

Militant

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth 25p

ISSUE 789 14 March 1986

Put Tories on trial

GUILTY—Thatcher and the Tories.

Massive misuse of public funds.

- Billions spent on smashing strikes when workers try to save their jobs.
- Oil revenue squandered to pay for Tory dole queues.
- Industries like gas, water and the motor industry being sold off for tax cuts for the rich. 43 per cent of previous tax cuts went to the top 7 per cent of earners.

Intimidating workers.

- To stop workers fighting back, the Tories resort to intimidation—first through the threat of the dole and then through the law courts.
- If the unions fight to defend jobs, seize their assets; when Labour councils like Lambeth and Liverpool battle to save jobs they are fined and banned from office.

Extremist policies

Now Thatcher and Tebbit are using their dictatorial methods to draw up a new extremist manifesto to give more power and wealth to the rich. They are excluding the 'wets' from policy making.

CONVICTED—Liverpool and Lambeth councillors.

- For defending local jobs, services and housing.

The press have smeared self-sacrificing socialists in Liverpool with charges of 'intimidation' and extremism.

The same papers never accuse their friends in Downing Street of these crimes. But the leaders of the Labour Party and trade unions must expose the real criminals.

They should stop the witch-hunt, defend workers from Tory attacks and force a general election now. They must be as radical for our class as the Tories are for theirs, with a bold socialist alternative to Thatcher and capitalism.



Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister, just brought £400,000 retirement home, presided over destruction of millions of jobs—she gets away scott free.



Felicity Dowling, Liverpool councillor, single parent with two children, surcharged and banned from office for defending council jobs and services.

Inside...

Book now for Labour Party Young Socialists conference Page 7

One law for the rich—Councillors surcharged Page 8-9

Anger over expulsions

ANGER SWEEPED through the labour movement in Liverpool at the charges made against 12 Labour Party members by the party's National Executive Committee (NEC).

Only two days after the High Court wiped out the votes of 90,000 Liverpool workers, the NEC have disgracefully opened up a second front against Labour councillors they should be defending.

Charges

The 12, including three city councillors, are among those named in the report of the inquiry into the District Labour Party (DLP). They have now been invited to attend a meeting of the NEC on 26 March to answer the accusations.

But the charges laid against them are a scandal. DLP president, Tony Mulhearn, is "charged" among other trivia, with a breach of the rules by allowing the DLP to elect two vice-presidents instead of one.

A whole series of "charges" laid against Mulhearn and deputy council leader Derek Hatton relate to being DLP officers or executive committee members. They are for the most part an attack upon the established democratic structure of the largest District Labour Party in the country, and especially on its influence over the



Harry Smith one of the threatened twelve.

Labour group of councillors.

To any impartial observer, it is a mystery why only some DLP officers and EC members are charged, while others are not. John Hamilton, DLP Treasurer, for example, is not charged with anything, unlike secretary Felicity Dowling who is. One vice-president Terry Harrison is faced with charges while the other vice-president, Eddie Loyden MP, is not.

The mystery is easily resolved. Charges have only been laid on the basis of political ideas—the only EC members and DLP officers held responsible for the conduct of the DLP are supporters of *Militant*.

What has caused the greatest anger has been the failure of the NEC to furnish evidence. It is made clear that legal representation will not be allowed and no 'live' evidence will be presented. This is contrary to all the promises previously given by the committee of inquiry.

Some of the evidence—and for a

Continued on Page 2

BLOC
Broad Left Organising Committee

Joint CONFERENCE

Liverpool Labour Party

Joint Chairs: Jack McPherson Gunn (BLOC Chair), Tony Mulhearn (President Liverpool District Labour Party)

RANK AND FILE LABOUR MOVEMENT CONFERENCE

THE JOINT labour movement conference organised by the Broad Left Organising Committee and Liverpool Labour Party on 19 April will be the largest meeting of rank and file trade unionists in Britain.

The conference in Sheffield with the theme "Build the Left" will have among its guest speakers Tony Benn, Phil Holt, Derek Hatton, Ian Lowes and Geoff Bright. Arthur Scargill and Ted Knight have also been invited.

Information and credentials from BLOC, PO Box 464, London E5 8PT.



NGA member and surcharged Liverpool councillor Tony Mulhearn speaking to pickets during the dispute over Shah's *Stockport Messenger*. Shah aimed to break the print unions' closed shop to pave the way for new technology.

What's new about Today?

EDDIE SHAH'S new paper *Today* hit the newsagents—or some of them—last week. Its hopes of “breaking the mould” are reminiscent of the launch of the SDP. And like the SDP it is a case of old wine in new bottles.

Today borrows something from all the other papers: some of its politics from the *Mail*; spelling mistakes from the *Guardian*; layout from Shah's own freesheets; the ruse of dubbing an old story “exclusive” from the *Sun*—though the story itself in its first issue came from the *Sunday Times*.

With journalists taken from the other papers, nothing in it is really new. It is like a scrapbook of cuttings from all the other dailies and as a result has no consistent tone.

Today is cashing in on its owner's name. Shah achieved

notoriety as a union basher in the *Stockport Messenger* dispute. It also made him a lot of friends in high places.

But how can a provincial freesheet publisher move into the big time? He has been able to by-pass the print unions with a no-strike deal with the EETPU, the anti-union union.

Thin on news

New technology means he only needs a tenth of other newspapers' staff. Production at several sites cuts distribution costs. Even so, it is a shoestring operation with only 130 journalists. The paper is thin on news and less up to date than its rivals. Much of the content is what you would expect in a magazine. And the electricians still don't seem to have got the hang of colour printing.

The competition—mainly

the *Express* and *Mail*—are taking no chances. They are appearing with colour on their own front pages. If *Today* will be a real threat remains to be seen.

What can be ruled out now is Shah's claim that new technology will mean greater competition and a wider range and choice of newspapers. This is not the 19th Century. Industry, particularly the print, is highly monopolised.

Shah is a relatively small fish. In the long term, if he wins a large chunk of the market, multinational sharks like Murdoch and Maxwell are likely to gobble him up.

In the short term you can take your choice between glossy “souvenir” photos and up to the minute secondary news pictures of our colourful Royal Family.

By Andy Beadle

Tin cartel hammered

THE WORLD recession is driving the prices of the commodities poor countries sell to make a living down to ruinous level.

The International Tin Council (ITC) was a price fixing ring established in the post war years to guarantee stable incomes to the tin producing nations. This last dyke behind the wave driving underdeveloped countries towards national bankruptcy has now been smashed.

In 1982 the world was consuming 140,000 tonnes of tin, 35,000 tonnes less than in 1979 and the lowest level since 1929. It is reckoned that production has been 15 per cent greater than consumption.

First major default

Under these conditions the cartel was bound to break up. As soon as it is no longer a question of sharing profits but of sharing losses everyone tries to reduce their own share to a minimum and pass it on to someone else.

The buffer stock manager of the ITC has for years been buying tin nobody wants at loss to keep the price up. As he ran out of money he kept

on buying unwanted tin by borrowing from the big banks—and using the 85 thousands tonnes of tin in stock as collateral.

When the ITC had built up debts of £900 million in this fashion, its member states just refused to pay their debts. On October 24 the London Metals Exchange (LME) ceased to trade. The first major international default had happened.

Tonnes of tin

The lucky banks who lent £900 million on the basis that tin prices would stay up at the level of £8-9,000 per tonne find themselves the proud owners of thousands of tonnes of tin that are no use to man or beast.

If they try to sell it all to rebuild their reserves the price (already unofficially slumped to £5,700 per tonne) could free-fall to a level that could wipe out mines all over the world. In effect the ITC stock will function as a mine whose production costs are zero—and nobody can compete with that.

The news last week confirmed that, after more than four months suspension of metal trading the rescue ef-

fort put together by Standard Chartered Bank and others who had so imprudently lent to the ITC had failed. The plan was to get the member governments to buy the tin stockpile at a discount, selling it off in dribs and drabs while sitting on the bulk to avoid disaster. But the ITC members wouldn't cough up.

The LME's credibility has been gravely impaired by their prolonged closure. Not surprisingly their spokesman explained they were bleeding to death. It is likely that the City's trade in tin through the Metal Exchange has gone for good as producers have signed new contracts with their customers.

More hardship

The world centre of tin trading has moved from London to Kuala Lumpur permanently.

One thing is for sure, tin prices will take a dive. For every £1,000 per tonne they fall, the producer countries stand to lose £100 million a year. Capitalist crisis spreads its hardship onto the backs of working people all over the world.

By Mick Brooks

Pat Wall still not endorsed



THE LABOUR Party national executive committee has still failed to endorse the nomination of Pat Wall as prospective candidate for Bradford North. The organisation sub-committee originally asked the executive to summon Wall to be interviewed. The executive referred this back to them. But on the casting vote of its chairman, NUR official Charles Turnock, the sub-committee voted again to ask the executive to interview Wall. This contravenes standing orders which preclude sub-committees from re-submitting items referred back.

John Bryan was, however, recommended for endorsement by the NEC as prospective candidate for Bermondsey.

Anger at expulsions

Continued from Page 1

number of the 12, all of the evidence—is based on what was apparently presented to the inquiry by “various witnesses in confidence”. In other words any lies, tittle-tattle or gossip could have been given and taken by the committee as good coin. Despite specific assurances by the chairman of the committee, Charles Turnock, those charged will have no chance to challenge any spiteful smears and allegations made against them.

When members of the National Executive Committee moved that any written evidence be presented to those charged and any verbal evidence given in person, they were shouted down. They made the point that this kind of intimidation was worse than at any other meeting they had attended.

When Larry Whitty, the general secretary, was asked if the procedures laid down by him would leave the NEC open to legal action, he replied “Yes”, because he had based the procedures on NEC precedents and these did not necessarily conform to the courts' interpretation of natural justice. The pro-

cedures were nevertheless agreed.

This scandalous procedure is an affront to fundamental democratic rights and natural justice. It is worse than the ‘Diplock’ courts of Northern Ireland which the Labour Party is on record as opposing. In the Diplock courts, the accused do not know their accusers but at least they hear the evidence. Now the NEC are denying party members

knowledge of who their detractors are and what has been said about them.

Labour Party members will not forget or forgive those NEC members who, under the pretext of defending the Labour Party constitution, are trying to victimise Marxists by such shamefully undemocratic and rigged disciplinary procedures.

By John Pickard

BROADGREEN Constituency Labour Party have organised a lobby of the national executive for 8am on Wednesday 26 March, when the expulsion of twelve Liverpool Labour

Party members is to be discussed. All party and trade union members are urged to come and show the NEC members their opposition to this purge.



Derek Hatton, deputy leader, Liverpool Council.



Ian Lowes, GM shop steward, threatened with expulsion.

'I feel like they're expelling me'

“I'M DISGUSTED with the Labour Party doing this. When they say they're going to expel Derek Hatton I feel it's like they're expelling me,” said Ivy Kelly, who with her husband Tommy, has been a member of Warrington Labour Party since before the war.

“I'm disappointed in Kinnock. We voted for him but he's gone to the right”. Tommy continued, “That's what they all do, they come in on a left ticket to get themselves elected and then turn right when they get there.”

“This council has just put up council rents by over £3 a week”, said Ivy, “and as far as I'm concerned that's not socialism. How am I supposed to get people to vote Labour when they're doing that? They should be fighting the cuts like Liverpool.”

“Since this Tory government came to power there's been about 13,000 jobs lost in industry in this town. And what about this pathetic 40p pension rise...I don't know what to spend it on!”

Tommy concluded: “All I want is a fair society. But a Labour government has got to be prepared to go all the way and start again from the beginning, rather than bowing to the City. Hattersley shouldn't be pleading to the City like he is. He should take it over.”

“You lot have got to stay in the party and fight your corner because *Militant* is the same as the Labour Party—the same policies and you're fighting for them. Without the likes of you, nothing would get done”.

By David Winfield

London Labour right thwarted

THE LONDON Labour Party's shift to the right at its conference the weekend before last came to an abrupt halt at the Executive meeting this Monday.

Campaign Group MP Jeremy Corbyn was elected vice-chair, and Broad Left Organising Committee officer George Williamson was elected chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, the executive's most powerful body.

The rightward stampede

of former GLC lefts into an unholy alliance with trade union bureaucrats they previously reviled, was spotlighted in the conference's election of Labour Co-ordinating Committee member Glenys Thornton to the chair. She defeated long-standing left-winger and reginal chair for a decade, Arthur Latham.

Her victory was engineered by NUPE regional official Chris Humphries, who has been showing all the

symptoms, in extremis, of the NUPE national leadership's move to the right, despite his division's rejection of witch-hunts.

He and GLC/GLEB-man Michael Ward were the right/soft left candidates for chair of the F&GP committee and vice-chair respectively. They were beaten by Williamson and Corbyn 23-10 and 23-11.

By John Bulaitis

How Cardiff members won re-instatement

CARDIFF SOUTH and Penarth Labour Party has been forced to reinstate *Militant* supporters Dave Bartlett, Diane Mitchell and Andrew Price following their expulsion from the party last December.

The party admitted its actions were wrong and has also agreed to pay legal costs of up to £4,000 after the three were left with no option but to resort to the courts to get justice.

"Our re-instatement was a major victory

in the battle of rank and file socialists against witch-hunts," said Price.

Their fight began in July 1985 as a result of an initiative taken by the LPYS in organising a public meeting on youth unemployment (in a constituency where in certain parts 70 per cent of youth are unemployed) without consulting with the party officers.

"No evidence was ever presented to prove the assertion that we were 'members of the Militant Tendency'," said Price. "At

meetings of the executive committee, we were not allowed to be heard", he said.

Only very short notice of expulsion was given, or of important meetings relating to the expulsions.

Legal aid was turned down but with the support of a South Glamorgan county councillor and a former Lord Mayor of Cardiff, a legal defence fund was established to raise money for legal costs and to take the case to the broader labour movement.

"The response exceeded even our own expectations," said Price. "Large amounts of money poured into the fund and we received many invitations to address meetings. Messages of support flooded in from all parts of the movement."

There is no doubt that the whole affair has damaged the party in Cardiff, but the responsibility for this must rest entirely with the officers.

Finest Lambeth councillor wins MP contest

SURCHARGED LAMBETH councillor, Joan Walley has been named for the second time as the prospective parliamentary candidate for Stoke-on-Trent North. Right wing MP John Forrester pulled out of the contest.

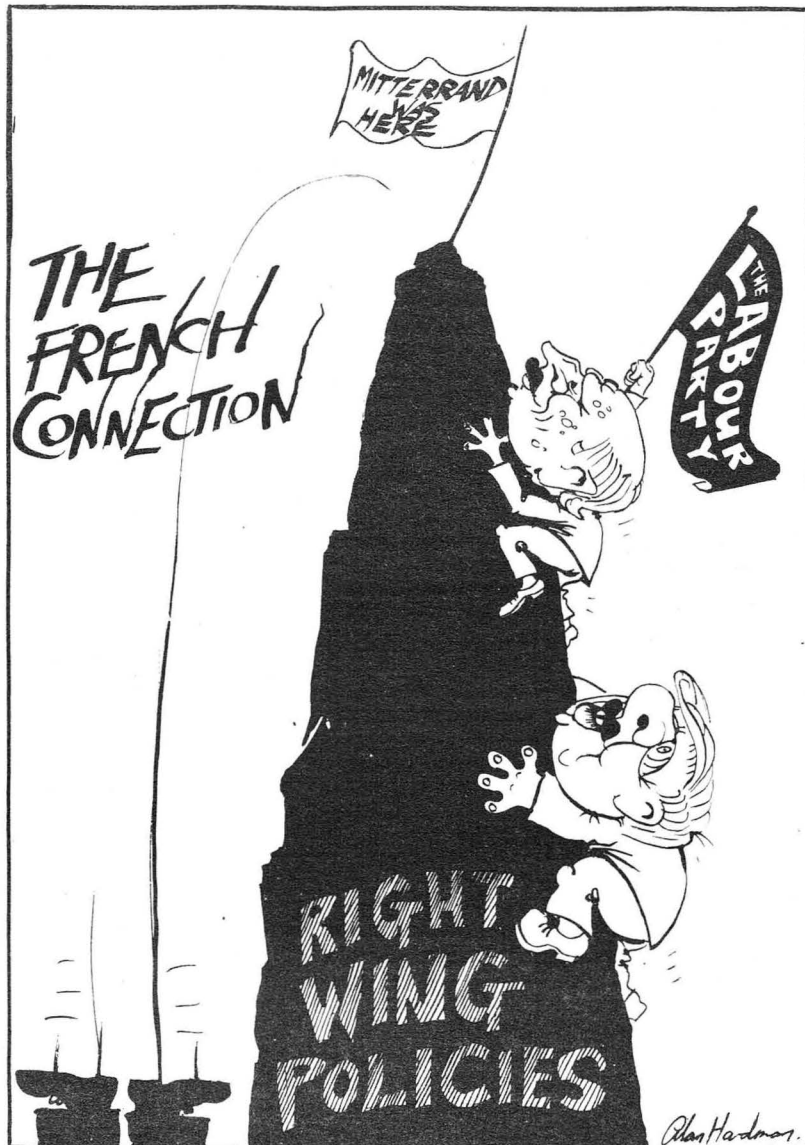
The first selection conference was in November last year in which Walley won by 53 votes to 50. However Forrester's supporters claimed that he had been ousted by a left-wing take-over within the constituency and three weeks later the Labour Party's executive ordered a re-run of the conference.

Boycott

Right-wing supporters of the MP claimed that they would boycott the selection meeting as a protest against the "left-wing take-over in the constituency". These are the measures that the right resort to when democracy doesn't suit them.

The party also passed a resolution in support of the Liverpool and Lambeth councillors and condemned Neil Kinnock for his deplorable actions against them.

By Paul Kelly
(Stoke on Trent)



Right keep up local attacks

Jarrow

EXPULSION PROCEEDINGS have begun against Mark Potter, Chair of the Northern Region of the Labour Party Young Socialists.

Hartlepool

THE ANNUAL general meeting of Hartlepool Labour Party passed a resolution calling for the expulsion of anyone who reads *Militant*, gives money to the paper or attends a public meeting held in the name of the paper.

Wapping hypocrisy

LABOUR'S PARLIAMEN-TARY candidate for Stevenage, Malcolm Withers, who is a *Sun* journalist working at Wapping escaped a motion of no confidence in him from his

Without any notice or warning Jarrow Labour Party's executive recommended his expulsion at the party's general committee meeting. No charges have been made and he has not been given any chance to reply to some of the allegations made at the meeting.

Nothing short of this 'thought control' will satisfy those on the right who's interests are threatened by the ideas of Marxism. Hartlepool's Labour MP, Ted Leadbitter is refusing to abide by the Labour Party's boycott of the *Times* and *Sun* newspapers. He said: "Nobody tells me who to speak to".

Stevenage Party. The motion was lost by 61 votes to 33. Withers' comment afterwards was: "Most of the 33 are *Militant* supporters and they'll be expelled soon anyway".

Some in the party, apparently happy with this unprincipled journalist as their prospective candidate previously attempted to expel 10 *Militant* supporters from the party.

Co-op threat

A RESOLUTION is to be moved at this year's Co-operative Party Conference at Easter calling for the "the Labour Party and the Co-operative Party to exercise their constitutional rights to exclude from membership all known full-time employees of *Militant* and any member who knowingly, and in whatever way seeks to raise funds for, or otherwise supports of, what is clearly a party within a party".

With the NEC now coming under more pressure from the right wing Co-op Parties to call for a more extensive witch-hunt not only in the Co-op Party but in the Labour Party, members of both parties are urged to flood Co-op Party headquarters with letters and resolutions calling for an end to the witch-hunting and for the party to concentrate its time and resources on attacking the Tories and returning Labour to power. Letters to the Secretary, Co-op Party, 158 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1.

By Andrew Dinknor
(Wessex Co-op Party)

Llanelli

OFFICERS OF Gower Ward Labour Party, Llanelli are attempting the expulsion of *Militant* supporter Pat Bell without allowing any discussion or putting the matter to a vote.

At the end of the ward AGM on Thursday 6 March they refused to give Bell a new party card on the grounds that he had been selling the *Militant* paper on Saturday morning. No

discussion on the issue of *Militant* had taken place at the ward meeting and it subsequently transpired that the ward secretary had no knowledge that this attempt was going to be made.

The issue is now being referred to the constituency secretary until which time Bell has been denied his party card and his membership effectively suspended. The party has already voted to "expel members of *Militant*" and prohibit the sale of the paper.

Apology

THE REPORT in last week's *Militant* that Steve Arnott is under threat of expulsion by Central Fife Labour Party was inaccurate. Threats of expulsion were made but the party backed down after a petition

was produced in support of Arnott.

However, Arnott's credentials to the Scottish Labour Party conference were withdrawn and the party has written to national headquarters to ask about activities of *Militant*—a possible prelude to further disciplinary action.

Vote to stop purge

A TOTAL of 481 resolutions opposing expulsions and organisational attacks upon socialists in the Labour Party, have been passed by Labour parties, trades unions and affiliated organisations since last November.

The National Union of Public Employees' Leicester Hospitals branch has passed a resolution condemning the "Labour Party decision to suspend the Liverpool

District Labour Party, and opposes the witch-hunting inquiry". This was passed unanimously by Leicester East Labour Party.

The youth conference of the engineering workers' union, the AUEW has passed a resolution by 28 votes to nine, to "support democratically elected Labour councils and calls upon the Labour Party NEC to stop its divisive action and purge of socialists and instead launch an effective

campaign to remove the Tories."

An estimated 8,500 people have attended the 108 *Militant* public meetings held since 1st January, donating over £20,000 to the papers' fighting fund.

Militant supporters in the Northern region will be holding a mass public rally at Newcastle on Thursday 20 March (see below for details) against the threatened expulsions in Liverpool. Councillors in Liverpool are being

pilloried for building homes and providing jobs and yet there has been no criticism of councils like Newcastle who are building no new homes, have just increased bus fares by 20 per cent and are now proposing £12m worth of cuts.

Why not organise a meeting on your estate, in your workplace or at your school or college. Start a discussion group or help build for one of the mass rallies in your area. Fill in the form on the back page if you would like to know more.

By Chas Berry

MASS RALLIES

Edinburgh: Wednesday 19 March. 7.30pm Assembly Rooms, George St. Speakers Derek Hatton and Peter Taaffe.

Newcastle: Thursday 20 March 7pm. Newcastle City Hall. Speakers: Derek Hatton and Peter Taaffe.

Birmingham: Monday 24 March. Speakers Derek Hatton and Peter Taaffe.

Islwyn: Thursday 17 April. Speakers: Derek Hatton and Peter Taaffe.

READERS MEETINGS

NORTH WEST

Blackpool: Saturday 15 March 1pm. Labour Party Conference fringe meeting. Lecture Hall, Central Library, Queen Street, Blackpool.

Withington: Friday 14 March 7.45pm. Withington Town Hall, Lapping Lane, Withington, Manchester. Speakers include: John Clegg, Labour councillor Burnage ward, and Phil Frampton.

Blackburn: Thursday 18 March. Speaker Lynn Walsh, Militant Editorial Board.

Burnley: Wednesday 19 March. Speakers include Cheryl Varley and Lynn Walsh.

Manchester: Thursday 20 March, Civic Hall, Stretford. Speaker Lynn Walsh.

Macclesfield: Wednesday 2 April. Speaker Terry Fields MP Liverpool Broadgreen.

YORKSHIRE/HUMBERSIDE

Huddersfield: Wednesday 26 March. 7.30pm Zetland Hotel, Queensgate. Speaker John Ingham.

Halifax: Tuesday 8 April 7.30pm. AUEW Club St James Street.

Castleford: Tuesday 18 March.

Doncaster: Monday 7 April. Speaker: Cheryl Varley

Cleethorpes: Wednesday 19 March. Cleethorpes Library

Scunthorpe: Thursday 20 March. Speaker Rob Sewell

LONDON

Forest Hill: Tuesday 18 March. Speaker Nick Wrack.

Eastern

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

Luton: Tuesday 18th March 7.30. Small Hall, Bedford Rd Recreation Centre. Speaker Simon Kaplan.

SOUTH AND WEST

Exeter: Saturday 15 March. South West Labour Party Conference fringe meeting.

Margate: Saturday 22 March. Southern Labour Party Conference fringe meeting. Speaker: Harry Smith.

Oxford: Tuesday 25 March. Cowley Community Centre. Speaker Kevin Ramage.

Sittingborne: Tuesday 25 March. "What we Stand For": Speaker Dave Fryatt.

MIDLANDS

Stoke-on-Trent: Saturday 15 March 6pm. Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, West Midlands Labour Party Conference fringe meeting.

Skegness: Saturday 15 March 1pm. East Midlands Labour Party Conference Fringe meeting.

Coventry: "Stop Car Industry Witch-hunts" Militant Readers Meeting. Wednesday 19 March 7.30pm. Speakers: Ian Schofield (sacked Range Rover Senior Steward) and Councillor Phil Hollifield.

Venue Tile Hill Social Club, Jardine Crescent, Coventry.

Militant

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Labour must defend surcharged councillors

SURCHARGED LAMBETH and Liverpool councillors face bankruptcy and removal from office. The Labour leaders have a duty to defend them. The NUM and SOGAT have had their assets seized for breaking the legal straight jacket, in which the Tories have tried to tie up the unions.

The Labour leaders must expose these legal judgements against printers (fighting for their livelihoods) and against local councillors (defending jobs and services) as class law. It is used as a punishment for daring to defy Thatcher or to stand up to the employers.

The next Labour government should remove from those persecuted the burdens imposed by the Tory courts.

Shamefully the Labour NEC decision to move towards expulsion of Liverpool councillors gave the green light to the courts. It appeared that the

Labour leadership was washing its hands of the councillors.

Ironically David Blunkett who has gone along with the purge, could as a result of the High Court decision also be surcharged. Two hundred more councillors who delayed setting a rate, if only for days, could be next.

Originally, with the backing of the NEC and its Local Government Committee twenty councils refused to set a rate, to force extra grant from the government. In the end only Liverpool stood firm. The surcharged councillors were clearly implementing party policy.

There is a feeling among many party members therefore that "we must defend our own". In response Neil Kinnock is supporting the establishment of a fund to relieve any hardship.

The statement of John Cunningham, Labour's environment spokesman, however, that this money will not be used for non-party members will be met with outrage. As he is pushing for the expulsion of Tony Mulhearn and Derek Hatton, he seems prepared to see their families, their children suffer. It is the equivalent of directing the bailiffs to the right address.

If the Labour leaders are really committed to this fund and campaign for it, the entire cost of the surcharges and of any further judicial appeal could easily be met. Talk by Cunningham of costs of £600,000 represents 10p for every affiliated member.

Pending the necessary amounts being raised, the

party itself should stand any immediate bills on behalf of the councillors. The TGWU lent £50,000 to the Liverpool councillors while they launched an appeal to cover the costs of their High Court defence.

But Labour must also give a commitment to repeal the iniquitous legislation under which the councillors are being penalised, to 'retrospectively' reimburse them for the amount they have lost and to remove whatever is left of the five year ban on holding office. That after all was the decision of last year's party conference. It was also the decision of the 10 March NEC Local Government Committee, with only Neil Kinnock voting against.

Why should councillors face ruin for loyally serving working people, when government ministers seem to have immunity? Transport minister Nicholas Ridley was found to have acted unlawfully in taking £50 million from the GLC for London Regional Transport. He merely changed the law to retrospectively avoid having to repay the money.

The Tories are not averse to retrospective legislation where it suits them or their class. Dave Nellist MP explained that the Tory government had introduced retrospective legislation to compensate non-trade unionists who had previously lost their jobs due to the closed shop.

Party members will be re-echoing his message to the Labour leadership. "If it's good enough for the Tories to support and defend their class, then nothing short of that is good enough for the majority of the rank and file of the party."

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How women benefit from Liverpool council

LIVERPOOL CITY Council has set an example to women and opened their eyes to what could be possible under socialism. The house building programme and the introduction of a fairer system of allocation has meant that single homeless women get a house, as they are included in a priority category, which no other authority does. This also means that Liverpool battered wives are not confined to long stays in hostels but are offered a house.

Liverpool is also leading the country in its programme for pre-school education, with six new nursery classes opened and more to follow, whilst other areas of the country are closing nurseries down. Creche facilities are also being provided in further education colleges. The setting up of a mobile creche to provide a service to parent support classes in primary schools (amongst other activities) has enabled women with children to return to education.

Education

The council has recognised the importance of education in overcoming sexist attitudes and discrimination against women, and equal opportunities advisors have been appointed in each of the 17 new community schools along with a race advisor, a parent support ad-



New homes give new hope to thousands of women.

visor and a special needs advisor.

The council has also shown its commitment to improve the pay and conditions of work of its women employees by the introduction of a £100 minimum wage and a 35-hour week. Most women who work are poorly paid, often working part-time on a casual basis, and the introduction of a minimum wage with pro-rata payments to part-time workers and the ending of all temporary contracts, will be of enormous benefit to women.

Liverpool City Council has not just talked about equal opportunities for women but has actually provided the material resources to improve the lives of many

women and their families in the city and given hope to many more. The campaign for extra resources along with the schools reorganisation, the pre-school education programme and the urban regeneration programme have only been implemented after massive public consultation exercises.

Expulsion

Many women have got involved in the Labour Party as a result of the council's campaign.

If *Militant's* policies are so unattractive to women as its opponents allege, why are there six women (one of whom is black) being recommended for expulsion out of a total of 16, as a result of

the inquiry into Liverpool District Labour Party? One of the women is chair of the North West Regional Labour Party Women's Committee and chair of the Liverpool Women's Council (now also under investigation), one is secretary of Liverpool DLP, one is agent for Broadgreen CLP, and two are city councillors.

The way to involve more women and get more women taking on responsibilities in the labour movement is a thorough commitment to fight for policies that are going to lead to a real improvement in women's lives.

By Ann Bannister
(National LP
Women's Committee)

£13 million for Welsh councils

WELSH SECRETARY of State Nicholas Edwards threatened heavy penalties for those Welsh county councils that proposed high rate increases this year. The Welsh county councils are predominantly Labour-controlled, but since they had no intention of fighting for the return of rate support grant stolen by the Tory government, they were faced with the choice of slashing services and jobs or substantially putting up the rates.

Although they have made

some cuts, the Welsh county councils in the main have gone for high rate rises. South Glamorgan, for example, have proposed a rate rise of 28 per cent.

Climbdown

In response the Tory threats evaporated. Nicholas Edwards caved in and is handing back £13 million to help to help reduce the rate increases. This climbdown has not been forced by a carefully worked-out united

strategy on the part of the Welsh county councils—it was simply forced as a result of them all taking the same action individually.

The implications of this episode for Liverpool and elsewhere are enormous. Liverpool Labour council followed to the letter recommendations on opposing cuts in jobs and services laid down in the Labour Party NEC policy statement of July 1984. Liverpool stood firm whilst 20 or 30 other Labour councils who had

promised to do the same capitulated.

Clearly the battle against cuts in jobs and services could have been won if those other councils had stood firm with the backing of the labour and trade union movement. The lesson is yet again: "United we stand, divided we fall".

By Chris Peace
(Labour Party, Wales,
Executive Committee,
personal capacity)



Women councillors Pauline Lowes and Heather Adams carry the Liverpool Labour Party banner.

Photos: Dave Sinclair

Lessons of 1916

IF YOU run a regular discussion group, you don't always need to have a lengthy lead-off. Sometimes it can be more effective to start off with a five minute introduction giving the background and then work out a series of questions.

But don't think that lets you off the hook, though. The speaker will have to prepare just as carefully if everybody is to be drawn into the discussion and benefit from it.

James Connolly and the Easter Rising. This Easter will mark 60 years since the Irish Marxist James Connolly played the leading role in the rising against British imperialism. Read Greaves' *Life and Times of James Connolly* at £2.95 for the background to his life and achievements.

Divide and Rule by Peter Hadden puts the period into perspective; it is an outstanding analysis of Irish history up to partition. A new edition is out any time now. Watch this space for our forthcoming reprint of *Militant Irish*



Monthly's major articles—and March's *Militant Irish* Monthly is on sale now.

This week's *Militant* looks at France and the record of the socialist government. For an international comparison read *Greece—workers demand socialism* a *Militant* pamphlet at only 35p.

We're in the middle of a witch-hunt but Marxism can't lose. Have you got a public meeting in your area? *Militant—What we stand for* is practically selling itself. Buy two and carry one around with you. You never know who you might bump into. Also keep a look out for the new *Charter for Women Workers* and make sure you discuss the issues it raises.

All books and pamphlets available from World Socialist Books, 3-13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB. Orders under £5 add 25 per cent post and packaging. Over £5 add 10 per cent. Over £10 post free.

NOWHERE IS support for the ideas of *Militant* growing faster than in Glasgow. Last week 1,300 packed into a rally to hear Derek Hatton, Deputy Leader of Liverpool City Council with Bob Wylie, a member of Glasgow Central Labour Party, who has been threatened with expulsion from the Labour Party by Glasgow Springburn Labour MP Michael Martin.

We are reprinting an article by Bob Wylie which he was asked to write for the *Glasgow Herald* on what *Militant* stands for:

IN THREE recent local government by-elections, in the West of Scotland, the total vote for the Tory Party was 155. According to a *Financial Times* poll 56 per cent of the electorate believe Thatcher lied about Westland and now 55 per cent now think she should resign as Prime Minister.

Thatcher's leadership of the Tory Party is under serious threat. The Government's economic policy is in ruins. There is no abatement of the rising tide of unemployment, manufacturing industry faces looming catastrophe, and social services and public housing are being reduced to Victorian levels.

Thatcher's Tories have raised pawnbroking to the level of government. The leaders of the former workshop of the world have been reduced to hawking Britain's industry around the globe—"Anybody want to buy a car factory?" Despite nearly seven years of Government, the Tories have been unable to halt Britain's Cresta Run down into decline.

This has meant untold misery in the real lives of ordinary people. A middle-aged leader of a tenants' association in Possil, Glasgow, told *Militant* in an interview recently: "There is no hope of a job for me. I'll be on the DHSS for the rest of my life. Look at me, what have I got to look forward to. I'll be one of the old people who dies of hypothermia".

General election

There has never been a better time, since before the Falklands War, for the leaders of the labour movement to expose the Tories for the liars and cheats that they are and force them to concede a general election now, to remove them from office. Instead, what we find is the National Executive of the Labour Party consumed with the findings of the Liverpool inquiry. It seems most likely that the results of the inquiry will open the door to re-establishing the McCarthyism that Labour suffered in the 1950s. The right wing of the Labour Party are living proof of the Shakespearean adage that those whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad.

For building thousands of houses, creating thousands of jobs, and standing by Labour conference decisions a section of the Labour Party in Liverpool are to be rewarded with expulsion. Derek Hatton has been slandered and pilloried like Benn and Scargill before him and now it seems his own leaders are to turn Judas on him.

All those who are to be expelled will be *Militant* supporters which substantiates the argument that the NEC inquiry was never anything else than a pretext for establishing a purge. This plague looks certain to spread from Liverpool engulfing Labour nationally in the witch-hunting wave of: "Are you or have you ever been a member of *Militant* Tendency?"

Instead of waging war on the Tories, the right is to prosecute a Holy War inside their own party. Thatcher will be allowed to walk away from Westland and Leyland.

This McCarthyism will be justified with the cry that *Militant* is "a party within a party". This has been the anthem of the right throughout the ages whenever the left has become a powerful force. It was used against the ILP in the 1930s and against the Bevanites in the 1950s—it is now *Militant's* turn in the 1980s.

THE THREATENED expulsion of Bob Wylie by Michael Martin MP must be one of the biggest own-goals scored by the right-wing. Wylie has received enormous publicity on TV, radio and the press. He managed to get a free advert for our meeting on every interview. Even the woman in the council's halls department asked if it was OK for she and her mother to attend; they had seen Bob Wylie on TV and agreed "with every word he said". Perhaps

the biggest effect of Michael Martin's antics however, was the fact that 120 turned up in Possil for a 6.30 pre-meeting, an excellent event in its own right.

The atmosphere inside the meeting itself was euphoric and all in attendance are unlikely to ever forget it. This meeting represents the waking of a sleeping giant, asleep since the days of Red Clydeside. *Militant* represents the best of those traditions in the 1980s.



We are supposed to believe that the right make no attempt to organise for their point of view. We are supposed to think that the strike-breaking of the leaders of the EETPU at Wapping happened by chance, and to forget that the SDP was formed first inside the Labour Party, in the shape of the Campaign for Labour Victory. Apparently the strike-breaker Hammond and the union basher Maxwell can have a Labour Party card but there is no membership for Derek Hatton.

Militant is being attacked because of its strategic position on the left and its increasing influence. The groups of party activists gathered behind the banner of the *Militant* are the last remaining bulwark against the complete abandonment of the socialist alternative strategy in favour of the Reaganomics that Hattersley now supports.

It was all right when our supporters took the minutes. It is different now we are writing resolutions. It was all right when we leafleted, but is different now that we aspire to be the candidate. It was all right to run jumble sales, raffles, and dances for party funds. But it is different now that we are demanding that MPs should live like us by giving a share of their salaries back to the Labour Party.

Militant is represented as an alien infiltration into the Labour Party which has gained success by brainwashing those who support our arguments, particularly the young. The facts are different. In the reselection vote to succeed Hugh Brown MP, in Provan constituency, a left-wing candidate was selected, defeating a *Militant* supporter by 73 votes to 72 in the final ballot. Are we really to believe that those 72, of all ages, were brainwashed and then parachuted into Easterhouse?

Reality tells the story that in today's Britain *Militant's* arguments are gaining increasing credibility. Wilson's White Hot Technological Revolution left most of us unscathed and Callaghan's fundamental and irreversible shift in wealth and power left the rich richer and the poor poorer. We want a return of a Labour government but we are opposed to it taking nothing from the rich and giving that to the poor, as many in the past have done.

We argue the classic socialist case based on taking the wealth of society into public ownership. We argue that there can be no progress to socialism by inches. That the capitalist system is bust and the lot must go. No patching up will be successful and anyway the Labour Party was not built to nurse sick capitalism back to health.

One Nation Tories

The development of production in the period 1950 to 1975 allowed some illusions to blossom that capitalism could provide forever. Now it is clear, society is a class society, them and us. Tebbit told the 1981 Tory Party conference that the trade unions must be emasculated to increase big business profit. The one nation Tories have gone forever, replaced by Thatcherism which was prepared to spend billions to smash the NUM and has provided the most draconian labour laws in Europe, to allow Murdoch to try to break the print unions.

Militant's arguments are not alien to Labour's traditions. In essence, they are little different to the statement for *Socialism in our time* made by Arthur Cook and Jimmy Maxton, the Red Clydesider, in 1928. Neither are these arguments peripheral; in fact they are central to the quest for a socialist Britain.

In June 1981, *Tribune*, the weekly journal of the so-called soft left in the Labour Party, heralded the coming of Mitterrand's socialist government in France with the headline "A chance to make socialism work". *Militant* explained at the time that unless the socialists in France broke the power of capital, by taking over the commanding heights of the economy, they would fail. In the Queen's speech in November 1984, the verification of history allowed Thatcher to declare: "It is to 'my policies' which President Mitterrand of France turned when his socialist policies failed".

Socialism is about what is right and what is wrong. Is it right that out of the £170 million which Glasgow District Council has to spend on housing next year, £106 million will go to the bankers of the City of London, for the cost of borrowing money from them, which is really ours in the first place? Is it right that Thatcher can say there is no money to save a community of thousands around Gartcosh when she found £250 million to bail out the 10 directors of the Johnson Matthey Bank, when it went bust in 1984? Is it right that the National Health Service is collapsing for lack of funds, even to the extent of driving health service workers to strike, when the Tories have given at least £12,000 million away in concessions to the super rich on capital gains tax, since 1979?

Instead of ceding to the pressure of Thatcher, Tebbit, Steel, Owen and the editorials of the capitalist press for the expulsion of the supporters of *Militant*, the leaders of the labour movement should be seizing the time to develop all the issues of our day into a powerful campaign for socialism in our time. On 2 December, 1985, John Cunningham, the Shadow Secretary of

State for the Environment explained in the House of Commons that Liverpool had lost almost £400 million in rate support grant since 1979 and gained only £80 million in urban programme, in other words suffering a net loss of £320 million, in rate support funding. Unfortunately he made these points, with force, after the Liverpool battle was over.

Ideas live on

Some may concede that there is much substance to all these points but then declare we have to win the election. In conducting a purge the leadership will demoralise a large section of the rank and file who play a vital part in winning any election and also confuse the electorate by allowing the Tories to present Labour as split and unfit for government. Labour lost Bermondsey in 1983 one week after the five editorial board members of *Militant* were expelled.

If moderation was the key to all politics then Callaghan would never have lost in 1979, at least Owen and Steel would be in government by now, and *Militant* supporters could never have won seats for Labour in Tory strongholds like Mount Florida and Shawlands in the last district council elections.

The right wing can try to defeat *Militant*, but the truth is you cannot witch-hunt ideas. If ideas do not conform to reality they will cease eventually to be viable and so will any tendency that puts them forward. If, however, ideas correspond to the actual reality of people's lives then again and again they will reappear in more formidable form. Those who don't believe that should ask President Botha. (Reprinted from the *Glasgow Herald* 27 February 1986)

ads

CLASSIFIED

15p per word, minimum 10 words. **SEMI-DISPLAY** £2 per column centimetre. Three weeks for the price of two. *Militant* meeting ads free.

All advertisement copy should reach this office by Saturday.

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 Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB. Price 40p & 15p&p.

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.

MILITANT scarves made in colours of your choice. Two colours (Red and yellow unless stated) writing lengthways. Two/three colours writing across width cost £5 each. £4 each if five or more brought. Hats in two or three colours. £2.30 each from Mick Fallon 64 Woodbrook Avenue, Mixenden, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX 8PZ.

DOVER Militant Discussion Group: Wednesday 2 April—The World Crisis of Capitalism, Wednesday 9 April—Reform or Revolution? Wednesday 16 April—Is Russia Socialist? Wednesday 23 April—What is happening in the Labour Party? All meetings at 8pm. For further details (0303) 43541.

BERMONDSEY LPYS public meeting. Hear: Derek Hutton (Liverpool City Council); John Bryan (Southwark Council); and a printworker.

On Wednesday 26 March, 7.30pm at Rotherhithe Civic Centre. Buses: 47, 70, 138 near Rotherhithe Tube.

1986 Diaries 30p, Address Book 60p, book marks 40p, Plastic paper sleeves 20p, Sew on badge 40p, plus post to *Militant*, 10 Rodney Court, Anson Drive, Sholing, Southampton, Hants SO2 8RU.

Kinnock sells the Militant!

THIS WEEK we say a big 'thank you' to Neil Kinnock. His moves to expel Labour councillors who have given everything for the people of Liverpool has resulted in an upsurge of interest in the ideas of *Militant*.

A typical sale was that outside Leo's supermarket in Liverpool where 50 papers were sold. No fewer than 14 people said they would like to join the Labour Party. Even if the right wing expel dozens of socialists, many, many more will take their place; they can't win.

In Scotland, three *Militant* supporters sold 70 copies last week's paper in the High Street, Cowdenbeath. In

Newport, South Wales 53 were sold on the Ringland estate together with 14 copies of "What we stand for".

And just to show what a concerted effort can do, look at *Militant* sellers from North Shields last week. One supporter sold over 40 outside Newcastle Polytechnic. Then the Young Socialists went out before their meeting and sold 31 copies. Finally 21 papers were sold in Wallsend.

Boost our sales even further with increased activity. Take those petitions for a million signatures out on your sales. Answer the right wing by finding thousands more battlers for full-blooded socialism.



Pickets at Wapping know you can't believe the bosses' press! Sell *Militant*, the workers' paper.

Optimism —and cash

FIGHTING FUND

This week £2978

Quarter ends 30 April

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 Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB.

VIDEO . . . VIDEO . . . VIDEO Teamster Rebellion—Minneapolis 1934. A proud page in American labour history. 35 minutes VHS video with archive footage and an exclusive interview with 1934 picket captain Harry DeBoer.

notes and booklist all in a wallet folder. Only £2.50 (plus £1 postage). 10 or more post free.

VIDEO . . . VIDEO . . . VIDEO 45 minutes highlights of the 25 February anti-witch-hunt rally and the lobby on the 26th. Wish you were there? Now see it as it really was, not the media lies!

VIDEO . . . VIDEO . . . VIDEO Liverpool fights the Tories—the truth about Liverpool Council's proud record. An excellent introduction to a meeting on the witch-hunt or on Liverpool. 35 minutes. £5 to hire plus £5 deposit. £10 to buy.

Available only on VHS. £3 to hire, plus £7 deposit or £10 to buy.

FIGHT the Tories, not the socialists—90 minutes cassette, highlights of the London anti-witch-hunt rally. Features: T Mulhearn, D Hatton, P Taaffe, T Grant, etc. £1.25 plus 25p postage.

INTRODUCTION to Marxism Study Pack: Updated. Includes: What we stand for, British perspectives, Northern Ireland: A Marxist analysis, Ideals of October, Transitional programme, Communist Manifesto Today, and The State—A warning, plus study

ORDER all the above from World Socialist Books, 3-13 Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB.

"Militant fights back" meetings

CRICKLEWOOD *Militant* Readers meeting. Monday 24 March 7.30pm. Anson Primary School, Anson Road, London NW2.

COVENTRY *Militant* Readers Public Meeting. "Stop Car Industry Witch-hunts" Wednesday 26 March 7.30pm. Speakers: Ian Schofield (sacked Range Rover senior steward) and Cllr Phil Hollifield. Venue Tile Hill Social Club, Jardine Crescent Coventry.

Blackpool: Saturday 15 March 1.00pm Labour Party conference fringe meeting. Lecture Hall, Central Library, Queen Street, Blackpool.

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

FOREST HILL What We Stand For Public Meeting. Thursday 20 March. St Saviours Church Hall, Brockley Rise London SE23. 7.45pm. Speakers: Nick Wrack and Jim Brookshaw.

ROCHDALE: Monday 24 March 7.30pm. Speaker: Cheryl Varley, at Brunswick Hotel, Baillie Street (near Bus Station), Rochdale.

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

BRIXTON: Public meeting: 'No expulsions—defend Lambeth and Liverpool councillors'. Wednesday 26 March, 7.30pm, Brixton Recreation Centre, London SW2. Speakers include: Derek Hatton, Peter Taaffe, Jock McPherson-Quinn.

Withington: Friday 14 March, 7.45pm, Withington Town Hall, Lapwing Lane, Withington, Manchester. Speakers include: John Clegg, Labour councillor Burnage Ward, Phil Frampton.

IN DERBY a worker approached some paper sellers on the street. "Is that the *Militant*?" "Yes," came the reply. "Well, then, here's £10 for the optimists".

Working class people can see that only the *Militant* offers any way forward in the fight against Thatcher and the Tories. If you are reading this paper for the first time why not join that worker in Derby and support the optimists? Send us a tenner today, or whatever you can afford.

Our optimism is due to confidence in the ideas of Marxism. It was shown by a huge donation from a reader in Manchester; Viv Seal has sent us a cheque for £900! Whether it is £900 or 90p, every single donation is vitally needed to keep up our fight against capitalism.

Our money comes solely from the working class. In or out of work, at school or college—we all have a stake in the future socialist society. So, once you've made your donation don't leave it at that. Go out and ask all your mates. Introduce them to the ideas that scare the Tories so much.

We are aiming for 50 per cent of the target by 15

March so every area should already have plans drawn up. See what you can do to help. The collecting tins are still providing the easiest way to raise money. Use them on all sales—on the streets, on estates, at work. Keep one in the car and collect for giving lifts.

The petition against the witch-hunt, announced in our paper last week, is an ideal opportunity to raise thousands of pounds. With a target of a million signatures we can ask each person for a donation. Any mathematicians reading can work out the possibilities for

much-needed cash. If all goes well with this petition we could raise enough to obtain some of the equipment we need for a more frequent paper.

Youth once again show where they stand. £136 (after expenses) was collected at the Northern LPYS conference. £102 at Scottish LPYS conference. *Militant* supporters at Liverpool University have sent us over £42.

At the other end of the age scale thanks to F Armstrong from Fitzwilliam, an examiner from the 1926 general strike who shows his con-

tinued support for the class struggle with a donation of £5. Whatever your age, we depend on your support. We're optimistic we will get it!

THANKS TO: H Naylor, unemployed, South Normanton £1.50, J Draper, NW London £10, Yorkshire Regional LP conference £317, H Clark, Strathclyde NALGO £2, H Maxwell, Strathclyde NALGO £1, Greater London LP conference £145, RE Fisher, South West £10, J Flynn, Holystone NALGO £10, Mansfield readers' meeting £41, Brighton readers' meeting £93.

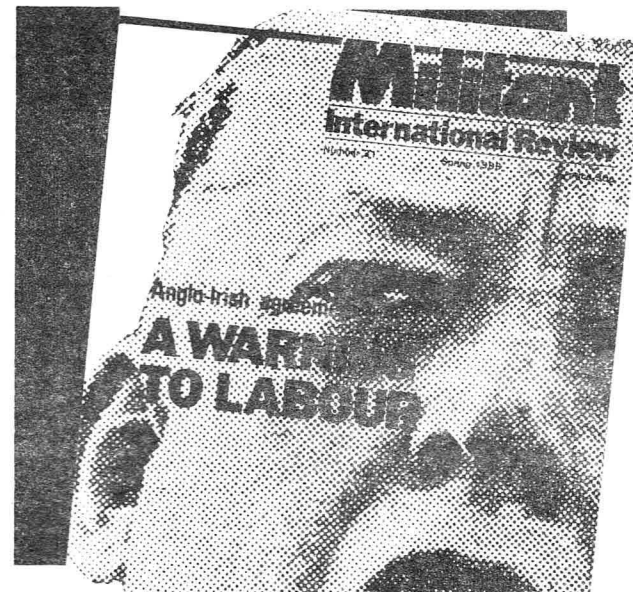
Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 Manchester/Lancs	1389		4200
2 London West	855		2900
3 London South West	426		1500
4 London East	935		3500
5 London South East	491		2200
6 Humberside	434		2350
7 East Midlands	508		3050
8 Southern	492		3100
9 South East	355		2400
10 West Midlands	527		4500
11 Yorkshire	666		5600
12 Merseyside	676		6900
13 Scotland West	391		3850
14 Northern	304		4550
15 Wales West	223		3150
16 South West	126		2150
17 Wales East	91		1450
18 Eastern	184		3450
19 Scotland East	164		3200
Others	949		5000
Total received	10198		70000



OUT NOW. New edition of *Inqaba ya Basebenzi*, journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the African National Congress. Price £1 plus 20p postage. Subscriptions £4 for four issues. Surface mail-all countries. £7.90 airmail-all countries. Orders from: Inqaba, BM Box 1719, London WC1N 3XX.

IRSF London Broad Left Meeting, Wednesday 19 March 1986, 6pm. At: "The Windmill", Tabernacle Street,

London EC2. Speaker: James McGuinness on "Building the Broad Lefts". All IRSF members welcome.



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

Where are you spending Easter?

Come to YS Conference

ONLY A couple of weeks left to prepare for the 1986 national Labour Party Young Socialists' conference in Bournemouth.

Who will be going? Well, Margaret Thatcher and Norman Tebbit won't, nor will Rupert Murdoch. But you should. Young workers, people facing conditions like the baker in the article below will be there. They'll be organising for a better deal.

Young unemployed people will be there, fighting for an end to the dole queue. YTS trainees will be in Bournemouth too, getting together to change the near-slave conditions which the Tories would like to impose on every young worker!

School students who want a decent job, and students who want to stop Fowler fouling up their lives by cutting benefits will be at LPYS conference.

Some Labour leaders claim the LPYS are making 'impossible' demands but

all we are asking for is a future and only socialism can give us that.

Join us in Bournemouth from 28 to 31 March for three days of discussions, discos, theatre, bands and a great weekend with other Young Socialists. A group of YS members in your area will be travelling to the conference, so why not join them? Details from Andy Bevan, LPYS, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT or from your local LPYS branch.



A fringe meeting at 1985 LPYS Conference.

On the march for our future

THE YORKSHIRE 'youth march for jobs' has been a great success to date. In Goole the five Hull marchers led a YCND/Goole Labour Party demonstration through the town centre.

Youth CND is a growing force in this town and after our march there is a real possibility of a good YS branch as well. The hospitality was marvellous. We were taken around to a local nightclub where we met young people of all political persuasions. That night, far from being a drinking session, was one long political debate for the marchers.

The hospitality of Stainforth Labour Party members and Hatfield Main miners' welfare, at very short notice, was first class. Miners in the club raised £17 and three Stainforth members marched with us for one leg of the journey.

We spoke at a Labour Club meeting at Sheffield

Polytechnic with a SOGAT official and raised money at the union building and the trades and labour club. This youth march has become for us a crash course in so many aspects of political work, fund raising, publicity, public speaking.

We are due to arrive in Bournemouth on 28 March

in time for the opening rally of LPYS national conference. So there is still time for your YS to prepare for our arrival and use it to build the local LPYS. Contact Alistair Tice on (0482) 29165 for further details.

By Ray Duffill
(Youth marcher)

WE ARRIVED in Chesterfield on 4 March, unfurled the banner, got out the rattling tins, leaflets, charters and stickers and proceeded with our own ad-hoc march.

We passed a factory where the workers were leaving for dinner. People gave money for the march and messages of support, passing cars blew their horns in support, just what we needed. At the Labour Party rooms we were warmly welcomed.

John Burrows, Derbyshire NUM general secretary came across for a chat with us, bringing messages of support

and £5 in lieu of sponsorship from the miners.

Betty Heathfield came for a chat about our aims for the march and the conditions for young workers and unemployed. She told us: "Until everyone is aware of the conditions young people are facing, until young people are rallied under Labour's banner our job is not fully finished, so keep at 'em, don't let people forget."

By Neil Ware



Terry Fields MP speaking at a school students' rally last spring.

The bread winner

JOHN IS 16 years old and the sole earner in his family. When we first went into John's house, his mother told us we had startled him—he thought it was time to go to work.

John explained: "I work in a bakery about 3½ miles away—my friend and myself leave the house at about half past three in the morning, I get up about three.

"Last night I did not go to bed because I had missed a previous shift and I was worried that if I did it again I'd get the sack.

"While I'm walking to work, I've been stopped by the police, but once I explain I work at the bakery it's OK. When I start work about 5, I know my next break won't be until I finish at two in the afternoon. We have no lunch break or tea break though we do have cups of tea while we're working".

What about pay? "I get

99p an hour and have to work a six day week for which I take home £47. Most days I walk home to save money rather than catch a bus." John's mother, brother and sister were in and out of the room as we spoke. Did he give his mother any money? £12 a week, his is the only wage.

Tory haters

Young people can often tolerate lousy work if you get a reasonable social life, but John's consists of falling asleep on the settee most nights and going out on a Saturday night if he feels up to it. In his own words he is a "slave".

But what of the slavedrivers then, his bosses. "They all have fancy cars and good lifestyles—on our backs." And what of the Tories? John and his mother answered in unison, "we hate

her". Living on a council estate, they decided to join the Labour Party, when we told them of Liverpool's achievement in building houses, nurseries and leisure centres and providing jobs including YTS on a decent wage and with a real job at the end.

Young people are not asking for the moon. John told us: "If they taught me to be a baker and paid me around £70 I'd be happy". We invited him to speak at Swansea LPYS that week about organising a union and linking it to the perspective of socialism in the near future.

If you have a job like John's come to the biggest YS meeting of the year, this Easter's national conference and start the fightback.

By Roy Davies and Paula Harford

"We will be calling on school students to support students, who are taking strike action in Portsmouth, to escalate this into a national day of action alongside the student and trade union movement. We must stop 'Fowler', kick the Tories out, and bring to power a socialist Labour government committed to securing a decent education, a guaranteed job and a secure future for our generation."

Teach Tories a lesson

THE SCHOOL Students' Union has issued a warning to the Tories. Their fresh round of attacks on the most vulnerable sections of society could lead to a major outcry from school students.

The 'Fowler' white paper is part of an overall plan to stop jobless school leavers claiming personal benefits, hand over 25 per cent of further education courses to the Manpower Services Com-

mission, and stop students claiming welfare benefits.

The attacks will shut off further and higher education to all but the super-rich, and force six out of ten school leavers on to slave-labour YTS schemes. This amounts to YTS conscription.

Dave Sirockin, secretary of the School Students' Union has pledged to mobilise support for the campaign against 'Fowler'.



No to YTS conscription.

What THEY stand for

THATCHER says she will not meet representatives of the ANC, PLO or Sinn Fein until they 'renounce violence'.

Labour MPs who have discussed issues with such organisations have been roundly condemned by the Tories and their lickspittle allies in the media. The NUM, readers will recall, were on the receiving end when they sought financial assistance from Qadaffi during the Great Strike.

It may come as a surprise, therefore, to discover that Thatcher is to meet Abdul Haq, an Afghani rebel leader who ordered the planting of

a bomb at Kabul airport which killed 27 people in September 1984. Is he not a terrorist?

No, according to Downing Street. He is a 'freedom fighter'.

TORY PARTY Chairman Norman Tebbit knows why 19,000 school students played hookey on one day alone in London last year.

Not a word about the lack of a proper job waiting for them or two years' slave wages on YTS.

"Barmy left-wing teachers are filling their heads with CND, gay and lesbian studies" he says.



THE POWDERED baby foods condemned by the Department of Health last year from Farley Health (sic) Products at their Kendal factory has been exported for animal feed.

Forty-one cases of food poisoning were reported and the factory closed down.

Liverpool and Lambeth councillors fined and banned

One law for rich another for poor

LIVERPOOL AND Lambeth councillors have been surcharged and disqualified—fined and stripped of an important democratic right—for losses calculated, so far, at a little over £100,000 for each council.

These "losses", moreover, supposedly arise from the councils' loss of interest on housing rebates and crown property payments in lieu of rates. These were deliberately held back, on the government's orders, by the DHSS and the Treasury—who collected the interest which accrued while they were holding on to these sums. From the standpoint of public funds in general, there was no "loss" at all!

The cost of the High Court trial so far is at least four or five times the District Auditor's "certified losses". By ordering the councillors to pay the DA's legal costs, the court has effectively doubled the penalty imposed on them.

Yet what happens when the servants of big business squander taxpayers' money and flagrantly disregard the law?

Two major scandals of recent times, the Crown Agents' losses and the busting of Rhodesian oil sanctions, highlight the blatant double standard by which the machinery of justice operates, along clear class lines. There is one law for the rich and another for the poor.

Ministers of Labour governments were involved in the handling of these affairs. In the light of their record, lectures from the Labour leaders on upholding the law and the "impossibility" of the next Labour government wiping out penalties on councillors carrying out party policy are inappropriate, to say the least.

Crown Agents scandal

IN 1974 it came out that the Crown Agents, autonomous civil service mandarins who act as brokers between the British and Commonwealth governments, had squandered £180 million in reckless speculative investment. Included in their losses, for instance, was £40 million placed with the notorious Stern Group, whose dubious involvement in international speculation brought about its collapse in 1974.

A preliminary enquiry showed that those with the principal responsibility, like Sir Claude Hayes, the senior Crown Agent, and the Director of Finance, Challis, did not regard themselves as answerable to anyone, and in turn were incapable of exercising control over their subordinates.

Were these people audited? Were they surcharged? Were they penalised for gross incompetence?

They were investigated, it is true, by a Tribunal under a High Court judge, Mr Croome-Johnson. But the 75 people under criticism and considered to be at risk were granted immunity from prosecution.

By Lynn Walsh

tion. This immunity covered not only possible charges of fraud and corruption, but exchange control offences which were already being considered by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Not only were the witnesses granted immunity, but the Tribunal paid for their legal representation out of public funds. For some of the main witnesses, potentially the main culprits, this meant paying for a leading counsel and two juniors each.

This Tribunal was set up by a Labour Government. So despite the fact that at least £180 million had been squandered, Labour ministers gave up in advance any opportunity of bringing those responsible to book.

The Tribunal found the Crown Agents to be incompetent. But there was no question of them being bankrupted or suffering any financial penalty themselves. For those top civil servants, working in cahoots with some of the most unscrupulous financial operators around, the law was waived.

"Oilgate"

AFTER THE white minority regime of Ian Smith made its Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), the Labour government of Harold Wilson enacted a series of orders which gave effect to UN sanctions. Amongst other things, they made it illegal for any British citizen to do anything "calculated to promote the supply or delivery of petroleum" to Rhodesia.

For over a decade, both the major oil companies and the government vigorously denied that any British company was supplying petrol to Rhodesia. By the late 1970s, however, it became clear that two companies, Shell and BP (51 per cent owned by the British government), were major suppliers either directly through Mozambique or through a "swap" arrangement with the French oil company Total via South Africa.

Sanction-busting was highly profitable for the oil companies. Profits per barrel were triple the pre-UDI rate. Between 1965 and 1975 Shell and BP's profits in Rhodesia totalled £13 million. In addition, they made extra profits on oil refined and transported through South Africa. Press reports in 1977 and 1978, moreover, revealed that successive British governments, both Labour and Tory, were well aware of the companies' role.

Faced with mounting allegations of an "Oilgate", a scandal comparable to Nixon's Watergate, the government set up an inquiry under



Council workers back the banned Liverpool councillors.

Photo: Militant

Thomas Bingham QC. This confirmed in detail the allegations of secret collusion between oil company executives, top civil servants, and government ministers. The report amounted to an indictment of a massive conspiracy to flout the sanction laws.

Unlike the Crown Agent inquiry, witnesses were not offered immunity. But the outcome was no different. An unpublished section of the Bingham Report, "Evidence of Criminal Offences", was sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions. In December 1979, the Tory Attorney General, Sir Michael Havers, announced that there would be no prosecutions.

The main reason given was that investigation and trial would take too long and cost too much. But it was clear that both Tory and former Labour ministers wanted to avoid the embarrassment of oil company executives bringing the defence that they had smuggled oil with the approval, and even encouragement, of ministers.

Explaining why prosecutions had not been considered in 1968-69, when the Labour government had become aware of sanction busting, George Thomson, former Commonwealth Secretary, said that it would have damaged Britain's

economic interests and would "have alienated the South African authorities at a time when we were seeking their political help again..."

No one was prosecuted. None of the oil bosses responsible for the smuggling operation was penalised in any way.

Retrospective immunity

On the contrary, Frank McFazean, the right-wing head of Shell who pushed for closer British ties with the South African regime, was knighted and later appointed chairman of British Airways. Another oil boss who might have been worried about prosecutions was Denis Thatcher, director (1967-72) of the Burmah Oil subsidiary Castrol, which Bingham investigated as one of the main suppliers of lubricants to Rhodesia.

So sensitive were Labour ministers to evidence pointing to their collusion in sanction busting, that James Callaghan proposed a special commission of both Houses of Parliament, to be headed by a Law Lord. This was passed by the Commons but then defeated in the Lords and no effort was made to

revive the idea.

When the incoming Tory Attorney General announced that there would be no prosecutions he was in effect granting retrospective immunity to all those involved in the twelve-year sanction-busting conspiracy, which netted millions of extra profits for the oil companies.

When right-wing Labour leaders are called on to defend the position of Labour representatives elected by workers to defend their interests, they invariably take cover behind legalistic slogans: the law must be upheld, no retrospective legislation etc. When it comes to financial scandals and systematic law-breaking by the big monopolies and their agents, it is a different story entirely.

When the Bingham Report was debated in Parliament, and the devious role of Wilson and his ministers over sanctions became clear, the *Rhodesia Herald* the mouthpiece of the Smith regime, made an ironic comment: "Perhaps it would be stretching things a bit to suggest that Sir Harold was, in fact, our man in Whitehall. But if things do get hot for him in Westminster, should we not let by-gones be by-gones and offer him political asylum?"

'We're disenfranchised'

SNATCHES FROM Radio Merseyside phone in—6 March 1986—the day after the councillors lost their court case.

Thatcher's not interested in the ballot-box, only when it suits her. She scrapped the county councils because they're Labour. She had to use the courts; they'd never win an election here.

I don't support Hatton, but the people of this city elected this council. This is a very dangerous; we've been disenfranchised.

Thatcher wants to destroy all opposition, not just to win, but actually destroy anyone who dares to fight against the government. That's what this court case is about.

What exactly have they done wrong? They've built houses, they've created a few more jobs, they've given me a ray of hope.

There's been a lot of talk about intimidation. When are we going to hear about intimidation from the other side. I reckon this is why they've banned them from office and given them such heavy fines—to frighten off any other councillors or anyone else who's prepared to take them on. She wants to grind them into ground; that's what I call intimidation.



Liverpool's Labour group.

Photo: Militant.

Councillors defiant

THE ANNUAL losses from business fraud amount to more than the annual losses arising from 'theft', 'burglary' and 'robbery' in the whole of London.

Very few of the well-heeled spivs responsible will ever come before the courts to answer for their crimes, and even those who do will get much better treatment than was meted out to the Liverpool and Lambeth councillors. Mary Jennings spoke to councillors in Liverpool about the consequence of the surcharge which may run into hundreds of thousands of pounds for each councillor.

PAUL LUCOCK was elected for Vauxhall ward in 1983 and sits on the education, social services, and personnel committees. He works as a community assessment teacher dealing with individual children with learning difficulties.

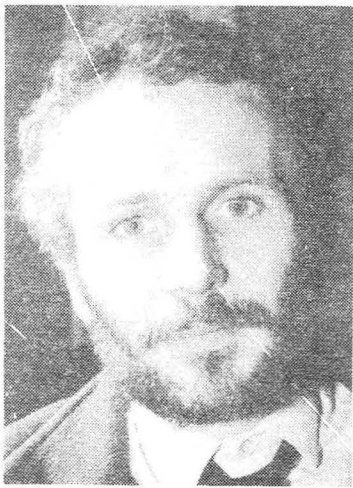
Pam Evans is the secretary of Liverpool Women's Council, and a delegate to the District Labour Party. She works at the Royal Liverpool Hospital as a scientific officer. The couple have one child, Katheryn, who is nine months old.

MJ. Paul, how will the threat of surcharge affect you and the family?

PL. We are under the threat of losing our home and all our possessions.

If we had not followed the policies we were elected on, it would have meant that people who were living in slum tenements and other bad housing conditions would have to continue living in those conditions. We have only placed ourselves in the same position as any other family in Liverpool who constantly have the threat of redundancy and losing everything hanging over them.

PE. I feel that I can cope with a surcharge of a few thousand pounds. We are lucky because we



Paul Lucock.

both work at the moment and hopefully we'll be able to pay off the debts eventually, but we could not do so if the surcharge ran into hundreds of thousands of pounds.

MJ. Pam, how have you coped with the pressure?

PE. When I was having Katheryn, the pressure was tremendous because I was off work and getting news from the TV and media. However the Families Support Group kept me going through regular discussions and moral support. If I had had to rely exclusively on the press and media for my information I think I would have given up the struggle a long time ago.

Jacky Crowley, 26, was elected for Anfield Ward in 1984 and sits on the education, planning and land, social services, and personnel committees. She is also chair of the drugs sub-committee set up by the social services committee.

She has recently started work after 18 months on the dole. Prior to that she worked voluntarily at Croxteth comprehensive in its independent year and was active in the fight to save the school.

MJ. How do you feel about the disqualification from office of yourself and the other Labour

councillors in Liverpool?

JC. I think that the disqualification is worse than the surcharge because if we are disqualified then democracy has been snuffed out in Liverpool. As far as the surcharge is concerned, I have no savings, but I am very worried about the future because if I am made bankrupt, which is quite likely, it will affect my credit rating if I try to buy a house or any other big item.

MJ. You have just started work after 18 months on the dole. How do you feel about the threat of an attachment to your earnings?

JC. I would be absolutely sick if this happens because for the first time in nearly two years I have not had to worry about money.

MJ. What kind of reaction have you had from the people around you?

JC. Everyone who knows me is very supportive and sympathetic because they know that we have no other choice but to do what we did. Last week I was in the reception area at the council and an old age pensioner came up to me and gave me £5 towards the Councillors Appeal fund. I knew he could not afford it and it made me think. It shouldn't be up to these people to pay the fines and legal fees: they have suffered enough over the years. The labour and trade union movement should be paying the costs.

MJ. Do you have any regrets about what you have done?

JC. No, we have carried out the policies which we were elected on as well as Labour Party policy. My one regret is that the labour and trade union leadership have not backed us up in the way they should have done. I was not surprised by the verdict of the court, but I was absolutely shocked at the behaviour of the NEC who gave the green light to the courts to find us guilty. The NEC's action confused people. Some think that it is the Labour Party that is removing us from office.

Fighting on two fronts

IN THE heat of the battle to defend their councillors from the legal attack by the District Auditor, Liverpool Labour Party activists are being forced to fight on a second front, against moves by their own party's national executive committee to re-organise the District Labour Party and expel twelve of their members. But they are fighting back on both fronts.

Six Liverpool parties oppose reorganisation proposals

AT A meeting of officers from each of the six Liverpool Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs), Joyce Gould, national Labour Party official and two regional party officials reported on the National Executive Committee's proposals for the Liverpool District Labour Party (DLP).

The officials apologised for the timing of the meeting—the same day that 48 Labour councillors were tried, surcharged and debarred from office by the High Court. They said that they had not realised that when they organised the meeting.

The opposition by all the CLPs to their proposals was made absolutely clear. Questions were asked about the temporary co-ordinating committee (TCC) which

will be set up to take the place of the suspended DLP executive committee and officers until the AGM is held in June.

It was revealed that the trade union places on the TCC will be organised not by the rank-and-file members and branches in Liverpool, but through the general secretaries of each affiliated trade union. It would not be a condition that they were delegates to the DLP before, and the NEC appeared to have overlooked a representative from either the youth or women's organisations on this body. There will be two full-time staff to run and organise the Labour Party in Liverpool.

At the end of the meeting, Broadgreen CLP officers moved a resolution that opposed the continued suspension of the Liverpool DLP and rejected in particular section 15.17 of the majority of the inquiry into the DLP (which in effect recommended expulsions).

The resolution was carried without dissent and the officials were asked to report it back to the NEC.

By Jose Aitman

Key conference for Labour in North West

LABOUR'S NORTH West regional conference which takes place this weekend in Blackpool must give a firm no to the expulsions in Liverpool.

It must also throw out the threatened expulsions in Chorley, Morecambe, Macclesfield, St Helens and Eddisbury and turn its attention to fighting the Tories.

Conference should support the emergency resolution from Walton opposing witch-hunts and support the resolution calling for backing for the surcharged councillors. The

new regional executive committee to be elected must become accountable for the regional full-time officials so that they don't spend all their time policing the party.

Militant supporters are organising a lobby at 9.30 am on Saturday 15 March outside the Winter Gardens.

Also the biggest ever conference *Militant* meeting is to be held at 1 pm with Derek Hatton and Joan Beal, an expelled member of the regional women's committee, as speakers.

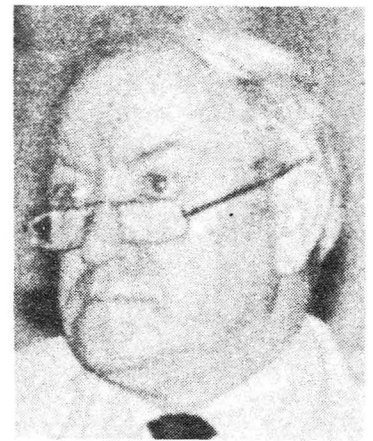
Liverpool DLP and Labour Group have also organised an anti-witch-hunt rally on Saturday evening at 7.15 pm. Both meetings will be at the Lecture Hall, Blackpool Library, Queen Street.

By Bryan Beckingham

Lambeth councillor fights on

LAST WEEK'S ruling by the Tory High Court will mean severe hardship for the 32 Lambeth Labour councillors who have stood firm in defending jobs and services. None of them are wealthy and eight are unemployed, retired, or full-time councillors living off allowances. Many could also face bankruptcy.

One of the surcharged councillors, Jock McPherson Quinn, said his family would now be financially better off if he was dead, and the thing that upset him most was that he and his wife would now never be able to afford to visit their children in Australia and Canada.



Jock McPherson Quinn

He was not prepared however to let even these enormous sacrifices stop him from fighting for socialism and for a party leadership that was going to defend working people.

The stand of 32 Lambeth councillors must be used as a means of building solid support for the Labour Party in the coming local elections.

By Steve Nally (Vauxhall LPYS)

France

"Help! The right are coming back"

FRANCE GOES to the polls in legislative elections on 16 March. The failure of the left government, brought to power with massive support in 1981, has prepared the way for a victory for the right-wing opposition.

Unless there is a sudden radical shift towards the Socialist and Communist parties, the main capitalist parties, the RPR and the UDF, will most likely win an overall majority of seats in the National Assembly, not counting those gained by the extreme right, the *Front National* (FN).

The two bosses' parties would need 43 per cent of the vote for a majority in parliament. Recent polls give them at least 47 per cent, with another six or seven per cent for the FN.

Inspired by Thatcher, the capitalist parties propose draconian counter-reform and attacks on workers' rights and living standards. They are demanding massive denationalisation, cuts in health, social services, allowances and benefits, and the suppression of hard-won rights and conditions enshrined in the French labour legislation, the *Code de Travail*.

In particular, the youth and the four million strong immigrant population are under threat. The "TUC", part-time slave-labour schemes for youth, paid at half the legal minimum wage, are to be extended to the private sector. Jacques Chirac, mayor of Paris and RPR leader wants all immigrants who lose their jobs to be expelled from the country with their families. Family allowance for the third child in immigrant families is to be cut.

This programme can hardly appeal to working people and their families. If the capitalist parties come to power it will be, as one of their spokesmen admits, "by default", merely taking advantage of workers' disillusionment as a result of the experience of these last five years.

Right wing divided

THE LEFT were swept to power on the slogan of "fundamental change". At the last Congress of the Socialist Party (PS) before the 1981 elections, Francois Mitterrand spelt out the policy of the party. "Our aim", he said: "is not to modernise capitalism, but to replace it by socialism."

Unfortunately, in concrete terms, the programme of the Socialist-Communist government was far too limited to realise this objective. True, particularly in the left government's first months a great number of reforms were carried through. The minimum wage, pensions and

By Philippe Roland

allowances were increased. The working week was cut to 39 hours with no loss of pay and a fifth week of paid holidays was introduced, together with retirement at 60. Workers won important new rights in the workplace, and thousands of new jobs were created in the public sector.

But the decisive question of who owns and controls the economy, was dodged. In spite of a series of nationalisations, by far the greater part of the means of production was left in capitalist hands.

The Socialist and Communist leaders naively hoped that the reforms, and the increase in demand which resulted from them, would 'stimulate' the capitalist economy, encouraging the capitalists to step up investment and lead the way out of the crisis. In fact, the effect of the government measures was exactly the opposite.

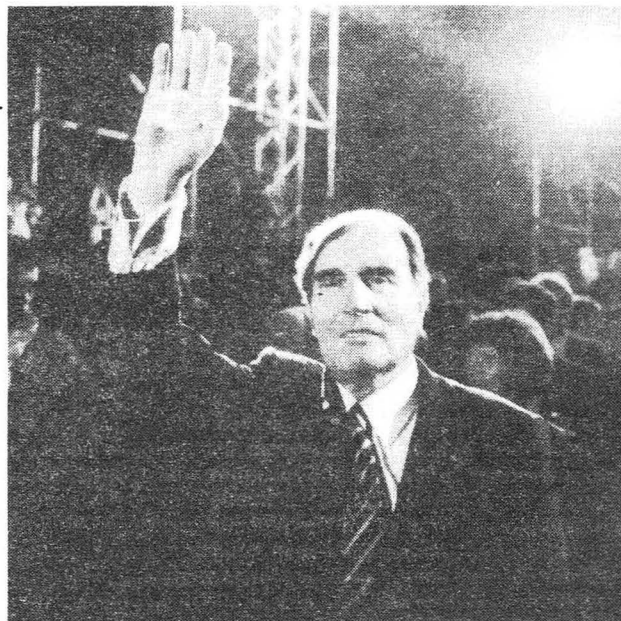
Under the capitalist



Socialist election poster: "Help! The right are coming back" — but no policies to prevent it.

system, the aim of production is not to satisfy needs, but to make a profit. The immediate effect of the reforms was precisely to threaten the bosses' profits. Basing themselves on the enormous economic power concentrated in their hands, they forced the government to back down. Unemployment rose sharply, investment projects were demonstratively cancelled. Money left the country, and speculation against the franc forced a series of devaluations.

Having no serious programme to break the power of capital, the government capitulated. In June 1982, a wage freeze was imposed, opening a programme of 'austerity' which has continued up to the present time. It was necessary, as the then Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy explained: "to restore the confidence in private enterprise". From reforms, the government moved to counter-reforms.



Mitterrand: Capitalist policies rejected by workers.

The consequences have been disastrous for working people. Unemployment figures, at 1.6 million in 1981, are now approaching 3 million. Half of this number receive no benefit payments whatsoever. In one town recently, on one single day, 50 families, mainly victims of unemployment, were turfed out of their homes onto the street.

Amongst youth under 21, one in three is out of work, including 45 per cent of all young women under 20!

posing great hardship on the workers, the Socialists, with the participation in the government (up to July 1984) of the Communist Party (PCF) leadership, tried by all possible means to make capitalism work.

For example, between January 1982 and January 1985, a staggering 400 billion francs was paid over to big business to encourage investment in industry. Investment fell by 10 per cent over the same period, the 1984 level being lower than that of 1973! In 1984 60 per cent of investments went to speculation of various kinds. At the same time, between 25 and 30 per cent of industrial capacity remained unused.

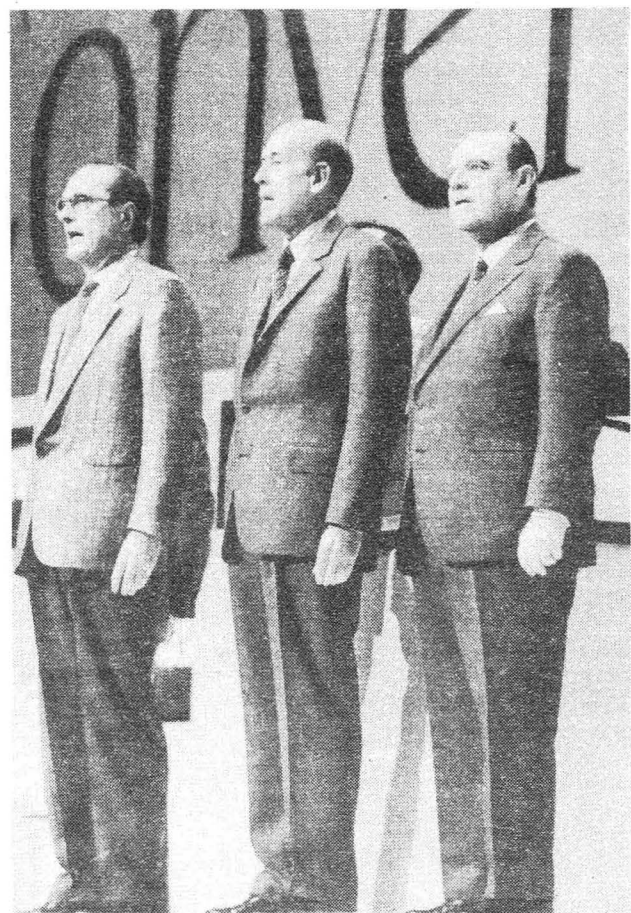
In spite of the exports boom to the USA, France continues to lose ground on foreign markets, to the extent of 2 per cent last year, and in the same period even lost 1 per cent on the home market. These developments will now be translated into yet more cuts and more attacks on workers' hard-won gains.

Reforms cancelled out

THE SYSTEM itself is in crisis so even the partial measures of reform, positive as they might be in themselves, are soon cancelled out. This is what has happened in France. Compromise with capitalism has now prepared the way for reaction.

However, a victory for the capitalists on 16 March would be largely illusory. It is one thing for their economic "experts", within the safe confines of their party headquarters, to elaborate such a programme, but to be able to carry it out is entirely another question.

The French working class has great revolutionary traditions. They founded the first workers' republic in history, the great Paris Commune of 1871. In 1936, they shook the foundations of capitalism by a revolutionary



Right-wing leaders Chirac, Giscard, Barre: No way forward.

general strike. In 1944, they overthrew the Nazi occupation by an armed insurrection, and in the general strike of May and June 1968, power itself only slipped from their hands because of treacherous leadership.

Following the return of a right wing government which attempts to carry out its programme, it is possible that the labour movement will remain dormant for a period of six months or so, without serious leadership, and stunned by the defeat. But the situation could change very quickly. It is not excluded that we could see, within a relatively short period of time, the development of a new revolutionary upheaval.

The whole balance of class forces is weighted against the capitalist class. The middle class, which in the 1930s ensured French capitalism a certain social basis, has been eaten away by post-war industrial development. The rural population has fallen from 47 per cent to 7 per cent in the last 40 years. Furthermore, of that 7 per cent, 85 per cent are wage-earners, and therefore form part of the proletariat. In 1965, there were two million farmers in France. Now there are barely 600,000.

This means that the capitalist class will not be able to restore the situation decisively in its favour, as it would like, and as it was able to do following the debacle of the 1936 Popular Front. The weakness of the middle class also explains the extremely ephemeral nature of the *Front National*, the most extreme party of reaction, which is already on the decline. There is no comparison between Le Pen's puny movement and the big fascist leagues of the 1930s.

No programme

EVEN BEFORE coming to power, the right wing parties are hopelessly divided. The RPR is riven by internal factions. The UDF was never more than a fragile coalition of ruling class sects, the biggest of which is the little *Parti Républicain*. Now there is the *Front National*, in itself a new division and

also a source of difficulties within the other parties, who fear that open association of a right wing government with the FN would provoke the workers' movement.

Already divided on virtually all questions of policy, caught between the need for stern measures against the working class, and the fear of setting off a new 1968, yet another issue has split the capitalist parties in the course of the election campaign itself. The problem is that of so-called 'cohabitation' with the Socialist president, Francois Mitterrand, the presidential elections not being due until 1988.

Chirac, and the former President, Giscard d'Estaing, in the name of "respect of the constitution", (a piece of hypocrisy which has served the bourgeois well in the past) want to avoid, if possible, provoking a constitutional crisis which would bring forward the presidential elections. Not the smallest factor in their calculations is that their common rival, Raymond Barre, would be likely to be the opposition candidate. Barre and his supporters, confident that the attempt at 'cohabitation' will end in a fiasco have declared that they will not support any government formed under a Socialist Party president.

These divisions which reflect the impasse of capitalism and its representatives' uncertainty and pessimism for the future will become much deeper once the right is back in power, and particularly once French labour moves into action.

At the same time, because of the bankruptcy of their leaderships, the PS, the PCF, and the trade union organisations are moving into a period of crisis. The very important developments within these organisations over recent years, and the perspectives for the left in the coming period, will be covered in a further article.

The left parties will be put to a decisive test in the years ahead. Whatever the election result the irreversible decline of the French economy, and the impossibility of finding a way out on a capitalist basis is pushing French society into a period of great social upheaval and revolution.

USSR, China, India, Belgium, South Africa

No miracles from Gorbachev

THE 27th Congress of the Russian 'Communist' Party has marked a new stage in the degeneration of the regime, with frantic attempts to restore confidence in its ability to take society forward.

A new Central Committee and Politbureau of handpicked Gorbachev supporters were elected, who are supposed "to help push the Soviet Union into the post-industrial age" (*Guardian*, 6 March).

From the congress rostrum, the corruption and bungling of the Brezhnev administration were repeatedly denounced.

But what, concretely, is Gorbachev proposing to put in its place?

Essentially, Gorbachev hopes to soothe the massive discontent among workers by providing them with more and better consumer goods. He hopes to achieve this, and better economic performance generally, by more use of high technology; by replacing old bureaucrats with new ones; by giving plant managers more powers of decision-making; and by giving enterprises cash incentives to produce better goods.

But Gorbachev's measures fail to come to grips with the basic problem of the Russian economy and society as a whole: the stranglehold of a self-perpetuating bureaucratic elite on all the levers of power.

Barrier to growth

The workers' revolution of 1917 established state ownership and central planning of the economy, making it possible to transform backward Russia into an industrial society. The resources for socialist development are present in abundance.

Increasingly, however, the repressiveness, inefficiency and corruption of the ruling elite (organised in the 'Communist' Party) has become an absolute barrier to growth. (See table)

Gorbachev's changes of some top officials cannot solve this problem. As a Hungarian journalist commented: "It's easy to change a few people at the top. But it is not so easy to change the millions of bureaucrats underneath."

Thus, after the fireworks of Gorbachev's 'reformist' speech came the cold water of bureaucratic conservatism in speeches like that of Prime

By George Collins

Minister Ryzhkov, stressing that no structural changes in the system are envisaged.

The capitalist media have lapped up Gorbachev's exposure of bureaucratic malpractices because it fits in with their general line that 'socialism' (i.e. Stalinism) doesn't work. To these commentators, the big question is whether Gorbachov will allow more play for "market forces" in the economy - i.e., less state control, less planning, more anarchy in production.

In reality, the solution to bad economic planning does not lie in abolishing economic planning, but in establishing an effective system of planning - i.e., control over production and distribution by the mass of



Gorbachev 'meets the people' in Leningrad. But workers' management? Certainly not!

desks, earning good salaries and interested in nothing but making themselves fat".

It is precisely the spectre of political revolution that is looming larger in front of the bureaucrats after the movement of the Polish

Brezhnev years. A temporary improvement in economic performance should result from the streamlining of the machinery.

But Gorbachev's "miracles" will soon turn sour. The net result of his policies will be to elevate stagnation and chaos to a higher level, to 'decentralise' corruption among wider

layers of officials, and turn the workers' expectations into anger.

The "Gorbachev era" could in fact see the build-up of a decisive movement of the Russian masses against every form of bureaucratic rule. This would mean the collapse of Stalinism in Russia and Eastern Europe, and the rise of new regimes of workers' democracy,

which would appeal to workers throughout the world to follow their revolutionary example.

A democratic workers' Russia moving towards socialism would bring huge gains, shortening the working week and increasing living standards. It would pave the way for a socialist revolution worldwide.

Economic planning and results

	(% growth per year)		
	1981-85 Plan	1981-85 Actual	1986-90 Plan
Gross industrial output	4.7	3.7	3.9-4.4
Industrial labour productivity	3.6	3.2	3.2-4.6
Gross agricultural output	2.5	1.2(est)	2.7-3.0
Total investment	2.0	3.4	3.4-3.9

working people through their own, democratically-elected organisations.

This is the fundamental policy of Marxism in relation to all the Stalinist countries, put forward by Leon Trotsky over fifty years ago. To carry it into practice, he explained, would require a political revolution by the working class to overthrow bureaucratic dictatorship, re-establish democratic rule by the working people on the basis of the planned economy, and pave the way to genuine socialist transformation.

This policy accords with the experience of every worker in Russia. As one retired lorry driver put it, it is "more than time we sent to pension all those bureaucrats who sit at their

workers and rumblings in other Stalinist countries. Yeltsin, Gorbachev's appointee at the head of the Moscow party apparatus, put their fears into words:

"Why do we raise the same old problems at one Congress after another? ... Why for so many years have we been unable to root up bureaucratism, social injustice and other abuses? How often can we present certain party heads as miracle workers?"

Workers' democracy

How often indeed? For the moment, Gorbachev's promises of reform have struck a chord among workers who hunger for change after the dismal

A DEVASTATING comment on efforts at reforming the Stalinist system has been delivered by the policy experiments in China.

These reforms went much further than the limited changes announced by Gorbachov in Russia, but only exacerbated the problems of the system, as this article by STEPHEN SMELLIE shows.

The reforms in China were designed to improve the efficiency of agriculture by allowing peasants, once they met their targets, to sell their produce on the open market.

This met with remarkable success, and spurred the bureaucracy on to introduce a similar scheme into sectors of industry. Factory managers were encouraged to use spare capacity to produce for the market.

But to the bureaucracy, a worrying development has been the effect of the

reforms on the workers and peasants. Pockets of wealth have grown up, creating inequalities which are threatening the whole base of the reforms.

Protests

Many peasants, and most workers, have not shared in the benefits of the reforms. Prices have jumped drastically, but wages have not kept up with price increases.

The growing feeling of

resentment among workers has broken to the surface in many cities and towns. In January, for example, Peking bus drivers deliberately skipped stops in order to show their discontent.

At the same time there has been a growth in corruption and bribery among the bureaucracy, reaching what the authorities describe as 'epidemic' proportions. This is partly due to the freedom now given to middle-level bureaucrats.

In the face of these problems, the reforms have been slowed down. The bureaucrats are discovering that it is impossible to satisfy the increasing demands of the workers and peasants either by 'free-market' reforms, or by tightening their own control again.

India

MILLIONS of workers took part in an all-India bandh (general strike) against price increases imposed by Rajiv Gandhi's government.

The strike was reported to be "total" in southern states, and successful in every area, except in states where no action was called because strikes had already taken place.

It is reported that 10,000 workers were arrested on a mass demonstration outside parliament, and thousands more in other parts of the country. The strike cost 4,500,000,000 rupees in lost production.

This was the second all-India bandh. The first, in 1982, was called by the trade unions while this one was called by 12 opposition parties.

There has also been a huge movement, supported by over six million government employees, against a recent High Court ruling that government workers can be sacked on the spot for "anti-government action".

Faced with mass anger, the government has retreated in the budget announced on 28 February, increasing spending on rural development by 65 per cent, and increasing taxes on the rich.

Belgium

MORE THAN 15,000 Belgian school students took part in strikes and demonstrations on 5 March. They were protesting against the anti-youth measures being proposed by the right-wing government: extending military service, and doubling the period that school

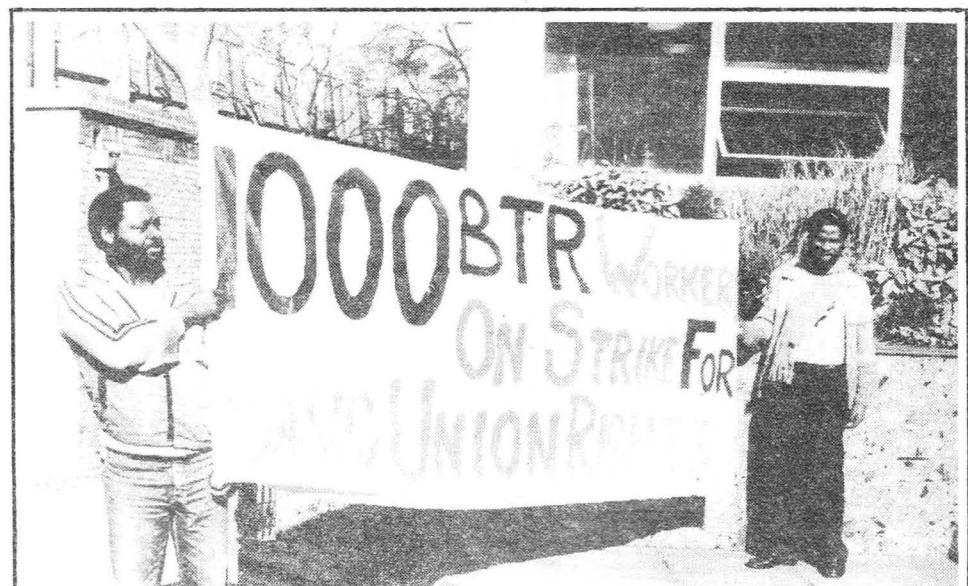
leavers must wait before getting benefits.

There are even plans to force school-leavers to work without pay while they wait for benefit! All these schemes are intended to cut unemployment statistics, without providing jobs.

The youth had to face threats from principals, who in some cases locked school gates to prevent them coming out.

Many youth linked their protest to the struggle for jobs and a future. As one youth put it: "Next time we must get the workers to join us". Socialist trade unionists supported the youth in Brussels, Charleroi and elsewhere.

The struggle will not be confined to one strike. Another day of action is planned for the end of March, with a march on Brussels.



WITH freedom songs and fighting slogans, pickets lined up outside BTR's headquarters in London last Friday in support of striking Metal & Allied Workers' Union members at BTR's Sarmcol plant in South Africa.

Among them were MAWU members touring Britain to gather support for the strike. A message of support from Dunlop workers in Leicester (TGWU 5/251 branch), which was passed on by SALEP, was read out. Daniel Ntangi of MAWU commented:

"It is this sort of letters that gives us courage to go on. We definitely want worker to worker contact. It is one of the main policies of COSATU (Congress of SA Trade Unions). Now we have to talk about how we can build direct links. We want workers in Britain to write to us in South Africa to ask us about our problems and tell us about theirs. Not just TGWU members but workers in every field. For international workers solidarity!"

Messages of support and donations to: MAWU, P.O. Box 9451, Johannesburg 2000, South Africa. (Report by April Ashley)

Barbaric conditions inside prisons

Dear Comrades,
 'Life behind bars' (*Militant*, 786) brought back some vivid memories of when I was imprisoned in Camp Hill prison on the Isle of Wight in 1976. Another lad and myself were put into a cell with bunk beds, lucky for me I chose the top bunk, due to the fact that that evening we were invaded by an army of cockroaches which entered through the vents in the wall.

.....
 We made a paste from paper and Vim and blocked up all the holes in the cell, which held them back for a while. It was still very hard to sleep at night because you could hear them scratching

away at our paste.
 I made friends with a kitchen orderly which was very fortunate. He told me never to eat the bread pudding which we were given twice a week. Apparently all the stale bread was thrown into an old stone room which was infested with cockroaches, on cooking day everything was shovelled up including the roaches and cooked.

They talk about "rehabilitation" what a load of rubbish that is. It's this degenerate, rotten system that put them in prison in the first place.

Yours fraternally
 B.Spetch

Letters

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

A boss's wage

Last Tuesday (25 February) a small article in *The Guardian* caught my eye. It reported that 'The former Labour MP for Loughborough, Mr John Cronin, who died after his falling near his home in Hampshire, left £385,167 gross in his will. Socialists are bound to ask

how a representative of the Labour movement managed to make so much out of his career.

For once the millionaire press has found the correct word for this state of affairs when it calls it 'gross'. Somehow I don't think that much of this small fortune was left to the Labour movement.

Yours fraternally
 John Goodby
 Leeds

Silencing the opposition

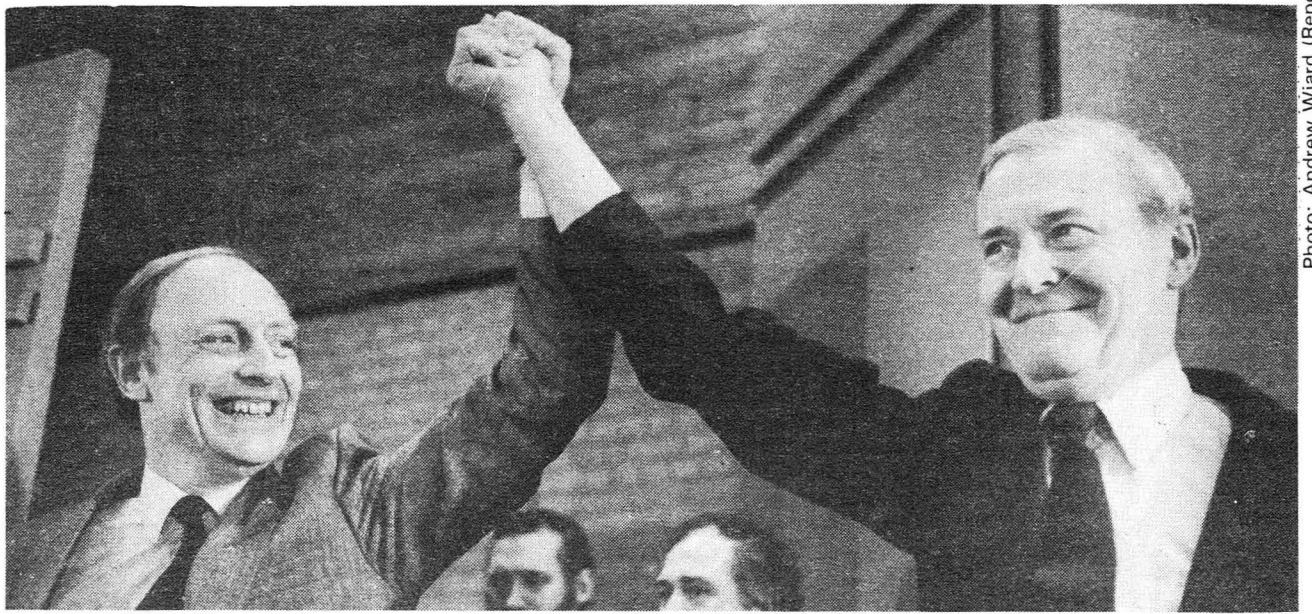


Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

Kinnock gave his support to Benn during the Chesterfield election campaign, but attacks on *Militant* are a prelude to a purge on anyone who opposes Kinnock's line.

Dear Comrades,
 The witch-hunt in the Labour Party is now going beyond supporters of *Militant*. I am a member of the Coventry District Labour Party Executive Committee and attended its meeting of 27 February.

During discussion on one item a member of the Committee commented on a report in the local press that a left-wing Labour councillor, George Lindfield, had been successful in appealing to the NEC for inclusion on the local municipal panel list.

He went on to denounce the councillor for "bringing the Party into disrepute" and suggested he be expelled! This was

followed by another hysterical attack on the same councillor, who was accused, among other crimes, of going around "with a cynical smile on his face".

When I inquired where such conduct was mentioned in the party rules, the chairman ruled the discussion out of order.

These events would be amusing were it not for the fact that they clearly demonstrate that expulsion is not now a last resort for the right-wing but their first and only solution to dealing with opposition.

Yours fraternally
 Pete McNally
 Coventry South East
 CLP

Political expulsions

Dear Comrades,
 In your recent list of CLP's passing resolutions against the witch-hunt you have omitted Hastings and Rye.

We have repeatedly passed resolutions deploring not only political expulsions but also Kinnock's leadership and the inquiry into Liverpool. Currently we are considering an LPYS motion calling for an inquiry into Exeter CLP which has witch-hunted socialists opposing

the Labour Group's coalition with the Liberals on the pretext that the "expellees" have not upheld party policy. It is the intimidatory tactics of Labour's right that must be exposed in Exeter as elsewhere.

These actions are a prototype for Kinnock to roll up the whole of the left as a preparation for a sell-out in a hung parliament.

Yours in struggle
 Mark Harry
 Hastings and Rye CLP

Tories attack the poor

Dear Comrades,
 I would like to express my deep anger at the proposed cuts in student grants and benefits.

The media made it appear that cuts in the minimum grant affected only rich parents but it has also meant that poorer parents have had to give higher contributions than ever. When I started university two years ago my parents were supposed to pay me £20 per week out of about £50 per week grant. Now they're supposed to

give me about £30 per week, which of course they can't afford. Out of this I pay rent of £19, but if the housing benefit is stopped I will have to pay £26 a week. If you add this to daily transport costs and the proposed cuts in social security then there's no way I will be able to stay on at university. It isn't even possible to get a part-time job with the massive unemployment in Liverpool.

This is the sort of situation that is affecting thousands of working class students especially mature students who have families to support.

Yours fraternally
 Paula Leigh
 Walton LPYS

Hidden dismantling of the NHS

Dear Comrades,
 Recently I had to go to the local hospital casualty unit. While I was waiting for four hours I saw just how far the health service has been ruined by cuts.

Two people, a middle aged woman and a young lad both needed to be taken into hospital. However, the hospital staff said that there was no way that they could take these people as there were no beds available.

I could not believe my ears. During this time the doctors were called away to an emergency and no one was seen for hours. One woman had been waiting seven hours to be seen.

It is only when you experience the cuts first-hand that you can appreciate the sheer vandalism done to the NHS by this government.

Yours fraternally
 Tim White
 Hackney South
 Labour Party



Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report) II

Hospital and ward closures mean ever-lengthening waiting lists for NHS treatment. Simple lack of resources results in unnecessary deaths every day.

Fusion—no safe alternative

Dear Editor,
 Your readers should be careful not to accept without critical appraisal Ronnie Sookhdeo's suggestion (*Militant* 787) that nuclear fusion produces no waste. This is a myth.

As assessment by two UKAEA scientists, who work on the JET fusion prototype at Culham (*Nuclear Energy* August 1985) points out that irradiated waste will arise in operation from contamination. Furthermore, it is estimated that the waste

created in decommissioning will be more than the equivalent cost for a Sizewell type PWR.

A further problem with fusion reactors is that the neutron flux created by their operation may be used to bombard uranium to create weapons usable as nuclear explosives. In the US the Reagan administration has just mothballed the MFTF fusion test programme, which has already cost \$360M, in order to concentrate on other fusion projects

that deal in laser technology and have a star wars spin off.

It has been reported recently that the UKAEA Culham laboratories are to take up an offer to develop particle accelerators for the star wars project. Vigilance is important in this fusion field.

Yours sincerely
 David Lowry
 Research Associate
 European Proliferation
 Information Centre

Butchered

Dear Comrades,
 I'm an apprentice butcher. I'm not complaining about my job being a 65 hour week, or about the pay. However, other leading butchers take on YTS trainees as boy butchers. A 65 hour week for a youth of 16-17 years old, earning £27 a week is slave labour.

The company I work for do not do this, but it's only a matter of time before they replace me with someone younger on £27 a week instead of the £76 that I take home.

Yours fraternally
 Jamie McGrane
 Peckham LPYS



Groom at the top

A JOB Centre in Lancashire recently advertised for a trainee groom to work from 8am to 5pm six days a week. They would be expected to feed, water, groom and exercise the horses, clean equipment and "train in stable management", all for a massive £30 per week. The advert stipulates "Must be interested in horses"—You'd have to be.

Not-so-desperate refugees

SPARE A thought for all the deposed dictators who are now having to rough-it in exile. Duvalier who is reported to have milked the Haiti treasury of \$1 million a month, is now slumming it in the French alps, paying £3,000 a night for his family to occupy an entire hotel. Meanwhile Marcos, despite being kicked out of the Phillipines, has a choice of homes in Britain alone. He has £10 million invested in property here including a penthouse in London worth £750,000.

The great Leyland sale

FOR THE last six months the government (not even the British Leyland Board) has been discussing the sale of parts of British Leyland to UK companies such as Laird Engineering and overseas giants such as General Motors.

There is a special cabinet committee to oversee it. After the Westland fiasco Thatcher intends to keep close personal control.

General Motors is bidding £230 million for BL Trucks and Buses divisions and Land Rover/Range Rover. They have allocated £40 million for redundancies.

This has led trade union and Labour leaders, along with some Tory MPs (particularly those in car constituencies), to set up the cry of 'keep BL British'. But a glance at the British options hardly gives BL workers confidence.

METRO-CAMMELL is bidding for the bus side, yet this Birmingham-based company has a long history of redundancies. It recently served notice on the unions that it would no longer recognise them "for any purpose."

Land Rovers

Lonhro, the company that even Ted Heath described as "the unacceptable face of capitalism," Aveling Barford was formerly part of BL.

Neil Kinnock has given some support to the idea of a management buy out. David Andrews of the British Leyland main board (responsible for commercial vehicle production) has been given the go-ahead to put in a bid.

As a boss of British Leyland he has overseen the sacking of thousands of British Leyland Bus and Truck workers, hardly a confidence booster for those who are left.

THATCHER AND her clique have adopted the 'American' option whilst a section of the bosses are pushing for a 'European' option.

Neither contains any hope for the jobs and living standards of working people.

The spectacle of the Tory MP for Solihull, John Taylor, leading a joint delegation of shop stewards from Land Rover and local Tory councils to the government pleading for British Leyland to be kept in British hands only serves to perpetuate the pernicious myth that workers and bosses have a common interest.

General Motors' present interest in Land Rover coincides with their plans to introduce a rival to the Land Rover to be produced in the UK.

A GM takeover will mean further redundancies, and as a minor outpost of the American giant the British workforce would be the first to go if the company ran into difficulties.

But selling it off to a British company also means redundancies. And in the longer term none of the companies mentioned are big enough to withstand even a temporary downturn, or provide the investment needed.

LAND ROVERS have been produced at Solihull for nearly 40 years. For 28 years it was in private hands. It has only once made a loss (in 1983). In the 1950s and '60s and well into the '70s it had no rival vehicle in the world.

It was, and still is, exported to 140 countries. As the *Guardian* commented, it has been an "unexploited asset." It was never able to keep up with demand and yet it has only been in the last few years that any investment has been put in.

For decades Land Rover employees have worked in a fac-

tory that was built in the '30s. Much of its machinery has been out of date for years. Enormous profits were made by the private owners, hardly a penny of which was reinvested.

Now the chickens have come home to roost. In Japan alone there are now two companies producing two and three times as many four wheel vehicles.

Up against intense competition management have screwed more out of the workforce. Because of a temporary increase in the world market Land Rover production rose by 20% last year over 1984, whilst Range Rover increased by 13.3%.

Yet hardly one new job has been created. Indeed, at present, vacancies created through natural wastage are filled by temporary workers on three month contracts.

Like the Westland workers, what concerns most Land Rover employees is, 'Who will guarantee my job.'

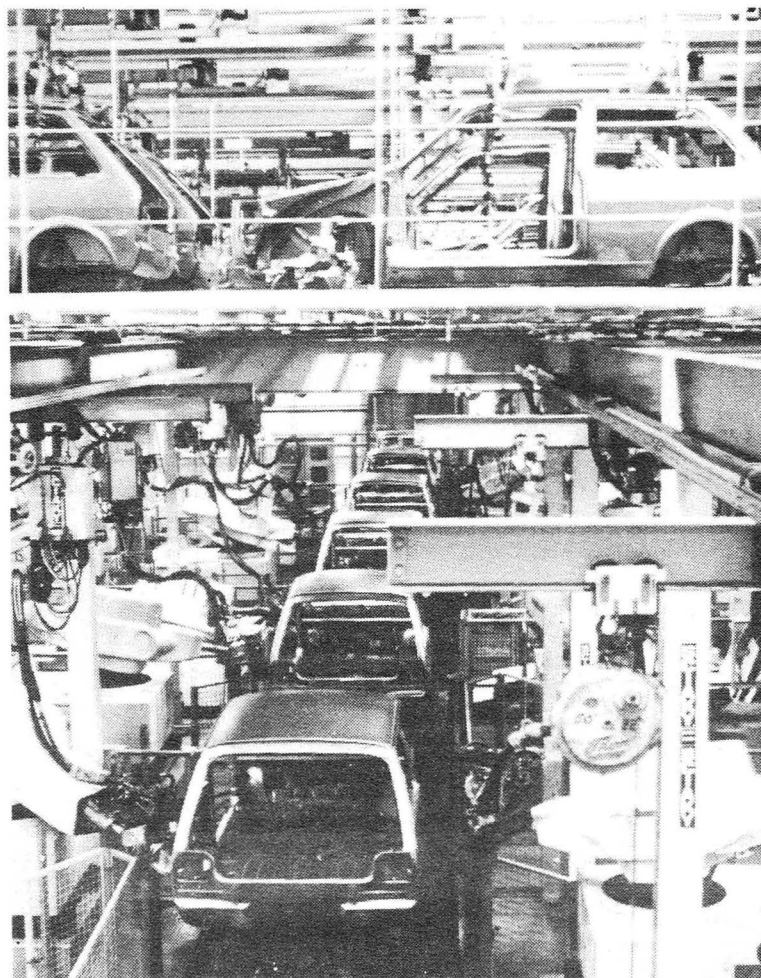
"Patriotic"

It seems that given a choice between British or American bosses, they would opt for General Motors. After all they haven't done too well under the Union Jack. And General Motors are "awash with cash" according to the *Birmingham Evening Mail*.

Union leaders have only themselves to blame if their 'patriotic' solutions are rejected by the workforce.

In the Westland affair the Labour leaders fell into the trap of accepting the agenda of the ruling class—America or Europe; Thatcher or Heseltine. The labour movement should not allow the same to happen over Land Rover.

The only option which guarantees jobs is the socialist one. Defend public ownership—but not



Leyland Metro cars on the automated assembly lines.

on the existing, bureaucratic basis. Workers' control and management of Land Rover and the rest of British Leyland is essential to the survival of the British car industry.

A national board of management made of representatives equally from the trade unions in the industry, the TUC and a Labour government is necessary to plan the company's activities, along with workers' control at shop floor level.

But it also has to be part of a wider planning of the economy in the interests of the working class not the capitalist system, based on nationalisation of the motor industry and the other key sectors dominated today by less than two hundred top companies.

NEXT WEEK Bill Mullins continues with a look at Austin Rover and prospects for the car industry.

Two North East miners talk about . . .

Aftermath of the miners' strike

A sacked miner from Easington Lodge (Durham Area) talked to Bob Stothard.

IT'S two years since over 600 miners went to work. The men who were sacked by the NCB for their part in the struggle have paid a high price through fighting for a decent future for themselves and their families.

I was sacked 6 months after the strike's end and it's been a bit of a trauma for my family, we have two bairns and one on the way. Two months after we moved into our house, having first repaired and decorated then got the furniture, I was sacked. My lass was particularly demoralized as the place was just the way she wanted it. We couldn't keep up the re-payments and the DHSS were as helpful as an ashtray on a motorbike.

We're now back in her father's house and neither of us is working. The future is bleak for our bairns. Our village, Blackhall, lost its pit five years ago and Horden is to close.

The situation we found ourselves in during and after the strike made me realize the need for socialism. For

the first time in my life I felt compelled to do something about the state of things. I joined the Communist Party but soon got sick of their defeatist attitude towards the strike and the working class.

Militant provides answers to my questions and campaigns for unity and organization of socialists against the right and their desire for a quiet life.

Solidarity

The spirit amongst many of the sacked lads is encouraging. We meet monthly at union HQ in Durham and discuss the means of getting our message across to trade-unionists. We have raised the money to buy a mini-bus to this end.

There is a lot of untapped activity amongst us which could be put to work for the NUM. Unemployment is disheartening and takes some getting used to.

We must demand that a future Labour government immediately re-instate all sacked miners with no loss of benefits. Until such times, miners must be organized at every level of the union ready to act.

If the struggle taught us

anything, it was the need for solidarity.

Interview with Alf Ward, Wearmouth NUM, by Bob Harker.

IT'S NOW a year since we returned to work after the strike. However, I've been off more than 20 weeks due to a serious accident so times are still hard and I'm no better off.

During the strike I was at Monkton Washeries, which has now shut down, and am at Wearmouth colliery. When we went back to Monkton we met the scabs who had worked with the gaffers but we did not speak with them. You could feel the difference—it had been a happy sort of place. We knew the plant was to close in 3 months yet the scabs didn't—that stopped them thinking they were cock'o'the walk. The scabs didn't know which way to turn particularly those who were going to Westoe colliery. We got badges saying "I stayed loyal to the Union" and were told to wear them at our new pits. Some scabs asked me for a badge—I just laughed in their faces.



Above: miners support groups at Chesterfield on International Women's Day. Right: Support group women dishing up during the strike.

Most of them took their lot (redundancy) rather than move but were disappointed at what they got: the last laugh was on us. Even our manager told us that the 10 men who went back at Christmas were taken in by McGregor's lies and never got the £1,000 or anything like it.

Last laugh

As for the so-called new union in Durham, it is on the verge of collapse. At Christmas they said everyone that returned to work would get £100 loyalty bonus, so the scabs went to the pay office smiling. When they got their notes however, they got what we got—nothing. We

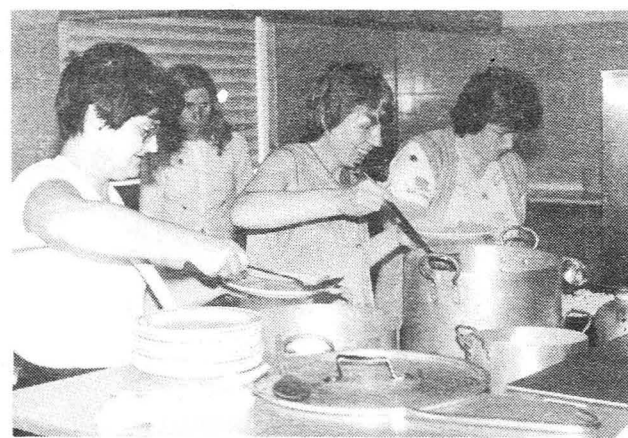


Photo: Dave Pearson.

Photo: Mark Salmon.

had a great deal of fun.

When I was in hospital my NUM official came to see me to get details of my accident. In the opposite bed a lad from the scab union told me they had no money to fight his case so he's going to re-join the NUM, like a lot more have.

I cannot see the UDM

lasting long especially with Leicestershire voting to stay in the NUM. Arthur Scargill was proved right. I can name 12 closures in the North-east alone. I still keep in touch with friends I made in Staffs and Scotland during the strike. The dispute brought many solid miners closer together.

Industrial Reports

Jordan: 'AUEW and EETPU to merge'

THE SECOND round of voting to determine the next president of the AUEW began this week.

It is a straight choice between left and right. John Tocher, of Manchester, enjoys the support of the left. His opponent from the Midlands is Bill Jordan.

Jordan, according to recent press statements, prides himself on being more 'moderate' than Sir John Boyd or the late Terry Duffy! He plans to bludgeon the AUEW into a merger with the right-led EETPU and has already had discussions with Eric Hammond to this end.

Voters will be surprised, to say the least, that a candidate for their union's presidency has a lot in common with the man whose

deals with Murdoch have led to more than 5,000 Fleet Street sackings including many AUEW members.

Jordan views with relish the prospect of a right-wing voting bloc at TUC and Labour Party conferences.

Bill Jordan proudly boasts that he wants the current purge of *Militant* and other lefts in the Labour Party to be widened. Workers' MPs Dave Nellist and Terry Fields are top of his list and he is calling for a return of the Proscribed List.

Every vote for Tocher must be garnered if the AUEW is to return to its rightful place as a progressive and representative union in the labour movement.



Jordan (third from left) on a Labour Solidarity platform at Labour's conference with right wingers, Hattersley, Radice and Anne Davis—the real infiltrators.

Photo: Militant.

AUEW youth

THE 41st Annual Youth Conference of the AUEW was the best attended and debated for many years and was given a pat on the back from Brother Ed. Scrivens who was presiding.

The resolutions debated ranged from apprentice training, peace and disarmament, economic policy, local government, South Africa and health and safety.

The resolutions concerning economic policy, peace and local government were the most controversial.

Economic policy called for the smashing of capitalism, to be replaced with socialism. This was called extreme by the right-wing youth delegates, one of whom was a Conservative member! But it was sup-

ported by a large majority and carried by 29 votes to eight.

The peace resolution was opposed by the Executive Council, because it called for nuclear disarmament, but this was also carried—by 30 votes for and 7 against.

The resolution on local government was the most interesting. It called for full support of Labour city coun-

cils fighting Tory cuts by building houses, protecting jobs and services and after an addendum called for a stop to the witch-hunts and a campaign to defeat the Tories.

Gavin Laird attacked this resolution and called for extremists to be expelled, saying that the Labour Party would be better off without the *Militant*.

He was soundly knocked back when he was reminded what the workers at Fleet St. and printers in Glasgow thought of the extremists Eric Hammond and Robert Maxwell. This resolution was carried by an overwhelming majority.

All in all this was an excellent conference and proof that although at the moment we have right wing national

leadership, the youth, who are the leaders of tomorrow, are far more progressive.

The future of our union would also benefit immensely with the election of Broad Left candidate John Tocher, and I would urge all AUEW members to support him.

By John Kydd
(Conference delegate)

Firemen lobby Parliament

ON 20 February, firemen lobbied Parliament to protest at government proposals to use the abolition of the Metropolitan councils as a way of cutting back on fire services. Firemen on the lobby made it clear that they would not accept attacks by the Tories on their jobs and on the vital service they provide.

Efficiency

In a debate in Parliament the previous week Tory Minister of State Giles Shaw stated: "Our aim would be broadly to maintain the current level of service in these metropolitan areas", although also admitting that "we have not ignored the possibility of efficiency savings".

Mr Shaw was apparently upset that the Fire Brigades Union did not understand the "adequacy and sincerity of the government's commitment on these issues".

On the contrary, the FBU understand exactly what the Tories are about. On Merseyside, the fire service budget is to be cut by £729,000—this represents 169 job losses in an area which already suffers from enormous unemployment.

More deaths

The reality of what the government is doing will be fewer fire fighters and appliances, slower attendance time, more severe fires, more property destroyed and many more deaths.

The FBU have shown



Photo: John Smith (IFU)

in the past their preparedness to struggle for jobs and conditions and to give a decent efficient fire service to working class people.

As I pointed out to the Tories in the debate: "The government had better watch out. If they

are looking for an easy touch in cutting away the fire service as they have done everything else, they are in for a big surprise. The Fire Brigades Union will not stand idly by and watch it happen."

By Terry Fields MP

Women's TUC - 1985 replay

MANY WOMEN attending the Women's TUC conference in Leicester this week are hoping that perhaps this year conference will express the anger of working women against the Tories.

Will conference reflect the kind of determination shown by women at last week's demonstration at Wapping or will it be a bland replay of the 1985 conference?

The agenda for this year contains dozens of wordy motions on issues crucial to the labour movement as a whole, not just for women.

Composite 9 on the Fowler proposals, motion 28

on South Africa, composite 3 on low pay, calling for a statutory minimum wage, motion 64 on the need to return a Labour government with socialist policies.

Frustration

On the important issue of domestic violence the debate will take place under around an extremely confused and moralistic motion, motion 57. The increased number of amendments tabled indicates that unions are taking the debate more seriously than in previous years, but even so there is hardly a motion

on the agenda which really gets to grips with the policies and campaigning solutions necessary to deal with the problems outlined.

The Women's Advisory Committee through its ironically titled document *The Wider Involvement of Women in the Trade Union Movement* will be attempting to oppose recent moves by some unions to make the conference more democratic and more relevant to the needs of the women it represents. The modest changes include extending the length of conference, introducing a conference ar-

rangements committee and allowing the conference to discuss issues other than those only affecting "women and young persons". This debate and the conference as a whole being held against the backdrop of women's struggles may yet prove to be more effective if the widespread sense of frustration built up amongst delegates over previous years is brought to the conference rostrum.

By Harriet Stevens
(Delegate from CPUSA, personal capacity)

Special education

THE ILEA held a consultation conference with its trade unions on 28 February on the Fish Report, which considers the integration of special needs pupils into mainstream education. While some were not necessarily opposed to integration, every single union representative spoke against immediate implementation of the report and against the Education Officers' proposals, which are to phase in integration in the next few years and close special schools and units.

The teacher unions, including the heads, pointed to the myriad of initiatives already pending, to the inadequacy of current mainstream provision in this area, and to the inevitable loss of jobs and promotion prospects. Mainstream is already overworked and teachers' morale low, following a decade of eroded salaries.

Unfilled

The ancillary workers' union saluted the excellent work now being done in the special schools and expressed grave concern for their members' future when already two-thirds of vacancies are unfilled on some sections, due to the authority dragging its feet deliberately.

The Inspectorate's representative reported that her staff were under extreme pressure and would be unlikely to be able to cope properly with the placement of ESN pupils in mainstream.

The unions were united in condemning the way in which the authority has pre-empted consultation by going ahead with detailed proposals.

Above all the unions feared that a rate-capped

ILEA (already mapping out areas of possible cuts) would be unable to implement the proposals properly and that the very pupils whom these were supposed to benefit would end up with an inferior education and would be vulnerable to further cuts.

The delegates were very angry that only one ILEA councillor attended this conference and this added to the suspicion that perhaps ILEA is only going through the motions of consultation and intends to disregard its unions' position. This should be taken up through the Labour Parties in the Inner London area.

By Pauline Gorman
(ILTA NUT delegate to the conference)

An article on the Fish Report and Special Education will appear in the Easter issue of *Militant Teacher*.

Bus strike

MUNICIPAL busworkers have voted two to one for strike action in defence of the National Joint Industrial Council (see *Militant* 788).

The first strike is planned for Friday 14 March followed by a further one-day strike on Monday 17 March.

Passenger Transport Executive (PTE) buses are not yet affected but the 12,000 municipal workers involved in the forthcoming national strikes will be hoping to broaden the dispute.

Action could also be pending on London buses following a recent ballot.

Industrial Reports

Tories hijack job on airports

FROM THE 1 April, Birmingham International Airport, at present run by the West Midlands County Council, will be privatised

The Tory government will no doubt be pleased at this further attack on public ownership. What is disturbing for party members however has been the complicity and active encouragement given by right-wing councillors.

While councillors in Liverpool and Lambeth have been attacked by the party leadership, for opposing the government and for carrying out party policy, the full-time local politicians of the Labour right have been working hand in glove with the Tories. Not a word has been heard about these "Comrades" bringing the party into disrepute.

The Labour Party in the West Midlands has witnessed an unseemly race of local Labour leaders jockeying for positions and jobs on the new Tory joint boards, designed to take over the functions of the elected West Midlands County Council.

Councillor Adams, one of the West Midlands' Labour leaders, had secured a plum job for himself at £7,500 per

By Eddie Doveton
(Coventry South West Labour Party)

year as chair of a joint board.

In a recent letter to Tory Minister Nicholas Ridley, he proudly boasted: "I hope you would agree that we have a good record in the West Midlands of working with the government on major initiatives. Our approach to the reorganisation of local government has been positive, with very close working between the district and the government".

Adam's letter is specifically about promoting the creation of Birmingham Airport as a public company. But this privatisation will fall directly into line with government intentions to privatise three of BAA's airports, Heathrow, Edinburgh and Gatwick (the three which are at present making profits).

Heathrow is the real money-spinner and makes over £37 million a year. Under public control these



Heathrow airport—not just for the jet—a valuable public asset which could be an important part of an integrated national transport plan.

funds are distributed to regional airports, which enables them to provide a wider range of services. After privatisation this will end, and Heathrow, free from limitations on its trading could leave other airports at the mercy of the price-cutting war.

Birmingham airport now

requires an investment of over £2.5 million for runway resurfacing. Under privatisation it will need to raise this money on the private market. Last year it only made a trading profit of £18,000.

The likely result of the Tory plan will be a threat to regional airports and work-

ing conditions put at risk. It will mean a threat to passenger services as airlines plum for the cheap facilities at Heathrow.

Labour representatives should be defending public assets and services—including a co-ordinated air transport system—not helping to plunder them.

Two disputes in Dundee

AFTER 18 weeks the strike by AUEW members at Scottish Electric over recognition of their union and reinstatement of their victimised members is still continuing.

Three bosses in Dundee are taking the dispute very seriously. The notorious scab local paper *The Courier* has only mentioned the dispute twice in over three months.

Meanwhile management at Timex has been more blatant. They've threatened dismissal of employees who are attending the mass picket outside the Scottish Electrical factory every Wednesday lunchtime.

The workforce at Timex wanted overwhelmingly to defy management. But unfortunately, amid confusion, the proposed stoppage did not go ahead. Now management at Timex are pressing home their advantage and threatening disciplinary action against employees who attend non-company approved meetings.

It is up to union activists to rush in messages of support and donations to prevent the attempted isolation of the strikers. At the Scottish Labour Party conference the strikers collected hundreds of pounds and contact was made with miners and other workers.

Messages of support and donations and requests for speakers to: John Kidd, AUEW District Secretary, 26 Southward Road, Dundee.

Michelin

TGWU MEMBERS at Michelin in Dundee have refused to be intimidated by the announcement of 311 redundancies at Michelin's Aberdeen factory and have voted for strike action every Friday over holiday entitlements.

At present workers in Dundee's Michelin factory get 33 days annual holidays including public holidays. Management are trying to cut this to 27.

Reports by
Chris Goodman

Warehouse workers defend their right to representation

THE STRIKE by warehousemen at United Transport, South Kirby, West Yorkshire is now in its most crucial week.

United Transport are one of many distribution groups which have moved into the South Kirkby area since it was conferred Enterprise Zone status.

They have all taken advantage of chronic local unemployment by offering low pay, poor conditions and non-unionism.

Sackings

But workers at United Transport won union membership in September 1985 by spontaneous walkouts after arbitrary sackings by management.

Predictably management wouldn't recognise the elected shop steward and

sought to appoint one themselves. Strike action has, however, brought increased levels of union recognition.

Management have responded by intimidating the steward, giving him a succession of different jobs in a bid to break him. This ended in his sacking.

Strike

The workers have responded, in a paper ballot, with unanimous support for their shop steward. This brought a walk-out on 28 February. The TGWU have since declared the strike official.

Since the dispute began management have recruited half a dozen scab drivers from an employment agency. This is clearly the crunch as management will either back down or sack the 38 strikers.

Letters of support and donations to: Carl Roberts, 24 Park Road, Grimethorpe, Barnsley, South Yorkshire.

No apartheid in Pompey

STOREMEN AT Portsmouth and South East Hands regional health authority warehouse have entered the ninth week of their dispute with management.

Members of NUPE, they have refused to handle any South African goods and requested that management replace these items with alternatives. But management refused to accept the workers' request and have been suspending any worker refusing to handle the goods, resulting in the loss of anything up to ten per cent of weekly wages. Management have attempted to bring in private contract

firms to handle the boycotted goods. Workers have responded with lightning strike action.

At a meeting with management on Monday 3 March it was admitted that alternative goods could quite easily be found to replace the South African ones. However management refused to use any of them. They are escalating the action with a two-day strike on the 4-5 March.

Donations and messages of support should be sent to: Andy Lavender, c/o NUPE office, 93 Leigh Road, Eastleigh, Southampton, Hampshire.

Kinsley Drift campaign against closure grows despite Bates blow

AFTER THE recent decision to close Bates Colliery, despite the Independent Review Procedure ruling in favour of keeping the pit open, feelings at Kinsley Drift in Yorkshire are that the NCB has postponed the Kinsley review so that the decisions are not announced too close together.

A rearranged review has been announced for the 25 March, but no location has yet been given. Commenting on the outcome at Bates Colliery, Paul

Wilkinson, a member of the Kinsley Drift Community Action Group and a miner at the pit said: "Arthur Scargill said at the time that it (the review procedure) wasn't worth the paper it was written on, again he has been proved to be right".

The campaign video, entitled *The fight for Kinsley* is now available. It explains the case for Kinsley Drift and contains interviews with members of the local community, shop keepers, etc as well as men who work at the pit.

The video costs £10 and is available from the address below.

The local campaign is arranging a public meeting for 2 April where it is hoped Arthur Scargill will be speaking. Action group members will also be taking part in the David Jones memorial march this Saturday (15th) in Hemsforth.

For information/video contact: Margaret Dawson, 14 Common Road, Kinsley, Nr Pontefract, West Yorks. Tel: (0997) 614260.

NALGO journalists oppose purge

AT A meeting of the NALGO headquarters NUJ Chapel on 25 February, the following motion was passed:

"In the light of the outrageous dismissal of our member, Jim Roberts, and noting with concern the witch-hunting of Militant supporters in Liverpool and elsewhere, this chapel wishes to place on record its total opposition to bans, proscriptions, expulsions, and all other manifestations of political intolerance within the labour and trade union movement. . .

"This Chapel therefore calls upon the NUJ's NEC to rebuff any attempts to introduce a similar witch-hunt into the union. The chapel urges the NEC to use its authority over the union's membership, especially those working for the press and media, to ensure that every political standpoint, other than fascism, is given a fair hearing, inside and outside the union, recognising that the free and open debate of ideas is a vital condition of a healthy democracy, whilst suppression of ideas is a vital

condition of totalitarianism.

"The chapel is firmly of the opinion that witch-hunts of the type currently directed against Militant supporters create disunity and weaken the movement."

The motion was moved by Jimmy Roberts, sacked by NALGO for allegedly leaking a document to Liverpool council deputy leader Derek Hatton, and seconded by Barry White, FOC. It was carried overwhelmingly, with no votes against and just one abstention.

Vital elections have started 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 ballot 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



Militant

Liverpool and Lambeth

Pages 8-9

Leyland sale

Page 13

National action against Murdoch

PRESSURE on Murdoch's Wapping plant continues and the mood amongst sacked printworkers remains confident.

But there is still no sign of nationally co-ordinated action amongst print workers to halt Murdoch's distribution and sales.

Recent figures show the Sun has lost half a million sales and the News of the World two million.

Murdoch needs revenue from the Wapping titles since his American operation, News Corporation, is effectively mortgaged for his six TV stations.

News International provides him with cashflow: there has never been a better time to bring out Fleet Street—and stop Wapping at the same time!

As Jim Brookshaw FOC AUEW *The Times*, wrote in *Militant* last week, the best action is a one day stoppage of Fleet Street, perhaps on a Saturday night, with a mass march on Wapping. The general trade will have to be brought into the dispute—sooner rather than later.

The TUC together with the Labour Party should call a national demonstration at Wapping. And solidarity action must be implemented nationally.

If the TUC, through its member unions, were to prevent mail and telecommunications reaching Fortress Wapping and the local authority unions also took action, then Murdoch would fall over himself to reach an accommodation.

But unless solidarity action is taken up in a serious and methodical fashion then the dispute will go the full

fifteen rounds.

Militant welcomes Brenda Dean's remarks at the mass meeting of SOGAT '82 in January, that "the union was trying to organise a stoppage of Fleet Street". The SOGAT NEC must act on Dean's words and begin, with the other unions, to organise such action.

The pressure is increasingly telling inside Wapping. Journalists have called a meeting with management to discuss grievances about working conditions and the 'hostile environment'.

In Portsmouth, two EETPU members, recruited to work at Wapping by their union want to quit, complaining "we were conned".

The two, who refused to be named, claimed they were promised they would not be taking someone else's job; they would be working for the *London Post*; they would not have to cross picket lines.

They cannot now return to Fawley power station, where they had temporary jobs each year, as the TGWU members would refuse to work with them.

They told how, despite their EETPU membership, there is no union representation as such at Wapping. They spoke of 14 hour days and of the time when ten printers left their work, thinking it complete, only to find next morning management putting names in a hat and drawing two out who were deemed sacked.

Murdoch and his like understand one form of bargaining alone: the 'Sundae Punch' of combined trade union action. You can't stockpile news. Stop Fleet Street now.



On the picket line at Wapping.

Photo: Militant

Maxwell 'negotiates' lockout

THE WORKERS in the Daily Record/Sunday Mail plant at Anderston Quay have experienced yet another bizarre week at the hands of Robert Maxwell, Labour Party press millionaire.

Threats of sackings of various numbers of journalists and printers have accompanied the "negotiations" over Mr Maxwell's request that they print a colour version of *The Mirror* for Ireland.

Following management shutdowns and resumed but unsuccessful negotiations, the unions were given seven days to find 300 volunteers for redundancies. The workers threatened to

strike. Fresh talks without preconditions were offered by the management. There followed an uneasy truce.

At the Scottish Labour Party conference a resolution was passed condemning Mr Robert Maxwell's threat to the tradition of the *Daily Record* and *Sunday Mail* being "edited, printed and published in Scotland".

Statements that his action at Anderston are not compatible with his Labour Party membership were made at the conference.

This prompted Maxwell to want to carry an editorial condemning the Labour Party and SOGAT for passing a resolution "which was riddled with lies".

Print workers demanded a right of reply. Agreement was apparently reached at national level but local management reneged. Printers then refused to set and print the offending editorial.

Occupation

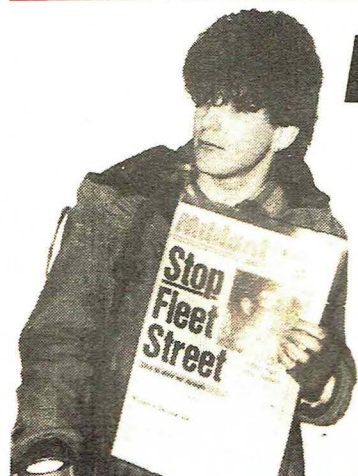
Management then declared the printers had dismissed themselves but the workers refused to accept this. Some occupied the plant. Currently the rest report for work as usual, but find they, with the exception of the journalists are locked out.

Since then Maxwell has declared 600 have been sack-

ed for "gross industrial misconduct". Maxwell is still demanding redundancies but so far there are no signs of negotiations re-opening. The plant is at a standstill.

Meanwhile, across the city at Kinning Park, Murdoch continues to print the *Sun* and *News of the World* and is now talking about printing the *Sunday Times* there as well. There are increasing attempts to mobilise for mass picketing at Kinning Park. This action and activity around the boycott and the talking to distribution workers will be intensified in the next few weeks.

By Ronnie Stevenson



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