lent by the council, the endless ringing of the telephone bells signalling another miner registering for a parcel and the countless other chores, Edna continues: "The coming together like a family, the solidarity and fighting spirit of all those involved with the groups, miners, their wives and people like yourself and not only in Gateshead but throughout the country was indeed tremendous. **Thatcher didn't count on that. Her mindless policies have brought us all closer together**".

Picking up the polished brass Davy Lamp from the small coffee table she smiles and adds in a sad but also determined note, "Aye, the flames are still burning. Maggie. The memory of those lads killed, the brutality of this rotten Tory government will not be forgotten, and the fight to reinstate the sacked lads and protect our jobs and communities will continue".

As I left Edna's house something seemed to come back to me from when I was a kid. A history teacher at school talking about events in Europe in 1939. "It became known as the phoney war" he had said, "a sort of defeat which only served to organise us and in the following greater struggle, victory was finally ours".

International Women's Day

Russia: women's movement born of class struggle

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S Day arose out of the battles in the USA for the eight-hour day and for women's right to vote. It was established in 1908 by the American Socialist Party. By 1910 the last Sunday in February had become recognised as "Women's Day".

Today, our celebration of International Women's Day should continue by looking at the struggles of women internationally and in the past. In this article KIM WADDINGTON examines the rich history of the women's movement in Russia.

THE RUSSIAN revolution was launched in February 1917 by women textile workers celebrating International Women's Day.

In fact, women workers had been to the fore in every major struggle in Russia from the 1870s onwards. The struggles of these women will provide inspiration, on this historic day, to millions of women worldwide who are fighting oppression today.

The first major influx of women into the factories took place in the 1860s. From the outset they faced tremendous hardship under the backward conditions of Russia.

Over 90 per cent of women were illiterate, and forced to work 12 to 18 hours a day. There was no paid pregnancy leave, so women often gave birth beside their work bench. They received only half the wages of men, resulting in serious malnutrition.

Under these terrible burdens, life expectancy was only 30 years.

Yet women did not let their conditions hold them down. From the moment they entered the factories, they showed how determined they were to fight.

Women workers were concentrated in the cotton industry. It was here that their struggle began. There were 176 strikes between 1870 and 1879, most of them textile mill strikes where up to half the workforce were women.

Political organisations were illegal. This meant the threat of arrest for the small

handful of revolutionaries, who included women such as Nadezhda Krupskaya (lifelong collaborator of Lenin) and Alexandra Kollontai, who helped smuggle leaflets into factories and raise money for strike funds.

Mass strike

In 1895 the Union of Struggle was formed, the forerunner of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (formed in 1898). Women played an important role from the start.

Nadezhda Krupskaya managed to make contact with some promising women workers, and urged them to lead others on the factory floor. As a result, there was a mass strike in the textile mills of St Petersburg in May to June 1896.

A pamphlet documenting this momentous struggle, *The Woman Worker*, written by Krupskaya, appeared in 1896.

Then the Tsarist police clamped down on the Union of Struggle, and its leading activists were exiled to Siberia. Despite the harshness of the regime, however, workers continued to struggle.

Between 1900 and 1901 the number of working women grew by 12,000, while the number of men decreased by 13,000. This explains the initial reluctance on the part of men to help organise women, as they saw

them as a threat to their jobs.

Up to this point there had been very little improvement in women's conditions. In 1900 *Iskra*, Marxist paper of the RSDLP, took up the question of women's inhuman working conditions.

It was these conditions which forced women out to the streets in 1901. For the first time they were joining the street fighting in the huge protests which took place. The Tsar responded by having both men and women shot down by the police or thrown into jail and flogged.

But that couldn't stop the huge strikes, the unrest at the universities and the peasant uprisings which swept Russia throughout 1903. Employers tried hiring more women to break the strike movement. From 1900-1910 the number of industrial workers increased by 141,000, of whom 88 per cent were women. But the tactic failed.

Solidarity and confidence

THE STRIKES of 1903 were brought to a peak in the crisis opened up by the Russo-Japanese war, which culminated in the 1905 revolution.

In January 1905 a procession of hundreds of thousands marched to the Tsar's Winter Palace. They were met with bullets. 3,000 people, including many

women and children, were killed on what became known as "Bloody Sunday".

But the workers, men and women, came back onto the streets with renewed anger. Strikes broke out all over Russia.

Due to their enormous participation in these strikes, women acquired more and more confidence. Kollontai wrote: "...women shook off their old servility, let their machines, and gave the strike movement a quite unprecedented sense of solidarity and confidence".

The sexual divisions created by capitalism between men and women workers were increasingly knocked down as women proved themselves to be heroic fighters. Men started to see them as equals. Working women now represented between 30 and 40 per cent of the workforce.

In the many strikes of the day, women took up demands to improve their position at work and in society - paid maternity leave; time off during the day to breastfeed infants; and creche provision in the factory. Some women also demanded equal pay.

During September, trade unions started to spring up quite rapidly. The St Petersburg Soviet (Council) of workers' deputies, under Trotsky's leadership, increased to 500 delegates representing 275,000 workers.

By December, however, the Tsar had rallied his forces. He arrested the entire



Alexandra Kollontai

soviet and closed down the party's papers. During the lockouts and battles which ensued, 620 were killed and many workers arrested.

Feminists and working women

THE DEFEAT of the workers' movement created favourable ground for the bourgeois feminists, who were beginning to arrive on the scene and appealing to the politically-awakened women. The fact that working women saw themselves as equal to men facilitated the rise of feminism over the next few years.

In 1906 the Moscow textile union, under leadership of the Bolsheviks (revolutionary tendency in the RSDLP) passed a resolution calling on trade unions to attract women on an equal basis with men. As Alexandra Kollontai explained, this resolution did more for working women than all the feminists' efforts.

And the feminists could not understand why their attempts to recruit their maids into their "Women's Union" failed. The fact that the maids' employers were in the same 'union' might have had something to do with it!

In the spring of 1907, despite the ever-growing threat of arrest, the Bolsheviks organised a series of women's meetings under the banner of the St Petersburg textile union. They were now officially committed to legal women's work. Kollontai and other party agitators would present 20-minute talks on maternity care, factory hygiene or workers' clubs. Meanwhile, the bourgeois

feminists continued to appeal to working women to join them in their struggle to win the right for propertied women to vote in Duma (parliamentary) elections. Only this, they said, would eventually improve working women's lives!

In 1906 this 'union' had 8,000 members - compared to the Bolsheviks whose membership had grown to 100,000 by 1907.

Though legal work was being beaten back, the regime still allowed the first All-Russian Women's Congress called by the feminists to take place at the end of 1908. This Congress heralded the breakup of the feminist movement.

Alexandra Kollontai spent a tremendous amount of time touring factories in the months before the Congress, persuading women workers to come to feminist meetings to heckle and put forward class ideas. As a result, many factory women attended the Congress.

What precipitated the split in the feminist movement was their loss of support among working women, who were being attracted to the wider labour movement. The feminist movement could no longer unite the different political interests of two such different classes.

As a factory woman at the Congress shouted: "What do you know of our lives, bowling along in carriages while we get splashed by the mud?"

By 1912 the illegal period was cut across by a series of strikes which involved many women. To begin with, it seemed that the men were only interested in their own demands. In one or two strikes they went back to work once their own demands had been won, even if their women fellow workers had not yet won



Women building workers in Moscow—still oppressed by the Stalinist bureaucratic regime.

Greek workers strike at austerity

HUNDREDS of thousands of Greek workers came out on a one-day general strike on 27 February against the austerity measures imposed by the PASOK (Socialist) government last October.

Air Olympia flights were grounded. Public transport, banks and even theatres were closed down in 18 cities and towns. In Athens, 20,000 workers marched on parliament to demand an end to the wage freeze and a return to free collective bargaining.

The strike was entirely the result of workers' anger at the government's policies and their pressure on their leaders to call action. Unfortunately, little was done by the Communist Party and PASOK left leaders at the head of the strike to coordinate an effective national movement.

The leaders raised no new demands except an end to the emergency measures, which has been demanded since October. No perspective of how this could be achieved was put forward to enthuse the workers.

As a result, no more than 60 per cent of the workers called out responded. To

many it seemed they would lose a day's pay without any obvious gain.

But the workers remain overwhelmingly willing to fight on a clear programme. If the strike had been linked to a demand for the government to nationalise the 200 top monopolies and transform the economy; if strike committees and councils of action had been set up throughout the country, millions of workers, peasants and youth could have been drawn into struggle.

The PASOK government point at their record deficit of £2.2 billion - 50 per cent more than they budgeted for - as an excuse for the wage freeze. They don't understand that this is a direct result of their own policy of trying to revive the ailing capitalist economy.

There is a warning to British workers in these events of the threat posed by right-wing Labour leaders, who hint that they would impose similar policies if they are returned to power.

But, as in Greece, enormous opposition would build up among British workers if a future Labour government tries to go down this road.

Mutiny in Egypt

THOUSANDS of conscript security police rioted in the streets of Cairo and other Egyptian towns last week. They were joined by crowds of civilians, whose anger at abysmal living conditions exploded into looting and burning of food shops, hotels and wealthy houses.

The mutinous troops are part of a 300,000-strong security police force. Units from three barracks and several police stations rebelled after a rumour that their term of conscription would be increased from three to four years.

The government imposed a curfew and moved in tanks

and armoured vehicles. Dozens of people died in the fighting that followed.

Egypt's economy has been hard hit by the halving of oil income in the last two years. Mass poverty has become even worse. Now the banks are pressuring the Mubarak government to abolish or severely cut food subsidies.

Riots stopped similar plans in Egypt in 1977 and 1984, and in Tunisia and Morocco in 1984. If Mubarak tries to enforce such measures, he would face the risk of massive new protests—and splits in the armed forces who would be expected to put them down.

Rowntree boss backs apartheid

THE COLLABORATION of British companies with the South African regime was glaringly exposed earlier this year when a director of Wilson Rowntree gave state evidence against four leaders of the militant South African Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU), on trial for their lives on charges of "treason".

Mr Alistair Lightbody, a director of Wilson Rowntree's plant in East London, SA (where 500 workers were sacked following a strike in 1981), accused SAAWU of causing "industrial unrest".

His complaint was that, before SAAWU appeared, there were only two or three incidents of "insubordination" per month. But after SAAWU organised the workers, this increased to two or three per day!

Moreover, Mr Lightbody recited, this was followed by work stoppages. In the bosses' language, active resistance by workers against their savage exploitation and

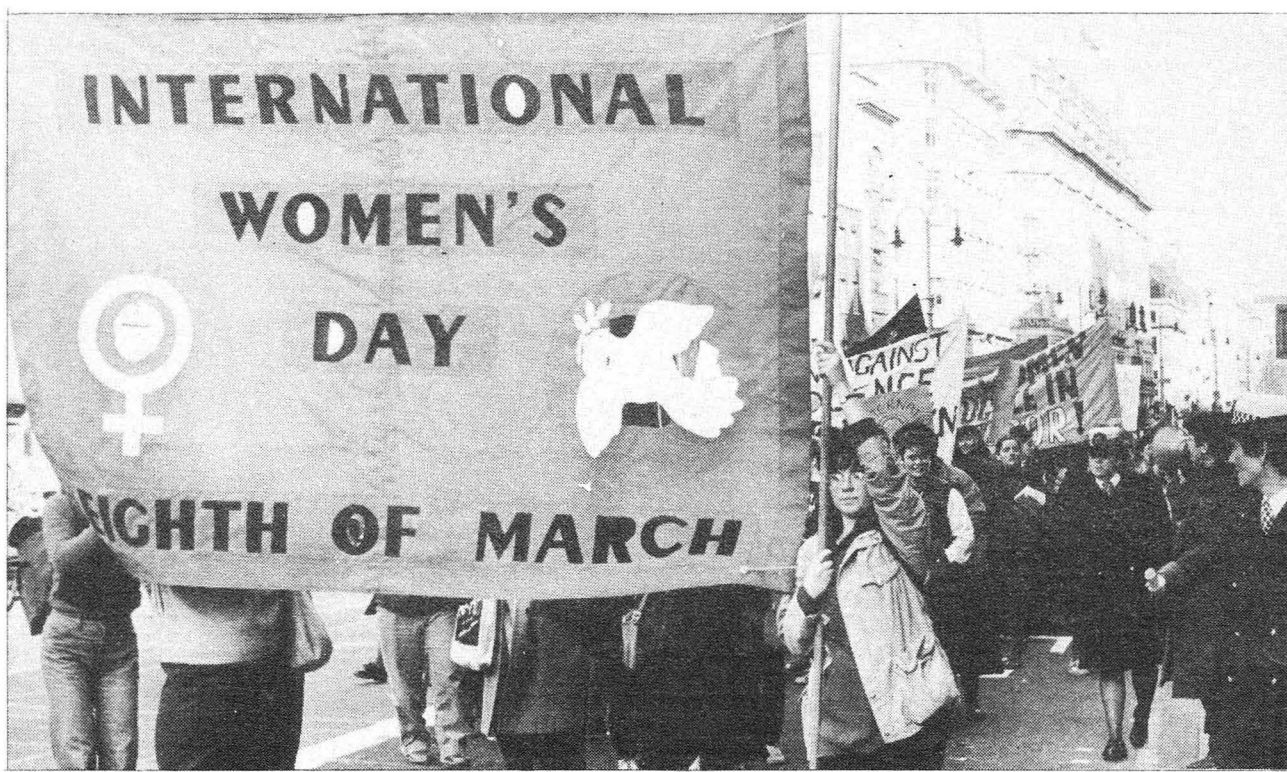
oppression is evidence of "treason".

The SAAWU leaders on trial are T. Gqweta, S. Njikelana, S. Kikine and D. Ngcobo. Originally they had been charged together with 12 leaders of the United Democratic Front with trying to overthrow the state and furthering the aims of the banned African National Congress. But the non-trade unionists have all been released.

SAAWU is now affiliated to the Congress of South African Trade Unions. Messages of support can be sent care of COSATU, P.O. Box 9451, Johannesburg 2000, South Africa.

Moses Mayekiso—correction.

The address for messages of support for MAWU in last week's *Militant* should have read: PO Box 9451 Johannesburg 2000, South Africa. We apologise to readers for inconvenience in re-directing messages.



The banner links International Womens Day with feminism and pacifism—but the movement was born out of women workers' revolutionary class struggles.



Krupskaya with Lunacharsky and Pokrovsky.

their demands.

However, the heroic determination of the women again came to the fore and helped to unite them with the men.

It was the Moscow Society of Factory and Plant Owners which first recognised this militancy among women. Being extremely concerned about the 'disruptive' influence of striking women, they conducted a survey in 1910 which observed a "characteristic feature—the energetic participation of women..."

Women started raising demands like wage increases, paid pregnancy leave, use of factory owners' bath houses and laundry facilities.

The united struggles gave women a new status. They were no longer prepared to accept sexual harassment or other degrading treatment. In 1913, at the Grisov factory in Moscow, a strike began because "the attitude of the factory administration is revolting. There is no other word for it than prostitution".

The Bolsheviks responded to this movement, and their new weekly *Pravda* included articles on working women. By January 1913 the articles developed into a women's section appearing in the paper every week.

Kollontai urged the women of St Petersburg to organise a demo for international women's day, and on 8 March thousands of women came out. This was the first time Russian women celebrated the day.

In 1914 the Bolsheviks (the idea was Lenin's) launched *Rabotnitsa* ("The Woman Worker"). It was printed on International Women's Day, despite the editorial board being ar-

rested, and promptly sold out all the 12,000 copies produced.

1914 dawned with street barricades and mass strikes. The workers' battles were reaching fever pitch, when World War I exploded onto the scene.

Revolutionary fervour was overtaken by a strong wave of patriotism and sabre-rattling by the regime. With workers' leaders internationally scurrying behind their 'own' capitalist governments, it seemed that only the Bolsheviks were unconditionally opposed to the imperialist war.

But by 1915 the Russian workers and peasants being sent to the front were becoming demoralised and surrendering in whole regiments.

In the cities women were rioting for bread. The factories recruited even more women to take the place of men - by 1917 women made up 40 per cent of the workforce.

Women in the revolution

IN 1917 the women textile workers in Petrograd (renamed from St Petersburg) came out a little early to celebrate International Women's Day. They had found out that workers had been locked out of the Putilov factory on 7 March, and responded by storming the streets.

Food riots and strikes swept the city. Soon housewives and families of soldiers were joining the demos.

Women workers appealed

talions' of women.

These defensive struggles prepared the Bolsheviks and the soviets for the taking of power by the working class on 25 October. This opened the way to dismantling the oppressive institutions of capitalism and feudalism, and transforming the position of women.

The Bolsheviks organised the first Congress of Petrograd Working Women, where Kollontai, now elected commissar (minister) of social welfare raised important demands to alleviate the heavy burdens on the woman worker.

Divorce was made easier under the workers' government. The introduction of the eight-hour day, along with a ban on nightwork and overtime, gave additional protection to women workers.

In 1919 the Bolsheviks set up a Women's Department. They also attempted to introduce public kitchens and central laundries.

But by now the country was in the turmoil of civil war. After years of war, with millions dead, industry decimated and starvation widespread, the working class was becoming exhausted.

This period saw the ebbing of workers' power, the growth of bureaucratic privilege among state officials, and the rise of Stalin as leader of this bureaucracy.

Yet, on the basis of state ownership and planning, backward Russia has been transformed into a huge industrial state, though at terrible cost to the workers and peasants.

Women today are far in advance of their illiterate mothers and grandmothers who stormed the barricades in 1917. But they are tied down by the chains of bureaucratic rule, and the new burdens of inequality and sexual discrimination which this has imposed on the working class.

Only a new revolution by the working class, to reconquer political power and establish democracy on the basis of the planned economy, can break these chains.

The whole history of the women's movement in Russia, and its outlook for the future, shows (in the words of Kollontai) "the fundamental compatibility of socialism and women's liberation".

Democratic Right

Dear Comrades,

Last week at a Student Union general meeting, *Militant* supporters put forward a resolution calling on NUS to issue a "vote Labour" call to students and to campaign for a Labour victory at the next election.

You can imagine our surprise, therefore, when the chairperson of the Labour Club was the first to oppose the motion, saying it was wrong for NUS to call on

students to vote Labour!

Other members of the Democratic Left—the group in the leadership of NOLS and NUS—also came forward to denounce the motion as a "Militant stunt just to show them up." Well it certainly did. Many socialists were disgusted by their attitude.

Yours fraternally
Karen Acton
University College
Swansea

Letters

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

Right-wing losing ground on IOW

The Editor
Militant

Vic Dale claims in his letter which you published in your February 14 issue that the Isle of Wight CLP "has not put out one single leaflet" since his expulsion, and that the party is "losing members hand over fist".

The fact is that since Dale's expulsion the party has issued 2,500 copies of

three different leaflets. As for losing members, if that were the case perhaps Dale has some explanation as to why I have just had to order 70 more membership cards? Vic Dale deserves this year's Nobel Prize for fiction.

Yours sincerely
Robert Jones
Secretary Isle of Wight CLP

Dear Comrades,

In his reply to my letter Robert Jones fails to address his remarks to the question of whether or not the CLP is losing members, but tries instead to divert attention by telling us how many extra cards he has ordered, as if the one were directly linked to the other.

As for the leafletting, even if this was organised by the CLP and not (as is the case) by individual branches, whether his vague references mean that 2,500 or 7,500 were distributed (I doubt the latter) he can hardly claim that the CLP has been engaged in an unremitting class war, under his leadership.

Recently I reported that a wave of anger was growing

in the branches at the way in which the party's time had been given over solely to the witch-hunt. This continues to grow and the latest expression of it came at the branch AGMs where four out of six branches refused to nominate Jones for the party secretary. Add that to the splits on the EC and there are problems ahead for Jones, whether or not he is toppled at the CLP AGM is immaterial, what matters is the growing influence of the ideas of Marxism in the CLP and we'll continue to take up issues that concern working class people young or old, whatever the right-wing may do to try and stop us.

Yours fraternally
Vic Dale
Isle of Wight

More valuable than gold

A terrible thing is a scab
A scab is a terrible thing
Its backbone is made out of glass
Its brains are made out of string
It's a traitor, a coward
A thing with no conscience
It's all these things and then
The most terrible thing about scabs is
They masquerade as men.



This is just one excerpt from the book of childrens' writings about the recent miners' strike. The stories and poems from miners' children give an insight into their awareness of the issues behind the strike.

Costing only £1.50 (plus 50p p&p) the book marks the anniversary of the strike and is very enjoyable reading. *More Valuable Than Gold* is available from MVTG, 10 West Bank, London N16 5DG, cheques payable to 'More Valuable Than Gold' all proceeds go to Women Against Pit Closures.

A wonderful thing is a picket
A picket's a wonderful thing
His back is strong and proud
He uses his brain to think.
He is brave, he's courageous
He looks to the future
He's all these things and plus
The most wonderful thing about pickets is
That they belong to us.

Jane Petney,
Age 14, Nottinghamshire



David Blunkett arrives at Labour Party headquarters where the National Executive Committee moved towards expelling members of Liverpool District Labour Party. Photo: Dave Sinclair

Kinnock bails out Tories

Dear Comrades,

Militant supporters have always claimed that witch-hunts hinder the fight against the Tories. A graphic example of this appeared today when the report of the inquiry into Liverpool DLP was sent to NEC members. This gave certain TV commentators the chance to ask about the alleged (a word they never used) "corruption and malpractice" in Liverpool Labour Party.

This received wide attention in the media. On the same day Norman Fowler announced his pension and

supplementary benefit increases—10p on child allowance, 40p on old age pensions etc. This one per cent rise he presented as "in line with inflation."

Yet instead of Labour pressing home its advantage after the Westland affair and nailing these Tory lies right there and then, the opportunity slipped no doubt like more opportunities will slip unless the witch-hunts are defeated.

Yours fraternally
Dugald McKinnon
Newcastle under Lyme

Attacking socialists

Dear Comrades,

I happened to watch the last of a Channel Four series on the welfare state. It was produced by a Sheffield film co-op and was based on that city. One startling feature was the number of families condemned to live in dreary blocks of flats like prison blocks. What they desired most was a council house

with a garden.

Liverpool is tackling the housing problems. Liverpool tenants have a real chance of their housing desires being met.

Is the reason Blunkett showed little real support for Liverpool in its battle, the result of his own obvious capitulation in Sheffield? Perhaps he fears his tenants may get the Liverpool bug and begin to campaign and demand real socialist action.

Yours fraternally
Bob Edwards
Harlow CLP

Police violence at Wapping

Dear Comrades,

On Saturday 15 February, the London YS organised a march from Tower Hill to Wapping. The march was peaceful and good natured until the police moved in. When the march tried to picket the plant the police charged in, knocking anyone in their way to the ground. The snatch squads were sent in to frighten the pickets off.

The police were picking on the weakest sections of the crowd. Mainly women or those separated from the crowd. I saw police kicking, pushing, swearing, punching and pulling people's hair.

I was arrested. After I had been finger-printed, photographed, searched and locked in a cell on my own for one and a half hours I was allowed to go.



Police at Wapping move in with horses to break-up the picket and arrest anyone who gets in the way. Photo: Dave Sinclair

I am a teenage girl who does not live in London and it was one o'clock in the morning.

Yours fraternally
A YS member
Stevenage.

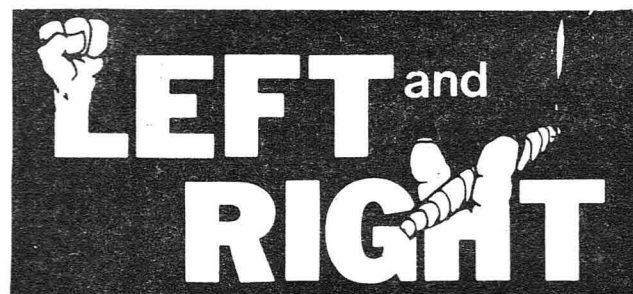
'No-pay' industry

Dear Comrades,

Last week Thamesmead Motor Centre was criticised in the High Court for sending one of its forecourt attendants home penniless as a result of him having his wages deducted to cover bill shortages. Anthony Barratt, the employee concerned, had his entire wage of £55.90 withheld one week and another £20 the next week because the bill was short and his firm, "naturally assumed he was to blame".

This sort of action by firms in the garage industry is typical of the conditions facing workers in what is a mainly non-union industry.

Yours fraternally
Andy Walker
Redcar LPYS



Labour takes Moscow gold
LABOUR'S RIGHT-WING often accuse *Militant* of taking 'Moscow gold'. *Labour Weekly* (28/2/86) carried an article reporting that the Labour Party NEC had passed a statement welcoming Gorbachev's proposals on nuclear weapons. An acknowledgment of his democratic regime perhaps, or could it have something to do with the full-page advert for *Soviet Weekly* on the facing page bringing £946 into their coffers?

One out all out
WALLASEY LABOUR group were on to a winner when they moved to change the Tory controlled council's policy on rating empty properties. Tory councillor David Fletcher agreed to withdraw from the debate because of possible 'financial interests' in the issue. A further ten Tory councillors then followed suit including the mayor, leaving Labour to win by ten votes.

Holding onto the purse strings
NATIONALLY THE DHSS have a fund of £1.7 million to help the old and needy meet their fuel bills, just as well considering that this February was reported to be the coldest for almost 40 years. However, despite this, only three families have received any of the allocated funds—totalling less than £100.

Contributors include Steve Billcliff.

Transport Act cuts bus wages

THE 1985 Transport Act privatising the passenger bus services and reintroducing 'de-regulation' after 50 years is exposed as an exercise in wage-cutting and job butchery.

The National Bus Company is being broken up prior to being sold off and some NBC workers have already been made redundant. In West Yorkshire workers have been engaged in industrial action in protest against the introduction of 'mini bus' services with mini wages.

Passenger Transport Executives (PTE's) are also being broken up into 'freestanding companies'.

300 redundancies are planned by Tynes & Wear PTE with 2,000 announced by Greater Manchester PTE. Thousands more are earmarked on Merseyside and South Yorkshire.

"Arms length"

The municipal sector is made up of bus undertakings controlled by local councils. These have to be formed into private companies "at arm's length" from the councils. This means the council will own the shares, select a board of governors and run the company at a profit.

Over the years, the union and employers negotiated national wage rates and conditions at the National Joint Industrial Council (NJIC). When the 1986 claim was submitted last September the employers replied by withdrawing from the NJIC no doubt influenced by the award of pay rises between 8 and 12 per cent won by Local Authority Manual workers. Their federation

By a Lancs T&GWU Shop Steward

voted overwhelmingly for withdrawal and to negotiate locally with individual branches. This must have been with the connivance of Labour-controlled councils. The Labour Party leadership should condemn this action particularly having only recently condemned the Tories for the abolition of Wages Councils.

At a delegate conference in November the TGWU stewards unanimously passed a resolution calling for a ballot on industrial action. There then followed two futile meetings of the now defunct NJIC before another delegate conference was convened two weeks ago.

By this time about a dozen local branches had begun individual negotiations. The conference voted in favour of the ballot proceeding and supported a 24 hour national Strike followed by further national stoppages. The platform had recommended 'regional days of action'.

The responsibility of campaigning for a 'Yes' vote will fall upon the stewards who will have difficulty explaining why some branches have broken ranks. One branch at Lincoln has 'settled' on a 46 hour week.

The TGWU leadership, even at this late stage, should be campaigning to unite all sections of bus workers to fight for a common minimum wage.

Save on Safety

REAGAN'S DE-REGULATION of airline services in the USA has led to a record number of accidents and 'near misses'. His political bedmate, Thatcher, has followed suit with our bus services. The result will be the same: costs cut at the expense of safety and maintenance.

Garage workers and fitters will be shown the door. Maintenance intervals will expand and records will be

falsified. Profit, not service, will determine a route. The Tories call this 'liberalisation'.

For many years it has been Labour Party and TUC policy to unify and integrate all means of transport throughout the country. Little has been actually done by previous Labour governments and the current dictum of 'impossibilism' does not offer much hope for the future.

where over 80 per cent voted to fight the closure.

The closure of the depot is only part of proposed 2,000 redundancies in the Greater Manchester Area, due to cuts in central government funding. The union sees this not only as an attack on their own jobs, but an assault on the services of the local community. The mood of the men is clear; 'Enough's enough—now's the time to fight'.

at Barking. Hornchurch garage is threatened with closure and the 145 route earmarked for private tender.

Management here have threatened more routes to be put out to tender unless workers accept worse conditions. It is important that the fight to keep garages open, maintain conditions and oppose privatisation are all linked together.



Working class people will lose their cheap transport.

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

Hull's Labour council apes Murdoch

SINCE THE passing of the Transport Act privatising public transport, busworkers up and down the country have been attacked over jobs and conditions. Hull City transport drivers have now been involved in a three month dispute over holiday pay and entitlement.

Drivers feared that accrued holidays would not be honoured or not paid at current rates after the setting up of the management board required under the Act. They asked the local Labour council for such guarantees but

none were given, so drivers were involved in a series of one day strikes up to Christmas.

'No strike'

With the involvement of national TGWU officials, an agreement was reached in January. That was until the national officials returned to London when the general manager of City Transport decided he could not agree with the union's interpretation of the agreement. This rekindled 'lagging support

from the drivers who embarked on a series of lightning stoppages.

This led to vicious attacks not only by management, which is demanding "No strike" agreements before privatisation, but by Labour councillors, especially the chairman of the council's personnel committee. He has since been called upon to resign by North Hull Labour Party and the Hull Trades Council. The *Hull Daily Mail* reported that the committee has decided that unless an agreement was reached by

the next meeting all 600 drivers would get dismissal notices. This from a Labour council.

Any such attempt will be met head on and opposition will gain support of other trade unionists. But it shows some Labour councils prefer to follow the methods of Shah and Murdoch rather than trying to defend their workforce from Tory legislation.

By Colin Sowter
(TGWU bus steward, personal capacity)

"Keep them wheels rolling"

THE CLEANER.

The bulk of my job is on the night-shift, sweeping and mopping the coaches out. In summer the *Rapide* vehicles (long distance express coaches—Ed) get priority over the service buses. That's when the complaints flood in.

If the weather is very cold the buses are started up and left ticking-over. The exhaust fumes have you wheezing and choking in no time. If the weather is hot or dry you find the buses get very dusty and you have to wear a mask. Even so, when you blow your nose the product is all black.

THE GREASER

I work regular nights, Sunday to Thursday from 10.00-06.00 greasing, changing and tapping oils and checking batteries.

There are five pits in the depot with two usually blocked with vehicles undergoing maintenance. Not all the pits have pumps to supply the oil you need (engines, gear boxes and axles all have separate lubricants) so there's quite a bit of carrying with cans to do. No 'new technology' here!

Being as we're a nationalised company there are some good points. The buses have to be checked every 14 days, which is company policy anyway, unlike cowboy operators who arrange for their entire fleet to be 'on tour' when they hear of a visit from the Ministry of Transport. However, the bureaucracy of this type of



South Yorks transport workers hand in a petition to Downing Street.

nationalisation means we've had 'buses' in for checks which were actually in Switzerland on tour.

The work that is given us on nightshift is mundane. As one fitter said: "We're like mushrooms, kept in the dark and covered in manure!"

The boredom on nights leads to pranks. A tailor's dummy dressed in overalls was put on the back seat of a bus and gave the cleaner palpitations when she came up the stairs. Another lad put on a luminous mask and sat in the toilet of a *Rapide* waiting for the cleaner to open the door.

Night shift gets called the 'married man's shift' but it should be 'divorced man's shift'. If you want a nervous breakdown, ulcer or in-

dustrial accident—our shift's for you!

It's bad when you have to work a weekend especially Friday or Saturday. You're going to work when everyone else is going out. When you're taking the bus on a test run in your nice oily overalls you can watch everyone else enjoying themselves.

Management are the limit. With university degrees in 'transport policy' they come and go quicker than Italian governments. It's small wonder that older workers hark back to the time when the company was a small family firm and everybody knew everyone else.

Recently an Inspector died and soon after his funeral two junior managers went to

the widow to ask for his 'privilege pass' and uniform back! One night in another depot, a senior manager was spotted in a parked car with a pair of binoculars spying on the workers. Someone phoned the police reporting a 'Peeping Tom' and he spent hours at the police station waiting for the General Manager to get him out!

One of the staff, who grasses to the management, excelled himself recently by confusing a booking. Passengers on a Mystery Trip were a long time on the motorway and asked the driver where they were going: "Paris" was the reply.

By National Bus
TGWU workers

Manchester

TGWU WORKERS at the Northenden Bus Depot in Wythenshawe, Manchester voted overwhelmingly to fight the closure of their workplace, due to go in October this year.

Seeing the vicious tactics of the bosses, the workers' attitude has hardened, clearly shown in a recent ballot

Barking

FRIDAY 28 February saw strikes at both Barking and Hornchurch garages writes Terry Pye of Barking LPYS.

Barking busworkers are sick of management's heavy-handedness and the erosion of previously flexible attitudes.

A work to rule is in force

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

Industrial Reports

Leyland strikes at Unipart depots

Coventry

WORKERS AT BL's Unipart depot in Coventry staged a two-day strike in defence of their convenor last week.

In a case that is suspiciously similar to victimised steward Ian Schofield at Land Rover, John Hughes, Labour candidate for Coventry North East in the next election, was suspended and then sacked.

Dave Nellist, Coventry South East MP, tabled a parliamentary motion opposing the sacking which was signed by 55 MPs. The Coventry Evening

Telegraph reported the reason for John's victimisation as his opposition to a proposed sponsorship deal with Lamborghini and preparations for the privatisation of BL.

The Unipart workers are also threatening strike action next week over a long-running pay dispute. Thanks to the pressure applied to them, management have reinstated John Hughes, but only to hear his appeal against his victimisation. Union officials are cracking down on opponents of their privatisation plans, using witch-hunting techniques borrowed from Labour's right-wing. Workers at all

BL plants must brace themselves for another "Red Robbo" style offensive.

The TGWU, to which both victimised men belong, must publicise their cases throughout the car industry and fight for their unconditional reinstatement. They must prepare BL workers for a battle to defend their union rights and fight off privatisation.

In a separate dispute, 500 AUEW members at the Armoured Vehicles manufacturer have been locked out for refusing to accept a four per cent pay offer with strings attached.

By Tony Cross

Cowley

A TWO-day strike by 550 manual employees at the British Leyland Unipart depot at Cowley is the latest move in a long line of industrial action in pursuance of their pay claim.

Since last November, with the full backing of the workforce, senior reps of the AUEW and TGWU have been seeking a settlement bringing parity with other Leyland employees.

Already the unions have won major concessions by making the company back down on such proposals as: changing the hours of 80 workers without consulta-

tion, making employees clean their own work areas and having new employees paid over £30 less than other workers (taking into account bonus payments).

They will be saving a considerable sum by making 270 workers redundant. But now have said, in registered letters sent to homes whilst employees were at work, saying that anyone not returning to work on Tuesday will be open to dismissal, will lose all back pay and will no longer be considered for voluntary redundancy.

These proposed redundancies will mean an increase in work levels beyond established maximum standards, for which

the company will only pay £6 as opposed to the £17 that the unions seek for parity (although bonus short-falls mean that Unipart's workers are on average £27 behind the rest of British Leyland).

Workers voted 419 to 35 in an official ballot to refuse the company's offer and seem set to continue with strikes and overtime bans, with the much appreciated solidarity of cleaning and office staff until their wages match their conditions.

Messages of support to: Roy Smith or Pat Evans, c/o Unipart House, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2PG.

By Willie Richards
(Oxford LPYS)



New NCU general secretary with top media 'communicator' Sir Robin Day at Labour Party Conference—more his scene than sharing the problem of the rank and file. Photo: Militant

Witch-hunter Golding wins but right have no answers

THE ELECTION of John Golding MP as general secretary of the National Communications Union is a major setback for defence of jobs and conditions in British Telecoms.

During his campaign Golding made it clear that he would be prepared to negotiate job losses in return for 'benefits' to those who remain. This sets the tone for the leadership of this union in the next five years.

Activists in the union have to draw a balance sheet of the strengths and weaknesses revealed in the election campaign.

Golding received 41,350 votes, 52 per cent of those cast. Phil Holt, the Broad Left candidate took 24 per cent with 18,559 votes.

The original favourite, David Norman, the union's general treasurer who was portrayed as the 'moderate' candidate, was beaten into third place with 13,068 votes (16 per cent). There were three other candidates. Total votes cast were 79,130 out of the union's 160,000 members.

Golding has spent the last five years preparing for this campaign. He used his position as political officer of the union, particularly during the political fund ballot campaign, to create a national reputation.

He used the backing of the headquarters' bureaucracy and particularly a personal

letter to union members from Bryan Stanley, the union's retiring general secretary, to good effect. This was combined with an estimated election expenditure of £12,000 on national literature alone.

His lengthy campaign was not matched by the Broad Left. This was the first ballot held under the individual workplace system. Although much good work was done in some areas, the task of reaching beyond the activists proved too much for the Broad Left at this stage.

An outstanding example of what could have been achieved was the production of 100,000 leaflets by Broad Left member John Moynihan in London for national distribution.

Left's weakness

On the other hand, it was always understood that the Broad Left's local campaign in London was key to the outcome. Unfortunately, initial analysis of the voting shows that the Broad Left did not win the votes there it needed.

As a left-led area of the union, it indicates that there was an air of complacency among some Broad Left activists, who failed to convince the membership.

On a national level, compared with Golding's long term campaign the left began with the disadvantage of not being entirely united around

Holt's candidature at the outset.

Sections of the left influenced by the Communist Party only joined the Broad Left campaign at the end, if at all. The only clear exception to this is the Glasgow area which worked vigorously for Holt.

Nevertheless, the Broad Left has made significant advances during the campaign. Holt, the youngest candidate and in his first national campaign, standing on a platform of a workers' representative on a workers' wage, was well received at meetings throughout the country. He is now established as a widely respected and nationally-known figure.

The issues highlighted by the Broad Left will not go away. Golding's inevitable failure to defend the members' interests in crucial battles over new technology and management attacks will rebound on him.

The voting in this election shows a sharp polarisation in which the so-called moderate David Norman's vote collapsed. On this occasion Golding's national reputation and the mood within the union ran for him. Whatever temporary setbacks now follow only prepare the ground for a massive swing to the left in the future.

By Bill Boyle

Welsh Enterprise

SINCE 1979 Britain's first and largest enterprise zone, in Swansea, has seen an influx of warehouses and superstores—70 per cent of the zone is service industry, most employing less than a hundred workers.

Meanwhile the basic industries that used to dominate the area have been devastated by Tory policies. Out of the 20,000 jobs lost in manufacturing industry in West Glamorgan between 1979 and 1984, 11,500 were lost in metal manufacture alone.

Swansea Foundry Ltd is the latest in a long list of casualties, and looks set to shed most of its 57 workers. We spoke to Glyn Jenkins, AUEW convenor at the plant, who pointed to chronic lack of investment as one of the reasons for closure:

"Only four new machines have been in-

stalled in the last 30 years," he told us, looking round at the crumbling buildings and rusty machinery. "We rely on work contracted out, but now UNIFLOC have told us they can get the work done cheaper elsewhere".

If the works is uncompetitive, it's not because the men are 'pricing themselves out of a job'—a tradesman is getting £112 gross for a 40 hour week. For many, the sack will mean they can get more from the DHSS, while even now some are entitled to claim FIS after 39 hours.

Local union officials have done little to publicise the closure or give the men a lead. "Nobody has recommended to the workforce that they should fight", said Glyn.

By Roy Davies and Bill Williams

Home office passport pay

HOME OFFICE clerical workers in the Passport Office, as reported in *Militant* last week, voted 221 to 149 for all-out strike in response to Tory proposals to abolish an allowance worth £530 per annum.

However, CPSA's National Dispute's Committee, dominated by General Secretary Alistair Graham, immediately refused official

backing.

Graham bored the delegation from the section committee into a stupor with his version of 'new realism'—the defeat of the miners, the defeat of Newcastle DHSS, the 'victory' of the teachers(?). His conclusion was that the vote should be used for more negotiations. Brilliant in theory—except the big bad government won't negotiate.

Supported by assistant secretary John Ellis, Graham has ordered a further ballot on the question of 'all-out' strike. Meanwhile they have endorsed a programme of

one-week strikes in each passport office. They are no doubt confident that members will be sufficiently despondent, not to mention confused, to enable the 'correct' result to be achieved.

Graham and Ellis are in for a shock. Broad Left members in the Home Office have not only campaigned for a successful vote, but will use the issues to expose their role and explain the need for a Broad Left General Secretary accountable to the membership.

By Larry O'Callaghan
(Home Office CPSA, personal capacity)

Welsh slate demo

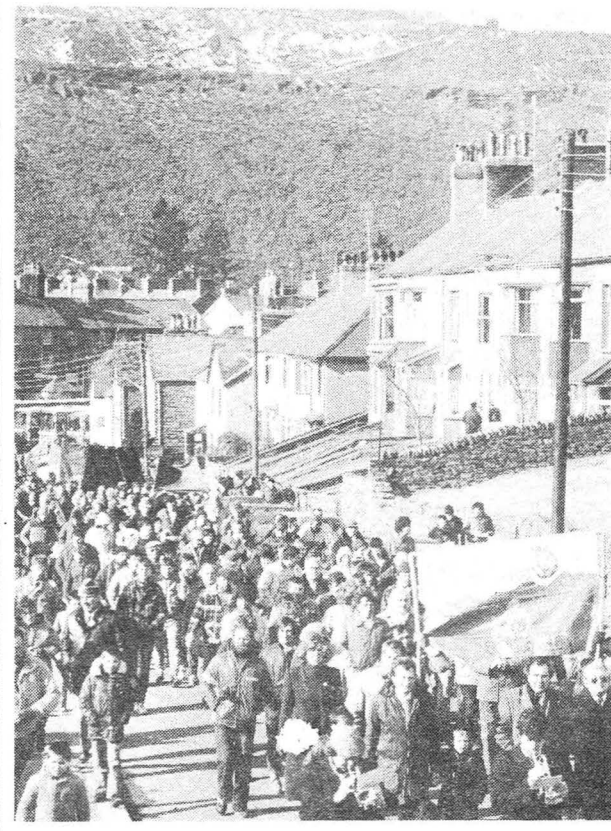


Photo: John Harris (FL)

A MARCH and rally took place on 2 March in Blaenau Ffestiniog in support of 42 slate quarrymen who have been on strike since 19 August last year.

The strike was provoked by a new bonus scheme which resulted in a wage cut of £28.50. (See *Militant* 787).

Messages of support and donations urgently required: Ffestiniog Quarrymen's Dispute Fund, TGWU District Office, 17 Segontium Terrace, Caernarfon.

Industrial Reports

Union leaders abandon Addenbrookes

HEALTH UNIONS NUPE and COHSE have suspended official support for the cleaning domestics' strike against privatisation at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge. Strikers have said they will continue the struggle.

By Robin Pye
(Cambridge LPYS)

The EC decisions follow months during which the union leaderships have failed to give full support to the strikers. Now they are pleading lack of cash as a reason to give up supporting the strike.

NUPE full-timer, Margaret Dunn, speaking to a Cambridge Labour Party meeting even cited high full-timers' salaries and provision of cars for full-timers as ex-

amples of the kinds of costs unions have to meet.

Yet NUPE have refused to implement a resolution passed unanimously at its Southern and Eastern Divisional Conference to buy strikers a minibus to transport speakers and pickets around the area.

At the same time the leadership's anti-privatisation rhetoric has been maintained. When strikers lobbied Neil Kinnock, visiting Cambridge to publicise the Labour-controlled City Council's co-operation with local private business, he promised to "look into the possibility of turning the heat up a little bit" and wished them "all the best".

The strikers are still being supported by the grass-roots of the labour movement. Cambridge Labour Party

and Cambridge Trades Council have both asked the health unions to change their position on Addenbrooke's and local unions, college Labour clubs and the LPYS continue to support the strike with money and on the picket line.

Struggle continues

Chair of the Strike Committee, Sylvia Burton, said, "Privatisation doesn't only threaten Addenbrooke's, it threatens the whole of the NHS. It doesn't just affect health workers, it affects the whole of the working class in this country who have fought for a national health service. We therefore have duty to continue the struggle. And we will."

Transport must be booked now if this has not already been done.

Date: Saturday 15 March 11am-5pm.

Venue: Conference room, Nelson Mandella Building, Pond Street, Sheffield. (Sheffield Polytechnic Students Union).

NUPE Broad Left

NUPE IS regarded as a left-wing union but during the course of the past year the union's leadership have moved sharply to the right. The first step in halting this process will be a successful Broad

Left conference in Sheffield on 15 March.

Broad Left supporters in NUPE must make every effort in the next two weeks to ensure that every area is fully represented at the conference.

Teaching unions split but NUT continues

TEACHING UNIONS, with the sole exception of the NUT, agreed earlier this week in negotiation with the Burnham Committee to accept a 6.9 per cent pay offer backdated to last April with a further 1.6 per cent added from next month, writes Bob Stothard.

The teachers have been engaged in industrial action in pursuit of a claim for a £1,200 flat rate increase due to them last year. Since 1974 it is estimated that teachers' pay has fallen by 34 per cent compared with similar white-collar jobs in industry.

The NUT had threatened legal action to prevent the Burnham Committee involving itself in conditions of service: normally the remit of a Committee made up of local education authorities and teachers.

Sir Keith Joseph, Minister of State for Education had attempted to steamroller the

unions along this path having manipulated representation on Burnham to ensure the NUT no longer had the majority vote.

Talks begin this Friday with ACAS which will attempt to bring teachers' voluntary duties, lunchtime supervision, after-school sports and activities etc., into their paid conditions of service.

The NUT is opposed to any conditions of this type being in their contracts of employment and are also opposed to the pay agreement. They have promised, backed up by an 87 per cent vote in favour, to continue sanctions in the manner of the past thirteen months.

In the meantime, the 'truce' has gained only "an uneasy peace", in the words of NUT General Secretary Fred Jarvis. Even the leaders of the NAS/UWT cannot guarantee their members will accept a return to 'normal' working.

Action in schools up and down the country will undoubtedly continue. If Joseph and the leaders of the smaller unions think the determination of the teachers in the classrooms will evaporate with the pay deal they are sadly mistaken.

Vital elections begin in the next few days for a new president of Britain's second biggest union, the AUEW. The Broad Left candidate is John Tocher. Ballot papers must be returned by 28 March.

Copies of the BLOC leaflet (right) are available from Mick Barwood, 1 Earlswood Close, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 6DB

BLOC
Broad Left Organising Committee

AUEW Presidential Elections.
For a fighting AUEW leadership

JOHN TOCHER, the AUEW Divisional Organiser for Division No 11 in the Manchester Area is challenging for the presidency of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers.

John Tocher—rank and files choice in crucial election

The final balloting for this, the top job in the AUEW will take place in March this year. All AUEW members will therefore soon have the opportunity to participate in the most important election in our union for many years.

Presidential candidate John Tocher speaks out



A NUMBER of recent developments indicate that things are not going at all well for management of Silentnight Beds in Barnoldswick, Lancashire, and Sutton, West Yorkshire, where an official strike has been in progress for nearly nine months.

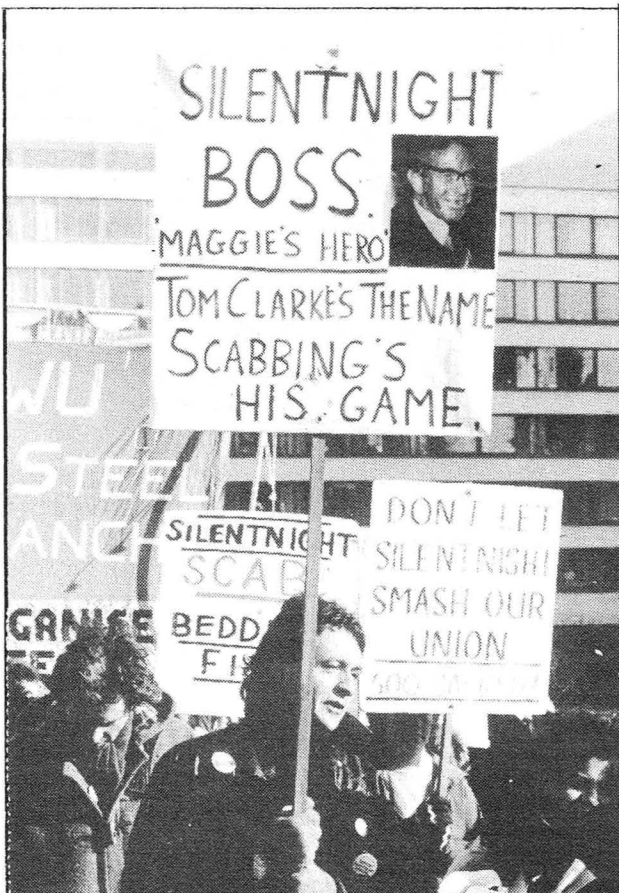
Last October, after Silentnight announced a half-year loss of £820,000, the *Financial Times* advised investors: "Those wishing to rest easy at night may well want to wait to see results before venturing in this direction".

A fortnight ago, BBC 2 television were filming both inside and outside the Barnoldswick factory and interviewing representatives from management and union—for the *Money Programme*!

When the financial journalists take such a keen interest, it usually means there is a crisis, and certainly any pretence by Silentnight management that production is healthy is revealed to be a deception.

There are also reports that a number of Silentnight workers are to be laid off. And an announcement has been made that the factories will close down for a full week over Easter—something that has not happened before.

In addition, there are reports of much dissatisfaction among the present workforce. In December these scab workers were per-



Silentnight strikers on last Sunday's march in support of victimised miners. Photo: Militant

sued to sign a no-strike agreement in return for a promised £6 a week wage rise, across the board. Last month workers were told that, after all, the £6 would not be paid to piece-rate workers (the majority)—just like the £5.25 last year.

One striker told me he'd pointed out to a scab worker, "You've signed a no-strike deal for getting your pay docked when you're doing piece work.

What they didn't tell you was that the pay rise would not be included in the bonus—and that's what we've been on strike about for all these months!"

Messages of support and donations to: FTAT Cravendale No 92 Branch Strike Fund, c/o Ann King, 10 Rainhall Crescent, Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancashire.

By Linden Stafford
(Skipton Labour Party)

Bates pit closure exposes Review body

ON THURSDAY 20 February 1986, the National Coal Board tore the last shred of credibility from their "independent review body" when they ignored its recommendations and announced the closure of Bates Colliery in Blythe, Northumberland.

As Ray Palmer, a Bates NUM member put it "everybody in Blythe now knows that the review procedure was a sham, only ever intended to put a thin veneer of respectability over the board's closure plans".

Destructive

The closure will have a devastating effect on the Blythe area. The abandoning of 29 million tonnes of coal means a loss of 880 jobs at the pit and could push unemployment locally over 30 per cent.

Bates' miners feel that he board is now trying to stamper them out of the industry. Whereas previously the board was only too willing to provide information about redundancy payments and transfer procedures, they have now clammed up and confusion reigns.

So far they have given notice

of 40 transfers to Whittle, 80 to Westoe (in the Durham Area), 10 to Ellington and two to Ashington. Other transfers will be offered only to replace other miners taking redundancy on a one for one basis. Miners, particularly union activists, are being told they will be allocated transfers and if they don't like them they will be made redundant without pay-offs.

Many lessons have been learnt from Bates' experience. The NACODS' representative at the local Labour Party General Management Committee, admitted: "We've learnt a lot. MacNestry believed the NCB. His trust has been betrayed. We now need to play a far greater part in the Labour Party".

The review procedure has been exposed as a charade. The proceedings in the courts, first granting and then lifting an injunction to stop the NCB beginning salvage work, confirmed that the unions cannot rely on legal protection. Miners can only rely on their own strength and need to rebuild on the experience of the strike.

By Kevin Miles

IMI Baildon victimisation

THE IMI Baildon strike near Bradford, reported in *Militant* last week, against the sacking of AUEW deputy convenor Bill Clarkson, is continuing. Convenor Dave Laycock talked to Keith Narey.

Wage negotiations had almost exhausted procedure when management tried to force members to work with non-union labour. They demanded a meeting so the deputy convenor could express their opposition.

Despite the fact that Clarkson had previously worked with non-union labour himself, and said he was prepared to continue to do so, they sacked him on the spot, despite Dave Laycock's demand to consult the membership.

There was an immediate stoppage. It was suspended in order for an appeal to be heard. But management merely confirmed their decision. A ballot of the members backed strike action and they've been out since 21 February.

Messages of support and donations to: IMI Strike Committee, c/o 2 Claremont, Bradford 7.

Overworked underpaid in Foreign Office

FOREIGN OFFICE canteen workers in the old Admiralty building off Trafalgar Square stopped work on the morning of 19 February over lack of replacement staff for workers off sick and on holidays.

The strike started at 8am. The union official arrived about nine and rapidly negotiated a deal: no loss of pay; no victimisations; for every three full-time staff off one casual to be brought in; the attitude of a particularly objectionable steward to be looked into; all overtime to be paid.

Did you see the Tory party's political broadcast?



Militant



Liverpool Labour Party

RANK AND FILE LABOUR MOVEMENT CONFERENCE

Joint CONFERENCE

Joint Chair: Jock McPherson-Quinn (BLOC Chair), Tony Mulhearn, President (Liverpool District Labour Party)

Time to stop Fleet Street

AFTER ALL the propaganda about destroying 'Fleet Street' privileges' Rupert Murdoch has conceded his first so-called 'Spanish practice' at his News International printing plant in Wapping.

It's not some exotic aphrodisiac—it's simply the kind of thing Fleet Street workers have won in the past—extra money for working in dust from newsprint.

But not only that. Murdoch's methods inevitably force his workers to organise. A new union formation has emerged at Wapping. 180 EETPU members have held a meeting to discuss grievances about doing a 15-hour day including travelling. On top of this management demanded four hours extra work without pay.

New unionism

They called a meeting of something called the London Post Steering Committee and elected a representative to go and negotiate for them. He came back a little later with two things to say: they no longer had a spokesman—or free transport—or a free canteen.

That's what Murdoch's attempt to smash the Fleet Street unions is about. It's nothing to do with progress, quite the opposite. The people he has recruited will learn even harsher lessons later if he is allowed to succeed.

The EETPU people have said they want an honourable settlement. We say the only honourable thing is to come out of there and help force negotiations with all the print industry unions.

We can't rely, however, on either official pressure on

By Jim Brookshaw
(AUEW FOC, *The Times*, personal capacity)

the EETPU, which has got us nowhere, whilst Hammond continues to sit in the TUC, or the kind of negotiations going on at ACAS, to deliver our jobs back to us.

The print unions are not officially involved in the talks. That's as it should be whilst all Murdoch is talking about is paltry redundancy pay. Our fight is for our jobs back and union organisation in Wapping.

Solidarity and united trade union action against Murdoch and the print bosses who stand behind him will be a lot more effective in achieving our aims.

But the message from meetings and pickets around the country is beginning to get through to our members, that many workers don't see why they should be putting their necks on the line whilst other printers on Fleet Street and the rest of the industry aren't.

Though there is an understandable fear that to shut down the rest of the Street merely gives Murdoch a free run, it's a question which can't be dodged.

There is a growing feeling amongst activists for a one-day stoppage of Fleet Street.

If it was a Saturday night there could be a mass march down to Wapping. It would help to involve all Fleet

Street workers, showing unity and strength, and could stop Murdoch's papers that night.

News International is being hurt by the Wapping picket and solidarity action around the country. Distribution is delayed and patchy. They've already had to give a 40 per cent discount to advertisers, who are now demanding it be increased to 60 per cent. Even the ACAS talks show the company is worried.

But relying on such pressures alone has dangers. The dispute can't be allowed to drag on and on. The mood at the moment is confident. It will only be maintained if action is being taken and seen to be successful.

Mass picketing at Wapping provides a focus for the dispute. It can delay and even stop distribution on occasions. We should welcome all the support we can get. At the same time, it should be under the discipline of the unions, and we have a responsibility to provide proper guidance and stewarding.

Getting organised

The Fleet Street unions are beginning to get organised together. We've got a national co-ordinating committee set up between all the unions to look after picketing nationally. And there's now a weekly Liaison Committee meeting which at the moment mainly serves as a clearing house for information between all the chapels and branches.

Many print workers recognise that we have been

Photo: Mick Carroll



Jim Brookshaw (front) at Wapping.

slow off the mark. We are only now getting the kind of organisation together we needed as far back as Warrington. It's widely felt that if we had stopped the rot then we wouldn't have 6,000 on the stones now.

There is still time. A lot of Fleet Street workers have learnt a lot of lessons fast. Many are showing enormous determination and self sacrifice in picketing and financial contributions to the strike fund.

With a view to widening the dispute, the AUEW Joint Chapels Strike Committee has passed a motion

calling on the TUC and Labour Party to organise a national demonstration at Wapping. It could be coordinated with other industrial action in the print.

Widen action

It's increasingly being recognised that we can't hang about. Rallies and demos are being used to increase the pressure at Wapping. But the necessity for wider action in Fleet Street and the general trade will become unavoidable.

From that we can make an appeal to the rest of the

Build the left

LIVERPOOL LABOUR Party and the Broad Left Organising Committee have joined forces to hold a joint labour movement conference to fight the witch-hunt and build the forces of the left. It will be held in Sheffield on 19 April. Speakers already confirmed include Tony Benn and Derek Hatton.

It will be the largest gathering of rank and file trade unionists in Britain, the next stage of the offensive against the ideas and bureaucratic manoeuvres of the right wing in the labour movement and trade unions.

No purge

Tony Mulhearn, president of Liverpool District Labour Party said: "The trade union barons, in their feudal fiefdoms are the main instigators of this attempted purge of socialist ideas from the party. It is, we think, appropriate that the BLOC should be the first major organisation to fight back."

Jock McPherson-Quinn, BLOC chairman said: "We wholeheartedly agree to this joint conference. At a time when the Tories are persecuting good socialists in the courts, it is scandalous that the Labour Party indulges in the same type of persecutions. We are determined to stop this, particularly in the trade unions."

For more information contact Mick Barwood, BLOC press officer on: 0403 58264 (Home).

labour movement for solidarity action and force the TUC to organise a national day of industrial action. That's the certain way to make Murdoch retreat.

Such a call would receive wider support than any of our trade union leaders suspect.

Millions of workers know that Murdoch's treatment of Fleet Street workers, and now the people at Wapping, is just a taste of what to expect if he and his Tory backers are allowed to continue their assault on trade union rights.



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

Militant SUPPORTER!

Name
Address

SUBSCRIBE!

BRITAIN & IRELAND	EUROPE (by air)	REST OF WORLD (by air)
13 issues . . . £5.00	26 issues . . £11.00	26 issues . . £16.00
26 issues . . £10.00	52 issues . . £22.00	52 issues . . £32.00
52 issues . . £20.00		

Name
Address

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

Donate

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

Sell

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