

Militant

Solidarity price £1

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth 30p

ISSUE 831 23 January 1987

Liverpool councillors Lords Appeal trial

Monday 26 January
Welcome the councillors—8.30am
Euston Station. Bring your banners.
Due at House of Commons
10.00am
Read about Liverpool councillors' struggle
— pages 4/5

Militant Fighting Fund

£250,000

250,000

240,000

230,000

220,000

210,000

200,000

190,000

180,000

170,000

160,000

150,000

140,000

130,000

120,000

110,000

100,000

90,000

80,000

70,000

60,000

50,000

40,000

30,000

20,000

10,000

DONATIONS OF a week's income are still pouring in to our £250,000 appeal. Two students in Dundee have given £50 each and a reader in Gwent £60.

If you have not donated yet, follow these examples and help us hit the jackpot.

Remember, also, our Winter Draw will be held on 31 January, so send in your money and counterfoils in time.

Telecom strikers

take on

By Phil Holt
(National Chairman,
NCU Broad Left)

Maggie's

profiteers

BRITISH TELECOM engineers up and down the country have been defying the new 'tough' style, privatised BT management. To give the shareholders the rich pickings Thatcher promised them, BT bosses are having to make their own

It is not just the miserable wage offer, but the strings attached which have driven our members to back an overtime ban. Flexible working, longer hours, more work from less workers—that is what BT wants.

But they have certainly misjudged the mood of the workforce. At first they were picking on the traditionally moderate areas. By suspending workers loyally operating the overtime ban, they thought the action could be broken. But the solid support for solidarity strikes has rocked their confidence.

They had hoped to exclude London, where the City and Stock Exchange are the most sensitive targets for industrial action. In Liverpool we were bombarding the NCU head office with telexes to call a national indefinite strike. The executive did call a 24 hour London strike on 21 January and the following day for other areas. But the key City of London branch voted for indefinite strike action with only three votes against.

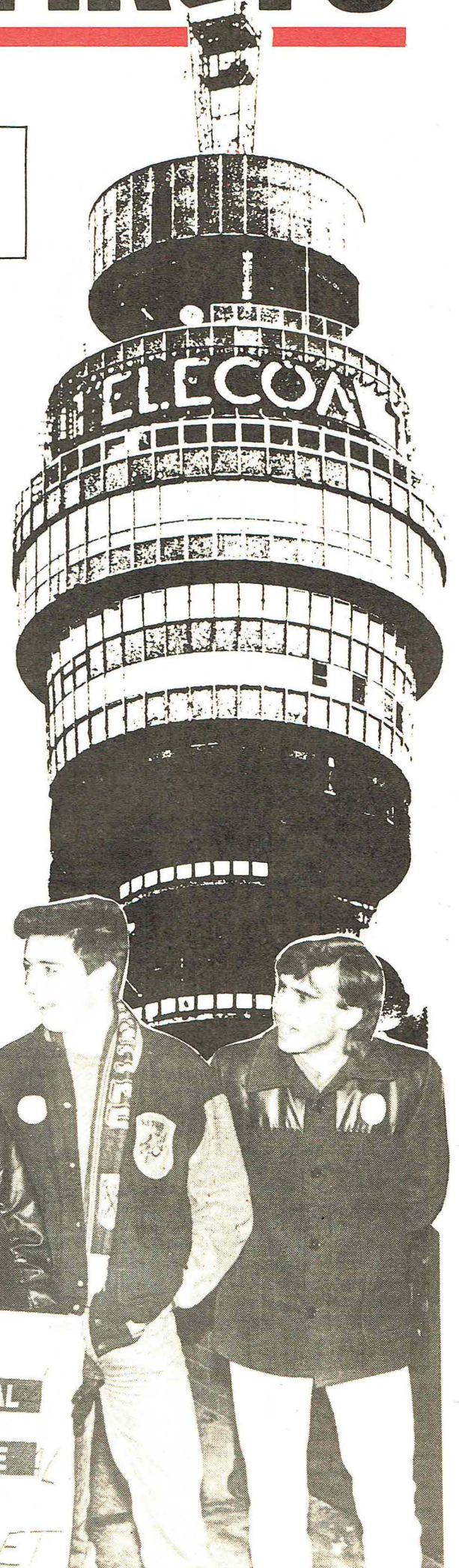
Thousands of members have been staging one day strikes. Then on their return manage-

- BT profits up 20%
- Directors' salaries up 100%
- Wage offer—5%

ment were demanding they sign a declaration that they would "work as directed", or be suspended. The union instruction was not to sign. Management were creating a national indefinite lock out, not even bothering about emergency provision. If anyone is put in danger, the bosses are entirely to blame.

But our union leaders also failed to fully appreciate the workers' anger. During the general secretary campaign I spoke at meetings with General Secretary John Golding. I warned that there would be a national battle over wages this year, and that we should prepare the members. He spoke of negotiating as reasonable men with BT. The union leaders have also allowed the NCU engineering section to be negotiating separately from the clerical section and the Society of Telecom Executives. We must urgently unite together. As one force we could really bring BT management to heel.

The NCU leaders will have our full support if they show the same fighting determination as the rank and file. After 20 months wait, we will accept nothing less than the full 10 per cent wage claim, without strings.



"BT thought the Midlands was the soft part of the union but they have had a shock. I've never seen the blokes so angry. Those that have been anti-union in the past are now solid.

"Nearly all the blokes have got shares but it 'aint made a blind bit of difference." — Walsall NCU picket.

Militant

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

Socialist campaign vital for Labour victory

IN THE past few weeks an avalanche of reports have appeared in the press, which, together with the brutal statements of Tory ministers themselves, have provided more than enough ammunition to shatter the Tories in the general election.

The Guinness scandal has shown that directors with "inside information" pocketed £100 million, buying the shares of their own company! Are they to be dragged before the courts or the House of Lords like the Liverpool councillors? Not a bit of it.

The obscenity of the growing army of homeless on the streets of London have moved even *Guardian* journalists like Hugo Young to shed an occasional tear and plead for "something to be done."

The yawning class chasm revealed by the recent "North/South report" mean that while some low paid jobs are available in the South there are no houses for northern workers who might wish to fill them.

Social Security minister John Major admits that there are "643 deaths a year" from hypothermia. More people die in Britain of hypothermia than of heroin addiction. On this emotive issue alone Labour could win mass support by demanding a living pension for the millions who live in the direst poverty.

There is a seething discontent amongst the great majority of the population. Why then is Labour lagging behind, or at best only neck and neck with the Tories in the polls? Labour stood at 38 per cent in the opinion polls at the beginning of 1985 and two years later is at the same figure. This refutes those on the right of the Labour Party who argued that the witch-hunt of *Militant* supporters in Liverpool and elsewhere would prove "electorally popular."

Most disturbing is the recent opinion poll on the voting intentions of the young. 42 per cent of the youth support Labour, 25 per cent the Tories and 22 per cent the Alliance. But only one third of the 6.2 million 18-25 year olds have said they intend to vote. In other words only 1.1 million intend to vote Labour!

The recent 'Social Trends' survey indicated a big shift towards the left in the attitude of the majority of the population. Yet this is not reflected in electoral support for Labour. This is entirely due to the incapacity of the Labour leadership to mobilise the enormous potential support which exists for the Party. If right wing spokesmen like Hattersley, had consciously set out to lose the election they could not have done a better job. In a speech to a recent meeting in the City which was carried on the TV, he declared that Labour would take back any tax cuts in the budget! He handed the Tories a propaganda weapon for use in the election campaign.

Workers would not object to Labour taxing more heavily the really super-rich. But there is an enormous discontent about the tax burden on the majority. Hattersley missed a golden opportunity to expose the measures of the Tories which really have resulted in only the working class and the middle class paying tax. How can a Labour spokesman counterpose increased government expenditure to tax cuts?

On the basis of capitalism this choice is inevitable. But if Labour organised a planned socialist economy, they could slash the massive taxes imposed on the working class, together with a programme of increased expenditure on housing and social services, education, etc.

The Tories are obviously hoping to ride back to power on the basis of a "pre-election boom" for those with jobs, mainly financed by credit. They hope to be able to win an election this year before the next economic recession starts to bite. Time is short and the fate of millions of workers are at stake. If the Labour leadership merely pose as "the second eleven of capitalism" many sceptical workers will question why they should be able to manage the system better than the serious representatives of capitalism!

Labour must learn the lessons of the French, Spanish and Greek socialist governments. Unless it takes over the big monopolies, the 200 companies in Britain who have a stranglehold over the economy, it cannot defend the interests of working people.

The ranks of the movement will not forgive those who allow Thatcher, even by default, to enjoy another period of power. It will not be cosseted parliamentarians or comfortable trade union leaders who will bear the brunt of another reign of Thatcherism. It will be millions of workers who will be ground down. Party members and trade unionists must urgently demand that the National Executive Committee immediately organise a socialist campaign which can inspire voters and ensure victory for Labour in the forthcoming general election.

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



LABOUR COUNCILS are facing a crisis. They are struggling to maintain vital services needed by working people in the face of Tory cuts. Many have been forced to offset the cuts through 'creative accounting'. Now they face crippling debts.

By Councillor Tony Mulhearn

Environment Secretary, Nicholas Ridley has produced a hit list of 20 councils, 19 of them Labour, which will be rate capped in the coming year. He says this will mean rate reductions of 38 per cent in some areas—but does not say that this will mean corresponding cuts in services. On top of this many councils face a battle against privatisation.

During the campaign against rate capping in 1985 Neil Kinnock advised Labour councils to follow the 'dented shield' philosophy, as opposed to a generalised fight against Tory cuts. Now Labour councils face the consequences of this advice.

The party will be holding its local government conference on 6-8 February. The rank and file must pressurise the leaders to come to these councils' aid, and relieve them of this terrible burden of debt.

Labour councils compelled to borrow to save services now have a £2 billion debt from creative accountancy. Liverpool council stood out the longest against the Tory cuts, but was forced to back

down when the Labour and trade union leaders refused to support its campaign. It then had to borrow large sums to save its programme of job creation and house-building.

But other councils also face huge debt repayments. Sheffield has £100 million worth of loans and will have a £41 million deficit this year. It is possible that the city faces £30 million worth of cuts this year which could mean 3,000 redundancies. Hammersmith and Fulham also has loans of £100 million. The screw will really be tightened when these debts are due for repayment.

Labour leaders must relieve terrible debt burden

The leader of Manchester city council spelt out the problem when he said: "Unless we have extra resources the city will have no capital

Labour councils in crisis

budget at all by 1989, and added to further revenue problems this would mean no homes being built and a complete collapse in services and redundancies of at least 7,000 council employees." Already there are 36,000 on the housing waiting list in Manchester.

Yet Labour local government spokesman, John Cunningham, has stated that a new Labour government will not bail out those councils that have 'overspent'. How can a Labour government honour its pledge for job creation, when Labour councils will be unable to re-

tain their own workforce intact?

But it is not just the full £2 billion that must be given. The Labour leaders must be committed to give back to local authorities the £16 billion stolen by the Tories in cuts since 1979.

If they explained what this would mean for jobs and services, they would gain massive electoral support. Liverpool council increased its vote by 80 per cent during its magnificent struggle. Labour could emulate our victories, nationally.

Socialists remembered

SOCIALISTS IN Wrexham, North Wales and Merseyside have been shocked to hear of the sudden death of one of their comrades, Chris Pinkerton, on Sunday 18 Jan. We would like to extend our deepest sympathy to Chris' parents and family. His untimely death at such a young age has depleted our number in the fight for socialism, something that no doubt would have annoyed Chris, such as his commitment to the struggle. Those who knew Chris will remember him as a gentle man full of humour and enthusiasm in the sometimes thankless striving for socialism. His memory can spur us on to achieve something that Chris longed to see—a socialist world free from war, want and exploitation, where all can live life to the fullest.

were saddened to hear of the death of Tommy Handley. He fought tirelessly for his members as a full time official of the National Union of Seamen, and never failed to give his support to other workers in struggle. In particular he will be remembered for his unstinting support for the miners in their year long strike.

Tommy was a principled opponent of witch-hunts in the Labour Party and always fought against those NUS leaders who supported expulsions. In 1985 he publicly identified himself with those opposing attempts to expel *Militant* supporters from Cardiff South Labour Party.

The labour movement will mourn the passing of a fighter it could ill afford to lose, whose name will be remembered long after those of right wing officials have been forgotten.

TRADE UNIONISTS throughout South Wales



Terry Fields MP spoke to Pat Craven.

ON WEDNESDAY the House of Commons debated the government's severe weather payments. Tory minister for social security and the disabled proclaimed that 'our record of practical assistance throughout the benefits system and in other policies...will keep people warm'.

On Thursday night in my constituency a pensioner was burnt to death after falling on top of his electric fire trying to keep warm. That is the horrific reality of Tory assistance to the elderly and needy in

Britain.

But real callousness was shown by Dame Jill Knight who said that if a £5 heating allowance was paid throughout the winter there would be pictures of pensioners basking in deck chairs on a Cornish beach, having used their severe weather payment to buy a railway ticket down on a mild sunny day'.

Dame Jill and her friends in the media would like to portray all pensioners as being able to afford a holiday in Majorca or Tenerife.

The reality of course is that old people are dying in their hundreds because they cannot afford to put on an extra bar of the fire, or buy an extra bag of coal. Tory MP Martin Brandon got to the crux of the matter when he professed: 'Yes of course we would like to do more. Personally I would like to see more done, but I am conscious that it must be paid for'.

Spanish schools strike

Madrid: Tuesday 20 January.

THE MOVEMENT of the Spanish school students which began in December of last year has now reached a new and dramatically higher stage.

Two million school students are on strike until Friday 23 when mass demonstrations of students and workers planned. Today Spanish television announced that the strike called by the Spanish School Students Union reached 100 per cent support on its first day.

The mass demonstrations being held on Friday promise to be a turning point in the history of Spanish youth and the labour movement. The Spanish ruling class and the government had hoped that the Christmas holidays would paralyse the movement—but their hopes have been dashed by this week's events.

From the very beginning of term there has been an enormous explosion of activity in the schools up and down the country. Unfortunately this has been partly due to the intervention of ultra-left sects, who played no role in the initial mobilisation. They have attempted to climb on the bandwagon, calling for all kinds of adventurist actions in the name of alleged 'co-ordinating committees' of school students, which represent nobody but themselves.

It is clear that Spain is heading for a new and stormy period in its history. The school students' strike represents a brilliant opening to this new period.

The reaction of the School Students Union was firstly to continue the negotiations with the ministers—which have already gained unprecedented concessions including the promise of an increase of 25 per cent on the grants of all students in Spain. But because the ministry has not conceded the fundamental demands of free entrance of students into the Spanish universities, the School Students Union decided on further action—a four day general strike of the whole education sector.

The strike was preceded by a day of assemblies or mass meetings called in the schools to discuss the strike call and vote democratically on the line to be pursued. This tactic, despite the efforts of the different ultra-left sects has now had a resounding success—with 100 per cent response to the strike call from the smallest villages to the big cities all over Spain.

The union has explained that the only way the school students can win all their demands, as was the case with the French students, was by getting the active support of the labour movement.

Already in December approaches were made by the union to the leaders of the many workers' unions in Spain, the socialist UGT and the CP dominated Workers' Commissions who supported the strike call on 17 December, sending prominent leaders to participate in that demonstration.

The union instructed all its members not to passively stay at home, but to approach factories and mines in Spain during the strike to explain their case to the workers directly and to call for sympathetic action.

This initiative has come from the Spanish Marxist tendency represented by *Nuevo Claridad*, and the youth organisation Youth for Socialism—*Jovenes por el Socialismo*—which has independently issued a call for a one day general strike of all workers. The School Students' Union wanted to organise a united front from above and below—as before, approaching the leaders of the UGT and the Workers' Commissions for assistance through solidarity action.

The Marxists have used the occasion to hammer home to the union leaders the need to call a 24 hour general strike.

The reason for this became all the more clear when, just before the strike, a minister of the socialist government incredibly announced a new round of industrial 'reconversion' involving the sacking of 30,000 workers, mainly centred in the steel and coal industries.

Dock workers in Cadiz immediately responded with a strike and mass demonstrations, which forced even the leaders of the socialist UGT to sharply criticise the government. Then leaders of the PSOE appeared on television disclaiming all responsibility for these statements. The main dockers' union, the OPP, is linking its own one-hour strike on Friday 23 with the school students and has instructed its officials to call mass meetings and collect money.

Even prior to this there were mass demonstrations of workers in Seat, the giant car factory in Barcelona and a general strike of agricultural labourers in the south and west of the country (Andalucia and Extremadura). Road blocks have been set up in Extremadura, in another protest at attacks on benefits for unemployed labourers. A struggle of port workers is also entering into a new phase.

It is clear that Spain is heading for a new and stormy period in its history. The school students' strike represents a brilliant opening chapter to this new period.

The response of the school students' strike in the state schools has been matched in the private schools, mostly owned by the church, which did not participate in the previous struggle and also in the apprentice schools and night schools.

The call of the students' union to turn out to the factories, has already had some very significant results.

In Zaragoza, the Workers' Commissions



"What do you mean there is no industry here, there's the mill, the garages, the small workshops, we'll go to them."

have already provided the union with a headquarters and a telephone for the strike committee. It has also published, at its own expense, 2,500 leaflets which have been used for the purpose of involving the universities in the strike action.

The Workers' Commissions have promised to produce a large number of stickers and 20,000 posters which will be used to cover the whole city with a call for strike action.

Most important of all, the municipal transport workers' commission, Tuzsa have expressed complete support and have sent telegrams to the ministry and have asked all its members to turn out to Friday's demonstration.

Since the demonstration is held in working hours this call of support is equivalent to calling strike action in solidarity with the students.

The Tuzsa workers' leaders have also agreed to provide free bus transport for any representative of the Students' Union who wish to travel throughout Zaragoza on union business.

In Seville, workers in the Isa aircraft factory, invited students to put their case at an assembly. The brewery workers at Cruzampo have also agreed to organise an assembly and the UGT has invited members of the students' union to address any of its trade groups in Seville.



Bulletin produced by School Students' Union in December proclaims: "Now we must prepare to carry on fighting for our just demands."

In many other areas the unions have provided money, headquarters and general support for strike action.

It is now accepted even in the capitalist press and the TV that the real force behind this movement is the Spanish School Students' Union. This union has now begun to take on flesh and has undoubtedly gripped the minds of the youth.

Two school student activists went to a small village near Castille, named Ovreros, in an agricultural area. The students there were enthusiastic, but when the suggestion of visiting the factories for support was put, some of the students said: "How can we do that? There is no industry here." Immediately half a dozen voices shouted "What do you mean there is no industry here, there's the mill, the garages, the small workshops, we'll go to them"—an indication of the development in consciousness of even in formerly backward layers of Spanish society.

The success of the union was gauged in the first national meeting on Sunday 18 in Madrid. 100 comrades attended from 30 provinces of Spain and, with the numerous apologies, the union must have support in about 40 provinces. The mood of this meeting was euphoric. Once the strike is finished, this union will undoubtedly get off to a flying start as a mass youth organisation.

The most important lesson is that despite the confused calls from the ultra-left, the students responded to the clear call of the union. A measure of the impact of the movement, and the panic which it has caused in the government, came when Felipe Gonzalez convened a meeting immediately after returning from of a Middle East tour of a mysterious inter-ministerial youth bureau which nobody had ever heard of. It consisted of himself, the minister of education, the minister of culture and the minister of labour. They subsequently issued a statement on television saying the government was very concerned with youth matters, youth was a priority, education was a priority, that they were going to put enormous resources into education, increase grants and make all sorts of concessions.

When asked by a sceptical television journalist whether the strikes and demonstrations had not had something to do with the convening of this meeting the reply was: "No of course it had nothing to do with it. It had been formed in May of 1982." The fact that it had not met since May 1982 and happened to meet on the first day of the strike action was a pure coincidence.

What this indicates is the growing awareness on the part of the ruling class and its strategists of the enormous danger posed by a youth movement, even of students, organised under a Marxist leadership which makes an appeal to the Spanish working class. The events of May 1968 in France are not lost on these people.

Flood misery for tenants after thaw

JEAN WEBB, from the Kingsmead estate in Hackney spoke to *Militant*:

As the thaw began the tanks in some blocks on our estate began to split. Cascading water came through the four storey blocks; in some blocks the water reached the first floor.

200 families had been washed out by the weekend. They were evacuated to the local community centre waiting to be permanently rehoused—some are still waiting.

Most flats have had no water at all or

only one cold tap since the weekend. Now all the blocks have had the water cut off to prevent more flooding. Many flats have also had their electricity cut off by the Electricity Board out of fears of electrocution.

Everyone is reliant on stand-pipes, though in some areas the stand-pipes have been cut off—they are using too much water! The Water Board is letting them have rationed amounts.

The estate is already like a building site. It's like something out of the war

with piles of rubble and the community centre stacked up with mattresses.

The council has given out electric fires but they've run out of them now and who's going to pay the bills for that on top of everything else?

The council has created this crisis by not building council houses and not doing the necessary repairs. People should be rehoused whilst they do the repairs and then moved back in. But they've nowhere to put them so the repairs are going on around us.

A lot of the people who've been rehoused have lost everything. It will take ages for insurance claims or compensation to be sorted out.

The local Labour Party have organised a public meeting on the estate on Thursday. It's the only real move there's been to do anything about this situation. Our Councillor, Lynne Faulkes, asked the Head of Housing what is going to be done—but they were not even going to meet to discuss it until Friday!

Better to break the law than break the poor

ONCE AGAIN, at the end of this month, 47 Labour councillors elected by the people of Liverpool will face a tribunal of unelected judges. Lynn Walsh examines the case of 'Liverpool Council v. Tory Law'.

Liverpool's socialist councillors are now up before their final appeal hearing. The judicial committee of the House of Lords will decide whether to back the district auditor's decision to surcharge and disqualify them for "wilful misconduct".

Last July, the Court of Appeal endorsed the previous decision of the High Court to uphold the DA's verdict. The presiding judge at the Court of Appeal, Lord Justice Lawton, recognised that the councillors were striving to carry out their political mandate, repeatedly endorsed at the polls by Liverpool workers. But, in his view, "pursuit of their political objectives was not a valid excuse for not performing their statutory duty..."

As in the original High Court hearing the judges brushed aside the fact that the alleged 'losses' of £106,103 arose from the Tory government deliberately withholding DHSS housing rebate and Crown Property payments in lieu of rates. While there was a theoretical 'loss' to the council for these delayed payments, there was no loss to the public purse—because the Treasury collected the interest on these sums until they were eventually paid over to the council!

Tory accountability

How many other public officials or representatives are held personally accountable in this way? Tory ministers certainly are not. The decision to cancel the Nimrod early warning aircraft will cost taxpayers over £8 billion. Although this was a result of a series of blunders, not one of the of-

ficials or ministers responsible will be held personally liable.

What about the government's recent decision to write off £800 million of Rolls Royce debts, to clear the way for privatisation—another bonanza for the Tories' big business friends. This is an unmistakable 'loss' to the taxpayer in the interest of a wealthy minority—but no Tory minister will be surcharged or barred from office as a result.

The Court of Appeal had to accept that Liverpool Council had gained more cash from the government after delaying setting a rate in 1984. This was a result of the magnificent mass campaign conducted in Liverpool that year.

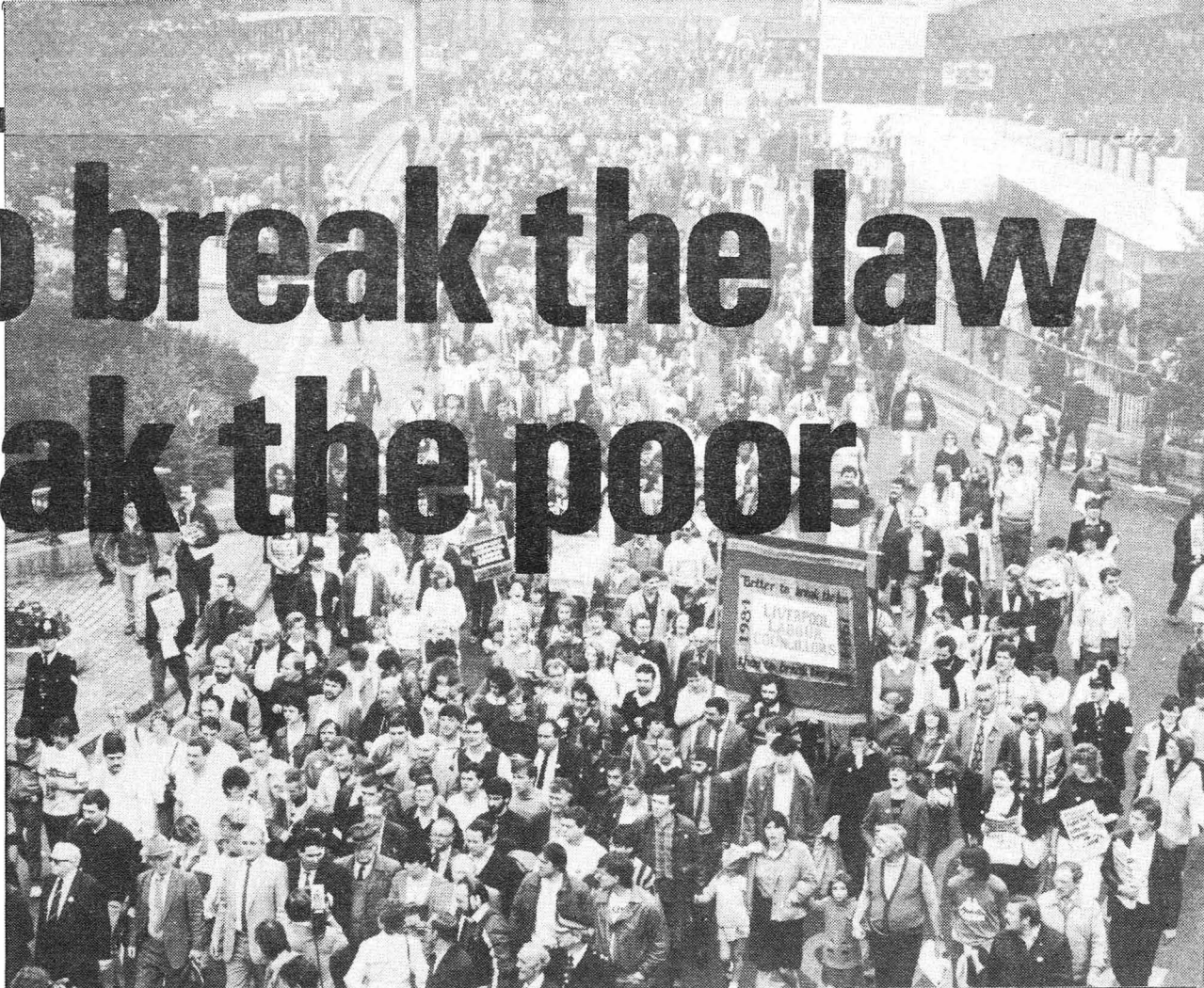
Labour leaders

But in 1985 everything was different, according to the judges. "By 16 April 1985", they ruled "no rational member of the majority party on the council could have believed that there was any hope of persuading central government to make further grants out of central funds."

The real difference, however, was that faced with a combination of opposition from the Tories, the right-wing Labour leaders, and right wing trade union leaders who refused to back Liverpool, the council was forced to retreat and suffer a partial defeat.

Then the district auditor moved in to impose an exemplary punishment on the councillors who had led the struggle. Significantly, no other council apart from Lambeth, despite delays in other cases, has been surcharged by district auditors.

Both in the High Court and the Court of Appeal, the



47 Liverpool Labour councillors face expulsion from office, £½ million in fines and costs and personal bankruptcy. Their crime! Since 1983 they have:—

- ★ Built or started 4,300 new homes,
- ★ Frozen rents,
- ★ Created 16,000 building jobs,
- ★ Opened 6 new nurseries,
- ★ Still refused to raise rates to compensate for Tory cuts,
- ★ Carried out their election promises.

judges made little attempt to conceal their hostility to the council's aims. At one point Lord Justice Lawton described the councillors as "political zealots" who "so delude themselves about reality that lying is unnecessary..." He described the councillors' spending plans on jobs, housing and services as totally irresponsible. "It would be like me," he said, "deciding that I would like to buy a Rolls Royce and rent a Caribbean Island for my holiday without worrying how I was going to pay for them."

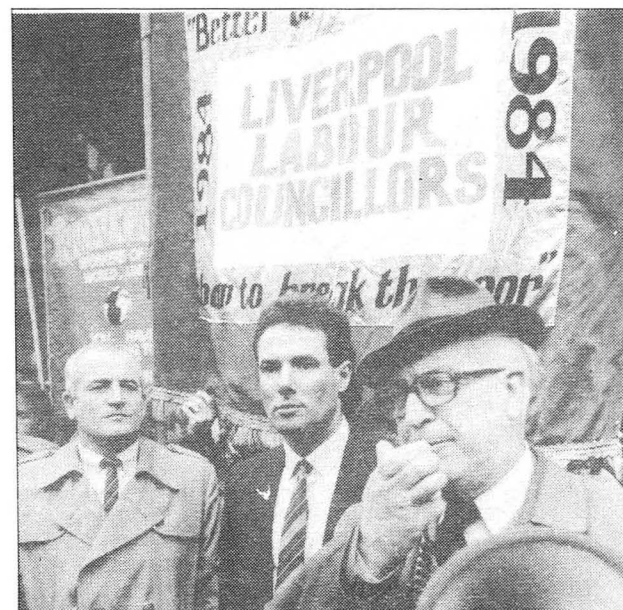
Despite the defeat in two court hearings so far, the Liverpool councillors do have a strong case, and this will be forcefully argued in the House of Lords. However, the views of the judges, who constitute one of the most conservative and reactionary arms of the state, do not give representatives of the labour movement much confidence in the impartiality of legal proceedings.

After the Court of Appeal decision, even the Audit Commission complained about the "slow, ineffective" legal process, which they pointed out could cost the Liverpool public £300,000. Much more than the "losses" alleged by the DA.

Abolish surcharge

"There is a strong case," concluded the Audit Commission, "for reviewing the whole process." Whatever the Commission has in mind, for the labour movement this can only mean the sweeping away of the totally undemocratic, penal powers of district auditors. Moreover, if the Lords rule against the councillors, then the Labour movement must be committed to lifting the surcharge and disqualification imposed on any councillor for implementing the policies on which they were elected.

John Cunningham,



(Above, below and top) Scenes from the massive demonstrations in support of Liverpool City Council in 1985.

Labour's right wing spokesman on local government, has said that the next Labour government will abolish the surcharge and disqualification. This is a minimum.

But Cunningham has warned it would be "unthinkable" for a Labour government to lift the penalties from surcharged councillors. This, he claims, would be "retrospective legislation". Tory Environment Minister, Ridley, has no such reservations. He has just introduced a bill to retrospectively legitimise grant payments to local government, which he has admitted were made on an il-

legal basis. However, even from the point of view of liberal jurisprudence, John Cunningham's point is false.

The traditional objection to retrospective legislation is based on the generally fair principle that no-one should be convicted and punished for doing something that was not a crime under the law at the time. But if a future Labour government abolishes a law which, as John Cunningham admits, is reactionary and oppressive, what legal principle stands in the way of that government giving recompense to those who suffered under an outdated, oppressive law?

Labour councils under threat from unelec

DISTRICT AUDITORS have always been used as a political instrument to obstruct expenditure on welfare and social reforms fought for by workers' organisations. The idea that they are auditors in the ordinary sense, merely checking the books, is nonsense. Time and again they have clashed with the labour movement.

In the nineteenth century, auditors were used to keep poor relief down. The struggle of the Labour councillors and Poor Law guardians in Poplar, in the 1920's, to pay decent levels of relief to the unemployed, represented an historic turning point.

The Poplar Guardians, led by George Lansbury, were constantly harassed by the auditors. A whole series of surcharges were imposed on these workers' representatives. However, because of the strength of labour movement opposition, successive Tory and Liberal ministers were forced to "remit" these charges, effectively writing them off as "unrecoverable".

After the defeat of the 1926 General Strike, however, the struggle in Poplar began to ebb. The government moved in with a new Act, which reinforced the auditor's ability to surcharge councillors, and an even more drastic power—that of disqualifying councillors from office.

This was seen by big business as a means of using the courts to defeat democratic representatives who time and again were re-elected to carry out policies unacceptable to

them and their Tory spokesman.

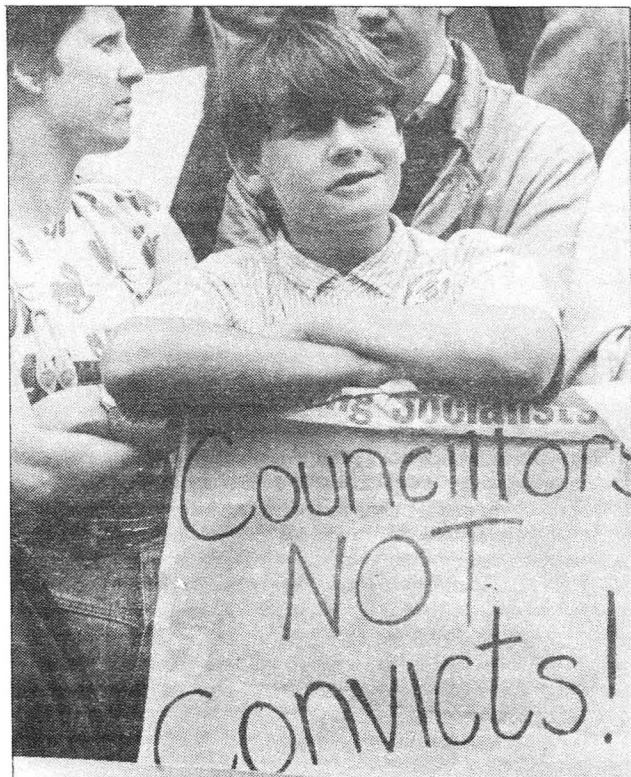
The blatant class hostility of the courts to Labour councillors was notoriously revealed in one of the Poplar audit cases (Roberts v Hopwood (1925) AC 578).

This arose from the council's decision to act as a model employer, and pay all council employees a minimum wage with equal pay for women. The District Auditor, Roberts, surcharged the councillors on the grounds that the wages paid were excessive. The councillors won on appeal to the Court of Appeal, but this was subsequently reversed by the House of Lords.

Socialist philanthropists

In language similar to that used to attack Liverpool, Lord Atkinson complained that "the vanity of appearing as model employers had... taken possession of the council", instead of being guided by "justice and common sense" as they ought to have been. He considered they had "allowed themselves to be guided... by some eccentric principles of socialist philanthropy, or by a feminist ambition to secure the equality of the sexes, in the matter of wages in the world of labour."

Lord Atkinson dismissed the idea that the councillors' mandate justified their action. "The whole system of audit to which the legislature has subjected every municipal cor-



LIVERPOOL
City Council



Councillors' right to a fair trial

HAVE THE Liverpool councillors been given a fair trial? Two of the three Court of Appeal judges conceded a key point of the councillors' case—that they had not been given a fair hearing by the Liverpool District Auditor, McMahon.

He had rejected their reasons for delaying setting a rate in 1985, in effect calling them liars. When he issued the certificates of surcharge, he then made new allegations. Contrary to the long established, invariable practice of auditors, McMahon had not offered them the opportunity of an oral hearing at which they could explain their actions and argue their case.

The councillors' lawyers clearly won the arguments on this point, posing a dilemma for the judges. The judiciary claims not only to enforce statutes of parliament, but to uphold the common law, judge-made principles emerging from previous judgements.

Right to hearing

The councillors' lawyers clearly established that throughout the history of local government and audit law, there has been a right to a hearing, before an auditor comes to a decision.

In fact, in the very latest text-book, "Local Government Audit Law" by Reginald Jones, published by HMSO in 1985, there is a standard form which reads: "Notice is also given that in order to afford the (body) and the persons named an opportunity of being heard before they reach a decision, a hearing will be heard at (place), to commence at (time), on (date), at which it will be open to (the body/you) to appear or be represented, and to submit

evidence and make representations concerning these matters." (Page 375).

Lords Lawton and Dillon agreed that an oral hearing should have been held and that the District Auditor had acted unfairly. They then raised the question of whether the hearing in the High Court had in practice 'cured' the DA's original unfairness. On this issue, there are two contradictory views.

Twist

One line of judgements, as stated by Mr Justice Megarry in the case of *Leary v National Union of Vehicle Builders* (1970), holds that if the law gives somebody "the right to a fair trial and the right of appeal, why should he be told that he ought to be satisfied with an unjust trial and a fair appeal?"

Another line of judgements, however, holds that "if the right of appeal is exercised and the appellate authority acts fairly and does not depart from natural justice... the appeal may then be said to be have 'cured' a defect of natural justice or fairness which occurred at the first instance." This is the view taken in a series of cases, including the aptly named Australian case of *Twist v Randwick Municipal Council* (1976).

Given the bench's openly expressed hostility to the Liverpool councillors' campaign it is hardly surprising that the judges applied the "Twist" line.

The Liverpool councillors have strong legal arguments on their side. If, however, the Lords fail to uphold their appeal it will be urgent for the Labour movement to campaign for a sweeping reform of local government law.

ted district auditor

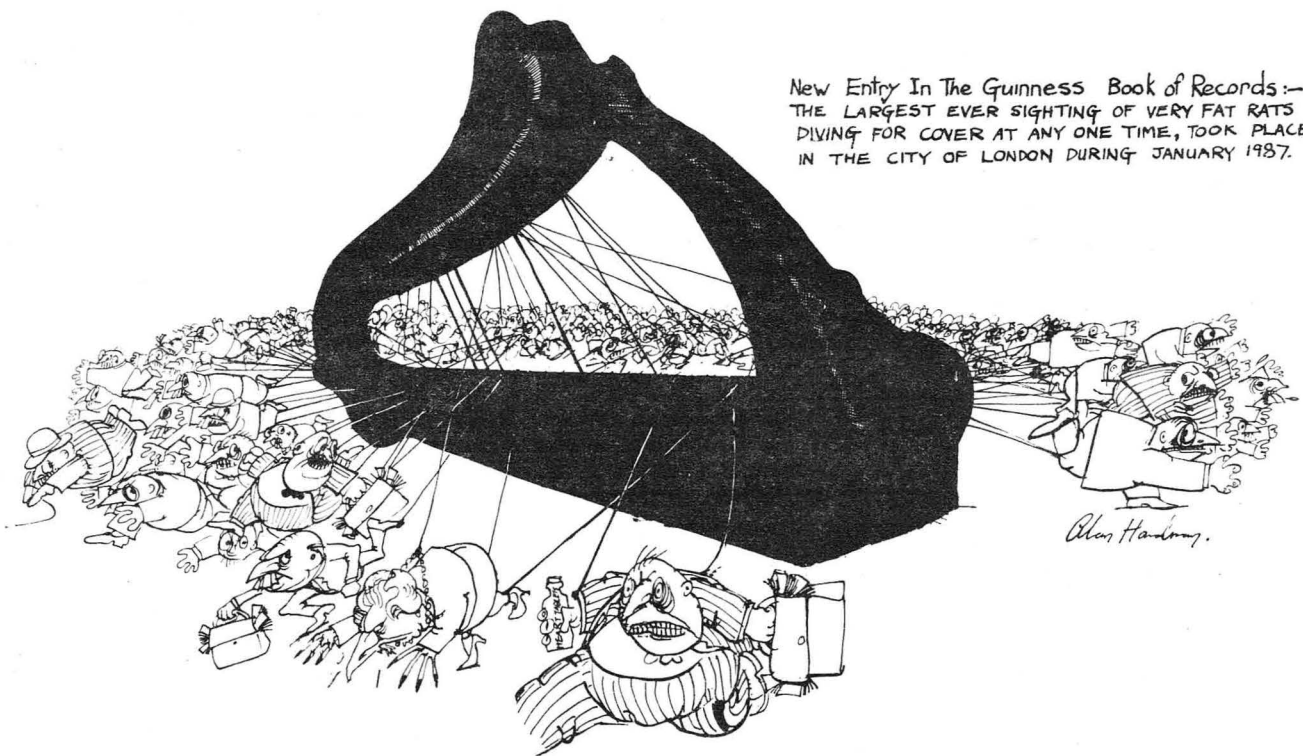
poration or council is a most emphatic protest against such opinions as these."

In the boom years following the second world war, there was a vast expansion of local government services. The measures to which auditors had objected in the pre-war period, seemed minimal reforms.

Under the Thatcher government, however, all these reforms are once again under threat. In the present period of crisis, the capitalists regard all reforms as a burden, undermining their profits. Once again, therefore, the district auditor has come into his own, as a weapon against "municipal socialism" and "political indulgences".

The national Audit Commission and its network of district auditors is an apparatus designed to play a key part in rolling back the boundaries of the welfare state. In 1982, a new local government finance act gave the auditors extensive new powers. These allowed the DA to investigate local councils, and act as judge, jury and executioner in serving certificates of surcharge and disqualification. Councillors are allowed to appeal to the courts, but the onus is on them to prove their innocence.

A system of local elections implies that there is a democratic element in local government. However, the democratically elected councillors are subject to a totally undemocratic audit system.



Impure genius in the City

THE GUINNESS board were very pleased last August after their takeover of Distillers. The then chairman, Ernest Saunders was given an 80 per cent rise to £375,000 a year.

They "could not afford" to keep all the whisky blending and bottling plants they inherited from Distillers, so shortly afterwards another 340 jobs went at James Buchanan near Glasgow. But they could afford Saunders' salary and they managed to put hundreds of millions into a slush fund to help win control of Distillers in the first place. But how did their dealings work?

When Argyll Group and Guinness both wanted to get their hot little hands on the multinational Distillers they didn't offer money to Distillers' shareholders, they offered shares. The higher the share prices went, the better the deal.

These days, share dealing is almost pure gambling. Guinness shares went up 25 per cent in the course of the bid. But they hadn't produced any more alcohol; if these share prices reflected production Britain would have been a lake of stout and lager last spring.

Share prices just reflect how much money is changing hands between the yuppie gamblers on the stock exchange. If a lot of people bought Guinness shares it showed "confidence" in their

future growth and profitability so the share price rose.

Guinness now admit that they made absolutely certain their share prices went up.

Ivan Boesky is the most notorious Wall Street merger expert. He, was recently fined \$100 million for insider dealing, using inside information to make a fortune on takeovers. Having made about \$400million the month before, he can take such a blow better than most of us.

Help from 'experts'

He was trading in all three companies, Argyll, Guinness and Distillers in the months of the bid. It seems he sold his Argyll shares, helping to depress their share price. A close associate of Boesky, Meshulam Riklis, also bought £60million worth of Guinness shares through one of his companies Shenley. In November, Guinness transferred the trademark of their newly acquired Dewars whisky to Shenley.

At the start of the bid Guinness also invested \$100million (30 per cent of the equity) into Boesky's partnership to invest in takeovers. You don't need to be cynical to believe these two moves were payment for expert help from Boesky and Riklis.

That wasn't all. Guinness bank with Morgan Grenfell; one of their directors was Roger Seelig. He is now accused of approaching another merchant bank Ansbacher to persuade its clients to buy Guinness shares. If their price went up they were on to a winner; if it went down they could sell back at cost price, you couldn't lose. They would also refund Ansbacher for any losses.

When Guinness took over Distillers, the prices fell. Ansbacher's losses were not reimbursed by Morgan Grenfell but a cheque for exactly the right sum of £7,614,682.10 arrived—from Guinness signed by the finance director. Guinness claimed it was purely an interest free loan!

Guinness and Morgan Grenfell have been looking for scapegoats, "bad apples" like Seelig, but big business is big money and ramps like this are commonplace behind the gentlemanly facade of the City.

The directors and bankers became millionaires by knowing every trick in the book to make themselves richer. They just know how to work the parasitic system of capitalism and its most leech like section, the City. The borderline between crime and 'normal' business methods is very thin.

Growing fatter at our expense

IN 1981, 'Deadly Ernest' Saunders was appointed the Chief Executive of Guinness to 'revive' a company which had been consistently under-invested.

Saunders was previously head of Nestlé's baby food division. Nestlé were banned from selling their products in the EEC after a scandal broke out over their third world policy. To establish a market for babies' powdered milk in countries like Brazil, Nestlé sold it at a low price then when they had captured the entire market, put up the price.

Competitiveness

This resulted in the deaths of millions of babies as women who could not breast feed their children, could not then afford to buy milk and water. They were forced to use tap water which was contaminated.

Arthur Furar general manager of Nestles and Thomas Ward, a lawyer who represented Nestles were later brought to Guinness by Saunders who immediately set about selling over 150 Guinness subsidiaries to con-



Ernest Saunders.

centrate on brewing.

In 1981 his management's competitiveness plan aimed at reducing the workforce from 2,600 to 1,500 and a re-investment of £120 million in new technology. The redundancies were to be 'voluntary', but if the plan was not accepted, then the company threatened to make them compulsory.

The investments would be phased in over the five year period of the plan and depended upon the company being satisfied with the pace of job reductions. So Saunders was sacking our workers and using the 'savings' to diversify including buying the Arthur Bell whisky firm. Profits increas-



Guinness finance director Olivier Roux.

ed from £41.8 million in 1981 to £84 million in 1985.

Insider dealing is commonplace in the City, but inside information does not reach us so fast. Throughout the last month, the Guinness workforce has been kept completely in the dark, relying on press and television for details.

MacGregor next?

Since Saunders arrived at Guinness, 900 jobs have gone at the Dublin brewery, numerous more at Park Royal, Liverpool and Run-corn. Pay increases for the workforce have not kept pace with inflation and conditions have worsened. Pen-

sioners have also received increases far below the levels of inflation.

The future competitiveness plan which was supposed to secure the jobs of the workers left in the Dublin brewery has not done so. The company clearly has another rationalisation plan as soon as the new plant is installed.

Now the company are looking for a replacement for Ernest Saunders. Ian MacGregor's name has been mentioned! Having butchered steel and coal the board would like him to do the same to Guinness. But whoever takes over at Guinness, we, the workers are going to have to fight hard to defend our jobs.

By Matt Wayne

(Chair, craft shop stewards council, Guinness brewery, Dublin, personal capacity)

World Socialist Books

New booklist available from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB. Build up your own socialist library.

Japan behind the bosses' mask

NEIL KINNOCK seems to glorify modern day Japan. In his speeches and books he praises the 'production orientated' society that Labour, he says, will try to achieve if it wins the next election.

For Labour's right wing, Japan is just the latest model for social democrats. Illusions in the various Scandinavian countries have been shattered by outbreaks of class struggle!

Like the previous racist ideas about the 'yellow peril' the new myths about Japan show a total misunderstanding. The latest legend is of a 'consensus society'. Factories are run by robots 'that never had a strike'. Managers and workers wear the same clothes, use the same wash rooms and canteens and do the same exercises. Management and labour cooperate and workers are guaranteed a job for life. If only Britain's bosses moan, if only, British workers would behave like the Japanese.

John Pilger's documen-

SIMON COLE looks at the recent ITV programme by John Pilger *Japan behind the mask*.

tary did us all a favour by pulling the mask off this Utopia. The 'job for life', now threatened by lay offs and redundancies anyway, only ever applied to a minority of 'elite' workers in the big companies.

False figures

Women workers and part timers don't even appear in statistics. (Thatcher isn't the only leader to 'massage' figures). But 40 per cent of Japan's labour force are women working in components sweatshops who receive on average half the pay of a male worker and none of the fringe benefits.

The documentary painted a vivid picture of life at the bottom end of Japanese society in the Tokyo suburb of Sanya. This slum area has not appeared on maps for ten years; the authorities are

embarrassed by its high unemployment. Most jobs are casual; workers queue daily and are often reduced to fighting for work. Recruitment is in the tender hands of organised crime, so of course 'successful' job seekers have to pay a cut of their wages.

When trade unionists have tried to organise these workers, the gangsters answered with violence, an attempt in 1985 ended in 200 killings.

Even in the 'elite' companies the average working week is 48 hours. Most workers spend on average 4 hours getting to and from work daily because housing near the job is so expensive. An ex-Toyota worker said he knew many workers had had no annual leave for 10 years.

The company unions were no help. 'If you complain about the company you are



Forty per cent of Japan's workers are women who get on average half a male workers' wage.

disciplined by the union and if you complain about the union you are disciplined by the company.' The giant monopolies provide hideous blocks of housing for their employees resembling Britain's worst high rise council estates. Like tied cottages they make the worker more dependent on the boss.

Workers' families are forbidden to organise anything like a tenants association;

even playgroups and nurseries are difficult to organise. Workers can rent the flats for 10 years then they have to buy them; the company of course is very 'helpful' in providing loans. The best Japanese capitalism can offer workers is a lifetime of subservience to the company.

The country's rapid industrial development has led to enormous environmental problems. The industrial area of Kawasaki, in the shadow of petrochemical and nuclear power stations has an estimated 50,000 victims of pollution.

Resistance

The Japanese economic miracle is not quite as miraculous as it was. Unemployment has already reached 1.6 million and is expected to touch 3 million by 1990. As unemployment benefit only lasts 90 days, there is real hardship.

One of the few weaknesses of Pilger's documentary was that it did not show the resistance of Japanese workers. Far from being

'naturally subservient' as the myths suggest, there has been a great history of struggle from the 1918 rice riots to the massive labour upsurge after 1945 which took a savage MacCarthyite purge of the working class movement to calm down. The rail union Kokuro is still fighting for independence from the bosses. (See *Militant* 12 December 1986)

One Japanese commentator spoke of the seemingly 'non political' mood of the youth. "They will support the system as long as it gives them a good life, when it can not do that, they have no strong loyalty to it."

When the system starts to falter, the sleeping giant of Japanese labour will start to move and that will cause a social earthquake. Labour's leaders should stop clutching at capitalist straws. Pilger's documentary has shown how workers suffer under Japanese capitalism. In both Japan and Britain workers' leaders should stop fostering illusions in a bankrupt system and start working out a socialist alternative.



Workers, dressed in uniform at a factory. The bosses portray a society of consensus but the reality is of exploitation, health and safety problems, slum housing and insecurity for the working class.

Left and Right

Stone cold dead in the market place

LEAVE IT to market forces is a normal Tory cry. Dr Martin Brams, an American economist, is taking it a bit further. He wants kidneys, corneas, livers and hearts for transplants to be available commercially with prices determined by the market. If you've got the cash, you could buy any spare organ you were short of. If you wanted cash, you could sell as well, getting paid either at the time of bequest or leaving money to your heirs after you die.

This grisly idea puts a price on life and death. It could also be very dangerous medically. Blood donors in Britain are organised voluntarily through NHS. There are fewer problems with contaminated blood than in countries where the desperately poor, including alcoholics and drug addicts sell their blood to survive. The logic of Bram's suggestion is that without money you die but with money you get a liver ruined by alcohol or drugs.

Ten years later...

A READER has just sent us a back copy of the *Morning Star* where a Labour MP was explaining how his

socialist ideals had grown through seeing the "difference in lifestyle between manual workers and other people." He pointed out "it is not our job to manage capitalism... It is our job to change society."

Factory closures were radicalising workers, the MP concludes. "They see the relevance of all the demands... for industries to be publicly owned and controlled and democratically accountable—in short nothing less than Clause 4 of the Labour Party constitution."

The MP was reflecting the socialist ideas of workers in his constituency on Merseyside. Unfortunately he didn't carry on reflecting them. He started to welcome the "difference in lifestyle" between manual workers and himself and to relish managing capitalism. His name? Robert Kilroy-Silk, renegade ex-Labour MP for Knowsley North, writing in 1977!

The article shows what pressure the capitalist crisis and the growth of socialist ideas had then and will have in the next Labour government.

But life histories like this also show why *Militant* calls for MPs to live on workers' wages. Socialists believe that being "democratically accountable" doesn't stop at industry. It applies to the Labour Party and union leaders too.

New youth campaign group welcomed

THE LABOUR Party has set up a new campaign group to get young people involved in activity for the general election.

This has been welcomed as a positive move by the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS), replacing the old committee, which had no youth delegates, with a new broad based committee which will involve the trade unions. The new committee will have three representatives from the

LPYS, three from Labour's student organisation (NOLS), one each from the four largest trade unions, (TGWU, AEU, NUPE, GMBATU) one from Red Wedge and one from the Parliamentary Labour Party campaign unit.

Affiliated unions with an active youth membership will also be invited to send a delegate, and there will be four delegates from the National Executive Committee including the LPYS

representative, Linda Douglas.

But Tom Sawyer, former chair of the youth sub-committee which decided on the new group, disagreed that the age limit for trade union representatives should be set at 26, to be in line with the Young Socialists and to ensure that the committee is properly representative of youth.

By a Militant reporter

Sell Militant—freeze out the Tories

THE CHILL may have been a factor in stopping some people selling *Militant* last week. But those who ventured out and survived certainly didn't get an icy reception.

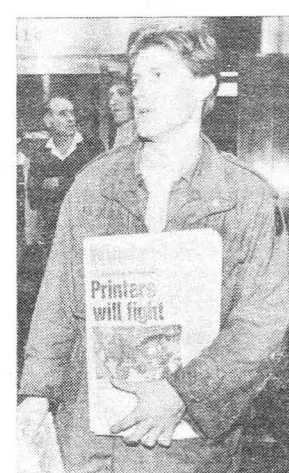
This month, we want all readers to set up regular street sales, and the relatively tropical weather at present is the best time to get them established. Local shopping precincts are ideal. If there's space, set up a stall with a portable pasting table filled with books, leaflets, etc.

Names for regular sales can be collected with paper

and clipboard. Why not attract attention with a megaphone. The more noise you make, the more attention you get.

In Swindon city centre they've been selling 25 to 35 every week. In Fleetwood three sellers sold 20 in one hour. In Hackney, 15 shoppers at Tesco added *Militant* to their shopping list last weekend. At 30 pence it's a bargain!

Try estate sales as well. In Tooting a new estate sale has got 12 regular readers, four of whom are coming to a regular discussion group. Don't be frozen out. Sell *Militant*.



The same message now as in 1983. Sell the paper that backs workers in struggle.

Further Education Labour Students

Students get organised come to FELS conference

FELS policies adopted

THE FURTHER Education Labour Students conference is just a week away. Now is the time for a final drive to make this an event to remember. This is the chance for Further Education students to get organised and fight for higher grants, better wages and conditions on YTS schemes and an end to college and course closures because of the Tory cuts.

It is also your chance to make your voice heard in the National Union of Students and the National Organisation of Labour Students, who for too long have ignored the FE sector. A big successful FELS conference will force them to act. So come along and get as many as possible from your college along.

The new venue is Kingsway Princeton College, Sidmouth Street, London NW1 (near Kings Cross station). The date is 31 January, 12 noon. Credentials cost £5 which includes entrance to the conference, social, accommodation and food.



Students demonstrate in Liverpool for 'GBH'—Grants, Benefits and Housing.

AFTER THE first meeting of the new officers of the National Union of Students Further Education National Committee (FENC), which represents 750,000 students, Cheryl Varley, a member of Further Education Labour Students (FELS), elected to the FENC with the highest recorded number of first preference votes, told *Militant*:

"It is quite clear from this meeting that the members of FENC are under pressure from students in Further Education to give a lead in fighting the Tories. The size of my vote and the fact that all the FELS motions calling for links with the labour movement were passed reflects a decisive change of mood amongst FE students and a willingness to fight back.

"The FELS motions on YTS and £35 a week minimum grant, passed with overwhelming support at the FE sector conference, were given priority by FENC despite attempts by National Organisation of Labour Students member John Dee to stop the grants campaign being prioritised. He also tried to overrule the FE Sector Conference decision that FE discuss with the Labour Party, including the demand for a £35 a week minimum grant, in its manifesto. He argued that FENC must represent all political parties. It was finally agreed that FENC would arrange to meet the party to discuss the grant demand.

"Other proposals agreed were to organise lobbies of local authorities on 11 February, during the NUS week of action, around the demands of YTS wages and conditions and the £35 a week minimum grant. It was also agreed to call a protest lobby again on the YTS issue in the third term.

"The decisions made here today" said Cheryl Varley "are a victory for FELS. I cannot transform FENC as an individual, however. Only by building a campaigning FELS can pressure be exerted on FENC. A successful FELS conference is vital to ensure that the decision made at this meeting are carried out.

"I appeal to all FE students to attend the FELS conference, to transform not only FENC but the full NUS leadership, to make it capable of leading a struggle for reforms in the FE sector."

WE APOLOGISE for an error in the article in issue no 830, 'Left Labour students must unite for democracy.' The last paragraph should have read: "Labour clubs and individuals should pass resolutions and write letters demanding a recall student council on the basis of past precedent, with NOLS Area Executive members allowed to vote... and calling for clear guidelines to reform the student council, on the basis of one delegate per Labour club, to avoid this situation in the future."

"I'M FED up being messed around by the NUS leadership and the government. We've got to get organised and do something instead of just sitting around moaning."—Robbie Henry (Vice-president Walsall College).

"THE THOUGHT of another Tory government smashing away at our colleges, and having a voice where it's needed are the reasons for my support and attendance at FELS

conference"—Pauline Hewins (Women's Officer, Bourneville College).

"IN THE area of Shropshire and Wolverhampton there are 15 colleges. There is a need to get organised for the next NUS conference and I see FELS conference as a way and means to get them organised"—Janice Walker (NUS Area convenor, Wolverhampton and Shropshire).

Why I'll be there

"THE ATTACKS by the Tories on YTS trainees show a need to get organised and elect a Labour government. FELS is the only organisation that is doing this and this is why I'll be at FELS conference."—Jason Tetley (Executive Officer, Matthew Boulton Technical College).

Support grows in Midlands

SUPPORT FOR Further Education Labour Students has been growing in Birmingham. Last Easter a FELS supporter was elected to the Area NUS. Then six members were elected on the executive of Garrets Green College.

FELS members have been able to get creches for three out of the nine FE colleges. Five more have been promised. They have set in motion the City Council providing money for sabbatical officers in each college. This will be achieved by September 1987.

In the summer they arranged with the college

unions and the Manpower Services Commission to have lectures for YTS trainees by student union officers on the issue of the NUS and the trade unions.

Youth demo

September saw the recruitment of more students to FELS and the Labour Party. 65 students from Garrets Green attended the 18 October youth demonstration in London, even though there was a bus strike which meant some had to walk 4-5 miles to the station. A general meeting at one college voted 421-1 to donate £250 to the demo.

A lobby of the City Council against the fees that part-time students have to pay ended with the education authority agreeing to pay them instead.

Students all over the West Midlands have voted to attend the FELS conference on 31 January. They want a Labour victory in '87 but they also want an assurance from the NUS and the National Organisation of Labour Students that FE students will have an equal voice in their affairs.

By Mark Sholl and Pauline Hewins (Bourneville College, Birmingham)

Student-worker unity

SARAH FOX, a student at the City and East London College, is typical of thousands of Further Education students who cannot afford a decent standard of education in Tory Britain. She receives no grant and she depends on what her parents can afford to give her, or on part-time jobs that may come her way.

Sarah will be attending the FE Labour Students conference because she believes FELS is the only body organising FE students alongside the labour and trade union movement, which has the industrial strength to defend education.

"The FE colleges" she told a meeting of the Eastern

branch of GMBATU "were developed during the post-war boom economic boom when the bosses needed a skilled workforce to handle new technical machinery. Now in a time of economic decline when three million are on the dole, the Tories have no interest in developing education. Instead they plan to change the FE colleges into training camps for their YTS.

"Only through the struggle of the trade unions was education opened up to all working people and it is only that same movement which can defend it from Tory cuts."

The GMBATU branch agreed unanimously to donate £100 to FELS.

Rush in every penny, every pound

HEVANS, a pensioner from Blackpool, sent us a £5 donation this week, I don't know if it was his £5 'present' from Mrs Thatcher, but it certainly represents a big sacrifice when every penny must be needed for the old to keep warm during the freeze.

Age Concern estimates that a hundred old people will die each day as temperatures plummet. Yet all the Tories can offer, and under pressure at that, is a miserable fiver for one week. How many hours huddled round a one bar electric fire does that represent? We owe our old people a better retirement than that. But capitalism can't afford to give super-profits to the rich

and look after the neediest sections of society as well.

That's why *Militant* will fight harder than anyone to get rid of Thatcher and to ensure Labour carries out its promises to look after the old, the sick and the unemployed. We need the resources for a more frequent *Militant*, and we need them now. Every penny towards our £250,000 appeal must be rushed in.

An excellent example this week is an anonymous donation of £250. Thanks also to Rob Denison from Newcastle for £50 and Russell Tandy from Colchester who sent us £25 pledged at the November Rally. Do you know anyone with a pledge outstanding from then? Ask

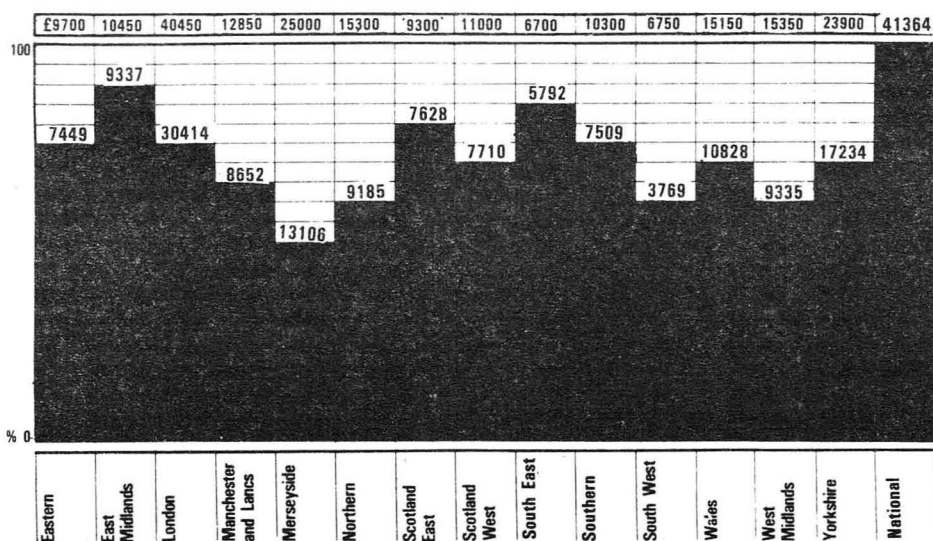
for it now before they forget.

There's only a week left till the raffle draw, so make sure all your tickets are sold and the stubs are sent in, so no-one misses their chance of winning our fantastic first prize.

Finally, why don't you lift the January "blues" by organising a (fundraising) party.

Thanks to: Jim Galaney, Preston, £13.20; Jenny Cole, Ipswich USDW, £10; Paul Forgiore, Maidstone CPSA, £7; J Cooze, South London, £20; John Ferguson, Harrow, £8; Newcastle BIFU collection, £34.30; Preston factory sales, £41.36; Lowestoft first ever *Militant* meeting, £15; Newcastle Rosa Luxemburg meeting £8.72.

£250 000 Fighting Fund



Old Bolsheviks Remembered Rehabilitate the heroes of 1917

AS WE celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the October 1917 Russian revolution, let us honour those Bolsheviks who led the revolution, but then perished at the hands of Stalin's brutal dictatorship. *Militant*, the inheritor of the ideas of Marxism, and of Lenin and Trotsky, will be carrying a series of articles on the individual victims of these purges. We are demanding the rehabilitation of these heroes of the working class movement.

THE MOSCOW trials, the greatest frame-up in history, of 1936 and 1937, saw life-long revolutionaries 'accused' of "organising terrorist activities" against the state and attempting to "restore capitalism."

The trials, based on lies and confessions obtained through torture, confirmed the complete degeneration of the regime led by Stalin.

They involved the disappearance and murder of almost all the leading Bolsheviks from the time of the victorious October revolution in 1917. Khrushchev, Stalin's successor, admitted to a meeting with the Italian Communist Party in 1956 that over 8 million were killed in the purges that followed. In reality, the figure was much higher.

The true figure has never been given by Stalin's inheritors but at least 20 million were murdered. Only a small number of families were left untouched. Of the 1,966 delegates to the 1934 Soviet Party Congress, 1,108 were arrested. Of 139 members of the Central Committee, 98 were arrested. The purges culminated in 1940 with the brutal assassination by one of Stalin's agents, of Trotsky, the joint leader with Lenin of the Russian Revolution.

The majority of the victims who had stood firm against the prisons, the exile and torture of the Tsarist regime, were shot or murdered without trial. Old Bolsheviks lived in fear of the midnight knock on the door, signifying that dreaded visit from Stalin's secret police. Others, a small minority, seeing the degeneration of the revolution for which they had fought all their lives, lost hope. In a last desperate attempt to save their own lives they capitulated to Stalin and confessed to the most horrific crimes, blaming some mystical 'Trotskyite centre.'

Who were their murderers? Many had hedged their bets in 1917, waiting to see who won the civil war before they joined the Bolshevik Party. Others were plain counter revolutionaries, people like Vyshinsky, Stalin's chief prosecutor, who was a Menshevik during the revolution, or Maisky, Stalin's Ambassador to London, who had been a Minister in Kolchak's White Government in Siberia during the Civil War. Stalin himself, who was a member of the Bolshevik Central Committee, played a secondary role in the revolution.

The degeneration of the Russian revolution into Stalin's grotesque distortion of socialism, was based upon the years of war and civil war which had taken their toll on the workers and the Bolshevik Party. Many Bolsheviks were tired, others lost their lives fighting the capitalist armies of intervention. The defeat of the socialist revolutions in Hungary, China, Germany, Spain and elsewhere left the Soviet Union, still an impoverished, peasant based society, isolated both politically and economically.

The earliest of these defeats co-incided with the death of Lenin, gave an impetus to those millions of functionaries and bureaucrats in the party, in industry, in the army and police, with few links with the workers. Without the check by workers' mass involvement, they concentrated on defending their incomes, perks and privileges.

Trotsky described Stalin as "the most outstanding mediocrity of the Soviet bureaucracy. His strength lies in the fact that he expresses the instinct of self preservation of the ruling caste more firmly, more decisively and more pitilessly than anyone else." All that remained of the conquests of 1917 was state ownership of the economy.

To confirm their position at the head of Soviet society, the bureaucracy was forced to draw a line of blood between the ideas and methods of Lenin and Trotsky and the workers and youth in Soviet society. Leopold Trepper, head of the wartime Soviet spy network in Nazi Germany explained: "The glow of October was being extinguished in the shadows of the underground chambers. The revolution had degenerated into a system of terror and horror; the ideas of socialism were ridiculed in the name of a fossilised dogma which the executioner had the affrontery to call Marxism. And yet we went along, sick at heart, but passive, caught up in machinery we had set in motion with our own hands. Mere cogs in the apparatus, terrorised to the point of madness, we became the instruments of our own subjugation."

Trepper explained that alone it was the followers of Trotsky who led the opposition to this: "Today, the Trotskyites have the right to accuse those who once howled with the wolves. Let them not forget however, that they had the enormous advantage over us of having a coherent political system capable of replacing Stalinism. They had something to cling to in the midst of their profound distress at seeing the revolution betrayed. They did not 'confess' for they knew their confession would serve neither the party nor socialism."

Militant now demands their rehabilitation. Not in the sense of requesting a pardon, but to clear their names of the false charges made against them by Stalin. We appeal to the labour movement to examine these cases and to confirm the innocence of the victims—Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Rykov, Smirnov and innumerable others. In particular, we call for the rehabilitation of the main defendant of the purge trials, Leon Trotsky.

By Dave Campbell

A report on Social attitudes, produced last year, shows that more people in Britain support views associated with Labour. John Pickard looks at the report's findings.

THE 'SOFT' left of the labour movement have argued throughout the recent period that there has been a fundamental shift to the right in society, as a result of the 'populist' appeal of Thatcherism. Whether intentionally or not, this has provided the theoretical justification that Labour's right wing needed to push policy to the right, and jettison any radical election commitments.

Thus, writing in *Marxism Today* (Jan 1985), one of its editors, Stuart Hall, wrote "the harsh, uncomfortable fact is that the Right was able sufficiently to identify itself as a kind of popular force. It displaced reformist politics from the centre of the political stage and began to swing people".

The conclusion drawn from this position is invariably that socialist ideas are unpopular: "If you cannot, in a country like ours, with its deep divisions of class and its massive inequalities, sustain intact the popular case for welfare socialism," Stuart Hall asks, "what is the evidence that the transition to socialism proper is at hand?"

'Success' of Thatcherism

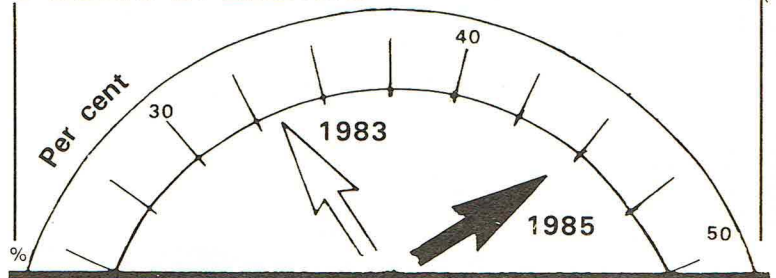
Similarly, David Cook, also in *Marxism Today* (Feb '85), commented on the success of Thatcherism, and added "the 'new' style Toryism has succeeded to some extent in disconnecting substantial parts of Labour's 'traditional constituencies', and bringing them over to its alliance and not just electorally."

The formerly left wing Labour Party grouping, the Labour Coordinating Committee (LCC); also referred to in a document to "a rightward shift in British politics." "There is no surer sign of a real shift to the right," it said, "than when people start finding strikes, protests and cuts campaigns outside conventional channels embarrassing and dangerous to electoral prospects."

The overall impression given, implicitly or explicitly, by the theorists of the woolly left is of a shift of social and political attitudes to the right. Yet proof has been published that just at the time most of the above comments were made—as *Militant* argued—the outlook of the majority of British voters in fact swung to the left. This movement has been carefully documented in the 1986 Report of *British Social Attitudes* published by the Social and Community Planning Research.

"It has been widely argued," the Report says, as if in answer to the 'theoreticians' of the LCC and *Marxism Today*, "that the election of the Conservative government in 1979 was part of a distinct move-

PUBLIC SPENDING



In favour of increased taxes and higher expenditure on health, education and social benefits.

ment to the right in attitudes amongst the electorate, a movement confirmed by the 1983 election result. The three surveys in the *British Social Attitudes* series reveal, however, that there has instead been a clear shift to the left since the last general election on many issues which divide the Conservative and Labour Parties."

Over two thirds of those questioned agreed, for example, that the government had a responsibility to provide a job for everyone who wants one. Only 26 per cent agreed with Neil Kinnock's view that this was "impossibilism". 86 per cent believed the government should actually finance job creation.

70 per cent of the population consider themselves either "working class" or "poor".

Tribune columnist Hugh MacPherson wrote recently that "the question of redistribution of wealth and resources to the poorer sections of society is considered even less acceptable than it was in the palmy days when we never had it so good." (*Tribune* 29/8/86). "Less acceptable" to the 'soft' left, perhaps, but not to the big majority of the population. By about a factor of two to one, the majority in the SCPR sample thought that income and wealth in Britain should be redistributed to "ordinary working people". 37 per cent disagreed with this idea in 1983, but only 28 per cent in 1985.

69 per cent thought the Government has a responsibility to reduce the income gap between rich and poor, against only 24 per cent who disagreed. In general, 77 per cent thought the gap between high and low incomes was too great. Only 4 per cent disagreed. The general acknowledgement of widespread poverty among the unemployed was seen in the fact that 81 per cent thought that the government had a responsibility to provide a decent standard of living for the

unemployed, as opposed to only 14 per cent who disagreed.

The survey results, the report says, "suggest that there has not been a sudden change in the electorate's attitude, but a continuous shift to the left on the 'collective' dimension. It does appear that the electorate has been moving significantly away from much of the ideological ground staked out by the present government."

Taxation policy has been the subject of a great deal of discussion, even in the Tory Party, in recent months. The shift to the left in social attitudes has been marked by a clear increase in the proportion of those favouring more expenditure on health, education and social benefits, even at the cost of higher taxes—

Overall, the report concludes, the survey "contains little that is comforting for the present government. During the last two years between 1983 and 1985 public attitudes seem to have moved more or less consistently against its non-interventionist anti-statism philosophy.

... there is, in other words, an increasing 'collectivist' or 'welfarist' majority, drawing recruits from all parts of the political spectrum, who appear to have lost faith in the essential message of the present government."

As far as future economic prospects go, there is not a lot of optimism going around, contrary to all Nigel Lawson's grandiose boasts about "recovery". Two thirds of the electorate, as it turns out correctly, believed that unemployment would go up in the next year (1986). Only 28 per cent think Britain's industrial performance will improve, 65 per cent believe it will stay the same or decline.

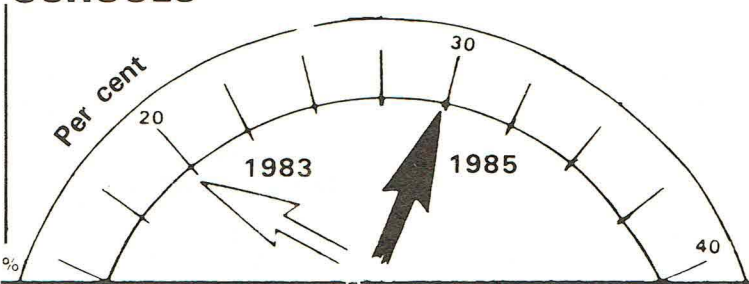
Most people are no more optimistic over the prospects for living standards and prices. 86 per cent of those whose household income had fallen behind prices in the previous year envisaged the same problem in the coming year. Overall 40 per cent expected prices to have gone up "a lot", 48 per cent by "a little", and 8 per cent thought they would stay the same. Overall, expectations have worsened since 1983.

"Of all six of the economic values and expectations" the report says, "opinion has moved unfavourably against the Conservative government."

"Compared with 1984 there has been a clear increase in pessimism about both the general and immediate individual prospects. The already large majority in 1983 who regarded unemployment as the higher priority than inflation has increased further."

While the 'soft' left of the labour movement (including the 'Communist' Party) sing in tune with the right wing over the alleged "unpopularity" of nationalisation, in

SCHOOLS

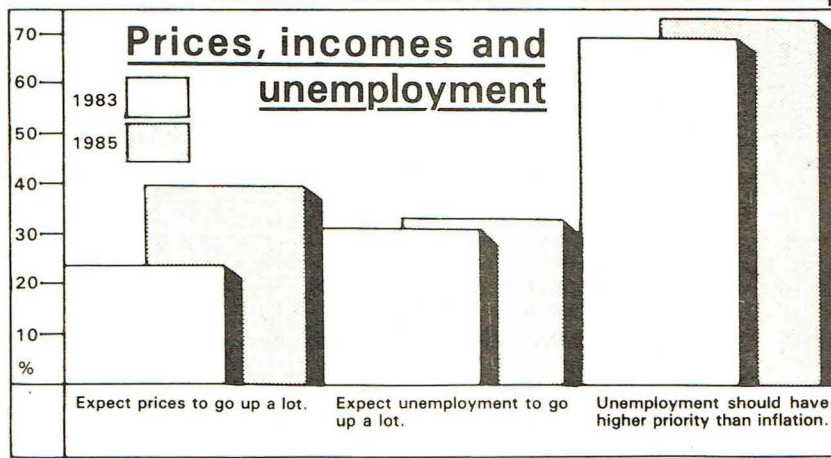


Support for fewer or no private schools



Britain - Swings - left

"Of all six of the economic valuations and expectations," the Report says, "opinion has moved unfavourably against the Conservative government."



indicate trends and changes. It is clear from the SCPR survey, as *Militant* has argued for some time, that the leadership of the Labour Party and the 'soft left' around the LCC, *Tribune* and the Communist Party have completely misread the underlying mood among workers.

Since the miners' strike especially, a social gulf has opened up between the classes. It was a capitalist newspaper, not *Militant*, that pointed to the "insurrectionary mood" in Yorkshire at the time of the massive police occupation of the coalfields. In the whole of the post-war period there was never such ferocity and class bitterness as during those twelve months, and the effects of the strike will linger for many years.

The miners' strike was only the most blatant indication of the collapse of "consensus" and the beginning of a move to the left. Since the strike, the collapse in support for the Tory party has been evident in one by-election after another. This and not Kinnock's "new-style" Labour image has been the explanation for the increased support for the Labour Party. The swing has not come about because of but despite the swing to the right of the Labour leadership, and their abandonment of socialist ideas.

Labour's right and former lefts have given up any idea of campaigning, arguing or fighting for socialist ideas. They hide their contempt for such a strategy by referring disparagingly to 'preaching' or 'pronouncing' socialism.

Yet if such a move to the left could take place, within society, just when the leaders of the movement had moved right, there would be huge possibilities if the party leadership actively and consciously set out to publicise, explain and develop genuine socialist ideas in a way that made them mean something concrete to ordinary workers.

A democratic socialist plan of production, involving all sections

of the working class in the running and planning of the economy, would mean undreamt of advances in production and in the provision of real wealth and social benefits. But such a plan requires the public ownership and democratic running of the big monopolies and banks that presently dominate the economy. Genuine socialist ideas can be made relevant and meaningful to a big majority of the population if the leadership of the labour movement embraces such ideas, and explains and campaigns for their support.

There has never been a better time to publicise and fight for socialist ideas. Voters as a whole, but more especially workers and those affected by seven years of Tory rule, want positive change, and only the Labour Party, basing itself on socialist policies, can give that.

Other findings

- Fewer think Britain's nuclear weapons make the country safer to live in: 60 per cent in 1983 fell to 54 per cent in 1985.

- A general reduction in defence was opposed by 53 per cent in 1983 but only 43 per cent in 1985—and this was all before Chernobyl and the Libyan bombing raids.

- More think women on their own should decide on abortion: 35 per cent in 1983 up to 49 per cent in 1985.

Overall, the Report concludes, the survey "contains little that is comforting for the present government. During the two years between 1983 and 1985, public attitudes seem to have moved more or less consistently against its non-interventionist, anti-statist philosophy . . .

US MISSILES



this respect also, they have moved to the right, passing the majority of the population moving in the opposite direction. Thus, over the question of 'more' or 'less' state ownership of industry, the survey found 49 per cent adopting a 'right wing' position in 1983, 36 per cent in 1984 and only 31 per cent in 1985.

What is even more pronounced, considering the way in which the 'trendy' lefts pooh-poo the ideas of "class consciousness", is the overwhelming belief that social class affects opportunities and prospects. Moreover, 22 per cent (16 per cent in 1983) believe that social class will be "more important in 10 years' time."

70 per cent of the population consider themselves either "working class" or "poor".

"Responses to similar questions

asked over the last 20 years or so," the report notes, "have shown a similar pattern. If there is a tendency for more people to describe themselves as middle class, it is as yet barely perceptible."

The results of this survey are a crushing refutation of the argument that socialist ideas cannot find an appeal. On most issues in fact, support for "left" ideas is greater even than the declared support for the Labour Party, at around 37-39 per cent and the support for Neil Kinnock, at around 26-29 per cent.

Moreover, these questions were put to a sample of over 1800 people in April and May 1985, and the events of the last 18 months—record unemployment levels, continued industrial stagnation, Tory government crises over Westlands and the Libyan air raids and

Chernobyl—will almost certainly have given even more momentum to the move to the left.

Opinion polls can never give a completely accurate indication of the mood and political outlook of the population and in any case, invariably they tip the scale against the labour movement. With the press and TV churning out a daily diet of lies and misinformation, for example indicating that the trade unions have "too much power", or linking Marxism to "extremism" (and therefore "bad"), then public opinion polls inevitably reflect this.

Instead of asking specific questions about trade unions, such as how workers can defend jobs, better conditions or improve their wages, even this survey asked the question: "Do you think that trade unions have too much or too little power?" with the predictable results. News, information and comments about the enormous economic power of the big monopolies is never seen in the media, and therefore, never reflected in the polls.

One series of questions in the Survey on "revolutionaries" even begins with the preamble, "there are some people whose views are considered extreme by the majority . . ." in other words, 'here are some questions about bad people and you wouldn't want to be in the minority in thinking them good, would you?'

But despite the limitations in polling methods and the reflected partiality of the media, surveys can

German elections will herald new struggle

ON 25 January West Germany goes to the polls. Unfortunately, Chancellor Kohl's capitalist coalition of CDU (Christian Democrats), CSU (Christian Social Union) and FDP (Liberals) is likely to be re-elected.

As in the British election of 1983, when the vacillation of the Labour leaders allowed Thatcher to win for a second time, the outcome of this election was by no means determined in advance.

Only a year ago, hardly anyone doubted that the SPD (Social Democrats, the mass party of labour) would win.

The Kohl government had taken over in 1982 with a programme of cuts in benefits, particularly hitting working-class families with children, the long-term unemployed and school and university students.

The government has been rocked by one scandal after another. On top of this, it tried to push anti-trade union laws through parliament at the beginning of 1986, and brought out a million workers on a day of action called by the DGB (German TUC).

In 1985, state elections in North Rhine Westphalia and the Saar brought the SPD clear majorities. As late as April 1986, opinion polls gave SPD leader Rau 51 per cent support.

Given this mood and the government's record, the SPD should have been looking to the election with confidence.

Unemployment

Living standards may have risen in 1986 for those in work (for the first time in years), inflation may have hit zero and the economy is still experiencing a minor boom. But despite four years of boom the official unemployment figure stands at 2.1 million, while the DGB estimate of four million is nearer the mark.

So the SPD leaders cannot claim that the government is being re-elected on its record. Although the more backward layers will vote for the CDU on the basis of more money in their pockets, it is despised by the active workers and youth.

The real question is: where is the alternative? Far from explaining that the mini-boom is due to international factors and has nothing to do with the government's efforts, the SPD leaders have said as little as possible about economic policy—including their own.

The truth is that, faced with the onset of the next recession in a year

By Fiz Garvie, SPD Cologne

or two, they haven't got one.

Rau, like Kinnock, originally wanted to promise nothing at all. Rank-and-file pressure have now forced him to promise that he will create 400,000 jobs, increase child benefits and re-introduce student grants. This would put us back where we were in 1982, and offers no perspective of lasting improvement.

As to the dangers of nuclear energy and environmental destruction, the official line is that the SPD, if elected, will "start to get out of nuclear power in the next ten years"! Meanwhile, SPD politicians sit on the boards of energy companies and vote for more nuclear energy production.

Lack of credibility on this question is losing the SPD large parts of the youth vote to the Greens, who have been revived as a result.

The mood of the SPD voters began to change last June with the elections in Lower Saxony, where the local candidate was persuaded by the leadership in Bonn to wage an American-style campaign, concentrating on his own personality and avoiding political commitments. The result was a defeat, as in the elections in Bavaria (October) and Hamburg (November).

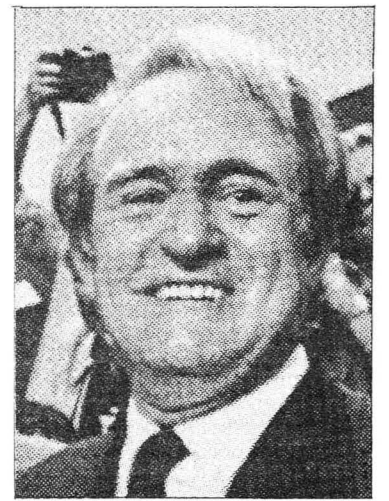
The SPD lost, not because of great gains by the right-wing parties, but because its own traditional voters either did not go to the polls, or (in the case of many youth) gave their vote to the Greens.

The loss of the SPD's thirty-year-long majority in Hamburg shook the party from top to bottom. It should have been the signal for the leadership to change its strategy and launch a political offensive to regain the confidence of the workers and youth. With a socialist programme, offering clear answers on the two main questions of unemployment and pollution, it would still have been possible to swing the trend back to the SPD.

Instead the SPD leaders in Bonn lowered their sights even further. Their immediate response was to say that an absolute majority was obviously utopian, and the party should strive for 43 per cent—or perhaps just try to stop the CDU from getting an absolute majority.



(Above) SPD leader Rau smiles for the camera—but campaigns based on 'personalities' brought election defeats in Lower Saxony, Hamburg and Bavaria last year. (Below) The real threat to Kohl's government: workers in action against anti-union law. Last Friday 10,000 steelworkers marched in Duisburg, demanding nationalisation of the industry.



How the SPD lost Hamburg

ONE OF the factors contributing to the defeat of the SPD in Hamburg was an event in June.

In the wake of the Chernobyl disaster several demonstrations were held throughout Germany protesting the government's nuclear energy policies. A demonstration against the disputed Brokdorf power station was broken up by police and border police using water cannon, helicopters and gas.

A demonstration was called in Hamburg to protest against this infringement of the right to demonstrate. But when 800 people assembled on an area of common ground they were surrounded by police and kept standing there from midday until the small hours of the next morning.

They were denied food, drink and extra clothing brought by friends. They were often not even allowed to go to the toilet.

As the night drew on, thirty taxi drivers drove through the police cordon saying "Our job is to take people home—these people want to go home." Many cab windows were smashed by the police. The demonstrators were taken away individually or in small groups, some to solitary cells. Others were strip-searched and questioned, then left handcuffed in a local sports hall.

The courts subsequently ruled the police action to be illegal. It led to a storm in the local SPD branches and 50,000 people came out on a demonstration called two days later.

This reactionary move was endorsed by some SPD leaders. This is a warning to the entire labour movement.

As if this was not enough to discredit the SPD, another scandal broke. It involved *Neue Heimat* (New Homes), the trade union run housing corporation—the biggest housing association in the world.

Neue Heimat had built up unbelievable debts following years of mismanagement and corruption amongst union officials who enriched themselves at the expense of the unions and of nearly one million people in 260,000 homes.

All these developments indicate that, far from being stable, German society is in a state of flux. Many of the scandals, particularly

the *Neue Heimat* scandal, have infuriated or demoralised SPD voters, making them cynical and distrustful.

Yet the Hamburg election—although a defeat for the SPD—was not the right-wing victory which the press and the CDU proclaimed it to be.

In the 1982 election the Social Democrats gained 53.3 per cent of the Hamburg vote. But in the November elections nearly 60,000 SPD voters stayed home and the party received only 41.8 per cent of the vote.

The CDU gained a mere 3,500 votes, to be proclaimed victors by the jubilant mass media. As it happens, the SPD have stayed in power as a minority government because no single party has a clear majority.

No clear alternative

Fundamentally, it is the SPD's failure to present a clear-cut alternative that has undermined voters' confidence that a vote for the SPD will mean a vote for change.

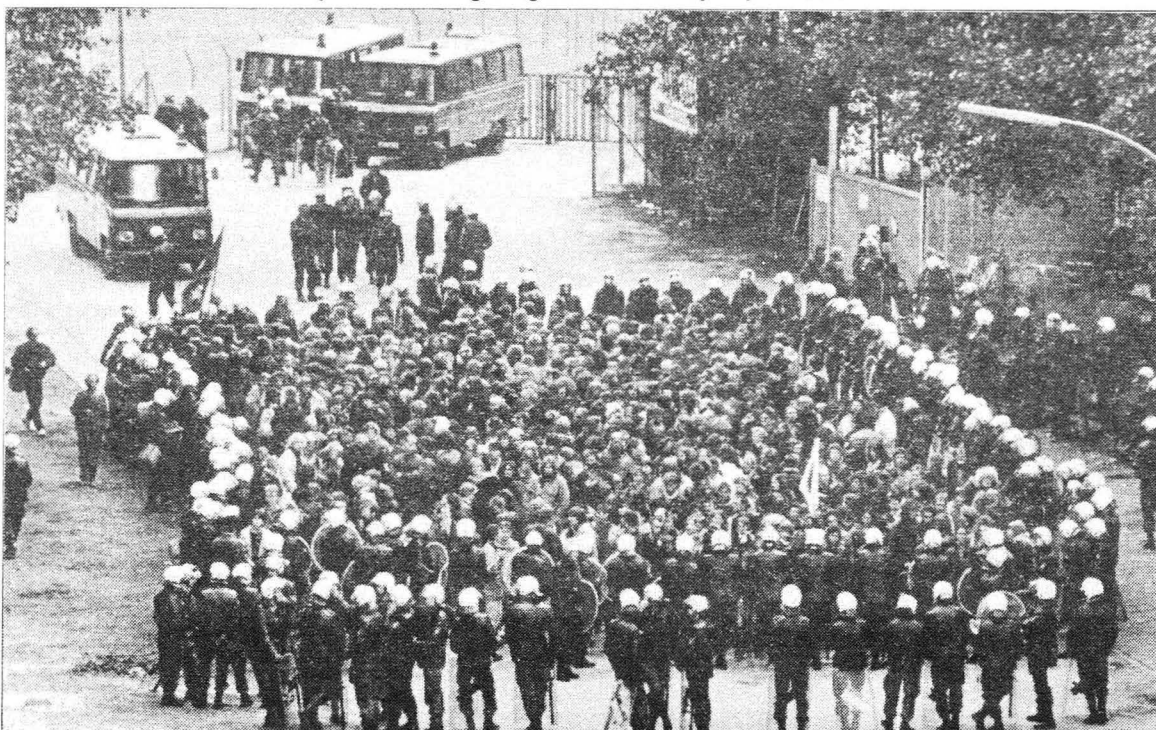
Following the Hamburg disaster, there was complete confusion among the leaders and a variety of emotions, ranging from despair to anger, among the party membership.

The last SPD conference took some modest steps in a more radical direction. But the party leadership are far from the socialist programme that is necessary if the country's mounting problems are to be seriously tackled.

Last year's pollution of the Rhine—seven "accidents" in the space of little over a week—show that government has absolutely no control over big business and industry.

Socialism, based on nationalisation of the banks and major industries under workers' control and management, is not just a sentimental dream remembered in a party with Marxist traditions. Socialism is, even in "stable" Germany, an absolute necessity and a concrete answer to the problems faced by the working class.

By Susan Powell
(Hamburg-Altona SPD)



Hamburg police illegally surrounding anti-nuclear demonstrators for over 12 hours. (See report).

Greece, USA, South Africa, Romania

Two million strike in Greece

GREECE WAS paralysed last Thursday as an estimated two million workers protested against the PASOK (Socialist) government's austerity policies.

Transport, industry, banks, schools, government departments, even theatres were at a standstill. Hospitals and emergency services operated with skeleton staffs. Only a few shops were open.

This tremendous demonstration shows the depth of working-class opposition against the government's 'moderation', i.e. open support for the employers. Workers' purchasing power, in contrast, was cut by 15 per cent last year.

It was the explosion of militancy unleashed by the movement in the schools and universities in December (see *Militant* 9 January) that pushed the union leaders into calling the strike.

Yet relatively few workers turned out for the rallies organised by the leaders. In Athens only a thousand came to the official GSEE (Greek TUC) rally and, according to press reports, perhaps 30,000 turned out nationally.

This contrasts sharply with the anti-cuts demonstrations by hundreds of thousands a year ago.

One factor was the sectarian divisions among the labour leaders. In Athens, three separate rallies were called—one by the GSEE (led by PASOK), one by the Trades Council (led by the Communist Party) and one by the Public Service Union.

This reflects the lack of any serious lead by the union officials, the absence of any policy that can harness the tremendous pent-up frustration and

energy in the workers' ranks.

Greek capitalism is too weak to offer working people lasting security under conditions of world-wide economic crisis. Only a clear socialist programme, and a determined campaign to end capitalist rule, can offer the majority in society the perspective of real change.

The role of the labour leaders is all that enables the PASOK government to continue its present course. But workers are being confronted again and again with the inadequacy of their leadership. The struggle to win support for the ideas of Marxism in the ranks of the movement will continue, and gather strength.

By George Collins

USA: 'Stop racist attacks-or else!'

ON THE evening of 19 December three black men were attacked and beaten by a mob of white youth in the Howard Beach area of Queens in New York City. One of them, Michael Griffith, a young construction

worker, was chased onto a nearby highway, knocked down and killed.

This racist attack provoked a furious response from New York blacks and trade unionists. Up to 3000 people marched in Howard Beach on 27 December. A hundred

black organisations and six trade unions were represented.

Chants from the marchers compared New York with Johannesburg. One youth group summed up the attitude of black youth: "Stop the racist attacks or else!"

Over the past three years several other New Yorkers have been killed by racist mobs. But none of those killings evoked the same response as this one. The mood of American blacks is changing.

Most of the gains of the black Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s have been eroded by economic recession or are under threat. The backward-looking Reagan administration has, in effect, given the nod to racists that their filth is 'acceptable' again.

One young woman on the demonstration said: "I am here because things are going backwards, not forwards".

The revolt of South African blacks, the revolution in the Philippines, the rising industrial battles in the US have all added to the mood to fight back. What is needed is a clear programme and strategy. Unfortunately this was not given by the speakers on 27 December or

by the labour leaders.



Unemployed and poverty create conditions where racial tensions build up. A campaign against low pay, unemployment, bad housing and racism could unite black and white workers and youth.

Thirty-one per cent of blacks live in poverty, and now face a rising threat in their own cities. New York blacks are saying: "Enough is enough".

Black leaders called for a boycott of the 'establishment' media and of pizza restaurants (the three blacks in Queens were first attacked in a pizzeria). The black lawyers handling the case have called for the Federal authorities to take it over, accusing the New York City cops and legal system of being racist.

This will not end racism. The way forward is for the black organisations and union activists to face

towards the labour movement as a whole. The New York Labor Council represents 750,000 workers. By mobilising this whole movement against racism, and also against low pay, unemployment and bad housing, broad sections of working-class people in New York can be united.

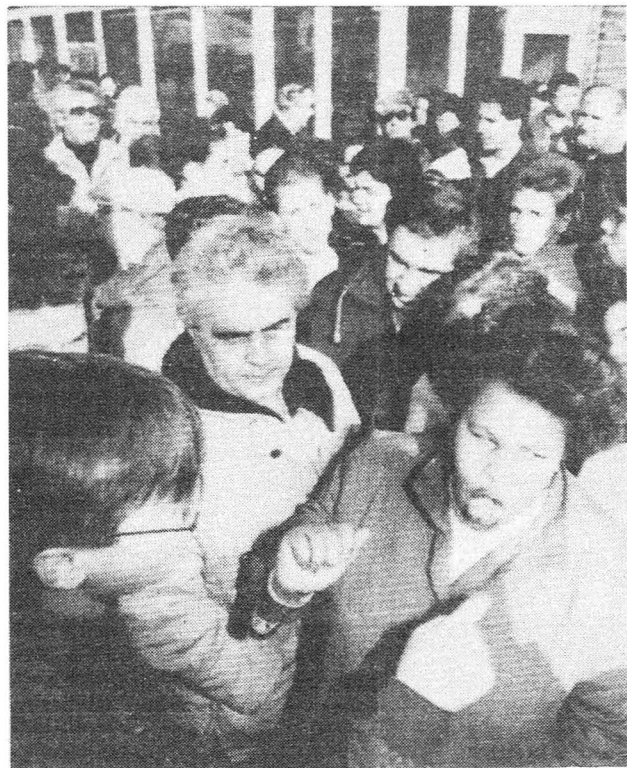
This is the way that racist attacks by whites and by cops can be cut across.

Such a movement would also provide the means of

ending the stranglehold of Wall Street, of property speculators and big business over New York. By taking independent political action, putting up labour candidates in elections and building a Labour Party, it could kick out Mayor Koch and his racist administration.

The example of New York would inspire similar movements throughout the US. The capitalist system is the cause of racism. By taking power firmly into their own hands, the working people can end it and build genuine democracy for all.

From Sean Heron
in New York



On the demo in Howard Beach.

International Notes



South Africa: OK Bazaars strike

DESPITE OVER six months of the State of Emergency, and a host of vicious laws directed against workers and the trade union movement, workers in South Africa continue their heroic struggle for better living conditions and trade union rights.

Since 18 December last year as many as 17,000 shop workers belonging to the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (CCAWUSA) have been on strike against the manage-

ment of one of South Africa's biggest chain-stores, OK Bazaars. Their demand is for a R160 across-the-board increase in wages, and for a minimum wage of R450 (£145) per month.

At present workers, sometimes with 20 years service behind them, are being paid an average monthly wage of R265.

However, the management and bosses, whilst being anxious to present themselves to the black workers as 'liberal' opponents of the Nationalist government, have again revealed their real interests and intent. Using laws enacted under the Emergency they have refused to discuss the workers' demands, and have employed police against picketing workers, often resulting in detention and dismissals.

This led CCAWUSA to comment: "Tony Bloom,

whose company owns South African Breweries and therefore controls OK Bazaars, is prepared to hold discussions with the ANC in Lusaka on South Africa's future, yet his company has no qualms about using police against workers on strike".

After the ANC bombing of an OK shopping centre in central Johannesburg on 9 January COSATU must make clear its opposition to misguided individual attempts at furthering the workers' struggle. Only united action on the part of the working class as a whole can guarantee victory against the bosses and ultimately over the capitalist system as a whole.

Letters of support should be sent to: CCAWUSA Strike Committee, COSATU House, 268 Jeppe St, Johannesburg, 2001, South Africa. Copies to: SALEP, P.O.Box 77, London, E8 4TB

Breed—or else

ROMANIA'S FALLING birthrate has led the country's Stalinist leader, Ceausescu, to take drastic measures against the abortion rate which is the highest in Europe.

His campaign started in 1984 with a directive from the Central Committee of the Communist Party, compelling every woman of childbearing age to undergo a medical examination every month at work. If the test shows that she is pregnant, she faces criminal charges if she fails to produce a baby nine months later!

Abortion, unless for medical reasons, can lead to imprisonment of both doctor and patient.

Measures against childless couples include a special tax on those who fail to provide a medical reason for not

having children. People who are unmarried at 25 also pay a tax of up to 16 per cent of their wage.

Yet Romania's bureaucratically-controlled economy does not encourage couples to start families. Living standards are among the lowest in Europe. All basic foods are rationed; for workers, it can take hours to shop around for a day's food.

As a result of the energy crisis created by the regime's mismanagement, it is illegal to heat homes above 12 degrees C, or to heat a room for more than an hour at a time.

Ceausescu's latest measure has been to form "squads" of CP officials and police agents to visit married women in their homes, to investigate their private lives and find out why they are not becoming pregnant.

Ceausescu's 'justification' for this medieval harassment of women in a so-

called "socialist" country?

"The foetus is the socialist property of the entire society. Giving birth is a patriotic duty which is decisive for the fate of the country. Those who refuse to have children are deserters fleeing from the laws of our national continuity."

"We have need of people", Stalin's bureaucrats said. "Then," Trotsky retorted, "women might answer: have the kindness to bear them yourselves."

No woman, Stalin's regime said, has the right to refuse "the joys of motherhood." Trotsky replied: "Socialism was to remove the cause which impels a woman to abortion, and not force her into the 'joys of motherhood' with the help of a foul police interference."

By Anne Lewin

Hattersley discovers class inequality

Dear Comrades,
Labour's deputy leader, Roy Hattersley, leading spokesperson of Labour's right wing, recently proffered the following information in the *Observer*:
"Britain is no more equal a society today than it was a hundred years ago.

Progress throughout the century has increased the total sum of prosperity without changing the relationship between the classes."
What a condemnation of the capitalist system! Roy should be proclaiming this to workers and Labour activists up and down Britain. Why is he

confined to whispering the truth?
Roy's truth is also a crushing admission of the bankruptcy of the reformist strategy of Labour's right wing who have spent 20 of the last 62 years in government!
Yours fraternally
Phil Frampton Manchester

Extra tax for those in low paid jobs

Dear Comrades,
On Christmas eve, HM Inspector of Taxes sent me a letter. I was accused of being in a 'tipping situation', and had accordingly been charged £350.
It seems that my crime was to work in the poorly paid (understatement of the year) catering trade and capitalist mentality decreed that anyone earning low wages must be getting a "bit on the side".
The irony is that if I had received tips, especially the huge amount of £350, I could afford a cooker for my family, which we don't have, instead of wondering how people have money to spend on luxuries like dinner in the restaurant where I work, the average bill for a dinner for two—£80!
Yours fraternally
D McEwan
Edinburgh

Judges upholding 'their' laws

Dear Comrades,
A survey examining the background of 465 judges found that the overwhelming majority came from a highly privileged section of society.
The House of Lords which comprises nine judges plus Lord Hailsham are on £71,400 per year except for Lord Hailsham who earns £77,000. Their average age is 66.7. Eight of them attended either Oxford or Cambridge.
Below the Law Lords are the 23 judges of the Court of Appeal, each earning £68,400 a year. 86 per cent were educated at either Oxford or Cambridge and 20 attended public school. One, Judge Lawton, is a founder member of the Cambridge Union of Fascists and stood as a fascist candidate in Hammersmith.
Of the 79 High Court judges, 80 per cent attended Oxford or Cambridge, as did 73 per cent of the 388 Circuit judges. Many of the judges have had involvement in political activity, most have been appointed by the Tories and many have expressed open hostility to the trade union movement.
Yours fraternally
W Blackstock
Glasgow

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

Militant,
3-13 Hepscoth Road,
London E9 5HB

Redirected bills to next of kin

Dear Comrades,
Recently a relative of mine received a letter from the South Wales Electricity Board saying 'his daughter had left her own home without paying her electricity bill, and despite repeated applications the bill is still unpaid, the debt therefore, will be included in your next electricity account as arrears'.
He phoned the board and they apologised and withdrew the threat.
More recently a friend of mine who is a single parent received a similar letter relating to her sister who had left home because she could not afford her electricity bill.
Electricity is a public concern and can only be managed and controlled by the public it is there to serve.
Yours fraternally
Mike John
Gwent

Cut-backs increase suffering



Britain has one of the worst records in Europe for its care of the elderly.

Dear Comrades,
My mother, in her 70s, has been suffering with arthritis. The doctor said she should go to hospital for an X-ray. She had to phone the hospital to make the appointment, a job that used to be done by the doctor.
My mother's back got worse until she could not walk without a great deal of pain. She is on a pension and I'm unemployed, so a taxi was out.
I decided to arrange for a ramp ambulance for the following day.
The doctor's receptionist told me 48 hours notice was needed to book an ambulance, so I had to put her appointment back.
The hospital could not say what time the ambulance would collect her, so my mother sat for several hours with her coat on waiting.
On top of all this when I tried to ring the hospital to change her appointment, two of the phones near me were phonecards only, and the other coin box was showing "999 calls only".
Yours fraternally
John Gibbs
GMBATU
(personal capacity)

British Gas gaffe

Dear Comrades,
One of the ironies of the expensive advertising campaign to encourage people to buy shares in British Gas was that the TV sequences were filmed on the Isle of Skye.
There is no gas supply on the island. On such a remote place public services are expensive to supply.
If anyone in Skye was foolish enough to buy shares, it certainly won't guarantee a gas supply. If it can't be supplied as a public service, it certainly won't when private profit is at stake.
Yours fraternally
Mairi Miller
Glasgow

Rising cost of education

Dear Comrades,
This October I was fortunate enough to gain a place to study medicine in London. Fortunate because for every place there are 22 candidates, also I have parents able and willing to support me.
What has astounded me is the cost of education. Books and equipment bills running into hundreds of pounds.
Living costs are around £75 per week. Many low paid workers do not earn this much! Friends of mine on full grants do not receive anywhere near enough money to pay for their course, this has forced many to take out huge overdrafts.
The system is stacked up against people from less well off backgrounds. Is it surprising that in Britain only eight per cent of the student population is from a working class background?
Yours fraternally
Medical student
Andover

Paper-thin charges in Kennington

Dear Comrades,
On 5 December 1986 I was selling *Militant* outside Kennington tube station. I had to stop due to the arrival of two police officers who informed me I was committing the offence of selling a newspaper on London Transport property without permission.
The charge is quite incredible when you consider

that I wasn't in the tube station, but on the pavement a couple of feet from the road.
I have received a letter from a Chief Inspector of the London area British Transport Police, cautioning me, but saying I will not be prosecuted, for the offence "whilst upon the railway without permission of an authorised person, did display printed matter for the purpose of publicity."
I still don't believe that the pavement of a main road in the middle of London can be London Transport property, but comrades should be aware of the obscure measures that the state is prepared to use to harass us.
Yours fraternally
Derrick McClelland
Vauxhall Labour Party

Desperately seeking candidates

Dear Comrades,
The enclosed advert appeared in the local free rag, advertising the fact that people could become a conservative candidate in the local elections soon to be held.
Yours fraternally
J Hayes
Poole UCATT

34 ADVERTISERS, 21 NOVEMBER

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

If you are interested, and support Conservative Principles, come and talk to:-

GEOFFREY WOODYATT
Agent to Poole Conservative Association
54 Parkstone Road,
Poole BH15 2PX
Telephone 674771

We are offering the opportunity to stand to those who otherwise might not have been considered, and are looking for newcomers who are interested in their communities, have a desire to serve, and want to improve the value for money in Local Government.

Tory plans to 'process' the unemployed

Dear Comrades,
Lord Young recently announced the launch of the new government Restart scheme for the unemployed, 'the most ambitious employment initiative in Europe'.
I have just completed four months in a *Job Club*, part of the previous Action For Jobs campaign. Since August approximately 80 unemployed have enrolled at the *Job Club*. Of these, 24 have found a job, a rate of about one job a week!

This is in an area of 5,000 plus unemployed. For the first two weeks we studied job application techniques, interviewing methods, writing letters etc then we were let loose to use the club's facilities.
However, as few jobs are available two thirds leave within a couple of weeks, some even leave after a day.
On the wall is a large 'Job Log'. Each member has to record the number of job applications daily. After a few applications this tends to depress members

rather than encourage them.
As there is a huge waiting list for club membership more pressure will be applied for the club members to take the cheap labour Community Programme jobs. This new employment initiative is a money wasting Tory pre-general election drive to mask unemployment and the effects of their disastrous policies.
Yours fraternally
Gordon Cormack
Manchester

Classified ads

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 first post on Friday, the week before publication.

- Militant '87 Calendars celebrating the Russian Revolution. Limited stocks now available again, only 50p each plus 20p postage. Rush your orders in before they all go, to: Finance Dept, 3/13 Hepscoth Rd, London E9 5HB.
- Funk against Racism. Saturday 24 January 8pm to 12. Florence Nightingale pub, Waterloo. £2 waged, £1 unwaged. Organised by Lambeth *Militant* supporters.
- Hackney South YS Benefit. Saturday 24 January. Chats Palace, Brooksby's Walk (off Homerton High St) near Homerton BR station. Buses 22, 22a, 276, 236, S2, 6, 30. With the Newtown Neurotics and disco. £1.50 unwaged and £2 waged.
- Militant poster blanks (A2 size). Available from Box 5, 3/13 Hepscoth Rd, London E9 5HB.
- South East Justice For Mineworkers Campaign with sacked workers from Silentnight, Hangers and News International. Joint meeting against victimisation. Speakers: Peter Heathfield (NUM Gen. Sec.) Liz Short (printworkers) Alan Barnes (Hangers) Irene Scott (Silentnight). Friday 30 January, 7.30pm. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, near Holborn tube.
- Leeds Militant Womens Day School 24 January. 11am to 4pm. The Swarthmore Centre, Wood House Square, Leeds 1. Professional crèche provided. Details from Dianne 0532 780568. Speakers include Doreen Purvis (Vice-chair CPSA).
- Comrade from Manchester looking for flatshare in London. Phone Steve Fisher, London 251 8814.
- Chile Socialist Defence Campaign slide video: *Chile on the brink*. 20 minutes long. Analysis of recent struggles in Chile. Order from CSDC, PO Box 448, Emma St, London E2. £10 including postage. Cheques payable to "CSDC".
- *The Burden in Heavy*: video on the growth of the workers' movement in Zimbabwe, with important conclusions for all socialists. Cost of hire: £20 (£10 for YS branches/women's sections). Order from Zimbabwe Trade Unionists' Defence Campaign, PO Box 77, London E8 4TB.
- Socialist '87 Year Planners, themes: "Forward to a Labour Victory"—proceeds to Bradford YS. Or "70th Anniversary of Russian Revolution"—proceeds to FF. A3 size, 12 pages. Includes anniversary dates. £2.50 each plus 30p p&p. 10 or more £1.50 each, £1 p&p. Order from: Hamid Khayam, Flat 7, 5 Oak Ave, Bradford 8, BD8 7AQ.

A year of struggle — News International

Now for a national print strike

On the 24 January it will be exactly one year since the News International print workers were sacked after taking strike action in defence of jobs and trade union rights.

For twelve long months the printers have struggled bravely against enormous odds in a battle, the outcome of which they see as vital, not only to themselves and their families; but to the whole labour movement.

Recently I was asked why we went on strike and would we do now—knowing what we do.

Like any other group of workers we took strike action because we had no other choice. We were faced with an employer who was tearing up existing agreements and was only prepared to discuss new ones if we were prepared to give up all our basic rights prior to those discussions.

We knew that the company could dig their heels in because they had the backing of the EETPU leadership in filling our jobs with hand picked scabs.

We knew that if we did not strike we would see our work gradually transferred to Wapping to be done by scabs, with perhaps a few jobs for us, on Murdoch's terms.

We knew that we were in for the fight of our lives. Or as our branch president put it, "You have two chances; a dog's chance or no chance at all."

One thing above all others that this strike has proved is the willingness and ability of workers to struggle.

In January few printers believed we could win this battle on our own and after the experience of the miners many doubted whether we would get real support from the TUC and our own leaders.

However, at the huge Sogat meeting in Lambeth, at the NGA and AEU

By Jim Brookshaw
(FOC, Times AEU chapel)

meetings, printers were told: "You are fighting for the whole trade union movement, you have the backing of the TUC and the whole labour movement."

Assurances like these won over the doubters and ensured a massive majority for strike action. But these were hollow assurances and empty promises.

Right from the beginning the leadership sought to keep total control of the strike in their own hands in order to conduct it along 'lawful' lines. Solidarity action was ruled out at the start and when the leaders belatedly called for it the chance had passed.

Totally failed

If this strike had been genuinely conducted as a national print strike, Fleet Street would have been brought out, Bemrose and Watford could have been stopped. Ad-setting, supplement printing and provincial distribution could have been halted.

And with that kind of support from the print industry it may even have been possible to change the minds of the scab journalists. It would have given a realistic base to call on drivers, seamen, power workers, building workers and others to isolate Fortress Wapping.

The whole leadership of the TUC and the print unions have totally failed so far to develop this strike in such a way that it can be won.

Everything effective that has been done has been by



Jim Brookshaw, nearest camera, on the picket line at Wapping.

the effort and determination of the strikers alone. Their efforts have forced Murdoch to make four (or is it five) "final offers."

The weakness of the leadership of our unions is the main reason why the Sogat ballot for 58p levy was defeated and why some 1,700 strikers have given up the struggle—they could see no future in it.

The dangers is that if things continue as they are more people will give up the strike. The leadership has the responsibility to lead.

If they have done their jobs properly the demonstration on the 24 January will be tens of thousands strong and could be used as a basis to relaunch the campaign.

They should organise, even now, a national print

strike—they must see now it's the only way—and call for solidarity action from the TUC. That should include expulsion of the scabs and the EETPU.

In this way they could prevent the strike from fading away, and together with our high morale and fighting ability, win a victory in February.

Cash needed

IN THE course of the Wapping dispute the bosses have used various tactics to try and defeat the strike. One of them has been to obtain High Court injunctions—not only against the unions but also individual rank and file union members. Peter Jarvis, my NGA FOC is in such a position.

Peter was allegedly identified by an employee of TNT from a portrait photograph which appeared in the *Militant*. He was accused of acts of criminal damage.

He was arrested and detained for nine hours. After the civil action by TNT, when because of the serious nature of the criminal charges he was advised it was an inappropriate time to disclose his defence, the police notified him that no proceedings would be taken against him. He was at no time interviewed by the police.

This, however, has not stopped TNT continuing with the civil action. TNT have millions of pounds with which to pursue the case. It is part of the strategy of intimidation to stop activists effectively pursuing the dispute.

Peter, if he is to prove his innocence, needs cash. Already his legal fees are over £1,500 and if the case goes to trial this figure will at least treble. The NGA leadership have turned down his request for legal assistance although the case is the direct result of the Wapping struggle.

On behalf of the combined chapels at Eastway Offset I appeal to you and your branch to back Peter with messages of support and cash. Please make cheques payable to PJDC and send to Eastway Offset NGA Chapel, 3—13 Hepscott Rd, London E9 5HB.

By Mick Carroll
(NGA)

A year of struggle — A-One Feeds

THE FIRST anniversary of the strike at A One Feeds in Bootle has passed with five pickets remaining solid.

The dispute began on 10 January 1986 the day after fitter Bob Coalbran and mill worker Fred Thomas were sacked.

Despite having both been congratulated on several occasions for the quality of their work, after organising themselves into the TGWU the two men were told it was now unsatisfactory and were promptly sacked. The remaining workers followed them out on strike.

The workers had suffered appalling conditions. As Alex Thomas explained: "Management were forcing us to work a 72 hour-week for £102.

"We worked on unguarded machines, the fire escape was coming away from the wall, the roof leaked so that we walk in mud, the lighting was bad, and the canteen used to be a toilet—it still looks like one."

Their jobs are being done by scabs from North Yorkshire who are not only working in the horrendous conditions but are living amongst them as well. The



On the A-One picket line.

Fighting to the end of the line

company said they could no longer afford to pay their board and lodging so they live on the site. They are confined to barracks 24-hours a day and allowed home every other weekend at their own expense.

Although a relatively small family concern, A-One Feeds Supplements Ltd had a £10 million turnover in 1985. It can afford to pay director Andrew Simpson £1,800 per week. He describes the pickets fighting for their jobs "scum of the earth."

The pickets have had to face violence and intimidation throughout the strike. Last year Eric Heaton, who was visiting the picket line as part of an unemployed centre project was beaten up. Two nights later a car came out of the factory gates and drove directly at the pickets knocking over two men.

No arrests

One had a badly twisted knee; the other, a shop steward from a nearby factory, had a leg injury plus

damage to his cheekbone and right eye, necessitating six stitches. No arrests were made.

Shop steward Paul Shaw takes up the story: "An ambulance was sent to my house from Walton Hospital. They'd been told one of my kids had been seriously injured in an accident. My wife nearly fainted.

"A pesticide van was sent to Kenny's house instructed to remove a rat."

"An air rifle was fired at us one day but the police said it was only a water-pistol'.

A stalemate appears to have been reached. Tremendous solidarity action has seen the plant blacked locally. A-One have had to employ out of town cowboy outfits to carry soya into the plant.

The dispute took another twist on 8 January this year with the pickets taking the potentially historic step of going to court claiming damages against their former bosses and seeking an injunction protecting their right to picket without interference.

Paul Shaw: "We've got no illusions in the capitalist courts but something has got to be done. Their barrister said, why don't you give up. You've got as much chance of getting your jobs back as hell has of freezing over. But we haven't come this far to turn back now. We're determined to stick it out."

After twelve months on strike, what lessons have been learned? Alex Thomas: "Never trust the police"; Paul Shaw: "We've learned who our real friends are. It's been ordinary trade unionists and socialists who have backed us. They've put pressure on their union officials to get A-One blacked."

The owners have undoubtedly been inspired by Murdoch's union busting and have attempted to turn the plant into a fortress with barbed wire, guard dogs and video cameras. Their attitude is summed up by Simpson: "We gave them a company-paid barbecue every year; you think they'd appreciate that; after all they are scousers."

The court case continues on 21 and 22 January. No matter what the findings are, the pickets have resolved to fight to the end of the line.

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

Industrial Reports

Caterpillar occupation

WITHIN MINUTES of an announcement by the multinational Caterpillar Corporation of its intention to close the factory at Tannochside, Uddingston 121 employees began an occupation.

News of the plan to close the factory was alleged to have been leaked to the *Financial Times* by a mole at the corporation's Peoria headquarters in Illinois, USA. As a part of a worldwide contraction of production the Uddingston plant plus two in the United States were earmarked for closure.

The action by the shop stewards was both swift and confused. They believed that the corporation had been caught on the hop by the leak and would not have announced the closure of Uddingston until they had moved production away to other plants in either Mexico or Indonesia.

Shop steward John Gillan told me: "Caterpillar Corporation had a £6.2bn turnover last year and undoubtedly they would have tactically run-down orders and production at Tannochside until it was in danger of becoming a loss-making operation."

Ironically the Scottish plant had made profits annually for the last 23 years. At a meeting with management, shop stewards convenor John Brannan was told that the reason for the decision to close was: "The corporation has problems, you're the remedy."

The remedy for Caterpillar is to close 1.2 million square feet of production at

By Steven Jollie
(Tannochside and Viewpark Labour Party)

Uddingston and move abroad. Malcolm Rifkind, the Tory secretary of state has been embarrassed and made a fool of because in August last year he was proclaiming that: "The corner has been turned for manufacturing industry in Scotland."

Caterpillar had just announced a £62.6m investment plan and got Rifkind along to the ceremony where it provided the news to the press.

Shortest decade

This would, according to Rifkind and Caterpillar management, "Provide employment for the 1,200 workers at Tannochside well into the next decade."

"Four months must be the shortest decade in history" said John Gillan, production shop steward at the strike's headquarters inside the factory. Over-production by Caterpillar of its DC6 tractor world-wide has led to a reduction of overall capacity.

For the industrial belt of Scotland and Lanarkshire in particular, this is yet another severe blow. Gartcosh steelworks is only three miles from Tannochside and 850

men lost jobs there only nine months ago. Also within a five mile radius of Uddingston is the Black and White Whisky factory at Stepps, which is to close in March with the loss of 430 jobs and Burroughs computers, Cumbernauld, also to close in March with the loss of 300 jobs.

Cardowan colliery, General Motors and Alex Finlays have all recently closed. Lanarkshire has one of the highest rates of male unemployment in Britain and if Caterpillar closes then not only the 121 direct jobs will go but almost 800 indirect jobs.

The closure of Caterpillar would take male unemployment in this previous industrial heartland of Tannochside to around 66 per cent. Gone are the local collieries, steelworks and engineering factories.

Caterpillar shop stewards are not prepared to go without a battle. Unions represented at Caterpillar include the AEU, Apex, the EETPU and Tass. They have called for support from other workplaces. Delegations from local and national rank and file unionised plants have been called to support the occupation.

The strategy currently being followed by the shop stewards committee is to develop an industrial-led fightback. The plan is to begin production at the plant under occupation whilst calling on the trade unions locally and nationally to give political and financial

support.

All production begun under the occupation of tractors and EC6 will be painted bright pink to differentiate from the others produced prior to the occupation. The union leaders, however, fear that the company may seek an injunction to end the occupation and therefore have called on the trade union movement for indications of support from industrial workplaces around the country should this occur.

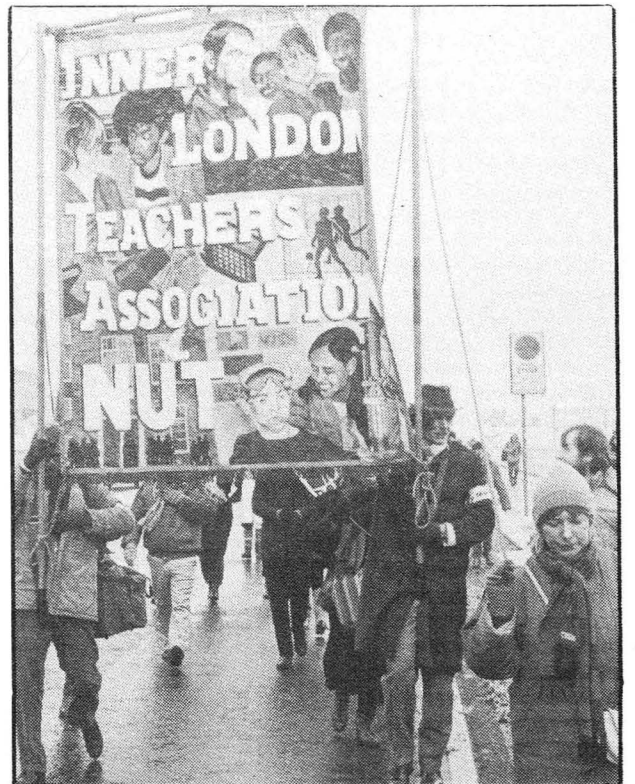
The lessons of unsuccessful battles to save Gartcosh, Linwood, etc, seem to be clear to the stewards at Caterpillar. Those campaigns failed because they relegated the workforce to casual bystanders, relying on lobbying the establishment.

John Gillan, told me: "From the beginning the dispute and its political campaign will be headed by the workforce and its whole emphasis will be towards industrial solidarity action. Support from the local community will be encouraged and welcomed of course."

Regular mass meetings will be held to keep the whole workforce aware of the latest developments. The occupation committee have sent out appeals to the whole labour and trade union movement for primarily political and financial support.

Messages of support should be sent to: Caterpillar Occupation committee, c/o Tony Stevenson, 17 Campsie View, Bargeddie, Aillieston, Glasgow.

NUT leadership attack London divisional executive



THIS SATURDAY 24 January Inner London Teachers Association members face an NUT disciplinary meeting for leading a one-day strike in London against the Tories' attack on teachers trade union rights in the 'Baker Bill'.

The mass strike of 5,000-6,000 London NUT members fully vindicated the call for action. It was an indictment of those, especially on the national executive, who argued that teachers were tired and unwilling to take action.

While attacking members prepared to defend basic trade union rights (ie. the right to negotiate pay and conditions) NUT leaders were mounting their own feeble campaign calling for pressure on the House of Lords and appeals to public opinion.

In London, at least, strike action has alerted union members and a wider public to the implications of Baker's Bill.

The whole experience under this government, however, is that weakness invites further

aggression. The union nationally must campaign around the demand unanimously endorsed at the 3,000 strong ILTA rally at County Hall last week.

The motion passed said the NUT executive should: a) call a one day national strike on 19 February in opposition to Baker's proposals; b) declare that NUT members will not cooperate with any changes in conditions of service which may be imposed by the government; c) continue to use the full resources of the union in a campaign for the salary policy agreed at NUT conference.

Union associations across the country must also demand the reinstatement of any suspended ILTA Council members; these are a political attack on the organised opposition to the executive nationally. All NUT members should attend the mass lobby at Hamilton House, Mapledon Place, London WC1 on Saturday from 9am.

For a common civil service pay claim

SINCE THE Tories came to power in 1979 civil servants have suffered massive attacks on pay, jobs and conditions. In this, the last year of the Tories' period of office, civil service workers can make up their losses.

Hopeful signs are emerging of unity on pay between unions, which alone can hold out a prospect of success in 1987.

The right wing leadership of CPSA, under pressure from the Broad Left at its November Pay Conference, was forced to seek a common claim and action with other unions.

John Ellis, newly elected CPSA general secretary, was personally against this and remains unconvinced. The Society of Civil and Public Servants has said it agrees with this approach.

Elements of a common claim could include:

- £20 per week flat rate increase;
- 15 per cent increase if this is more advantageous;
- Abolition of incremental scales;
- Minimum wage of £115 per week;
- Six weeks annual leave;
- 35-hour week.

As important as the claim is the action taken to win it. Here there is cause for concern. Members will be impatient to see pressure put on the government. A combina-

tion of the right wing and BL84 defeated the Broad Left programme of firm and immediate action. We warned that as a result nothing would happen.

The right wing leadership is talking of videos and a long campaign. More needs to be done and quickly. Action is required now, leading to preparations for an all-out strike later in the year.

Other unions are currently considering their position. The Civil Service Union is thought to favour a combined claim and programme of action. The Inland Revenue Staff Federation holds its conference on 27 January.

The right wing leadership of IRSF favour a go-it alone policy. They believe this would enable the employer to give them special treatment. This policy would be a mistake not only for them, but would damage the prospects of success for other unions.

The Broad Left within the IRSF has a crucial role to play in this year's pay campaign. It should firmly place the IRSF behind a common civil service claim—combining a flat rate for the lower paid and a percentage increase to deal with the interests of the higher paid. A divided labour force is a gift to the employer. This must not happen in 1987.

CPSA members at Caerphilly DHSS, South Wales are in the sixth week of a strike against the use of casual labour in their office.

Pressure from the strikers resulted in one casual being given a permanent job. But then a second one has been taken on with management claiming their "right to manage."

The strikers are demanding that the remaining casuals be made permanent, and that more staff be taken on to improve the service.

The Tories are planning to use thousands of casuals to implement massive cuts in benefit and to introduce changes in social security legislation and also to pave the way for computerisation.

The Caerphilly members have so far voted overwhelmingly in weekly meetings to continue the dispute and have received wide media coverage locally.

Support and cash needed. Send to: Mark Serwotka, 59 Clan Road, Aberdare, South Wales

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

THE IRSF leadership have decided to refuse press credentials to *Militant* for its Special Pay Conference. The reason given by a representative of the NEC is that the *Militant* newspaper "does not in our opinion properly represent the views of our members". The IRSF has been inundated with protest calls and hopefully the EC or the conference will reverse this decision.

Conference should follow the example of CPSA which passed a motion calling for a £20 a week flat rate and £115 a week minimum wage and for maximum unity in the civil service on pay. Reject the executive document.

Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign and LPYS members in IRSF call for support for a lobby of IRSF conference, Kensington Town Hall, Tuesday 27 January 21 noon.

By Harriet Stevens
(CPSA DHSS regional secretary, personal capacity)

The executive continue their attempts to introduce YTS to solve the problem of their own inability to lead a fight on Tory job cuts. Conference has consistently opposed YTS in any form or name.

We need to fight for an end to poverty wages and jobs cuts and call for a purge on big business tax evasion. This will provide plenty of jobs. That will not be achieved by the executive's proposals.

Delegates should follow the lead of the IRSF Broad Left. We need a united civil service pay claim and cam-

THE INLAND Revenue Staff Federation conference on pay provides an opportunity to build the left and complete the missing piece in the jigsaw of unions for a united civil service pay campaign. Issues to be discussed include YTS, merit pay, regional pay, regrading of work and IRSF-only claims.

Thatcher would love to see member set against member (merit pay), north against south (regional pay) and union versus union (self interest claims). The members must not allow the right wing leadership to play into the Tories' hands.

Third National Conference
Nalگو Broad Left
Saturday 31st January
11.00am—4.00pm
at: The Swathmore Centre
Woodhouse Square
off Hanover Way
Leeds
Further details including creche from:
Chris Hill 0632 431344

Mineworker
Journal of the National Miners' Broad Left
Stop
privatisation

THE IRSECF leadership are taking the first steps to break the road of privatisation. The 'one trade union' has been forced to accept changing the legal name of the 'National Miners' Broad Left' to 'The Miners' Broad Left' in order to be recognised as a trade union for the first time since 1924. This is a historic moment. The IRSECF leadership are taking the first steps to break the road of privatisation. The 'one trade union' has been forced to accept changing the legal name of the 'National Miners' Broad Left' to 'The Miners' Broad Left' in order to be recognised as a trade union for the first time since 1924. This is a historic moment.

Journal of the Broad Left. 20p + 20p post and packing. From 39 Gold Street, Barnsley, South Yorks. Telephone: 0226 200605.

NCU—strike round up

Fighting mood of engineers

LIVERPOOL
IT WAS standing room only in Central Hall, Liverpool as 2,000 British Telecom Engineers from Merseyside met to discuss their response to threatened suspensions. There was a unanimous vote in favour of a 24 hour stoppage if management carry out their threat.

Tony Rimmer a member of Liverpool Internal branch and also one of the 47 Liverpool Labour councillors threatened with surcharge explained what happened at the meeting: "You could see the feeling of the lads by the

magnificent turnout, the members are standing by the NCU District Council position of a 24 hour strike action if any members are suspended.

"Everyone put their hand up for action so there was not point in asking if anyone was opposed. If we do have to come out the District Committee will decide when to return. Those who will have been suspended are to go back with the rest. If they are not allowed back, then everyone will be out again. The mood is that we have got to make a stand now.

The pay deal should have been settled last July. We are now prepared to take action

to achieve it. We will be holding future mass meetings during the week, and as long as it is not on Wednesday when Everton will be playing, there will be the same mass turnout."

Morale

Geoff Ward, also from Liverpool Internal confirmed the mood: "Morale has been very low due to management, for some time, but now it is at an all time low. We see the double standards of British Telecom management. At the moment they are insisting on us working overtime. But in the past they have refused to

allow us to work overtime because, they say, of budget exhaustion, leaving hundreds of people without phones."

Roy, from Widnes, was equally bitter towards British Telecom: "You've got to stand up now, a one day strike is necessary, otherwise they will pour everything on us. They've got a 40-50 per cent productivity rise out of us in 1986 and you can only push out so much. Safety factors are going. They are promising the customer one thing, and not doing it in practice."

Colin, Pat, Brian and Dave from Liverpool External branch: "We are strong

and we are determined, if British Telecom don't back down there will be a walkout. Our local branch is doing an excellent job, but the NEC is rubbish. They don't know the feeling of the men. We've had eight months waiting for the deal and we've not had a pay rise for 18 months.

"We don't want to take action but we are forced into it. It's criminal the profits British Telecom have made. We want someone like Derek (Hatton), he'd get us the pay rise.

By Mick Whale

COVENTRY
THERE WAS a determined mood at the meeting of 700 in Coventry. There was an overwhelming vote to stay out until suspended engineers were reinstated. "It's an attack on conditions that we are fighting" said one worker.

Management have brought in mattresses, prepared for a 'Bunker-style' operation. So are the pickets: "We're prepared for a long fight" said workers on a well-manned picket line

By Paul Sharry

BERKSHIRE

98 per cent of engineers here have been sent home without pay for refusing to sign the management undertaking to work 'normally'. In Reading alone some 50 to 100 members have joined the union in the last few days.

By Ben Rayner, Reading NCU

MANSFIELD

Pickets said: "They thought we were soft because of the UDM but the men are solid." They wanted the executive to call London out.

SOUTH WALES

Cardiff, Newport, Pontypridd and Abergavenny branches had fifty people suspended on Monday morning after refusing to work overtime on Saturday. The result was a mass walk out.

The District Council, representing nine branches met on Tuesday and voted for a 24-hour strike on Wednesday and for the national executive to call a national 24-hour strike in support of the suspended members.

The members are instructed to report for work on Thursday but to refuse to sign the undertaking management are asking for.

By Phil Lloyd (NCU)

BRADFORD

A solid one day strike was held today (Tuesday). If people are suspended tomorrow there will be an all-out strike.

Pickets had a lot of questions for the national executive: Why hasn't the Clerical section been called out? Why haven't the City of London been called out by the national executive?

As one picket said "We'd be the most popular people in the country if we closed the City of London". Already parallels are being drawn with the miners' strike and the need to organise wives' support committees and solidarity.

By Keith Narey

MANCHESTER

There was 100 per cent support for 80 members suspended on Monday. In Manchester Central the Clerical Group members have



LONDON

INITIALLY BT management tried to avoid provoking strike action in London despite suspending workers in the regions.

On Friday, however, local management of Met West branch threatened suspensions. The branch responded by beating them to the

punch with an immediate walk out.

Further suspensions were threatened in various London districts including Westminster and by Tuesday it looks as though management decided to test the water by a more provocative line.

In response to this and

pressure from the membership outside London for action in the capital where it would have most effect the national executive were forced to call a 24-hour strike in London for Wednesday.

There are 40,000 members in London with over forty engineering branches and the overwhelming majority are

out. Clerical members have been refusing to cross the picket lines in droves, with many branches supporting the engineers. The response of management to the London action may well be decisive to the outcome of the dispute.

By Steve Jones, NCU

picket line brazier was replaced by a barbecue set with charcoal. Lower management brought out tea and local people delivered milk.

BLACK COUNTRY

3,000 NCU members are on strike here. Management had the shock of their lives when all the NCU members in two Black Country branches and the Worcestershire branch voted for all-out strike after 78 members were suspended.

The anger was shown in the vote of 1,000 to 12 in favour of striking at a mass meeting on Sunday. It was followed up with a mass picket of Telecom House in Wolverhampton on Monday.

George, from Kidderminster, told me that management: "Even demanded the Worcester depot worked Saturday overtime when it has never been required since it opened three and a half years ago.

Frank from Walsall said: "They thought the midlands was the soft part of the union but they have had a shock. I've never seen the blokes so angry. Those who have been anti-union in the past are now solid. There are blokes out today who have never had a militant thought in their lives.

Asked about the effects of privatisation he said: "Nearly all the blokes have got shares but it ain't made a blind bit of difference. Some had resigned from the union or joined the STE, but they have now rejoined the NCU".

Later on the strikers were addressed by a branch officer who had just come from a meeting with the STE committee. He said that

the STE were considering coming out also.

In response to a question about the attitude of the NCU national executive committee's calls for only four hour or twenty four hour strikes the branch secretary said: "Their position is outdated, we've gone beyond that here because of the change in circumstances. They will have to catch up.

By Dianne Simcox

POTTERIES

Last Friday 32 were suspended in Stoke. On Monday there was 100 per cent support for the strike along with 80-90 per cent from the Clerical members. Some STE members joined the pickets.

There was immediate solidarity action in Crewe even before local management could suspend anybody. Eight to nine hundred attended the Potteries engineering branch on Monday night.

Strike action was taken for granted but there were questions about tactics and lots of criticism of the lack of lead from general secretary Golding—in his own backyard, with wife Lynne now taking his place as MP in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Nobody will sign the undertaking so we will be out today and tomorrow (Tuesday and Wednesday) but there is a lack of clarity about the next step. The secretary has been phoning headquarters but been given no guidance.

On the picket line a Fray Bentos wagon turned back, the driver saying: "It's just like Liverpool here".

By Maggie McQuillan (NCU)

In Brief

THE METAL Mechanics conference marks the end of the first year of amalgamation with Tass. It has been a year of mixed fortunes.

The Borderway dispute ended with the firm going into liquidation. Nevertheless the company failed to break the solidarity of the strikers. The first Tass youth conference was held successfully, an inheritance from the Metal Mechanics.

1987 will be a crucial year in two ways. There is the proposed merger with Astms. It has come under fire from both the Tories and Alliance but the membership will judge on fact not fiction, and the facts are that all the members will benefit from a more powerful union organising from shop floor to middle management. Secondly there are the harmonisation proposals within Tass which the Metal Mechanics must play a positive role in.

By Mick Cotter (Metal Mechanics)

The shop workers' union Usdaw starts elections on 26 January for sixteen executive council seats and eight divisional councils electing ten members each.

The Usdaw Broad Left is challenging for most of the EC seats and is standing Jeff Price, secretary of the Newcastle branch, for president.

The Broad Left is fighting for a national campaign involving the whole membership to achieve a national minimum wage of £120 for a 35 hour week.

By George Williamson (USDW)

WHEN FOUR engineering workers were sacked at the Senior Coleman factory in Sale, Manchester, a mass meeting was held and the workers voted to strike immediately by 110 to 2 in a secret ballot.

Management wanted a daily work timetable instead of weekly but the stewards had refused, considering an attempt to impose complete control on the shop. The men refused to fill in the timesheets and four were arbitrarily sacked.

The factory was unionised four years ago in response to twelve sackings. It was part of the Coleman group but Segl took it over in July and tried to railroad the men into individually signing a new agreement.

Messages of support and donations to: 35 Norman Rd, Sale, Cheshire. Tel. 061 998 0032.

By Gordon Cormac

TALBOT CAR workers at Ryton, Coventry, have walked out three times in their dispute over bonuses.

The local paper carried a report about Talbot workers being the lowest paid in the car industry. Management phoned the paper complaining about the article. The reporters asked which ones pay less and management admitted they did not know.

The bonuses are meant to take the wages up to something decent, but recently they have only been one per cent, leaving some men with a take home pay of £96.

Management are now trying to break the overtime ban by provoking a strike. They have asked men to do overtime who never do it and suspended them for refusing. The union leaders have recommended an end to the overtime ban but the rank and file have voted to carry on.

Militant

A year of struggle — p13
 German elections — p10
 Guinness scandal — p5

Wapping pickets demand national strike

THE FIGHT for their jobs by the sacked News International workers is a year old. Saturday's march to Murdoch's fortress at Wapping will demonstrate their determination to keep up this struggle for basic trade union rights.

With the right strategy and flexible tactics by the union leaders, this fight can be won. But the print union leaders have laid no real plans for the coming battles. Brenda Dean, SOGAT's general secretary, has only given half-hearted support to extending and intensifying the action. SOGAT has now lost the ballot for a special levy, but this defeat must not be used by the SOGAT NEC to draw back further from the dispute.

Extra profit

The consequences for the print unions of a defeat would be very serious. Any short-term financial gain will be massively outweighed by the long term effects on union organisation and the closed shop.

The press barons, owners of the national and local papers, who claimed they were shackled by the unions, will introduce more new technology as and when they want. Any agreements presently negotiated will be torn up and thrown to the winds.

Murdoch, it seems is well pleased with his extra profits from moving to Wapping.

By Peter Jarvis
 (NGA, in personal capacity)

He only made one million pounds per week before the strike; now that has doubled.

The labour movement needs to take up the question of the ownership of the press. To campaign that a foreigner should not own papers in this country is a mistake. Even if this were successful, Murdoch would be replaced by another pro-Thatcher, pro-bosses employer.

No one individual or company should be able to wield such power by their control of the newspapers.

The press should be nationalised, placed under workers' control and management, then used for the benefit of society as a whole.

All parties, union and other organisations should be allocated the facilities to produce the material on the basis of their support in society.

Saturday's march must rally behind the demand to step up the campaign. National action throughout the



On march to Wapping in February last year.

industry must be mobilised to force Murdoch to back down.

- ★ For a national print strike.
- ★ Genuine trade union recognition in Wapping.
- ★ Expel the EETPU from the TUC.
- ★ Nationalisation of the press, under democratic workers' control and management.

National march to Wapping Sat 24 Jan Assemble 3.15 behind Temple Underground station.

All supporters urged to attend with banners.

Job victory

HULL CITY Council have been forced to back down from their decision to sack shop steward, and *Militant* supporter, Alan Shadforth. He was offered re-employment after a review panel meeting last Friday.

This has outraged the local Tory *Hull Daily Mail*: "This decision", complained its editorial, "may be regarded as a pragmatic response to what had been described as poor industrial relations with council staff. On the other hand it could be seen as total capitulation to union and political pressures. Either way it is an extraordinary state of affairs."

The decision follows a national campaign throughout the trade union movement. It is hoped that it represents a commitment by the council to concentrate on fighting the Tories and their privatisation plans, rather than attacking their own workforce.

By a Militant reporter

'Treated like slaves'

BTR HAVE withdrawn their bid for Pilkington's. But the interests of the workers of the two firms have been irrelevant to both these big multinationals. They are only interested in the money which can be made from these massive takeovers, as the Guinness episode has revealed (See page 5).

"Workers don't enter the equation" says Bill Geoghegan union convenor at Triplex, Birmingham, part of Pilkington's: "We have felt like slaves being auctioned to the highest bidder."

"BTR have a reputation as job cutters. They set targets for factories and close them if they fail. At Hanger's, which they own, BTR locked out workers when they objected to changed working conditions."

BTR make big profits from South Africa where they pay new workers £80 a month. In the strike at BTR Sarmcol they called in the police to shoot protestors, killing one child. But Pilkington's too have interests in South Africa and their behaviour in Britain is hardly better than BTR's.

"When the takeover was first mentioned" said Bill Geoghegan "they boasted on TV that they were as efficient as BTR—they had sacked 7,000 workers. Trade unionists are unlikely to get any thanks from Pilkington's now the deal had been dropped. Most shares in Pilkington's are owned by five London insurance firms. If the price was right they'd have sold."

By Roger Shives

GCHQ MARCH AND RALLY CHELTENHAM 24 JANUARY 1987
 Assemble from 12noon at Pittville Park
 March starts 1pm. Rally at 2pm
 in Montpellier Gardens.

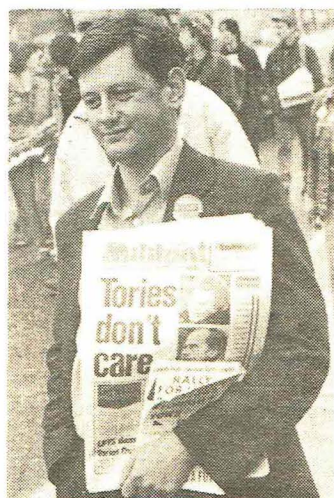
Support the GCHQ trade unionists — help restore their BASIC RIGHTS

Organised by the Trades Union Congress and the Council of Civil Service Unions, TUC/CCSU

Become a **Militant** supporter

Name
 Address

Send to
 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB



Subscribe

BRITAIN & IRELAND	EUROPE (by air)	REST OF WORLD (by air)
13 issues . £5.50		
26 issues £11.00	26 issues £15.00	26 issues £18.00
52 issues £22.00	52 issues £30.00	52 issues £36.00

Name
 Address

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

Donate

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

Sell

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