

# Militant

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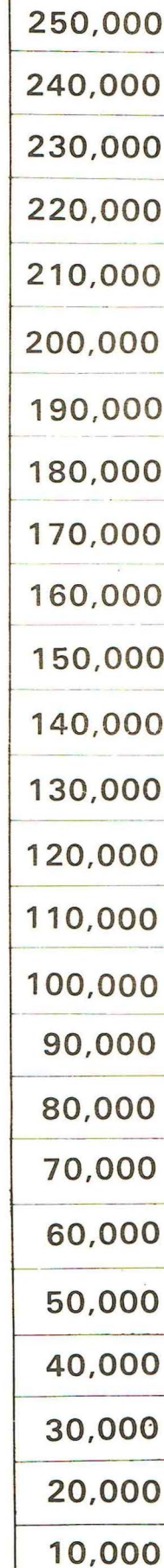
# BT strike

# Switch off big business



## Militant Fighting Fund

£250,000



**THE STRIKE** by British Telecom workers is a fight for basic union rights and for conditions trade unionists have fought long and hard for. The workers are sure they will win, particularly if they can hit the fat profits of the City of London.

"The district management", said Mick Crowley, NCU branch chair London City branch, "tell the media of the dispute's effect on residential customers but they are doing nothing to protect their interests."

"They are too busy boarding up and erecting steel mesh around Moorgate exchange which serves the Stock Exchange and the Bank of England. Nonetheless the service is getting worse every day."

An unemployed youth has turned down a 3-day job at Holborn Viaduct exchange to scab during the clerical strike. It was offered by Echo recruitment agency.

### Profits at risk

Management's panic shows how vulnerable the City is. Most City business customers go through Moorgate. Millions would be lost in seconds if the plugs were pulled. You can almost hear the screams in the dealing rooms of the trading houses which have mushroomed since the Big Bang if their touch sensitive screens could not be used.

If the Tories can't stop the insider dealers, BT strikers can! Telecom workers in the City have offered emergency cover for OAPs and people at risk. The bosses

By Dave Gorton  
(NCU Broad Left National Committee)

refuse; their idea of emergency is profit at risk.

City branch members point out that their productivity rose by 35 per cent in the first nine months of 1986. BT are making the best profits in Europe, £200 millions chiselled out of the flexibility workers have already delivered. Now BT seem to want telecom employees to "flex" themselves out of wages, conditions and jobs.

There must be an all-out strike by engineers, clerical staff and lower management. STE members must push to join the strike.

If the NCU nationally involve all their members in the struggle and concentrate their main attack on big business they can gain tremendous solidarity.

All active trade unionists and Labour Party members must support the strike. The Commons motion moved by Terry Fields in support of the NCU must be Labour's policy. For an end to all victimisation. For the full 10 per cent with no strings. Renationalise BT under workers' control and management.



Vote for strike at mass meeting of Telecom workers in London.

TWO ANONYMOUS donations this week show how much our supporters are prepared to give up to build Marxist ideas in Britain. A couple in Newcastle donated £425 and a reader in Poole £500. Paula Silcox from Bromley gave £100. Send your donation of a week's income or more and help us reach the £250,000 target.



# Militant

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## Back workers in struggle

THE LABOUR Party leadership must unequivocally give its full backing to all those workers now in struggle. The tensions below the surface of British society are erupting dramatically into the open, with the police riot at Wapping, the occupation of Caterpillar and the national strike by Telecom engineers. There are also many bitter, smaller disputes, ignored by the press. Labour councils face bankruptcy or crippling cuts in jobs and services as they try to set a budget. The Liverpool city councillors who took on the government are appealing to the House of Lords against their disqualification and surcharge by the District Auditor.

Events are vindicating *Militant's* assessment that society is passing through a turbulent period. There can be no stability or calm within crisis-ridden capitalist Britain. The idea that workers are cowed and apathetic after eight years of the Tories is being refuted at the Telecom depots and on the streets of Wapping. The sacked print workers and the NCU members cannot wait until after the election to begin their struggle. Murdoch and the BT management have left them no alternative but to take action now.

The bosses are being spurred on by the Tories and the press who believe there are votes to be won from scenes of industrial conflict—'Rampage of Terror' and 'Firebomb Riot Mob' were two of the headlines the day after the police ran amok into Saturday's demonstration. Wild allegations of 'sabotage' have been flung at the Telecom engineers.

In collusion with the employers, the state apparatus is being mobilised to take on trade unionism, as at Wapping and GCHQ. Home Secretary Hurd, is using the pretext of Wapping to bring forward the implementation of the Public Order Act, giving the police even wider powers to impose restrictions on demonstrations.

This challenge to the labour movement puts the leadership on the spot. It is a concerted attack on the most basic rights of the workers they are elected to represent. As the country becomes more polarised, there is no room in the middle. Labour cannot be neutral in battles between workers and the capitalist state.

But the response from both the Shadow Cabinet and the TUC general council has been pitiful. They seem mesmerised by the idea that strikes lose votes for Labour. The TUC has sat back with folded arms over the EETPU's strike-breaking role at Wapping. The Labour Party has joined in the attack on the Liverpool councillors. Rather than exposing the brutality of the police against the printers, Gerald Kaufman and Brenda Dean echo Tory propaganda about "outside elements" and "leeches" to describe those supporting the print workers' struggle.

They should be mobilising for larger demonstrations of all trade unionists, to defend the right to picket and against the threat from the forces of the state. Workers look to the Labour Party to defend job security and decent wages. If, however, they see *even before the election* that the party leaders are not supporting those who are fighting, how are they going to be inspired with confidence that a Labour government will act in their interests after it?

They will certainly not be encouraged to vote Labour by Neil Kinnock's support for the Tories in trying to suppress the Zircon scandal. They will be positively deterred by Roy Hattersley's pledge to reverse any Tory tax cuts.

Instead of constantly seeking to re-assure the Tories and big business that they are equally opposed to what the Tory press dub "loony left" councils and "extremists" and just as vigilant over national security, the Labour leaders must urgently reassure workers that Labour is *their* party and will act in their interests.

They must pledge the repeal of the Public Order and Employment Acts to restore workers' rights. All funds stolen by the capitalist courts from the miners and print unions must be refunded. There must be a firm commitment to a 35-hour week without loss of pay and a £120 a week minimum wage. The spending cuts imposed on local councils must be restored and all penalties on Liverpool and Lambeth councillors removed. British Telecom and all other privatised firms have to be taken back and placed under democratic workers' control and management. All firms making workers unemployed, like Caterpillar and News International, should be nationalised.

But first of all, if they are to rouse workers to turn out and vote Labour, they must demonstrate *now* that they are not neutral in the battles opening up, but stand solidly behind the workers in struggle.

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Liverpool Labour MPs, city councillors and their families at press conference in House of Commons.

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

## 'Finest council Liverpool has ever had' - Eric Heffer

**47 LIVERPOOL councillors, their families and hundreds of supporters came to London on Monday 26 January to take their case against disqualification and surcharge to the final court of appeal, the House of Lords.**

An impromptu meeting was held outside Euston station. Hundreds of passers by, and members of the NCU on their way to a mass meeting, stopped to hear speeches from Terry Fields MP and Lambeth and Liverpool councillors.

The appeal in the House of Lords is likely to last for five to eight days, with the

judgement possibly being reserved for some time.

The commitment of the Liverpool councillors was applauded throughout the day. At meeting organised by the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, Eric Heffer said that the present Labour council was the finest that Liverpool had ever had. Other MPs who gave their

support were Tony Benn, Joan Maynard, Terry Fields, Dave Nellist, Bob Clay and, significantly, also Dale Campbell-Savours, who is not a member of the Campaign Group.

He made it clear that he was not a left winger, nor did he support Militant but emphasised that he supported the courageous stand of Liverpool City Council. They were doing the right thing in carrying out Labour policy. Thatcher and the Tories would have been shaken more if other coun-

cils were doing what Liverpool had done.

The Liverpool councillors have so far raised £225,000 in costs to pay off a legal bill that will be in excess of £600,000. Although some of the councillors have now been granted emergency legal aid, it is only for the last stage of the proceedings and massive amounts of money still need to be raised to assist the the councillors' action.

By Ken Smith

## Secret spy satellite scandal

THE ROW over the Zircon spy satellite has highlighted the way the state machine operates independently of scrutiny by parliament. In contravention of an agreement that any such project worth over £250 million would be reported to MPs, £500 million of tax-payers' money is being spent on an operation which has not been referred to the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee.

Duncan Campbell, in the *New Statesman* has described the lengths the military and civil service bureaucracies have gone to keep secret the launching of a satellite over Russia. They have published a phoney cover story about the use of a communications satellite. They were even forced to use correcting fluid to alter a press release about this when they realised that they had given away the position where the real satellite was going to be.

The BBC was pressurised into banning a programme about Zircon. MPs were banned from seeing it in the Commons when the room which had been booked was 'picketed' by staff of the Sergeant at Arms. The *New Statesman* offices and Campbell's home have been raided by the Special Branch.

Yet exact information about satellites has been easily available. "Everybody knows where everybody's satellite is" Campbell was told by Sir Frank Cooper, a former top Defence Department civil servant: "Lists are published in the defence journals of who's launched what, where, what its orbit is... I think you can pro-

By Pat Craven

bably do this using school children in Milton Keynes these days."

It is not the Russian bureaucracy, nor any other potential 'enemy' power from which the British ruling class is hiding this project. It is British workers who will see yet another waste of money on what Sir Frank Cooper describes as "a matter of macho politics"... "The satellite would give us" he says, "a standing in our own relations particularly with the United States and our European allies."

Prestige

In the same way that the British ruling class for forty years has maintained an 'independent' nuclear deterrent of negligible military significance, but enormous cost (see centre pages), half a billion pounds is being squandered on a project designed just for prestige.

It is to hide its lack of any credible argument in favour of such white elephants as Zircon that the Tories cower behind the Official Secrets Act to dodge public debate.

A series of notorious show-trials have been staged to try to plug the leaks from the civil service and the armed forces. The 'ABC case' in 1978 concerned a very similar story about military signals intelligence and the very same reporter, Duncan Campbell.

Then it was a Labour government which prosecuted Campbell. The 1985 party conference however, voted for the replacement of the Official Secrets Act with a Freedom of Information Act. Yet in this case the Labour leaders have fully supported the government's attempts to suppress the revelations about Zircon. Labour MPs are reported to have "besieged" the office of Neil Kinnock's private secretary to express "bewilderment and irritation" about his decision to support the government's demand for secrecy.

In the Peter Wright case too, the Labour leaders backed the government's bid to ban publication of his book about MI5, though Kinnock was still attacked by the Tories for speaking to Wright's lawyer. He is now making gestures to reassure the ruling class that their secrets are safe with him. No more humiliating admission can have been made by any Labour leader than that "if the government says this is a serious matter of national security, I must take their word for it until such time as that claim is substantiated or otherwise."

This flies in the face of Kinnock's commitment to restore trade union rights to GCHQ workers in Cheltenham. He told them he condemned "a government which has shown again and again in its handling of defence and security issues that it confuses national interest with party advantage."

Demagogy

The Tories always cloak their most damaging attacks on workers' rights behind demagogy about 'national security'. Rather than echo the Tories, it is for Labour to explode such myths and tell the workers that it is the security of her class that Thatcher is protecting. Labour has no interest in defending the secrets of the capitalist state. It must always tell the workers the truth and draw the veil from the secret plans of the civil service, military, police and intelligence services.

The grovelling capitulation to pressure from the Tories over Zircon is a warning of how vulnerable the Labour leaders will be to such pressure when they are the government. The movement must flood the party headquarters with protests. The ranks must demand a renewal of the pledge to repeal the Official Secrets Act and defend the right to expose and denounce the secret schemes of the ruling class.



# Wapping—a year on

**URGENT ACTION** is needed to support the printers at Wapping.

The print unions' national bodies should meet jointly to plan a united strategy. First they must prepare for wider solidarity action.

Emergency meetings of the strikers must be called to explain how to step up the dispute. Strikers should be sent out to prepare the printers and the labour movement for a national print strike.

The national union resources, certainly the personnel, must be used to their full to build for the action.

Fleet Street must show the way with an immediate 24 hour stoppage. They have directly the most to lose. If Murdoch wins then the other press barons will tighten the reins and the agreements that exist today will be torn up.

Those union members that are connected in any way with Murdoch's publishing empire should be

## How the strike can be won

brought together. Co-ordinated action by these unions will attack Murdoch's confidence. The collective strength of our movement is

the only way to defeat these attacks.

The TUC General Council, who have abandoned the print workers

**LAST SATURDAY was not the first time riot police have attacked pickets at Wapping, but it was the most brutal.**

**The labour movement must be mobilised to defend workers' rights to picket and demonstrate. There must be a labour movement inquiry into the uncontrolled police action.**

**At the annual meeting of the London Region NGA last November, Militant supporter Mick Carroll, moved a motion calling for a labour movement inquiry into police activities at Wapping. The events on Saturday more than ever re-inforce this demand.**

and allowed the scab union, the EETPU, who conspired with News International at Wapping, to escape scot-free.

The General Council, which will have met by the time this paper is printed, must discuss ways now to give concrete aid to win this dispute.

If they continue to do nothing then the striking printers must appeal over their heads, and go to union branches and the major workplaces to explain the issues involved in this dispute.

Then, with the print workers taking national action, solidarity action can be demanded from others in the labour movement.

The time to act is now. Delay will be fatal. The strike can be won but the action needs to be stepped up now.

By Peter Jarvis

(London region NGA)

## NUJ ranks need print unity

**THROUGHOUT THE dispute, the NUJ leadership has been hesitant about taking disciplinary action against the Wapping chapels, for repeatedly crossing the picket lines.**

Besides their fear of invoking the government's trade union laws, they fear ostracising the 'Fleet Street' big boys in the union.

Their attitude seems to be that the highly paid 'Fleet Street' NUJ members—unlike their impoverished provincial press counterparts—make up the bulk of finances for the unions, so tread carefully.

They are terrified of mass resignations by the NUJ at Wapping. They want the Wapping chapels to stay intact, keep the money coming in and hope for better days.

But the NUJ leaders also faced the rising anger of the NUJ's rank and file over the ridiculous situation of trade unionists working normally as though the sacking of 5,000 workers had little to do with them.

So they fined just a section of the Wapping chapels, on the lame excuse that those fined were the only ones named in complaints made by fellow NUJ members. Of course, the Wapping hacks are refusing to pay the fines anyway and may even split away and form a company union.

It must be made clear to those prepared to take the Murdoch shilling that they are out of the union and entering a life sentence behind the Wapping wire, never to work in any other unionised newsroom again.

Yes, this would be a loss to the NUJ, but our higher paid members must start learning that being a trade unionist is not just about paying subs, but brings with it principles, discipline and a duty to the movement.

Such action even this late in the day would be an act of good faith to Sogat and the NGA and a basis for reopening talks on print unity and amalgamation. Wapping is just the start of a process that is taking place throughout the rest of the industry, with perhaps the *Guardian* and the *Mirror* next in line.

These talks floundered in the past as the print leaders—perhaps worried about what position and privilege they would maintain in a new 'super union'—failed to take it up seriously with the membership.

Some even pandered to members' prejudices, including some left wing leaders in the NUJ, who hinted that new technology would make the NUJ the 'print union of the future'. Wapping has shown otherwise—VDUs and direct input do not automatically bring new power if they are accompanied with the breaking of chapel organisation and union strength.

Amalgamation is back on the agenda. The NUJ leaders even passed a resolution at the end of last year—unanimously—calling for a conference of the print unions to work out a collective strategy to defend jobs and union power. However, after putting up their hands to support the motion, they have promptly sat on them.

Moves for unity will come from below, from activists in the 'frontline' who consequently have a sense of urgency. A small step in that direction will hopefully begin this Saturday with a meeting called by the NUJ Broad Left, to which activists in SOGAT and the NGA are invited.

By Bob Wade

(Sec. NUJ Broad Left.)

## 'The police were out of control'

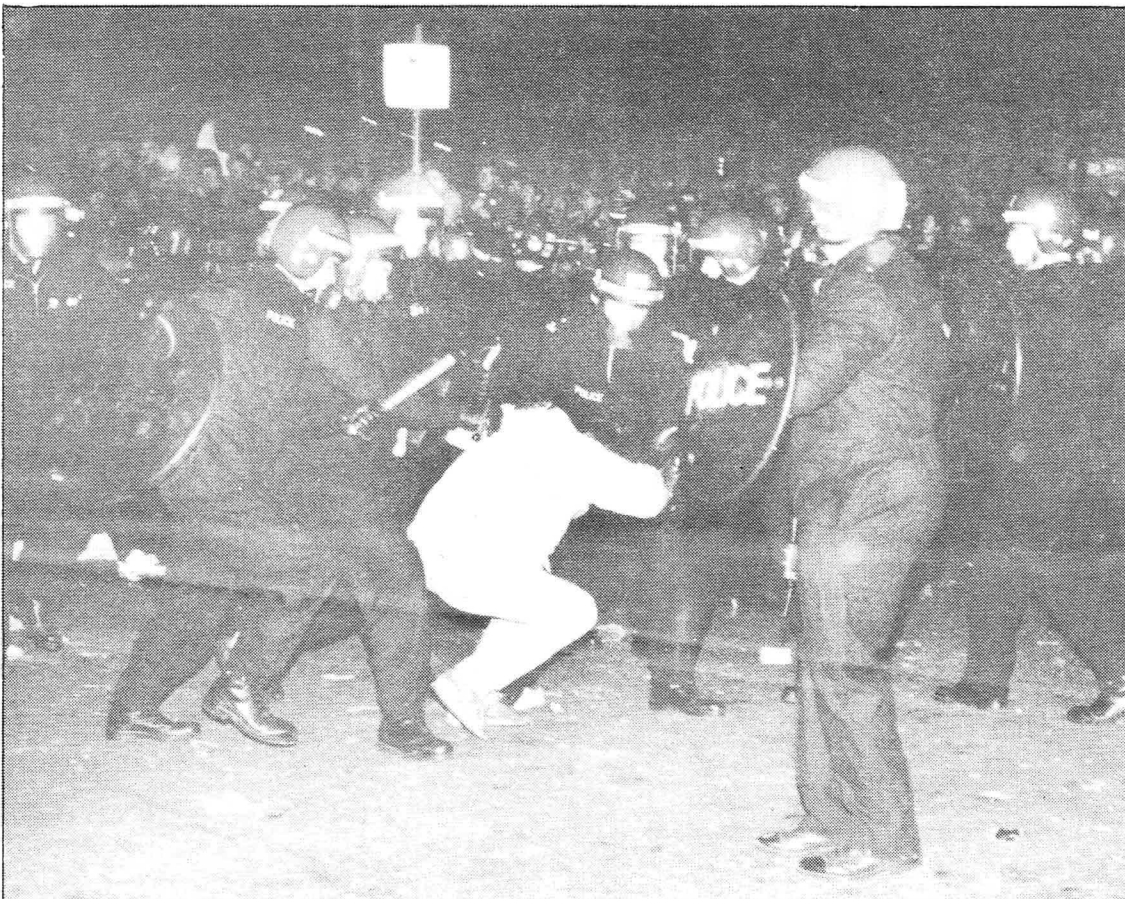
### Eye witness accounts

**AT ABOUT 10.30 I went into a pub near the plant. A few minutes later people began rushing into the pub until it was full up. The landlady locked the doors and people were cleared away from the windows. I managed to get to a window and look outside. The street was full of riot police who were beating demonstrators who couldn't get inside.**

I was standing in the road with another comrade when about twenty horses charged the demonstrators. The comrade was chased into a nearby pub, and after a few minutes a policeman in riot gear came in and chased him round the pub, hitting him on the head with his truncheon. He would have been hospitalised, but some miners came to his rescue and ejected the officer from the pub.

Helen Watson, Bedford LPYS

I WAS standing in front of the main gate, on the pavement outside the railings. The area was clear and I was taking pictures. The police charged, but as I



Six riot police beat a demonstrator.

Photo: Howard Jones

tried to move back behind the railings I was pushed down by riot police. They began kicking me in the legs and back, about four of them, while at the same time shouting at me to get up. Earlier I had been hit on the head by a brick which bounced off a police riot shield. The ambulance had bandaged my head but that didn't stop the police hitting me.

Howard Jones, Lewisham Labour Party.

**'It was an experience that I shall never forget'**

**MOUNTED POLICE galloped at breakneck speed down the main street for a quarter of a mile, knocking people over as they went. Riot police followed behind, lashing out at every one, including those already knocked over. We stopped looking round and just ran like hell - we could hear the sound of the horses hooves getting louder.**

The police charged at

people right onto the green and into the flats. One bloke was laid out on the green, his back broken by beatings from the police.

It was an experience that I and the other comrades will never forget. The police were well prepared, and most were smiling and enjoying what they were doing.

Chris Fernandez, Derby N Labour Party

THINGS DIED down, but then police began attacking the demonstration again. This time they went barmy - they went all out to clear the Wapping Highway attacking the green where the pickets usually stand opposite the main gate. They didn't seem concerned about arresting anybody.

I was on the corner with some friends. The police laid into the crowd. I saw a friend come out of the crowd - I think she had been hit or squashed in the crush. As people came out into the road mounted police charged down on them. One bloke was run over. Some of the police were out of control, just beating the hell out of

anyone. They cleared the Highway, and a young student was arrested for no reason. During the attacks the pickets defended themselves, tearing up paving stones and railings for weapons. It was like a war.

In the middle of all this some-one had got a pigs head and stuck it on the railings with a copper's helmet on it.

Tim White, TGWU

**THERE WAS a good atmosphere when the march arrived. We were listening to the speakers and there was a large contingent of riot police, although no-one was expecting any trouble.**

The police then attacked the demonstrators and a running battle ensued. With nowhere to run to, many were injured not being able to get out of the way. Some of the printers' wives and children who saw this for the first time were talking disgustedly of police thugs and nazis in uniform, and swore that they would tell every one they knew of what they had witnessed.

Dave Conway, SOGAT '82.





Maria Luisa Prada (14) is carried to safety after being shot and wounded by police in Madrid.

# Spanish youth defy police

**THE INSPIRING struggle of the Spanish school students again brought secondary education to a close, this time for four days, 20-23 January. Under the leadership of the School Students' Union, this was the third mass mobilisation in six weeks. But the shooting by the police of a young female student has brought the movement to a turning point. Our Spanish correspondent reports.**

Madrid: 27 January

As on previous occasions the response to the strike call was magnificent. According to official union sources, no fewer than two and half million students were involved.

The demonstrations of the 23rd were massive all over Spain, particularly in Madrid, where 200,000 students participated on the demonstration called by the School Students' Union.

The impressive organisation of the Madrid demonstration was thanks exclusively to the activities of the union under the leadership of the Marxist tendency organised around the paper *Nuevo Claridad*. They organised a defence force of 2,000 youth in order to ward off any possible fascist attacks.

The main bulk of the demonstration was proceeded by no fewer than five lines of defence, all armed with cudgels to defend the union and the demonstration.

The organisers had been forewarned of a counter-demonstration of fascist groups intending to provoke violence and break up the demonstration.

In the event these jackals were too terrified to attack the demonstration itself. But they presented themselves, 30 minutes before the demonstration was due to arrive, outside the ministry of education. They attacked the riot police with stones, iron bars and molotov cocktails. It is clear the police were unprepared for what subsequently happened, although it is not beyond suspicion that sections of them were in collusion with the fascist groups in order to destroy the demonstration.

As the demonstration approached it was forewarned by its information service of the fascist provocateurs around the ministry. The demonstration was therefore ordered to halt. A group of approximately 100 stewards, armed with staves, were sent ahead with orders to clear the fascists out of the way.

The police were more than sufficiently equipped to repel the aggression of these fascist provocateurs. They were not only armed but had mounted police, water cannon and armoured buses.

But they made no serious effort to attack the fascists, but waited until the advance guard of the demonstration arrived before wading in. Their indiscriminate attack did not affect the fascists, who immediately fled, but was directed in the main against the demonstrators themselves. This was the moment of truth. Had the demonstration broken up at this point, a bloody massacre could have ensued with many people injured or even killed.

The demonstration held firm. The iron ring stood its ground. Representatives were sent to discuss with the police who eventually permitted the main bulk of the demonstration to advance. Nevertheless the situation remained tense to the point that the police at a certain moment began to attack once again the main demonstrators, leading to bloody clashes. As a result of this some 17 demonstrators were injured and 14 policemen.

Most serious of all a young girl of 14 years of age received serious bullet wounds, as a result of the police opening fire against unarmed demonstrators.

The girl was from a working class family. Her father and sister had suffered from the cooking-oil poisoning a few years ago, in which thousands died or were injured. Her father remarked bitterly that he supported his daughter, he supported the right to demonstrate and the strike. "They have poisoned one of my daughters, and now they have nearly killed the other one" he said.

Immediately the school students' union discovered what had happened, they called a further one day strike for Monday 26, which again received massive support throughout Spain.

The general secretary of the largest union organisation, the Workers' Commissions, Marcelino Camacho, phoned the school students' union and said that if this student had been killed, they would have called a 24 hour general strike.

He also pledged that if the School Students' Union called for further action in a week's time, the Workers' Commissions would be prepared to call a general strike, at least of those industries faced with 're-

conversion'— those industries threatened with mass closures like steel, coal etc.

The possibility of a growing together of the school students' strike and the workers' movement is undoubtedly implicit in the situation.

There is a ferment among the teachers who are also on strike. The leader of the UGT socialist union federation, Nicholas Redondo, under the pressure of the rank and file, has this week in effect broken off negotiations with the bosses on a wage ceiling.

The police atrocity caused a wave of revulsion throughout the whole of Spanish society. But the school students' strike itself has had a big effect on the consciousness of the masses.

On Thursday night, (22 January) school students' union president, Juan Ignacio Ramos, participated in a TV programme lasting one and a half hours and put the union's case, together with a member of the ministry. The sight of an ordinary working class youth clearly putting forward a basic class position had an enormous impact. Workers and students have been stopping him in the street to shake his hands.

This shows that the movement of the students and the youth has struck a responsive cord, in a society that is now sick and tired of the behaviour of this right wing socialist government. The capitalist press have understood that this movement is acting as a catalyst for the general discontent within society.

The Sunday edition of *El Pais*, the main bourgeois liberal paper, on its front page carried an article clearly designed to warn the government not to go too far on the question of the students. It was signed by the editor, Cebrian, one of the main strategists of Spanish capital.

Early on in the dispute, the papers, particularly *El Pais*, adopted a hostile attitude towards the union, playing down and refusing to publish material issued by the union.

In the last few weeks however, the strength of the union has been proved in action, so even *El Pais* has been forced to begin to print the facts.

On Sunday it also published an ar-

ticle from Juan Ignacio Ramos. It was printed in the form of an open letter to the education minister. Written in very harsh terms, it explained the link between the dispute and the struggle of the workers' movement.

The same issue carried an opinion poll with incredible figures indicating that, after six weeks of struggle 67 per cent were in favour of the students, 20 per cent 'don't know' and 13 per cent in favour of the education ministry. A massive support among the workers and the parents in favour of the struggle of the students.

This movement has shaken the government. The ministry has been compelled for the first time to seriously negotiate.

The school students' union issued an ultimatum on Monday (26 January). Either the education minister in person appears before them to discuss the dispute and its demands, or else the movement would be stepped up to new and unprecedented levels. Immediately he agreed to negotiate.

The government is in a state of panic about the potential behind this mobilisation, particularly as it is aware that behind the students is a conscious, Marxist tendency.

At the time of writing it is still unclear what the results of this negotiation will be. It is not excluded that the ministry, faced with the enormous movement of the youth, and the danger of it spreading to the working class will offer substantial concessions. In the event of this taking place, most likely the movement will wind down. After nearly two months of struggle, while sections of the youth are moving into struggle, other layers are now beginning to show signs of tiredness.

The policy of the union therefore will be to enter seriously into negotiations, with the aim of seeking an agreement which will meet the main demands of the students. However, it is not excluded, given the blindness of this government and its past record, that if it shows signs of intransigence, and the negotiations break down, the movement then will enter new and uncharted waters.

## New right wing split in Notts

**THE EMERGENCE of a new breakaway 'Moderate Labour Party' in the Nottinghamshire area, shows the dramatic change in Mansfield's labour movement in just two years.**

The MLP traitors were right behind those who expelled Militant supporters in Mansfield, telling us to leave and form our own party. They insisted that a witch-hunt would win votes for Labour. Now they say that they will stand against the party they were previously claiming to defend.

The MLP can boast as its founder members—3 members of the Union of Democratic Miners and 3 Social Democratic Party members.

Now they have shown their true colours. The MLP's logo is a white dove with the red rose in its mouth.

Mansfield Labour Party has moved left since the miners' strike, as new workers and miners have joined. With the early 'retirement' of right wing MP Don Concannon, who consistently opposed the strike, and the adoption of left winger Alan Meale, the right has become isolated.

The new party could be linked to the decision of the UDM to stand against Labour in Mansfield, at the general election.

The MLP must not be used as an excuse for Labour to go on the defensive. The reverse. Labour in Notts must expose these second rate Tories and the scab leadership of the UDM, and offer an unshamedly socialist alternative.

All Notts workers including those ordinary miners who misguidedly joined the UDM face the same problems—crumbling health service, privatisation and threats to jobs. Only a Labour government with socialist policies could possibly tackle any of these.

By John Hoare  
(Mansfield Labour Party,  
in personal capacity)

## Vote against expulsions

**BY 30 votes to 1, with 3 abstentions, Hammersmith Labour Party has passed a resolution against witch-hunts. It was an attempt to discourage some right wing members of the neighbouring Fulham party from pursuing their calls for an inquiry into local Militant supporters.**

The resolution also called for the reinstatement of Keith Dickinson—a member of the Hammersmith party and one of the five Militant Editorial Board members expelled by the national executive committee in 1983.

By Sigbritt Herbert  
(Hammersmith Labour  
Party)



# Students demand 24 hr shut down

THE NATIONAL Union of Students has called a national week of action from 9-13 February against cuts in grants and education.

A national demonstration on Saturday 21 February has also been called.

The NUS Kinnockite leadership have been forced to act, with mounting pressure from the colleges and universities.

Students in Sussex and Cardiff universities have already taken direct action to resist cuts and campaigns are being planned at Salford University and Glasgow College of Technology.

But the NUS executive still have no coherent strategy to defeat the Tory attacks and win reforms for students. They have highlighted the issue of student loans in isolation, without linking this to education cuts as a whole. The national demonstration has been called on a Saturday, when

many students have part time jobs, and there are no clear slogans to mobilise the students.

But Labour students can build the campaign from below, joining the students' protests to the labour movement as a whole as students have successfully done in France and Spain.

## Lobbies

Local campaigns by colleges should be mounted with demonstrations and limited occupations, and area NUS bodies should co-ordinate lobbies of education authorities by further education students on the issue of discretionary grants.

To firm up the week of action Labour students must build the Education Alliance, by involving all workers in education. NUS Wales is proposing that the lobby of parliament on 4 March becomes a protest of

both workers and students to force concessions on pay and restore education cuts. Wales NUS are demanding a 24 hour shut down of all education institutions, including schools, organised by the Education Alliance. This should be taken up nationally.

With the threat of further and more widespread action to follow, the Tories would be forced to change direction.

- ★ No cuts in courses, and no job losses. Reverse all education cuts and launch a massive programme of public works with expansion of education.

- ★ Restore student grants to 1979 levels. £400 now and a £35 minimum grant for all further education students.

- ★ A living grant for all students equal to two thirds of average earnings, all through the year.

- ★ Build the Education Alliance at rank and file level—for a joint demonstration and lobby of parliament of workers and students. For a national 24 hour shutdown of all education institutions.

**LESLEIGH WOODBURN**, a Further Education Labour Students (FELS) officer, has called on all further education students to support the national demonstration and week of action.

This was agreed at the first London FELS meeting last Wednesday at the City and East London college, reports Rod Alexander, London FELS co-ordinator. Six colleges were represented, many reporting on campaigns which had already started.

FELS members at Southgate college, Nancy Taaffe and Justine Devon, organised a demonstration last Friday in protest at the invitation of Tory MP Michael Portillo to the college awards



assembly. The demonstration was supported by all the college trade unions.

The Tories want to take away further education as an option for school leavers, and turn the colleges into youth training centres.

Wednesday 11 February, during the NUS week of action, should be used to lobby local education authorities against the cuts and to call on teachers and other workers for support.

I spoke at a meeting of the college lecturers' union NATFHE, at City and East London college—the response was terrific and the union branch is calling an emergency meeting next Tuesday to discuss support for the action on the day.

# Flooded tenants squeeze council



Kingsmead tenants lobby Hackney Labour Group meeting on 26 January.

HACKNEY COUNCIL Labour Group has agreed in principle to freeze rents and pay compensation to tenants on the Kingsmead estate flooded out when pipes burst during the thaw.

The group passed an emergency resolution agreeing to all the tenants' demands including a freeze on rents and rates from 12 January until services are restored. A payment of £4 a week, possibly rising to £20 a week, for all tenants will be looked into to recompense extra heating costs and inconvenience.

Two hundred angry tenants packed into a meeting on the estate last Thursday. Labour councillors Lynne Faulkes and Brynley Heaven revealed that the pipes were not lagged up to standard, and that copper fittings on stainless steel pipes had caused them to separate in the cold weather. The meeting, organised by Kings Park Labour Party, endorsed a seven point plan for compensation and rehousing of flooded tenants.

The council has agreed to distribute leaflets explaining to tenants how to claim compensation. They also said that they were approaching the Water Board to give the tenants a rebate on the water rates. The council agreed to find accommodation for the eight families still sleeping on the floor of the local community centre. But many had been offered accommodation which was worse than the homes they had been forced to leave.

The flooding has shown that millions needs to be spent on many of these old, pre-war estates like Kingsmead, but government cut-backs have meant that councils are unable to carry out the necessary repairs and renovation. The campaign will continue to ensure that the tenants' demands are met by the full council. Tenants shouldn't be forced to pay for the consequences of Tory cuts.

By Simon Cole

## "God can come and flush our loo"

AT FIRST we were among the lucky ones. At least we could still get cold water to boil up and flush the toilet, even if bathing our two toddlers was a problem. Then came the first thaw. Two hundred families were flooded out when the pipes in the loft burst.

Sunday night; some people have been without water for a week.

Our cold water goes off, then without warning the whole estate's water is turned off. O.K. it was necessary to stop any more flooding, but they could have warned us so we could have done some washing and filled up some buckets. Now they tell us to turn off the central heating, it could be dangerous. Still its only going to be minus four tonight.

Time to fill up a five gallon bucket from the standpipe. Lucky

we've got a car and I'm fit and healthy. I wouldn't fancy carrying five gallons of water for 200 yards. How do the people three or four flights up manage?

### Worries

Now the worries start. How often can we flush the loo. Can we spare enough for a cup of tea, or bathing the kids?

Old people outside queuing in the freezing cold. People queuing at seven in the morning outside the changing rooms in the park to use the toilet. Is this London or a third world country?

Friday morning; up till two in the morning writing and printing leaflets. Out at 6.30 am to distribute them. Then to the Town Hall. At first the chief whip doesn't

JILL, A tenant on the Kingsmead estate, summed up the anger of the meeting held last Thursday when she said: "I'll be at the Town Hall with my daughter until something is done. What have I got to lose?"

She is forced to sleep with her six year old daughter because the child's room is unfit to sleep in. Every room in the house has a cracked ceiling—her daughter's room has plaster falling from the walls, and the floor is running with water.

Jill has been battling for four years to be rehoused, and get proper repairs done.

Incredibly one official asked if she could do the repairs herself. Working class people in Hackney have continually elected Labour councillors over the years and now it is the councillors' duty to provide them with the housing and services that they deserve.

want to see us. "I can't see them in this state, I haven't got any water to wash with at home", he says. But its a useful meeting, they make a few concessions, and we'll make sure they hold to them.

Get home knackered, but elated; the water's on again. I never thought a tap full of water could make me feel so good. The council said that it was an act of God. But why didn't he act in Downing Street or Buckingham Palace. I don't remember seeing stand pipes down there. As one woman at the meeting said; 'If it was an act of God, then God can come and flush our loo!'

By Kevin Ramage and Jean Webb  
(Kings Park Labour Party)



# Oh no they didn't

**IT WAS pantomime time again and Stevenage Labour Party had its very own. For one night only the new panto Any Witch Way was staged just before Christmas.**

It had all the old favourites like "Oh yes I did, Oh no you didn't" and "That's not a point of order, Oh yes it is".

True to form the promoters of this pageant couldn't organise a witch-hunt on hallow'en. They ensured that all the audience were locked out in the cold for the two hours of the performance.

Meanwhile, inside a real drama was taking place. The leading actor, playing the role of the Chairman, had been rushed to hospital. His understudy stepped into the Broadway dream; and fell flat on his face, but the cast carried on.

Straight away the script was in dispute, with the understudy chair arguing that despite its being a panto, it was really a serious event! The rest maintained it was a farce!

So the producer from regional office in Ipswich said "some of the cast should be thrown out!"

By our theatre critic

The plot thickened, until it was as clear as mud. But still the audience sang and cheered.

As with any show there are the 'goodies' and the 'baddies'. The former were the 'Ten' and their loyal supporters, the latter the wicked 'Kinnock society', who dreamed up the idea in the first place.

Just to confuse the opposition, only six of the 'Ten' were there as two were appearing in other parties. One was very pregnant, and the last was getting over being made redundant that very day.

But wait! A sensation! Enter stage left, the boys in blue! No not Buttons, but the local sergeant. Realising he was at the wrong theatre, after a few words he left. He was in a good mood probably because the audience had filled him with the Christmas spirit by singing

carols as he arrived.

But no such spirit on stage! "Who called them?" the cry went up. With the baddies saying "Oh no we didn't" and the rest replying "Oh yes you did!". Eventually a sinister voice said "I did". It was the wicked councillor of the east! He explained that none of the baddies could remember their lines because the audience kept making too much noise.

## Pumpkins

All this took up valuable time. If the baddies didn't say the magic words before ten o'clock they would all turn into pumpkins for the rest of the year.

Then the baddies had a brain wave: "Let's close the curtains so the audience can't see!". But this didn't dampen the spirits of the spectators as they cheered the goodies and booed the nasties.

Time was of the essence. It was 9.30 and we hadn't even finished the overture. The minutes ticked away.

At last the overture was finished, but before we could

go anywhere a dispute broke out. The baddies wanted to limit the goodies' speaking time to ten minutes. All this took more time than it saved.

Then the moment of truth! The chairman fluffed his lines again: "I move standing order 12".

"That's the wrong magic words" whispered one of the Ten. It was like saying "Abracadabra" instead of "Open Sesame" but such was the confusion, the nasties didn't notice.

The clock struck ten! As the egg started to run down the face of the chairman and his pumpkins, the goodies and the audience sang the song of victory, and walked off to the nearest pub.

But pumpkins have no brains, so they sat there for another hour in splendid isolation and complete illegality to finish the panto.

So ends the saga of the Stevenage panto, but don't go away. A sequel could soon follow. With the panto season over, they will try to revive this farce as "Carry on Expelling."

**Stevenage Militant Public Meeting. Hear Tony Mulhearn (Liverpool city councillor and elected president, Liverpool District Labour Party) and Ted Grant (political editor of Militant). At Stevenage College, Monkswoodway. Monday 2 February 8pm.**



Protest outside December's Stevenage Labour Party meeting/pantomime.

## Militant sales successes

THE NATIONAL sales campaign is off to a flying start. Many areas have already shown the great potential. A year ago there were only three Militant sellers in Scarborough, but they sold consistently on the streets to boost sales to 65 a week and found over 20 people prepared to help build support for Marxism.

### Door to door

In Cwmgors in West Wales a door to door sale was organised for Saturday afternoon; it turned out to be a good time to catch people in and they sold 13 in under an hour. In Ammanford Saturday afternoon saw sellers in the local market where seven or eight shoppers buy Militant regularly. Two stall holders bought copies at the £1 solidarity price and sales rose to 27. Sellers in Barking sold 12 at the tube station; one girl asked for six copies to sell at work.



Yes Comrades!

Finally, get down to the NCU picket lines, meetings and rallies. Sellers in Coventry and elsewhere tell us how

interested the strikers are in our analysis of their dispute. Keep up the sales and let us know of your successes.

## Labour's bad news...

I PICKED UP the magazine from the doormat. The cover showed a Britain shrouded in a Union Jack conquering the globe. What was it, the fascists?

The unimaginative title gave it away. Labour Party News, a free mag for all party members. It was deadly dull and hollow, the highlight being a colour photo of Neil Kinnock's head.

### Mugged

Always willing to support the party's finances, I turned to the merchandise 'offers' page. They had a party mug with a picture of a young girl waving to the sky (waving goodbye to Cruise? No such luck.) £5 for a mug! You'd need to be one to buy one.

Next they offered Labour Party ties in the traditional colours of grey and Tory blue. They were £11.95 and I didn't have a job interview



to go to, so I turned to the party scarf. At £23.95 I think I'll be going cold this winter. Who are these offers for? Not the working class or the rank and file.

But the best news for yuppies was the books, Roy Hattersley's "Choose Freedom" at £12.50 and a 2000 page encyclopaedia of

peace published by Maxwell at £250!

It's probably lucky it's for party members only. This stuff on general sale would put most people off voting Labour let alone joining it.

By Tony McNulty (Bootle)

## Left and Right

### Lighting up time

YOU MAY not have heard of Colin Tennant, 3rd Baron Glenconner but an awful lot of jolly important people were pleased to see he'd reached the age of 60. They were even more pleased when he held a party which the *Sunday Express* thinks cost at least £250,000.

His Lordship, known as the King of Mustique, invited 250 people for a week long party. Princess Margaret, Raquel Welsh, Norman St John Stevas, what more could you ask for a super seven days in the Caribbean. They had beach parties, barbecues and balls. A Boeing 747 was specially hired to get the guests to the two yachts, one a floating version of Maxims in Paris where they lived for a week.

It took two tons of equipment flown in from Los Angeles to light up

the yachts while the VIPs got lit up on champagne.

If only you lot out there worked a bit harder, perhaps people like Glenconner could afford a decent birthday party every year.

### Bonus of contention

SIR RALPH Halpern, says the *Financial Times*, is leading the battle against the idea that making money is un-British and immoral. To prove it, he is getting £1 million a year as chairman of the Burton Group in salary and "performance related payments."

Performance bonuses encourage enterprise and help the economy says Sir Ralph. A "top pay expert" told the FT of one "enterprising" manager who was offered a bonus of up to 30 per cent of salary to close down a factory within a specified time. Very helpful to the economy.

## ...and worse plans

TOM SAWYER a member of Labour Youth Sub-committee thinks the Labour Party Young Socialists paper *Socialist Youth* is 'impractical' in its aim of appealing to the "general youth population".

The party, he proposes, should use *Labour Party News* as a model and aim at existing party supporters especially constituency youth officers!

*Socialist Youth* is written by LPYS members, working class youth who write about how they live and work and why they are involved in the labour movement. It includes interviews with pop stars and leading labour movement figures and reflects the way young people inside and outside the

labour movement think.

*Socialist Youth*, which gets no budget from the party broke even at the beginning of January.

But Sawyer's new proposals put forward without warning at the January Youth Sub-committee meeting, would ditch this paper, go for a glossy internal failure aimed at people in the party and those attracted through Red Wedge. It would be edited by a band of people from NOLS/LPYS, trade unions and even "sympathetic professionals".

### Impractical?

"After all" says Sawyer, "we don't publish a newspaper for the general public". Most party

members wish we did, Mr Sawyer, rather than hoping that the *Mirror* and the pop press give us a hearing.

Is appealing to young voters really 'impractical' in election year? The most applications to join the LPYS came from *Socialist Youth*. Sawyer is making a thinly disguised political attack on the LPYS paper. But a journal which acts merely as a cheer-leader for the party's right wing leaders won't sell amongst Labour's youth and won't even be seen by the millions of new voters.

The LPYS will be presenting their own paper to the committee to make sure we keep our campaigning paper in general election year.

By LPYS members







**THE QUESTION** of war and peace, brought into the foreground with the launch of Labour's non-nuclear policy and the Tories' attacks on it, is one of the most fundamental issues facing the ranks of the labour movement. They need to be armed with an understanding of the processes and contradictions in the world situation and a Marxist analysis of defence, disarmament and nuclear weapons.

**WORLD PRIORITIES**, an American organisation which studies the economics of military spending, has just reported that in 1986 the world spent £634 billion on arms. This is two and a quarter times more in real terms than in 1960. From three in 1945, the stockpile of nuclear weapons has grown to 60,000. Their combined explosive power is more than a million times greater than the bomb which destroyed Hiroshima.

97 per cent of these nuclear weapons are possessed by the USA and the USSR, who also account for 60 per cent of total military spending. Yet they contain only 11 per cent of the world's population. In the Soviet Union more than twice as much is spent on defence as on education and health combined. In America, defence spending has risen faster than any other item in the budget and is the main ingredient in the record deficit.

"At present levels of world arms spending" says the report, "the average individual can expect to give up three or four years of his working life to pay for it." In a planned socialist society, the money now being spent on arms would transform the lives of the world's population.

If no more than a small proportion of these nuclear arsenals were ever used, the effect would be devastating. Scientists are arguing over the precise degree of destruction, but that is academic; even the more cautious forecast a return to barbarism. Others predict the end of human life altogether, life which has evolved over millions of years.

Given that so much is at risk, and the stupendous waste of resources on useless heaps of metal, it is inevitable that throughout the world there should be a mass movement of workers, especially the young, demanding nuclear disarmament. It is a demand which has

now become firmly entrenched within the consciousness of the British labour movement whose pressure has forced the party leadership to commit the next Labour government to act.

Nuclear weapons, however, will never be abandoned simply as a result of the moral pressure from those opposed to them. While totally in sympathy with the aims of such groups as CND, Marxists have the responsibility to explain the underlying reasons why nuclear weapons exist and to show that the struggle for world peace is inseparable from the struggle to transform the kind of society which manufactures such instruments of destruction.

The root cause of war, and the amassing of weapons, has always been conflicting economic interests. Capitalist powers have fought each other for natural resources, cheap labour, and markets for the export of both commodities and capital. As the German strategist Von Clausewitz put it: "War is the continuation of diplomacy by other means." The First World War was the classic example of such a conflict.

Wars have also been fought between classes, when a new class is struggling to break free from the chains of the old society it is replacing. Such was the case in the wars against imperialist intervention and the civil war which followed the 1917 Russian revolution.

Unlike the capitalist powers, however, the bureaucracies of the USSR today and in China, Vietnam and other Stalinist deformed workers' states, have no political or economic interest in waging war against the West. They are first and foremost concerned with the need to defend their power and privileges against attack from the working class.



Feature by Pat Craven



British and US defence secretaries, George Younger (left) and Casper Weinberger (right) with NATO secretary general Lord Carrington at NATO conference at Gleneagles Hotel in 1986.

**THE TORIES** are committed to keeping nuclear weapons and remaining in NATO. They also stand for the retention of an 'independent' British nuclear deterrent. At present this consists mainly of the Polaris submarine fleet, which is to be replaced by Trident. Although even one warhead could devastate a whole city, the present 64 Polaris warheads form a negligible proportion of the world's stockpile. Even the 1,000 or so which Trident is expected to have will be relatively insignificant. British capitalism's 'independence' is a myth, used by the Tories to exploit nationalist prejudices, revealed in opinion polls which show greater support for a 'British' deterrent than for US nuclear bases.

In reality, Britain's policy is totally integrated, through NATO, with that of the US. Its credibility rests mainly on the American Cruise and Pershing missiles deployed in Western Europe and Trident which will be supplied by American firms. The 'independent deterrent' is phoney and even many capitalist strategists, like David Owen, argue that there is no case for spending billions on Trident just to maintain the pretence.

Labour's commitment to remove Britain's 'independent' deterrent is not new. Even after Hugh Gaitskill reversed the 1961 Labour con-

## Not peace, but a nuclear stalemate

**IN A conventional war in Europe**, the Russian bureaucracy would have an overwhelming superiority. But, contrary to the propaganda of the capitalists, they have no motive for such a war. They already have difficulty in maintaining their control over Eastern Europe and could not contemplate military invasion of the West.

The development of nuclear weapons since 1945 now means that the capitalist powers too cannot use war on a world scale as a means of resolving conflicts. Neither side now can contemplate a war which would lead to the destruction of life on the planet. This is not for any moral reasons, but because such a war would destroy the very economic and political prizes which they were fighting for. There would be no labour nor markets left to exploit.

For forty years, therefore, there has not been a war between the two super-powers. Nor, because of the power of Stalinist Russia, has it been possible for the major capitalist powers to wage war between each other as would have been the case in an earlier epoch. That does not mean there has been 'peace'. The World Priorities report estimates that 20 million

people have been killed by conventional weapons since 1945.

Wars have been fought 'by proxy' mainly in the already impoverished 'third world', notably the Middle East and South East Asia, between regimes which are allied to and armed by one or other of the super-powers. In these countries military spending since 1960 has risen six times in real terms, to a level which exceeds their total spending on health and education combined. Over the same time unemployment in these countries has risen eight times.

### Fear of revolution

It is a stalemate rather than peace. Each super-power has poured out a huge proportion of its resources to counter the 'threat' from the other. But the 'threat' is a bluff. Each side knows that it cannot start a world war. They are more threatened by the workers of both their own countries and their allies. The capitalists and the bureaucracies, respectively fear social and political revolution more than any threat from their 'enemy'. In fact it suits the rulers on both sides to hold up the threat of 'soviet expansionism' or 'US imperialism'

to bind their own populations behind their governments.

All the attempts over 40 years to negotiate 'multilateral' disarmament have never achieved more than temporary 'successes'. The Russian bureaucracy has powerful economic motives to cut back on arms spending, but they cannot allow US imperialism to gain an advantage.

On the American side there is a powerful force against any disarmament, in the form of the armaments industry, which has a fortune invested in the arms race. As weapons have become more complex, so the profit to the manufacturer goes up. World Priorities show how the price of such weapons as tanks, destroyers and transport planes have risen 300-400 times since 1945. They calculate that if such inflation had occurred in the car industry, an American car which cost \$1,000 in 1945 would now cost \$300,000!

With the more advanced systems, the cost is rocketing even higher. Britain's Trident missile system is now estimated at £10,000 million. There is a powerful lobby behind all Western leaders to oppose any cuts which could reduce the massive profits being made

from weapons. The existence of this military/industrial complex helps maintain the arms race. The Russian bureaucracy is forced to keep up and the build-up of nuclear and conventional arms continues relentlessly.

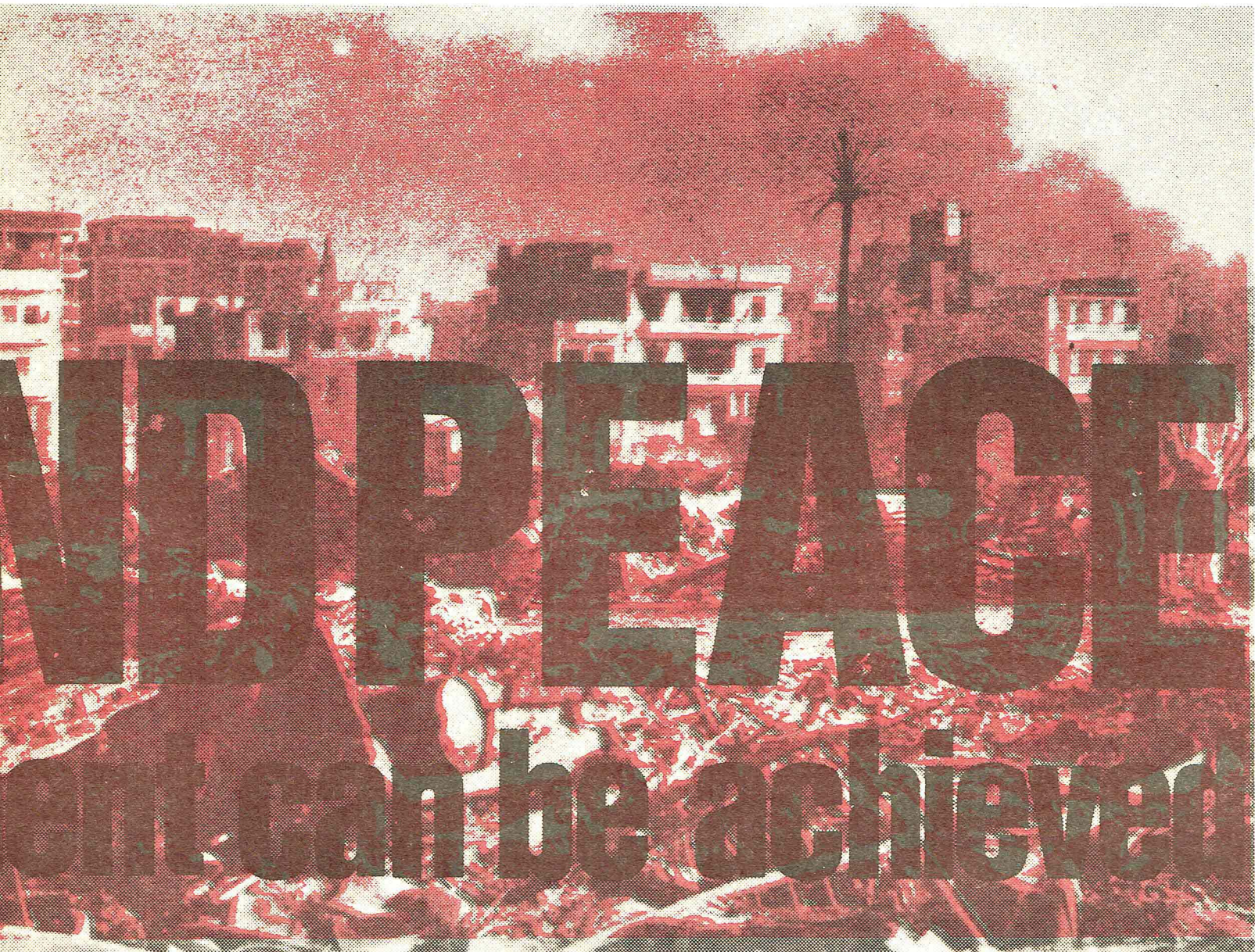
The ruling class and the bureaucracy understand the futility of ever using these weapons, and complicated systems to ensure against any accidental war breaking out have been built into the system. Only in the event of a military-police dictatorship coming to power in one of the main capitalist countries, which could only occur after a decisive defeat of the working class, could the possibility of a deliberate use of nuclear missiles against Russia, and the horror of world nuclear war be envisaged.

The present unbalanced situation cannot remain indefinitely. It cannot be ruled out that in despair the capitalists might resort to such a regime and risk a resort to nuclear war. That, ultimately is the alternative if capitalism is not destroyed, which reinforces the truth of Marx's statement that the future of mankind will be either socialism or barbarism. It is now socialism or nuclear annihilation.



US Air Force pilot guarding an F-111





ference decision in favour of unilateral disarmament, he still supported the abandonment of what his successor, Harold Wilson, described as "neither British, nor independent, nor a deterrent." This was pledged in the 1964 election manifesto, but, like much else, was never implemented. The ruling class in America was not prepared to see even this token component of the NATO defence system abandoned, and the Wilson government acquiesced.

The Party's new document *Modern Britain in a Modern World*, goes further than in 1964. It commits the next Labour government to decommission Polaris and cancel Trident, but also to withdraw nuclear weapons for American F111 bombers, and remove US Cruise missiles and Poseidon nuclear submarines.

It was inevitable that Kinnock's new proposals would meet the bitter opposition of the ruling class on both sides of the Atlantic. The NATO leaders have already forced Papandreu to abandon pledges to remove much less significant bases in Greece. There is no way the NATO powers would support a British Labour government opting out of their overall strategy. It would create a precedent for making participation in NATO strategies optional. Hence the bar-

rage of media hostility orchestrated by the Tories and, behind them, the Pentagon and the White House.

At the Reykjavik summit, Reagan offered to remove US nuclear warheads from W Europe. That alarmed Thatcher and other European capitalists, who fear that US imperialism could abandon its bases in Europe and rely on its intercontinental missiles based in America and in submarines.

In trying to answer the criticisms, Kinnock has tied himself in knots. He defends Labour's commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament and yet declares his devotion to NATO, whose strategy is dependent on the threat of nuclear 'retaliation'. To paper over the contradictions in this policy, he has adopted, with no mandate whatsoever from conference, a policy of increased spending on conventional weapons to seek to re-assure the ruling class. The policy document even attacks Thatcher for cutting spending on the armed forces. It promises to maintain overall defence spending at the same level as now, even after all the savings achieved by the cancellation of Trident. "Without Trident" it boasts "we could afford to build the equivalent of 90 frigates, 500 fighter aircraft or 10,000 armoured vehicles."

As John Witton, Labour can-

didate for Birmingham Edgbaston, has pointed out in a letter to *Labour Weekly*, this repudiates the policy document adopted by the 1984 party conference which said: "We are opposed to any major increase in NATO conventional defence spending. This could lead to a conventional arms race and undermine the political intentions of our policy of easing tension and reducing the risk of war." The new policy also flies in the face of the resolution passed at the 1986 conference by 5-1 which called for the party "to stress the need for a planned transfer of public spending from weapons to welfare and industrial development."

### Waste of resources

The party leadership has thus arrived at a position which satisfies no-one. However much Kinnock protests his loyalty to NATO and strong conventional defence, the ruling class will never agree with a policy which undermines NATO's nuclear strategy. The Labour Party rank and file and millions of workers who want to see genuine steps towards disarmament, will not be satisfied with a policy which continues the waste of resources on weapons of destruction, while remaining part of an alliance of capitalist powers which bases its

military strategy on nuclear weapons. Their concern is heightened by the development of 'conventional' weapons which can kill thousands, as in Vietnam and the Gulf War. Chemical and biological weapons could be used to destroy whole countries.

Underlying the confusion and contradictions of Labour's defence policy is a lack of understanding that defence and disarmament cannot be separate from policy on every other issue. States arm themselves to defend class interests, in the case of a capitalist state to defend profits, resources and markets and the 'free market' system. The capitalists are not concerned about the morality of nuclear defence, and will maintain it so long as it is in their interests.

The kind of Labour government which Kinnock and Hattersley propose, which leaves monopoly capitalism intact, will never be able to force those capitalists to accept any major reform to benefit the workers. Big business would certainly not sit back and see their defence policy overturned. Only a Labour government prepared to challenge the power of big business would be able to force through a policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament.

## World socialist federation

MARXISTS HAVE consistently supported unilateral nuclear disarmament but have recognised that peace can only be permanently achieved in a world in which the class conflicts which give rise to war and the arms race have been eliminated. Workers' democracies, based on the public ownership of the means of production under democratic workers' control and management would have no interest in fighting each other. On the contrary, they would seek to come together to form socialist federations in order to plan the world's resources on a global scale. In a world socialist federation, the billions now wasted on destruction would be ploughed into production for the benefit of the people.

That does not mean that socialists would be pacifists. Although it would be virtually impossible for capitalist powers to launch an attack on a country where the workers had come to power, in such an event the workers would defend their revolution. They would always fight first with a fraternal appeal to workers and ordinary soldiers of that country to over-

throw their government and join the worldwide struggle for socialism. If that failed, however, it could not be excluded that the democratic workers' states would have to take arms to defend themselves, just as the Red Army did after the 1917 Russian revolution. The armed struggle was backed by workers throughout the world, as have struggles for national and social liberation against colonialism, imperialism and racial oppression.

If the threat of war and nuclear annihilation is to be finally removed labour movement activists and the thousands of young people drawn towards CND need to be mobilised in a campaign together to commit the Labour leadership not just to oppose war and demand disarmament, but to tackle the heart of the problem. They will have to put an end to a society which exists to protect and expand the profits of a tiny rich minority and build a new world in which the resources are used and the wealth invested for the common good. That is now the only alternative to an ultimate nuclear holocaust. Peace would then become a reality.

## Old Bolsheviks remembered Leon Trotsky



LEON TROTSKY, along with Lenin, is the best known figure of the Russian revolution. He was also the main defendant in the Moscow show trials of 1936-39.

From the age of 17 to his murder by one of Stalin's assassins in 1940 when aged 60, Trotsky pursued a revolutionary life. He never wavered in his commitment to the worldwide socialist transformation of society.

He was imprisoned many times in his life and exiled by both the Tsarist dictatorship and the Stalinist bureaucracy. Many of his closest family and political associates were murdered in the 1930s at the hands of the brutal Stalinist machine.

In the Moscow show trials Trotsky was the main defendant because he was the most outstanding living representative of the best traditions of the Bolshevik party and because, after Lenin's death, he was the most tenacious fighter against the rising bureaucracy in the Soviet Union.

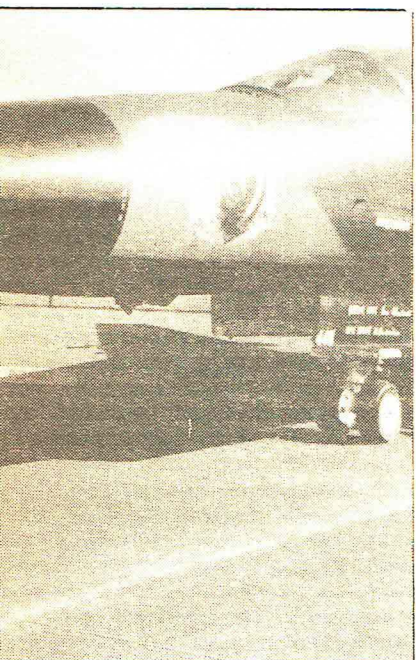
He made an outstanding contribution to the development of Marxism on a world scale. In his theory of permanent revolution, before Lenin came to accept the idea, he outlined how a socialist revolution through the working class could take place first in a backward country such as Russia.

He led the Petrograd soviet in the 1905 revolution, organised the October Revolution in 1917 and, in an incredible feat, mobilised the Red Army in the Civil War against 21 armies of intervention.

Trotsky's most important contribution to Marxism, however, came in the later period of his life in his struggle against Stalinism. Despite the most vile persecution against himself, his family and all his political co-thinkers, he resolutely defended the genuine traditions of Marxism. His work in the 1930s, especially his analysis of the material roots of Stalinism are a vital guide to Marxists today.

Trotsky will be remembered for both his words and deeds by future generations as the most inspiring of fighters for a new society. In his marvellous work, *History of the Russian Revolution*, in an excellent guide to today's generation of socialists, he summarised his own commitment to socialism:

"What good is the individual who because of empirical failures in the course of an hour or a day, renounces a goal that he set for himself on the basis of his experience and analysis of his entire previous lifetime?"



carrier, 'Miss Liberty'.

Photos: Nigel Clapp.



## Iran, Iraq

# Gulf slaughter tops a million

**THROUGH A sea of blood, Iranian forces have advanced to the outskirts of Iraq's second city, Basra. The war is at a new level of intensity. Is Iran poised for victory? DAVE CAMPBELL looks at the background to the war, and the prospects.**

The human cost of the war has been horrific. The number of dead and wounded has probably exceeded one million out of Iraq's 14 million and Iran's 44 million people.

The most barbaric methods are used. Iraq uses poison gas whilst the Iranian prime minister talks of using the injured as human sandbags, and deaf and dumb children as human minesweepers.

But very little is said in the capitalist media about the social tensions which lie at the root of this gruesome slaughter.

In Iran the economy is in dire crisis. Due to Iraq's attacks on its oil lifeline and the drop in the price of oil, annual income from oil fell from \$16 billion in 1985 to \$6 billion in 1986.

## Dismissals

There is a shortage of raw materials for industry, resulting in tens of thousands of dismissals. Most companies can only manage to operate at 25 to 40 per cent of capacity.

With unemployment at over 30 per cent and rising, wages are being forced down. But the capitalists are making millions through embezzlement and the black market.

The religious fanaticism of the Khomeini regime cannot hide the fact that it is protecting the interests of the landlords, merchants and capitalists.

It was the bazaar merchants who financed Khomeini's return to Iran at the height of his popularity in 1979, and still provide his main support. While in-

dustrial workers face extreme hardship, the merchants have been prospering.

Since 1980 the net profits of the 5,000 bazaar merchants has more than doubled to £4.5 billion, and now exceeds the annual income of the country's 4.5 million workforce.

The government is proposing to turn the clock back by privatising industry nationalised in the revolution. In the countryside the big landowners—many of them former lackeys of the Shah—occupy senior government posts. They have no difficulty in getting permission to repossess the land confiscated from them during the revolution.

In Iraq, oil revenue dropped by 10 per cent in 1986. As the war costs \$500 million a month, the national debt—now at \$20 billion—is shooting up at an alarming rate.

Every time a shell is fired, the debt increases by \$1,000. Despite emergency aid of \$4 billion from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait last August, massive austerity measures are expected. Already the benefits paid to the families of troops killed in the war have been cut.

Why do the masses continue to suffer the unending hardship and slaughter of the war? Basically, it is fear of domination by foreign despots that has caused the people in both countries to rally behind their respective regimes whenever there was any threat of conquest.

This is why the Sunni Arabs living in Iran did not support the initial invasion by the (Sunni) Iraqi regime, and why the Shias in Iraq—who make up 70 per cent of

the army's lower ranks—do not support Khomeini's Shi'ite regime.

The Khomeini regime, on the other hand, with religious bigots in all important positions, capitalises on the fear of Iraqi domination by whipping up religious fervour among the troops and peasantry.

But this does not always work. As a leading mullah has complained, the public does not show the necessary enthusiasm for prayer sermons on television—they switch off! So workers are often presented with an ultimatum.

## Lottery

For example, 400 workers at the Naz Nakh factory in Ghazkin were offered a simple choice last August: going to the front or being made redundant.

Others 'volunteer' under the threat of their wages not being paid, or have their names drawn in a lottery.

The rich don't face the same problems. They can avoid duty at the front by paying huge bribes.

Yet despite ferocious repression there have been important manifestations of opposition against conscription. Up to 90 per cent of white-collar workers have refused to accept their call-up papers.

In August 1985 the people of the village of Divandarreh, led by the women, refused to join the army or bear arms. When government forces threatened to shoot, the people defended themselves with pickaxes and shovels. The regime was forced to concede.

At the Toshiba factory last September the bosses were trying to enforce the government's requirement for the voluntary recruitment of up to 20 per cent of the workforce. The workers refused, and management



Iranian armour: moving into action with "human waves" of youth in front. A military commentator says: "Their tactics are like pushing people into a meat grinder."

was forced to retreat.

Iraq faces similar problems. To maintain troop discipline, an elite execution squad is stationed just behind the front line. Many deserters are taken home to be shot in front of their relatives.

As one Iraqi Shi'ite refugee put it: "We don't want Khomeini, but we can't take any more of Saddam. Where they can, our soldiers are making surrender pacts".

The tempo of the war has now been raised. However, while both sides are affected by growing war weariness and the dire state of their economies, neither side is capable of achieving a short, sharp victory.

At the time of writing the outcome of Iran's advance on Basra is still uncertain. Like the capital Baghdad, Basra is heavily fortified with minefields, earth pits and tank parks.

Despite Iran's superior numbers, Iraq has five times as many tanks, four times as much artillery and complete domination of the air.

The imperialist powers, as well as the USSR, do not want a decisive victory by either side in the war, which would destabilise the entire Middle East and present them with untold complications.

In the event of an Iranian victory, the unpredictable Khomeini would control a quarter of the West's oil supplies.

Iraq, one of the most stable Arab states, could become split along national lines between its Sunni, Shi'ite and Kurdish sections, raising the spectre of a second Lebanon.

All this would give a further twist to the national tensions now approaching breaking point in all the



right-wing Arab states where, in the absence of socialist leadership, sections of the masses look to Islamic fundamentalism for a way out of their nightmare existence.

On the other hand, a victory for Iraq would reinforce the Arab states, strengthening the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO)—now based in Baghdad—and boosting the anti-Israeli forces in the vicinity of Israel. It is therefore no accident that Israel has been engaging in arms deals with Iran on its own account.

## 'Final offensive'

At present the only certainty is that the slaughter will continue.

Khomeini has promised a 'final offensive' by March to crush the Iraqi regime, which would involve hurling hundreds of thousands of poorly-trained, poorly-armed youth against the Iraqi machine-guns, tanks, artillery and missiles.

The outcome of such carnage cannot be predicted at this stage. But if there is any danger of an Iranian victory, imperialism would be forced to intervene—most probably through Egypt—to try and enforce a settlement.

Until the outcome of the war is decided, both im-

perialism and Stalinism will hedge their bets, and continue to supply arms and other material to both sides.

But whatever and whenever a settlement is reached between the regimes in Teheran and Baghdad, none of the problems facing the masses in both countries will be solved.

As long as capitalism dominates the region, poverty and mass discontent will continue. All the basic tensions and instability will remain, leading to new wars.

Only the rule of the working class, winning the support of the peasantry, can make an end to the miseries of capitalist domination and lay the basis for solving the problems of the masses. Their key task in Iran, Iraq and throughout the Middle East is to arm the workers and youth with the perspective of socialist change, and with a Marxist leadership.

Links must be built between the workers of Iran and Iraq, to prepare joint struggle to overthrow the exploiters and dictators on both sides of the Shatt al Arab divide. This would open the way to the building of socialist democracy, and to a socialist federation of Iran and Iraq, which would form the beginning of a socialist federation of the Middle East.



Mass prayer meeting in Iran to whip up religious fervour—but war weariness is spreading.

**THE WORKING** class in Iran is beginning to flex its muscles again.

Khomeini's regime uses 'Islamic Councils' to police the factories. Often they are armed and equipped with factory prisons and torture chambers to intimidate the workforce.

Despite this there have been over 300 strikes and sit-ins over the past two years.

Workers at Caterpillar have fought privatisation with a series of strikes and sit-ins.

At a pharmaceutical plant near Teheran there has been a struggle for the reinstatement of a sacked worker. One report comments:

"The workers retain a sweet memory of those days (in 1979, when a factory committee was elected to run the factory in the interests of the workers) and remember the activities of the factory committee with nostalgia."

Often whole areas are put under martial law to quell uprisings. In many villages there have been protests against enforced conscription (see report) or the use of police agents in the villages.

In several factories management have insisted that women workers wear the veil on pain of sacking or arrest. At the Darupakhsh Pharmaceutical plant, this resulted in an overtime ban.



## Philippines, West Germany, France

Exclusive

# Coup fails but splits deepen

**MANILA IS tense following the latest coup attempt by right-wing officers against the Aquino regime.**

On Monday tens of thousands protested against the massacre on 22 January of peasants demanding land reform. This time Aquino held the troops back.

The coup attempt, aimed at preventing next Monday's referendum on a new constitution, was precipitated by what the right saw as Aquino's weakness.

Indeed, events are highlighting the regime's instability and internal contradictions. While Aquino talks of using "the full force of the law" against the coup plotters, military Chief of Staff Ramos addresses the coup leader in honeyed tones:

"We wanted to assure our good friend that he would be treated honourably if he surrendered. I appealed to his idealism and professionalism..." etc.

Less than a year after the revolution that swept her to power, Aquino's authority is crumbling.

Her hopes of ending the 16-year-old peasant struggle for land through negotiations with the guerilla leaders were utopian from the

## From a correspondent in the Philippines

start—nothing can bridge the gulf between the landowners and the landless. Now the massacre in Manila has put paid to the talks.

Still, at this stage, the capitalists (and US imperialism) regard Aquino and her dwindling popular support as a better bet than renewed military dictatorship in fighting the revolutionary movement on the land and in the towns.

## Death threats

But the extreme right among the landowners and military officers are vehemently opposed to negotiations, and insist on a war to the finish.

It has now been revealed that *both* teams of negotiators have received death threats—and the government side have admitted that they cannot guarantee anybody's safety!

*Leading members of the government's Human Rights Commission, as well as its*

*negotiating panel, have resigned because they can no longer defend the government's position.*

These dramatic events are indicative of the seething tensions throughout society. Amidst the hopeless poverty and decay of capitalism in the Philippines there is simply no basis for any 'settlement' between the parasitic elite and the masses on the land or in the cities.

Land reform is seen by the regime as the key to any hope of peace—but it will cost an estimated \$300 million to buy off the landowners' opposition. With its coffers empty, the regime is seeking this amount from Western moneylenders to add to its existing \$27.5 billion foreign debt.

Naturally, Aquino refuses to consider any reform as far her own family lands are concerned!

Cory Aquino's immense popularity in the cities is evaporating. At best she is now seen as irrelevant, at worst for what she is—an unvarnished representative of the ruling class, tied hand and foot to US imperialism.

The opposition National Democratic Front (led by the Communist Party of the Philippines) has leaked an



Manila, 22 January: a wounded youth drags himself away after marines and snipers cut down over 100 of the peasant demonstrators.

alleged US State Department document showing that plans are under way for a "soft" or "creeping" coup, through the elimination of "leftist" leaders and the blackmail of Aquino, forcing her to fall into line with the right.

## Crocodile tears

More power will then be given to army Chief of Staff, Ramos, and the war against the guerillas stepped up.

Politically, however, the right wing can still make good use of Aquino—to shed crocodile tears at their atrocities, and to beg international big business for aid and for rescheduling of the foreign debt.

In return, she may occasionally bleat about "people's power" in the hope of rallying her support.

But the illusions in Aquino are fading fast. The

floodgates of mass struggle have been opened, and none of the ruling class factions have any idea of how to solve the basic problems.

The regime and the masses are on a collision course. The guerilla war will be stepped up again. New urban movements are inevitable.

On 2 February the people will vote on Aquino's new constitution, to replace the constitution of the hated Marcos and instal her in power until 1992.

Significantly, in the run-up to the referendum the regime has refused to register the biggest "legal" mass par-

ty, the PnB, for the parliamentary elections later this year, on the grounds that it is secretly "communist"!

The Aquino regime is far removed from democracy. Nothing short of the conquest of state power by the masses, led by the organised workers, will make it possible to guarantee democratic rights and change society.

In the stormy period ahead there will be unlimited opportunities to build the forces, armed with a Marxist programme, that can lead this struggle to victory.



Cory Aquino and Chief of Staff Ramos.

## Hollow victory for W German Tories

**THE REACTIONARY coalition in West Germany has been returned to power, yet with the two conservative parties (CDU/CSU) recording their lowest share of the vote since 1949.**

German workers, now facing up to the prospect of another period of Tory attacks, will be demanding to know why their party (SPD) failed to capitalise on the obvious discontent with the right. But there are lessons too for Labour in Britain with the general election looming.

The opinion polls in Germany had been predicting a heavy defeat for the SPD, placing it 15 per cent behind the CDU/CSU. In fact the CDU/CSU vote fell by 5 per cent.

The liberal FPD increased its vote, but it was the Green Party, campaigning on the environment, peace and unemployment, that gained the most, especially from radicalised youth.

## Lack of fire

The working class base of the SPD stayed loyal, despite the lack of any fire or conviction from their leaders, who campaigned not on policies but on the 'personality ticket'. One of their main slogans was: "Germany needs a Chancellor who can trust."

But faced with the nightmare of another administration of Chancellor Kohl, at the end many swung back to the SPD.

Like the Labour leaders in Britain, SPD leader Rau did not want to make any firm



Rau (right) and Kohl (left). The SPD election campaign failed to inspire workers and youth with a vision of real change.

promises, in case the workers tried to hold him to them if he won. The SPD leaders gave the impression they did not even want to win an overall majority. They seemed to yearn for the old coalition with the FPD, which provided a ready made alibi for not pursuing socialist measures.

But the net result was the lowest turnout for thirty years, with many voters seeing no point in voting, and increased support for the Greens.

For many young voters the Greens appeared more left than the SPD. Even on trade union issues, while the SPD refused to push in parliament to make lockouts illegal, the Greens took up a position.

Of course, with their overwhelmingly middle class membership, they do not

represent an alternative for the working class. It is the failures of the right wing SPD leaders that has allowed them their success.

Inside the SPD now there will be intense debate. Already the party conference committed an unwilling leadership to remove US nuclear bases and to close down nuclear power stations. Now there could be a growing move to the left.

## No stability

There will certainly not be stability for long for the capitalist parties. In France, just nine months after its electoral victory, the government of the right faced students and workers in their millions in the streets. In Germany, with a weakened conservative chancellor, and economic recession closing

in, big class battles can break out.

Almost immediately the campaign for the 35 hour week, which has led to major disputes over the last ten years, will start up again.

But workers in Britain must study the warnings coming from these elections. No-one could claim the SPD lost because they were too left. Despite repeated government scandals and growing disillusion in the Tory leaders, they still failed to win power. It was because they refused to campaign on policies that could inspire workers and youth with the vision of any real change.

Labour workers in Britain must ensure their leaders are not allowed to make the same criminal error, that could open the way to another term of Thatcherism.

## Marseilles harbour 'like a battleground'

**WHEN THE Right won the elections in France last March, they thought they had a free ride to attack wages, jobs and conditions, especially in the public sector. In the last two months, however, there has been a wave of industrial action, which has involved many different sections and is not yet over.**

Events at Marseilles have probably best portrayed the huge combativity of the French working class. From mid-December to mid-January there were four strikes affecting this major Mediterranean port: seamen, railmen, administrative staff and tram drivers.

A railway worker was quoted as saying:

"Some nights you would have thought it was May 1968. When you heard the boat sirens, you knew the CRS were attacking the seamen's pickets again behind their barricades. The harbour was like a battleground."

Under the Socialist-Communist government of 1981-1986 the shipyards at nearby La Ciotat were closed. Mainly as a result of this, the dominant union at the port, the CGT, lost a third of its members.

Now, encouraged by the success of the students, the

seamen—with young sailors playing a leading role—moved into action, followed by other workers. Whatever their particular demands, all the strikes were characterised by the active involvement of the rank and file, with daily general assemblies and trade union unity.

The tram drivers' strike was led by an inter-union committee. Clearly, many workers are beginning to see the need to overcome the old divisions.

The real balance of forces—the strength of the working class and the weakness of the forces of reaction at this stage—was shown on 10 January, when 10,000 workers marched through Marseilles behind the banners of the CGT and CFDT (the main trade union federations led by the Communist and Socialist parties respectively), while the Right could only mobilise 2,000 on their anti-strike demonstration.

At the time of writing, teachers at some 50 primary schools are on strike in Paris over changes to their conditions of service. They have already forced the Education Minister to delay implementing his proposals.

By a correspondent in France



## Crisis ridden hospitals

Dear Comrades,

During the Christmas period I had the misfortune of staying in one of Thatcher's crisis ridden hospitals.

I was staying on the children's ward as my son was suffering from croup.

During our short stay the nursing staff were severely overworked attempting to cope with an ever increasing number of children, at the same time a children's ward had just closed.

Due to the extreme shortage of staff, young babies were fed, washed, changed and amused by parents of other children, like myself staying in the hospital.

Our fight this year is to ensure the return of a socialist Labour government which will ensure that every child will have the right to a high standard of hospital care.

Yours fraternally  
Rebecca Hunt  
Cheshire

## No return to back-street abortions

Dear Comrades,

Ann Farmer (Militant 829) says that she would not envy 'the possibility of disposing of (her) children by abortion' which she describes as a privilege of the rich.

Whilst respecting her opinions, abortion is something which should be open to all women, regardless of their

class or income.

NHS abortions are difficult to obtain, many women are forced to pay astronomical private prices whilst many young working class women have no option but to go through with the pregnancy.

Unfortunately, even the limited NHS resources are

under threat from the Tories who obviously want to see a return to the days of the back-street abortionist with women being butchered for profit.

Yours fraternally  
Krista Cowman  
Newcastle-under-Lyme

## Inequality

Dear Comrades,

Six months ago my father became seriously ill and was found to have terminal cancer. He had to wait eight months for a hospital bed for exploratory operations. By then the cancer had reached its advanced stages. This week, the mother of

a colleague I work with was also found to have cancer. However, her father is a company director and private medicine was readily available.

The cancer was found following an immediate check up, the operation took place the same day.

Yours fraternally  
A Hounslow Militant supporter

## Shares

Dear Comrades,

The Tory government will try to make a lot of noise about how they have extended share ownership, in the run-up to a general election.

In the office where my informant works, an accountant's, those people who didn't want to send off for any British Gas shares were given £1 to sign their name to an application form. So everyone 'applied' regardless of if they wanted shares or not.

When the shares arrive those who didn't want any simply pass them on to those who do. In this way they reckon to have got 20,000 shares and have already made a profit of £2,000.

I don't think there are as many share-holders as the Tories would like us to think.

Yours fraternally  
Pete McNally  
Coventry SE Labour Party

## Moderation

Dear Comrades,

The Labour Party leadership would have us believe that moderation will win over the floating voters to Labour at the next election. However, if we look at the most recent example of this, is it any wonder that Labour is trailing in some opinion polls?

According to the Daily Star (16.1.87), Roy Hattersley explained to a meeting of businessmen in London that Labour MP's would vote against a budget reduction of the 29p standard rate of income tax. Hattersley added 'What is more we will reverse that decision when we are elected and return approximately to the present level of taxation'.

In other words, the same Labour leadership that has relegated to the distant future plans to reverse Tory privatisation and the effects it has had on jobs and services, gives urgency to measures of tax changes that will reduce workers' take home pay.

Yours fraternally  
Jason Hunter  
Burnley, Lancs

# Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

## Vultures cash-in on AIDS scare

Dear Comrades,

According to Central TV news, someone is going to open the country's first ever blood bank in Gloucestershire, so as to capitalise on the spread of AIDS.

Those who can afford it will be able to store their

own blood there in order to avoid the risk of contamination from transfusions.

The capitalists really are bloodsuckers, aren't they?

Yours fraternally  
Tony Cross  
Coventry NW Labour Party

Dear Comrades,

Peter James of Peter James Hair Salons in Accrington displayed signs in his salon windows a few weeks ago stating: 'AIDS kills. No homosexuals. No bisexuals. Haemaphillias by appointment only'.

The Hairdressers' Journal a couple of weeks ago showed a very proud Peter James next to the offending poster and beneath that even more offending quotes.

James feels he is doing the hairdressing trade a big favour by attempting to stop it falling victim to the AIDS scare and that he and any other employer has a 'duty' to the public to inform them if they employ homosexuals. 'The majority of men in hairdressing are gay' he stated.

Not only is he showing his complete ignorance of the AIDS issue, he is wearing his own narrow-mindedness on his sleeve and doing a grave injustice to homosexuals.

Yours fraternally  
Sarah Bland, Black Country

## Decline of Communists

Dear Comrades,

'I've become a left reformist. The crisis has been long and drawn-out. But I can't see the agencies of change and I'm not convinced about the socialist answers any more. The failings in Eastern Europe have been very im-

portant in the crisis of the Left'.

The quote belongs to Bob Rowthorn, Communist Party economist and Marxism Today editorial board member. Need we say more?

Yours fraternally  
Dave Gorton  
London

## 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.

○ 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.

○ 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".

○ Militant poster blanks (A2 size). Available from Box 5, 3/13 Hepscoth Rd, London E9 5HB.

○ *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.

○ 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.

○ Cassette tapes with two issues of *Militant* (one each side). Available fortnightly. Tapes £3.50 per quarter, £13 per year. To be returned or send blank C-90 tapes. Contact Dave: 14 Harrowby Rd, West Park, Leeds 16. Tel: 0532 624917.

□ Brighton Rally Trade Unions for Labour Victory/LPYS. Sat 31 Jan, 11am. Brighton Centre, Kings Rd. Speakers: Eric Heffer MP and John Ellen.

## No home-no hope



New York's slums.

Dear Comrades,

ITV's documentary *The Quiet Catastrophe* on 6 January focussed on New York, the world's most affluent city. For a change we didn't hear of the scandals on Wall Street, or see the glitter of Broadway showbiz, we saw the plight of some of the city's homeless, including 10,000 children.

Ordinary people have lost their jobs in the recession and have been evicted from their apartments because they can't keep up with the soaring rents.

A truck driver lost his job because he had injured his foot so he couldn't drive.

One woman had a room in

a dark, dirty block. She said in despair: 'I never thought I would end up in a place like this'.

The social workers are looking to the capitalists to throw a few dollars into their collecting boxes. In the deepening recession they have got no hope.

Yours fraternally  
Allan Ursell  
Faversham Labour Party

Dear Comrades,

There are 50,000 (and rising) people in the city who are homeless. Only a tiny percentage of these are wino's, the majority are ordinary working people who have fallen on hard times.

Most of the hostels are set up by charity, they are large, impersonal places. The beds are set out in regimented rows, hundreds of them. All kinds of people stay in these hostels, some with young children. One black woman with kids pointed to four beds and said 'This is my home'.

The city administration has been doing a bit of slum clearance, but they don't build anything, so it's just big piles of rubble everywhere!

Yours fraternally  
J Hayes  
Poole UCATT and Labour Party

## World Socialist Booklist

Free

### World Socialist Books

Special Offers

**Trotsky**—In defence of Marxism. Usually £3.50, now only £2.50.

**Morrow**—Revolution and counter-revolution in Spain. A classic on the Spanish Civil War. Usually £3.95, now only £3.00.

**Rakovsky**—Selected writings on opposition in the USSR. 1923-30. Usually £4.95, now only £1.50.

**Lomas**—Eyewitness in Hungary, the Soviet invasion of 1956. Usually £2.95, now only £1.50.

available free from: WSB, 3/13 Hepscoth Rd, London E9 5HB.

## Frozen assets

Dear Comrades,

Following the recent spell of sub-zero temperatures, biting winds and snow falls of several inches, it was most encouraging that 27 copies of issue 830 were sold by Militant supporters on Friday 16 Jan in Ammanford.

We look forward to warmer weather which will increase the number of shoppers and hopefully the number of copies sold.

Yours fraternally  
Istvan Horanszky  
Annanford, Dyfed

### A Charter for Women Workers

A Charter for Women Workers. Produced by Liverpool, Manchester and Rochdale Labour Women's Councils. Order from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoth Rd, London E9 5HB. 50p each plus 20p p&p.



ON THE night of the 21 November 1974 two pubs in the Birmingham city centre were devastated by bombs. 21 people, many—young workers on an evening out—died. 160 were left injured. The bombs were widely assumed to be the work of the IRA. The Labour government of the day was railroaded into introducing the repressive Prevention of Terrorism Act. Six Irish workers were quickly charged, and it is now clear were beaten into confessing to an act they did not commit. They were sentenced to life and have remained in prison since. Leo McDaid examines the case of the Birmingham 6.

# Birmingham bombings



The convicted 6, showing the marks of their battering.

## Labour must demand justice

The Birmingham bombings occurred after a large number of bombing incidents on the British mainland by the IRA. Indeed less than a week before the carnage in Birmingham, David O'Connell, the then Provisional IRA Chief of Staff warned that: "The British people must realise that because of the terror waged by the troops in Ireland they must suffer the consequences."

The lesson of the complete failure of the Provisionals' campaign of the last eighteen years, as *Militant* has explained throughout that time, is that acts of individual terror could never succeed in forcing British imperialism out of the North, or of reuniting Ireland. Only the united mass activity of Catholic and Protestant workers in Northern Ireland linking up with a campaign by the labour movement in Britain could solve the Irish question. The tactics and programme of the IRA could never be capable of building such a movement.

What is more the feeling of utter revulsion amongst ordinary workers, particularly after the Birmingham bombings, allows the ruling class to introduce repressive measures that then pose a potential threat to the labour movement. The Prevention of Terrorism Act has been used to detain and harass hundreds of Irish people entering and leaving Britain, including trade unionists. While it was the right wing Labour government and renegade Home Secretary Roy Jenkins who introduced it, there is no question that the British state forces, especially the security services involved in Ireland, were itching for more repressive measures.

### 'Evidence'

They took full advantage of the public outrage over Birmingham. But the investigations by among others the left Labour journalist, Chris Mullin, in his book "Error of Judgement", have established that the Birmingham 6 were innocent.

Two of them were convicted on the basis of forensic 'evidence'. Home Office forensic scientist, Dr. Frank Skuse, who had taken swabs from the men's hands told

the trial that 2 of the men had been in contact with nitro-glycerine. Other more sensitive tests failed to produce a similar conclusion. For the defence, Dr Hugh Black, a former Home Office chief inspector of explosives, disagreed. He said that contact with such commonplace items as playing cards, leatherette material and furniture polish as well as other common substances could produce the same result. Indeed, five of the men had been playing cards on a Birmingham to Heysham train the night they were detained. And the two men whose tests proved positive were both painters!

### 'Confessions'

In October 1985 the television programme "World in Action" commissioned two forensic scientists who, working independently, confirmed that Dr Skuse's test results could never have conclusively proved that the men handled explosives. Days after the programme was screened, Dr Skuse took early retirement from the Home Office.

The other mainstay of the prosecution's case was the 'confessions' by four of the men. At their trial they maintained they only 'confessed' because of the beating they received whilst in the custody of the Birmingham police.

An ex-policeman from Birmingham interviewed on television last December, told how he saw and heard the men being threatened and beaten up.

In November 1977, in an extra attempt to prove their innocence, the men tried to sue the West Midlands and Lancashire police for assaulting them. But their action was stopped by Lord Denning in the Court of Appeal in January 1980.



The aftermath of the bombing.

Denning ruled: "If the six men win, it will mean that the police were guilty of perjury, that they were guilty of violence and threats, that the confessions were involuntary and were improperly admitted in evidence, and that the convictions were erroneous. That would mean that the Home Secretary would have either to recommend that they be pardoned, or he would have to remit the case to the Court of Appeal. This is such an appalling vista that every sensible person in the land would say 'It cannot be right that these actions should go any further, they should be struck out.'"

In other words while they may be innocent, the consequences if it should be established that they are innocent would be so devastating for the credibility of the capitalist state apparatus, that they will have to spend the rest of their life behind bars.

Chris Mullin, however, has traced four men living in the Irish Republic, who

claim they took part in the bombings and that the six convicted men are innocent.

Under the weight of such evidence and growing public disquiet Douglas Hurd, Tory Home Secretary, has ordered the Appeal Court to review the case. Whilst accepting the review as a step forward, Irish workers particularly will be sceptical. Will the Court of Appeal order a fresh retrial or quash the convictions? To do so, the police and judiciary, as Lord Denning understood, would have to admit to dishonesty and abuse of justice.

### Guildford

While the Birmingham case has recently grabbed the headlines, similar suspicions have been raised over the case of the four people convicted of the Guildford and Woolwich pub bombings in 1974, and the case of the Maguire family convicted for conspiracy to cause explosions.

The IRA men subsequent-

ly arrested during the Balcombe Street siege, admitted responsibility for the Guildford and Woolwich incidents.

The labour movement must campaign for a release and full pardon for the Birmingham 6 and the Guildford 4, as well as taking up the case of the Maguire family. It should demand their right to sue the British authorities for wrongful imprisonment. The measures of intimidation and torture used to secure convictions could in the future be used against labour movement activists.

A Labour government must be committed, if necessary, to release them with compensation for their loss of liberty. But Labour must also be committed to the repeal of all repressive legislation like the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and a labour movement inquiry into repression and false imprisonment in Ireland and Britain.

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November  
1974.

WHOEVER PLANTED them, the fact stands out that the Birmingham bombs can only benefit the interests of the enemies of both British and Irish workers.

Who else could benefit from this slaughter of young workers?

The immediate aftermath led to a backlash against Irish workers in Birmingham and in other parts of the country. This enabled fascist groups to rear their ugly heads again.

The bombs flashed a green light for further reprisals and provocation. Petrol bombs were thrown in London and the Midlands. Mainly aimed at Irish pubs they are almost certainly the work of fascists intent on sowing confusion.

But most of all, a golden opportunity has been presented to the ruling class to place new repressive legislation on the statute books.

Many workers shocked and angry, might well say, why not deal with the bombers? Why should we not be protected from further outrages? But it would be a complete illusion to see in the measures proposed by Roy Jenkins any defence or security for the future.

They will solve nothing as they have solved nothing in Northern Ireland. Where have all the special powers led to there, but to even more bloody strife? Only by eradicating the causes of sectarianism, rooted in the appalling social conditions of the workers in Northern Ireland, can a solution be found.

And this means a campaign for bold socialist measures by the labour movement of Britain and Ireland. On the basis of capitalism there can only be further horror.



# Industrial Reports

## Production plans at Caterpillar

**1,221 WORKERS** occupying the giant Caterpillar tractor factory at Cannochside near Glasgow have begun production of their D-6H machines. They expect to have the new tractor rolling off the assembly line by Friday. They intend to paint it pink and present it to Bob Geldof's Band Aid organisation.

By Steven Jollie

(Tannochside and Viewpark Labour Party)

Their decision to restart production followed a mass meeting of around 600 men and women held last Thursday and was unanimous.

In a confident and defiant mood, the workers agreed to start a programme of 'in-plant training'. John Brannan, the AEU convenor, in recommending the package to the meeting said the purpose of the retraining idea was to make the workforce as multi-skilled as possible.

"We will be showing typists how to drive tractors, we will be teaching the welders to use the computers and enabling our men and women to add to their already considerable skills."

Ballots held immediately after the meeting revealed total support for the action. The AEU (which is the largest union at Caterpillar) voted by 635 to 34 to accept the retraining introduction package. Similar votes by Apex (11 to 9) and Tass (62 to 8) indicate the almost total support which the occupation committee has from all employees.

Outside the plant support for the occupation grows steadily. Most significantly the feelings of horror at Caterpillar's decision and methods amongst the industrial working class of West Central Scotland in particular are shown by the size of support which other factories have promised.

As a result the Scottish Trades Union Congress has announced that it "Welcomes the decision to occupy the plant and congratulates

the magnificent stand of the workers at Caterpillar and agrees to launch an appeal for £150,000 per week to help finance and continue the occupation."

Again, as a measure of the support amongst workers in the area the occupation committee have collected over £5,600 in the local towns in the past couple of days. Mattie Bradwood, the Apex steward on the committee told me: "We have been almost overwhelmed by the extent of the support and the generosity we have received."

### Wide support

Political support for the occupation was pledged on behalf of 40,000 workers throughout Clydeside at a meeting attended by shop stewards from shipyard, engineering shops, steelworkers and other factories last week. Continuing production in the long term, though the intention of the stewards, may be difficult since management have asked suppliers

not to provide essential parts for tractor assembly. However, a call has already gone out from the workers to all local firms to recognise that the future for them would also be bleak if Caterpillar does close.

The expectations of the stewards at this stage is still that a writ will be sought by Caterpillar bosses to end the occupation. However, to do so at the moment would unleash a ferocious reaction from the embittered workers, unions throughout the country and the whole population.

Support for the Caterpillar workforce has come from all sections of the labour and trade union movement in Scotland and nationally. However, the messages of sympathy received from Malcolm Rifkind and the Tories are treated with a laugh from the occupants. Sammy Logan of the AEU said: "This must be the only occupation and sit-in in history which has been supported by the Tory government. Little sympathy has been shown to

the thousands of workers they have forced on to the dole in the past."

Talks with other companies to buy the plant have been fruitless and the shop stewards committee are prepared for a long dispute, even suggesting that the outcome could be decided by the effects of the general election and a Labour victory.

### Confident

In the meantime, as the Band Aid ideas shows the mood of the men is tremendously confident, defiant and united. They are in a strong position and they know it: "We control the factory, and it is us who produce the tractors not the management" was a typical response of the production line men at a mass meeting, indicating a feeling of elation and command.

Messages of support from LPYS branches and unions throughout the country should be sent to: Thomas Stevenson, 17 Campsie View, Bargedie, Glasgow.

## Right wing defeat in tax union sets scene for civil service campaign

THE RIGHT wing leadership of the Inland Revenue Staff Federation had a bad day at their special pay conference on Tuesday.

Against the executive's "dream package" as delegate Steve Whittle referred to it, conference voted in favour of the Broad Left's demand for a joint pay claim with the CPSA.

The pay package is for £115 minimum wage £20 flat rate for all with a 15 per cent underpinning minimum for higher grades, abolition of increments, 6 weeks annual leave and a 35-hour week.

Although IRSF leaders told delegates that such a united claim was impossible, the day before SCPS, CPSA and Northern Irish union Nipsa had agreed a joint claim, with the CSU likely to follow.

The executive's recommendations were ignored on no less than four occasions. Conference rejected the executive's attempt to downgrade the work of Clerical Assistants to a new low-paid grade.

As Malcolm Tetley said:

"This is the biggest con trick of all time being attempted by the NEC. We expect moves like this from speculators and capitalists, not from the leaders of a responsible trade union." Conference also rejected any introduction of YTS-type schemes into the civil service.

The way is now clear for a joint campaign on a common pay claim by the main civil service unions. Attempts to sabotage such a development by right wing leaderships must be resisted.

The CPSA executive have had the cheek to submit the claim adopted by conference to a consultative exercise of the membership with a closing date of 14 February. This will add a further delay in submitting the claim.

Whilst opposing the exercise as an irrelevant diversion from the struggle for a decent pay rise after policy was agreed by conference the Broad Left must now make sure that it is used to prepare the members for action.

By Bill Boyle

## Solidarity needed with BBC electricians

THE NATIONAL BBC electricians' dispute looks set for a long haul despite the combination of picketing and bad weather which cannot have done Outside Broadcasting (OB) operations much good. And shows like Wogan, Saturday Superstore, Top of the Pops and Eastenders are having to make do with lighting rigs already in place when the strike started.

By Ian Flood  
(Hertsmere LPYS)

The electricians voted three to one for industrial action to restore pay levels by the 17.5 to 20 per cent they have fallen behind the scenery and props workers after their 1984 strike.

The outcome of that dispute was that pay levels were removed from the common grading system for weekly paid workers agreed in 1970 with the Joint Negotiating Unions which was not to be altered without the agreement of all parties.

The EETPU have been trying for two and a half years to get a satisfactory increase to restore differentials with workers on the same grades. After taking the issue through every level of the negotiations the union balloted on industrial action and got a yes vote.

Pickets at the Elstree studio (actually in Borehamwood) where Grange Hill and East Enders are produced, told local Militant supporters that they



Contractors crossing picket line at Elstree studio—this is now happening at Television Centre. The other unions must be asked to stop members working with scabs. Photo: Dave Sinclair

have a regular rota of a five people at a time with picketing from 7am to 2pm and 2pm to 8pm, seven days a week.

BBC management have told workers inside not to help them by bringing out tea but they in turn have persuaded the local postal workers not to deliver mail.

The electricians' work is setting up the lights for 'filming' and then maintenance of the lighting rigs. Production will be hit as the existing rigs need alterations and maintenance.

The other technical staff, who are in BETA (Broadcasting and Entertainment Trades Alliance), have been instructed not to do

the electricians' work.

Their are, however, five contractors employed by William Stewards Ltd scabbing at Elstree. They did not cross the picket line on the first day but were then threatened with the sack and have gone in since. It is also reported that contractors at Television Centre who had been refusing to scab have similarly been pressurised into resuming work on OB.

### Programmes hit

But there has been much successful picketing of this work which has hit the news and a number of programmes in pro-

duction. Already a significant amount of re-scheduling has been forced on BBC management.

A press report has suggested that EETPU officials have put a document to BBC management which proposed acceptance of a productivity deal, including job losses, in return for the wage increase. Whether that would be acceptable to the members is another matter.

But it looks as though BBC management are determined to turn the dispute into a trial of strength—probably reflecting management's desire to assert its 'toughness' following Tebbit's attacks on so-called BBC bias.

### USDW ELECTIONS 1987



26th January to  
2nd March 1987

**VOTE  
GEORGE  
WILLIAMSON**

George has supported many trade unionists in their struggles. Here George addresses a rally in support of the miners at the TUC in 1984.

As a member of the Executive Council GEORGE WILLIAMSON will fight for:-

- £120 for a 35 hour week
- A fightback against redundancies and closures
- A better deal for part-time workers
- A united trade union campaign against low pay - equal pay and conditions for women workers
- The election of a socialist Labour government which represents the interests of working class people
- A union leadership which stands by its members....

## In Brief

300 WORKERS at Glasgow's American owned Craig Nicol refrigeration factory have been on strike for 2 weeks. 15 workers were paid off on Christmas week, and £25 cut off the bonus with virtually no negotiations with the Shop Stewards Committee. The workers have all received a letter from the parent company Hussmans stating that if they do not return to work by Wednesday 21st January they are sacked.

STRIKERS at engineering firm Senior Coleman in Sale, Manchester, are more determined than ever after new attacks by management. To this day they have visited four deaf and dumb workers and threatened that they would never get another job unless they return-

ed to work. Other strikers have been offered extra cash if they return to work immediately. About 20 scabs have been recruited. These, in some cases, have been recruited by going round local pubs. The company are paying these scabs £130 per week. The strikers are on £110.

Although the T&G have agreed to black the factory, some firms may not. Coleman's own drivers are in the United Road Transport Union who refuse to back the strikers. Pickets could be put on the local URTU office.

Cash is urgently needed to: The Strike Committee, 39 Norman Rd. Sale, Cheshire. Tel: 061 998 0032  
By Gordan Cormac

AT COVENTRY Colliery electricians came out on a one day strike on Monday 12 January, calling for the re-instatement of Clive Ham, sacked during the miners' strike. The

workforce gave overwhelming support with only enough men crossing the picket line to have one face working. Management were reported saying that they would re-instate employees who had won their tribunals but would not confirm whether this meant Clive Ham.  
By Paul Sharry

AEU members at Lightning Mixers, Poynton, South Manchester are on strike after a worker was suspended for working to rule in pursuit of their pay claim.

Tass had settled earlier but only 25 per cent of their members are crossing the picket line.

ELECTIONS start this week in shopworkers' union Usdaw. Voting has commenced in the presidential and executive council elections.

Militant supporter George Williamson is standing for

one of the Eastern division executive committee seats. He is chair of the Eastern divisional council and secretary of London Metropolitan branch. He currently represents the union on the executive of the Greater London Labour Party where he is chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

This election is a new departure for the union in that the method of voting has been changed to conform with the 1984 Trade Union Act so it will be conducted through a postal ballot of all members making the outcome very unpredictable.

George is committed to turning the Usdaw executive council into a body which gives a fighting lead to the members, particularly in campaigning for a minimum wage of £120 a week for all Usdaw members.

Jeff Price from Newcastle is the Broad Left candidate for President.



# Telecom strikers organise for victory

## Middlesbrough

NCU MEMBERS at the union's mass meeting in Middlesbrough told *Militant*.

"It was the suspension of three lads who refused to work overtime that sparked off the strike. Overtime has always been voluntary.

"But it's not just this, it's an accumulation of all sorts of things. The management really underestimated the feelings of the workers.

"The faults on the phones have started building up already. The longer faults keep going unrepaired, the more likely it is that a whole exchange will go out. The service will deteriorate. You can't stockpile maintenance."

Since privatisation it's been getting worse. "The management is getting greedier all the time. Morale in the work force has gone right down. It's harder to get all the things you need to do the job properly. We are no longer people but

work units, BT is turning into a cowboy outfit.

"It's more or less the same management as before as well. If it is renationalised we'll need representatives from the union, so we can have a say in what's going on.

"This thing about workers owning a share is rubbish. Most people needed the money and sold their shares. Even if everyone voted the same way we'd have less than 1 per cent of the vote. BT definitely needs to be renationalised under workers' control and management. If it isn't the industry will be wrecked. If we agree to the management's demands, then in 2 to 5 years time we'll be like the rest of Middlesbrough: looking for non-existent jobs."

By Jon and Jamie Driscoll

## Bristol

"IF ANY of your members report to work to deal with an emergency they will be suspended from work." That is a quote from a BT manager in Bristol.

The company want to try to break the NCU to get through their plans for regrading, restructuring, redundancies and automation without any benefit for workers.

We immediately started organising picketing rotas, we

told the DHSS of a trade dispute and set up an advice centre in strike HQ. We intend to involve as many members as possible in the day to day running of the strike with mass meetings at least weekly and daily issues of our regular newsletter distributed by teams of motor cyclists.

We also intend to involve families through support groups. Poverty and isolation won't break us; we intend to win.

By Brian Kelly  
(Bristol NCU)



## Unity is the key

THE NCU strike is practically 100 per cent solid. The sending home of union members made workers very angry and very determined. Management have upped the stakes. But the union must not return to work purely on the basis of BT withdrawing the disciplinary actions. The management must not succeed in their attacks on conditions.

We can win if we are fully united. The three day clerical strike must be extended to an all out strike alongside the engineers. Engineering and clerical workers have made local agreements that there will be no settlement until both sections agree. Both sections' executives must take up this united approach nationally.

Workers are ready to stay out until we get the full ten per cent with no strings. The management are trying to soften up the union for future attacks. They want 20,000 or more redundancies in the next few years, and want a tame unresisting union. We must wreck their plans.

The NCU Broad Left should call a meeting of the best activists in the union. Despite the Broad Left's warnings, John Golding was unprepared for this dispute and is being pushed into action by the rank and file. Build the Broad Left to ensure democratic control of this strike and a resounding victory against the BT bosses and the Tories.

## Local calls



\* BT management are using car hire firms to provide unmarked cars for managers and scab engineers. Un-unionised and relying on a steady stream of unemployed, the strike breakers threaten any driver who refuses to cross a picket line with the sack. One such firm is Miles and Miles of Kensington who are providing scab vehicles for both BBC and BT bosses.

\* A union officer was knocked down by a manager driving through a picket line in Galashiels last Thursday. Dick Martin, secretary of Scottish Borders branch, was not seriously injured and he was able to continue his Union duties.

\* BEFORE THE strike there were 43 non-union members in Blackburn. They have all now joined the NCU and even turned out on the picket line.

One member has been suspended for refusing to work overtime last Saturday. In his 12 years in the job he has never once worked overtime.

By Rossina Harris  
Blackburn

\* The NCU's life and death emergency cover was undermined by BT management in Stirling who suspended the Union's emergency volunteers and took away their vehicle, locker and exchange keys.

## Portsmouth

PICKET LINES have been set up outside all three BT sites in Portsmouth. The antics of management have led to people who left the union 5 years ago, over paying a levy to strikers in a different dispute, rejoining the union and even paying up arrears of their levy!

The strings on the pay offer are outrageous. The main complaint is the treatment of Saturday and Sunday as normal days. Even the policeman on the picket line couldn't believe that—he gets overtime for weekends!

One striker pointed out, that when Thatcher got elected, she said that if companies made a profit, workers should have a share in it. All BT workers are getting from BT's record profits is a kick in the teeth. 40 free shares which can't be sold for two years is not much in exchange for losing weekends and evenings.

By Alison Hill  
(Portsmouth Labour Party, personal capacity)

## Scotland

TELECOM MANAGEMENT in Scotland was slow off the mark in suspending NCU members. The BT Board seemed upset by local management's reluctance to reap the inevitable consequences.

However last Wednesday two Glasgow cable jointers were sent home without pay for refusing to work overtime. Over 2,000 engineers immediately started an indefinite strike later joined by the rest of the West of Scotland and East of Scotland Districts.

As the week finished only the North of Scotland had not been hit with suspensions. Probably fearing repercus-

sions in the oil industry, it seems management gave members an assurance that they would not be forced to work overtime! The northern workers however joined the national strike.

Already branches have appointed welfare benefit officers and picket coordinators, who ensure that all possible worksites are covered. Local authorities have also been approached both for support and help in matters such as rents, rates and welfare benefits.

If the strike is not successfully concluded soon then branches will implement contingency plans for collections, benefit nights and possibly support groups.

By Donald MacDonald  
(Stirling NCU personal capacity)

## Preston

TONY MONKS, secretary of Preston NCU branch and District Chairman covering Lancashire and Cumbria spoke to *Melanie Horridge, Preston LPYS*.

"THE STRIKE here is 100 per cent and many non-union members rejoined throughout the week. The only disappointing factor was the lack of support from the STE.

"Emergency cover was withdrawn when management broke the agreement by certain managers doing NCU members' work. BT says they are going to maintain emergency cover, but our members treat every customer, residential or business, as 'emergency' and deplored the district management's decision to send 3,000 people home.

"All the union's members in Preston attended a mass meeting last Thursday and marched down to the district office chanting and jeering at the District board. Over the weekend the district manager sent out a letter to all members' homes in an attempt to get them back. No members have returned."

## Bosses' sabotage

BT BOSSES have accused strikers of acts of 'sabotage' such as supergluing locks. But Mick Ryan, chair of NCU Westminster district council told *Militant* reporters who's sabotaging who.

"Myself, my brother who is also an NCU secretary and his chairman found out that our home lines were about to be cut off. We complained to the District Manager and he had to apologise. He'd been found out. Locally our union offices had their doors padlocked and facilities taken away.

"It's the members' strike. The strings, especially the threats to the gains of 1982 such as the 9 day fortnight particularly angered us. Without any discussion they put us back on 5 day week (or 7 if they wanted it). It could be a long dispute and it will need determined leadership. But we won't go back with those strings."

## Stafford

PAUL LEE NCU committee member told Judy Griffiths Stafford UCUW that tensions had been building up over the last few months. Since privatisation, management had tried to boost profits by cutting costs any way they could.

BT were hypocritical to highlight elderly people's suffering. They had stopped engineers installing equipment for chronically sick and disabled in their lunchtime so that the labour charge could be waived.

Paul said it was deliberate BT policy to encourage a delayed fault repair service to provoke customers into paying for the new four tier fault maintenance agreements. Lecturers at a tech college in Stone had been asked to clear faults showing how the strike was biting.

The union had approached Central TV to put the their case but they said "We've been told to play it down" So much for TV news impartiality.

## In Brief Crosville

200 bus drivers sacked by Merseyside bus company Crosville have occupied their Love Lane depot in Liverpool.

They have been on strike for two weeks after refusing to drive second hand buses without power steering bought from a 'scrap dealer' in Northwich.

Brian Ford, Crosville shop steward told *Militant*: "If we accept this, what else will management expect us to do." Their dismissal notices had three dates on, with two crossed out, indicating management had been planning the sackings. Management have now taken out a writ against the workers.

The strike has been made official by TGWU region 6. The drivers are picketing other depots in the Wirral and Cheshire and there have already been solidarity stoppages. A mass meeting will be held on Monday.

## West Yorks

AS BUS deregulation came into force in West Yorkshire today it was met by an all-out strike. It was in protest at both deregulation and the sacking of York TGWU bus branch secretary Derek Smallwood.

The cause of the sacking was supposedly an advert in the local paper inviting bus users to a public meeting to discuss the increasing level of complaints about bus services.

The meeting was called by the local union branch in York but by mistake it did not make clear it was called by the union. Derek Smallwood was sacked for gross industrial misconduct for use of the company logo without permission.

Yet management also threatened him with the sack if he attended the meeting, which was on his rest day.

The strike covers Bradford, Keighley, Otley, Leeds and York. Workers are wondering whether this provocation is an attempt to force down the price of the company prior to a management buy-out.

By Keith Narey

## NUPE strike

THIRTEEN STAFF at the Sutcliffe Rhodes Nursing Home, Oxford Road, Southport, have been sacked after they walked out of work because of appalling conditions.

Nupe members, they have set up a 24 hour picket outside th Home, with the help of an ambulance obtained by the union for them to sleep in at night. So far binmen and telephone engineers (before they went on strike themselves) have refused to cross the picket line.

The conditions in the Home are horrific. Patients are charged in the region of £170 to £180 per week. For that, last week they were served up stew three times—without potatoes.

One cabbage and three 2lb chickens feed 35 patients. One patient doesn't like beans so has had bread and jam for tea for six days. They are only allowed five hot drinks a day and are not allowed more tea or bread.

One person's bed sheets haven't been changed for seven weeks. Even toilet rolls are rationed.

The money being saved on patients certainly isn't being spent on wages. Most staff are paid £1.65 to £1.75 per hour, with the maximum around £2.05 although they are paid differently.

Support and donations to: Martin O'Donnell (NUPE branch secretary), 50 Poulton Rd, Southport.



# Militant

**Rosa Luxemburg**  
murdered  
revolutionary



—page 7

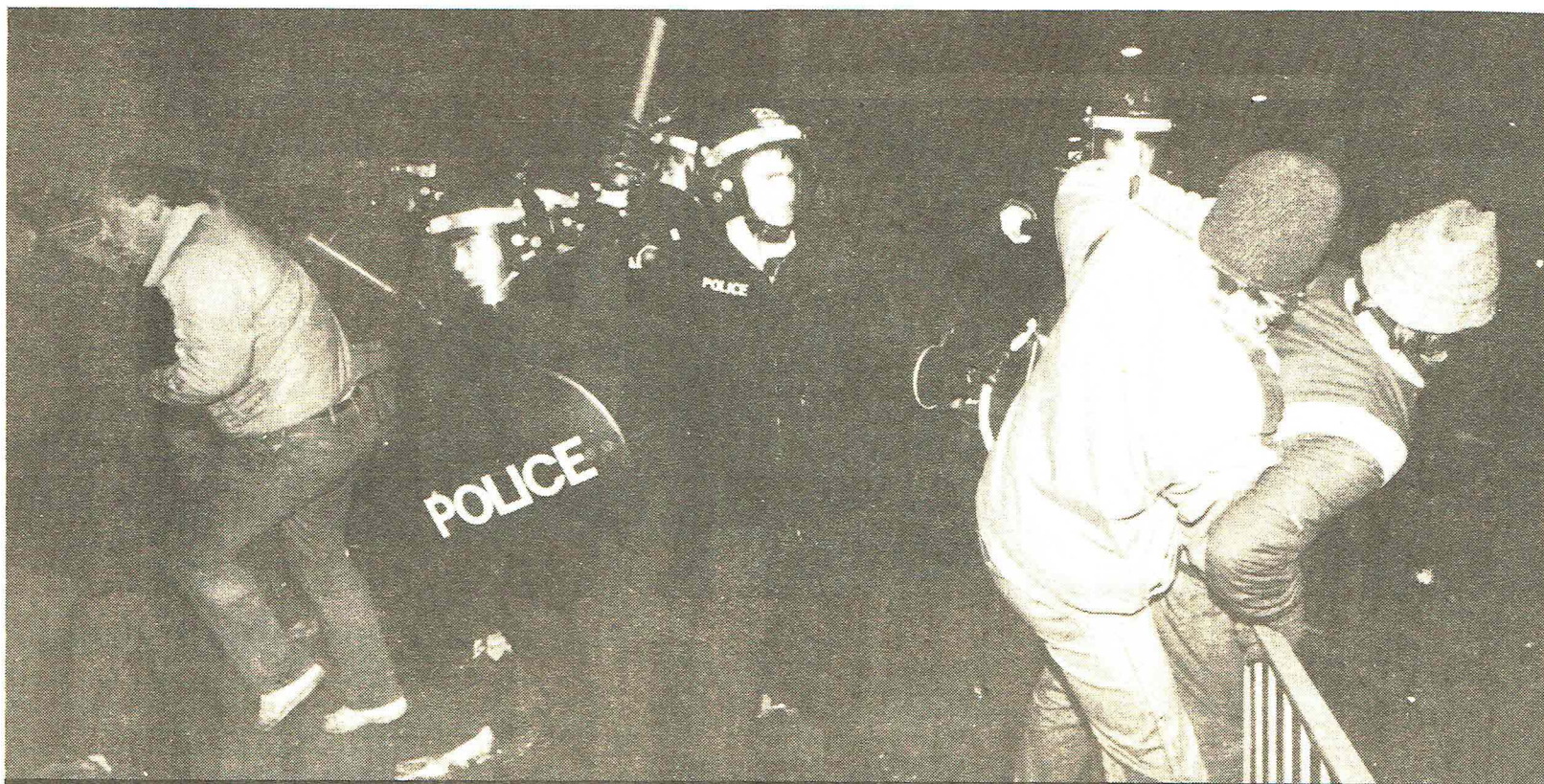


Photo: Andrew Ward (Report)

## What We Stand for

- The immediate introduction of a 35-hour week without loss in pay as a step towards the elimination of unemployment.
- Reversal of all Tory cuts and a massive programme of public works on housing, education, the health service, etc.
- A minimum wage of £120 a week for all, including pensioners, sick and disabled people.
- A socialist plan of production democratically drawn up and implemented by committees involving the trade unions, shop stewards, housewives and small businessmen.
- Opposition to the capitalist Common Market, the EEC. For a socialist United States of Europe as a step towards a World Socialist Federation.
- Workers' management of the nationalised industries. These should be run on the basis of one-third of the places on the management board coming from the unions in the industry, one-third from the TUC representing the working class as a whole, and one-third from the government.
- Opposition to the Tory government's anti-union laws and the reversal of attacks on the trade unions.
- Massive cuts in arms spending. Support for unilateral nuclear disarmament, but with the recognition that only a socialist change of society in Britain and internationally can eliminate the danger of a nuclear holocaust.
- Nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies, including the banks and insurance companies which control 80 per cent to 85 per cent of the economy. This should be through an Enabling Bill in Parliament with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need.

# Police riot in Wapping

Riot police attack demonstrators on Wapping demo.

**IN THE worst violence yet at Wapping riot police went wild, indiscriminately and repeatedly attacking the demonstration, and provoking a pitched battle for two hours.**

**By Sean Kelly**  
(Hackney N LPYS)

Over 20,000 marched to Wapping a year on from the start of the strike, when Rupert Murdoch sacked 5,000 printers.

The demonstration, determined and good humoured, had barely arrived at the plant when it turned into a bitter confrontation, entirely provoked by the police.

When pickets overturned a van, it was the signal for repeated and brutal charges on the crowd. The police didn't appear to be arresting anyone in particular, but charged in, forcing the crowd back, hitting wildly with shields and truncheons, and then retreating.

The crowd then surged forward again. A pause, before the police repeated the charge—at one time when no one was expecting it as they listened to a speech. On one such occasion a demonstrator five yards from myself, was knocked to the ground by a police truncheon, and then hit three or four times whilst

on the ground. He was later carried away with a bleeding head.

As a result the mood of the crowd turned very angry. Youth and older workers were united in their determination to hit back at the police. I have never seen such a mood in Britain.

The police were clearly identified with the state; and the state with protecting Murdoch. Workers were visibly shocked by the actions of the police.

### Pitched battle

By 9.15pm, after several mounted charges, a pitched battle was going on between workers and police.

As you looked across the Highway you could see similar battles taking place on at least four fronts. Horses, and snatch squads were running into the crowd every few minutes. People

were being carried to ambulances.

At 10.00pm the police obviously took a decision to try and rout the whole demonstration. We were suddenly surrounded. Part of the crowd was forced behind buses and refreshment vans, but were followed by the police, who broke the windows of one bus where children were sheltering—they hid under the seats, terrified. Red paint was being sprayed on demonstrators by the police, and later many were arrested at the tube stations going home.

As I left and walked up the street a bloke was crippled up against an iron fence. Print workers were confronting individual police officers, asking them whose side they were on, and I heard one worker shout back with real anger "We were brought up to respect you bastards..." And another reminding them what the battle was all about—jobs—and whose jobs they were doing. The police looked rattled!

(More reports page 3)

## Newham strike against cuts

ON APRIL Fools' day Newham council will be £35 million short of the money it needs just to get by. Then, the full effects of the Tories' rate capping policies will hit this East London borough.

All Newham council workers are going on strike for one day, 4 February.

Newham has some of the worst education and housing problems in the country, yet it is at the top of the government's hit list with rates being cut by a massive 26.4 per cent.

No-one wants huge rate bills, but the government's rate capping will ruthlessly cut the borough's jobs and services. Newham planned to spend £5 million on repairing its run down schools this year—but now it can only spend £1.2 million and £880,000 is already allocated. A recent report said that to replace just 20 of the borough's decrepit 25

pre-1914 schools would cost £46 million.

Labour's leaders have told councillors to 'hold the line'. But if the councillors are to stay true to the electors then they should hold the line against the cuts. At the very least they should be telling the truth. How many workers would have to go? How many schools would have to close?

If the council is opposed to cuts then it must mean they are not going to implement them. There must be a united struggle by all councils threatened with rate capping and Tory cuts to make the government pay for local jobs and services.

**By Pat Heron**

(Newham councillor, personal capacity)

**March against the cuts. 4 February, 12 noon. Start Central Park, East Ham**

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