

### Militant Fighting Fund

£250,000

250,000

240,000

230,000

220,000

210,000

200,000

190,000

180,000

170,000

160,000

150,000

140,000

130,000

120,000

110,000

100,000

90,000

80,000

70,000

60,000

50,000

40,000

30,000

20,000

10,000

### £200,000 reached

A GROUP of London NCU members, have donated £36 to our fighting fund despite the hardship of the strike. Jenny McGuire of Deptford gave a week's wages £92. This takes our total to a brilliant £203,727. Keep the money flowing in for a more frequent *Militant*.

# Jobless told work for nothing

WE WANT  
A REAL JOB!  
WE WANT  
A FUTURE!

**THE TORIES** have a new threat for the young unemployed—work for your dole money or have your benefit withdrawn.

A trial scheme is running in nine areas for young people from 18 to 25 who have been unemployed from six to twelve months. The Tories disguise this plan, the Job Training Scheme (JTS) as giving a real qualification. But workers will only receive six hours a week off the job training.

During the scheme, they receive only their state benefit plus travel expenses. After six months to a year on the scheme they get a certificate; it will be worse than useless. Employers can ignore the 'qualification' and take on more slaves from the JTS.

### Wages 'banned'

In Dundee, the trial area in Scotland, only Workstart, a voluntary organisation have so far placed 500 'trainees' with businesses, usually non union firms.

The Dundee Job Centre has banned 18-25 year olds from MSC schemes which pay wages. Instead they will be asked to take a JTS placement, ie to work for their benefits. A person considered to be avoiding work by turning down JTS will have her or his benefit stopped.

Labour movement opposition is growing locally with meetings, leaflets around the dole queues and pickets of Workstart.

On Friday 20 February at

By Harvey Duke

2.30pm in the AEU Hall, Dundee Trades council, the TGWU and the local Resources Centre have organised a mass meeting of shop stewards from all unions.

We will work out a joint strategy and contact other areas with trial schemes—Billingham (Teesside) Preston, Huddersfield, Stoke, Port Talbot, Plymouth, Ealing and Crawley (Sussex).

At the end of March the scheme goes national. 110,000 unemployed will be pressurised into working for dole money. There is no extra cash in the MSC budget so jobs which pay wages will be slashed.

NALGO the white collar union has told members not to co operate with the scheme. Tayside TGWU voluntary sector branch has sent a resolution to Dundee Labour Party calling for all Labour local authorities to boycott JTS. Other areas should do the same.

The LPYS is holding a public meeting. This is one of the biggest threats facing the labour movement. Local parties, the YS and unions should be preparing for a national campaign. No to JTS slave labour! Yes to real jobs and proper wages!





# Militant

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## The lessons of the News International print strike

THE SACKED News International printers were fighting to defend gains won over decades of sacrifice. The bosses blamed the print workers' 'restrictive practices' and their refusal to accept change and new technology for the dispute.

But for the press barons, new technology is a way to increase profits. Murdoch has doubled his profit to £2 million a week by the use of scabs. What was really behind this dispute was the bosses' right to print lies and distort the truth. The unions had the power to control some of the worst abuses with their right to hire and fire. But the media is an important weapon for the ruling class in their struggle to maintain the domination over the working class. This element of workers' control which posed such a threat had to be contained.

The print workers were also fighting for a basic trade union right—the closed shop. Murdoch had prepared the ground to take on the unions. The new anti-trade union laws, introduced by the Tories, altered the balance in a conventional industrial struggle in favour of the bosses.

The nature of the struggle had changed. The unions' tactics should also have changed. There were numerous warnings of the pending conflict but these were ignored. If decisive action had been taken earlier then the whole strike could have been avoided. Hesitations and weakness on the part of the unions gave Murdoch the confidence to act. Murdoch's forces had been concentrated into Wapping. His weakness was elsewhere. The whole News International empire should have been put under siege. But the threats of sequestration hemmed the union in around the confines of Wapping.

The police played their role as security guards, and their brutality in dealing with the marchers, pickets and supporters had to be seen to be believed.

*Militant* had constantly urged the use of the one asset the courts couldn't sequester—the solidarity of the print workers. To win a victory the strike had to be extended to the other sections. The most vulnerable were the Fleet Street workers, who should have taken solidarity action. The union leaders ran scared, conceding to the demands of other proprietors many of which were similar to Murdoch's. This has resulted in the loss of over 10,000 jobs in Fleet Street. Even extending action to the 'Street' would have stepped up the tempo of the dispute and concentrated the minds of the other newspaper owners and the Tories.

This, along with blacking by other print workers employed by Murdoch or producing his material, should have been the first step. The union leaders pushed the boycott campaign instead of relying on the printers' industrial strength. Two weeks ago they admitted it was having little effect. The dispute ended with the union leaders running from sequestration. Now all court actions against the union have been dropped. The injunction has served its purpose.

It should be remembered that two print workers, Mike Hicks and Bob Shirfield, are still in jail. Of the 1,300 people arrested many have yet to come to trial. Mike Hicks, *Militant* supporter Peter Jarvis and four others face civil action by Murdoch's distribution company TNT. Some face conspiracy allegations and all could face heavy financial penalties. The lessons of the dispute must be learned by all workers. Resolutions on the issue should be put to every union conference, and a campaign continued in the whole movement to fully understand these events.

The EETPU colluded with management to provide a scab workforce. The TUC general council refused to take action against the electricians' leader, nor has it given concrete aid in the fight. There will be talk in some of the print unions of withdrawing from the TUC—but this would be a mistake. It is not the print unions which should withdraw, but the EETPU which should be expelled.

One picket commented: "It is a shame the plant is operated by scabs. Murdoch was able to beat us because he had another printing plant. Now he has all his eggs in one basket—Wapping."

The printers must start preparing for the next battle now. The national conferences of the print unions should be reconvened and a new strategy, that will ensure victory in the future, must be discussed. If the present policies are maintained then more defeats will follow.

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National Union of Railwaymen banners lead last Saturday's march to Wapping.

Photo: Andrew Ward (Report)

# After Wapping

## Printers' bitter legacy

LIZ SHORT, deputy Mother of the Chapel (MOC) for *Times* clerical, spoke to *Militant* after the SOGAT National Executive Committee abandoned the News International strikers.

"After a year of struggle, and all our efforts, we have been dropped by Brenda Dean in the same way as Murdoch ditched us. We got in the way of her plans for the union, just as we got in the way of Murdoch's plans for his newspapers.

"She believes that she has saved Sogat 82 by avoiding sequestration. But unless there is a change of strategy she will be presiding over the destruction of our union. Now any employer, however small, can and will threaten legal

THE BATTLE of Wapping is over. After one of the most bitter struggles in the history of the British trade unionism, Murdoch has for the present won his chief aim in breaking effective trade union strength on his titles.

The year long fight put up by the 5,500 sacked printers has shown the combativity of the working class. Known as the 'aristocracy of labour' the News International Fleet Street workers did everything they were asked and more.

But this is by no means the end of the battle. The newspaper bosses may temporarily have the upper hand, but the issues will have to be fought again on different ground. The print workers and print unions need to prepare the strategy and tactics capable of meeting this new situation.

action and the union will back down.

"Dean promised at the beginning that the members would decide when it ended. It was ended by her running to the press and TV, before even consulting with us.

"The national union has been unwilling to oppose the trade union laws and rejected the policies that would have given us the chance of victory.

"Nationally the production of all Murdoch's products should have been stopped. Then extending the strike to a national dispute and getting Fleet

Street to strike in their own interests as well as ours.

"Dubbins has been just as bad. He hid behind Dean's skirt tails, also frightened of sequestration.

"At the moment I feel rather numb....we all do. I feel very bitter. However, we must now fight to change the union's policies so we can defend the union from further attacks.

"The leadership must also be made accountable for their actions at both national and local level. The officials must carry out the policies of the branch delegate meeting.

Peter needs cash to win the case and prove his innocence. Legal fees are already over £1,500, and if the case goes to trial the fee will treble.

Please send messages of support and cash to Peter Jarvis Defence Fund, Eastway Offset chapel, 3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB.

- More than 120,000 police days given over to the struggle to retain 'law and order'.

- £14m policing bill—£4.6 m of it overtime.

- 1,462 arrests.

- One death—Michael Delaney, 19, when he slipped under the wheels of a Murdoch truck on his way home from a party. He was not connected with the dispute.

JIM BROOKSHAW sacked AEU Father of Chapel (FOC) on the *Times* told *Militant* what he felt after the dispute was ended.

"Our chapel was really disgusted in the way the dispute ended. For us it was not to be finished until we had discussed it and voted on it.

"We have now sent our union officials to negotiate the best possible deal.

"We will act as a disciplined body. The forms accepting the compensation offer will be collected and delivered back by the FOCs.

"We will continue to meet as a chapel to sort out any problems and pursue the question of employment.

"News International has stated that there will be no victimisation and everybody will be free to apply for jobs in Wapping.

"No doubt some of our members will test the water at the first opportunity."

## Defence fund

THE USE of the law has been one of the main weapons used by the bosses in the Wapping dispute, both against individuals and unions.

NGA member Peter Jarvis is facing civil action by TNT, the Murdoch connected transport company. He has been accused of acts of criminal damage after allegedly being indentified by a TNT employee from a portrait in *Militant*. The police have dropped proceedings but TNT is pursuing the case.

MEMBERS OF the Labour Party Young Socialists are urged to get to the following Style Council concerts to sell papers and recruit new members. They start at 7.30, except the London one at 8pm.

## The Style Council The General Election Tour

Newport Centre  
 Saturday 14th Sunday  
 15th February

Birmingham NEC  
 Saturday 21st  
 February Sunday 22nd  
 February

Royal Albert Hall  
 Monday 16th Tuesday  
 17th Wednesday 18th  
 Thursday 19th February

Brighton Centre  
 Tuesday 24th  
 February

Bournemouth  
 Friday 20th February  
 Glasgow SEC  
 Saturday 28th

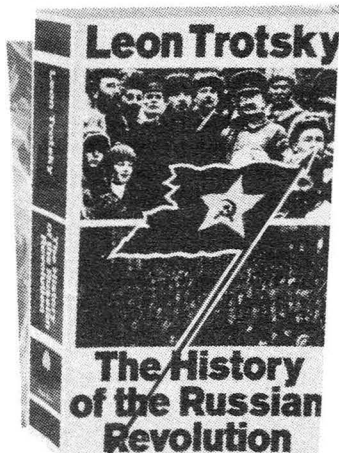
Newcastle City Hall  
 Thursday 26th Friday  
 27th February

## Special offer

### History of the Russian Revolution

Leon Trotsky

Only £8  
 World Socialist Books  
 (add £1 for postage)





# Free councils from debt burden...

LABOUR'S LOCAL government conference in Leeds was used by the leadership to launch the general election campaign and to mount an attack on the record of the Tories.

There was a feeling among left-wing representatives, however, that this attack was not backed up by a programme to solve the problems facing Labour councils.

In his keynote speech, Neil Kinnock said that the Tories had been at war with local authorities for seven years; there had been 14 bills to emasculate councils and £21.9 billion of rate support grant had been stolen. At the same time, he said, there had been tax handouts to the top five per cent of £24.5 billion.

Councils have run up debts of over two billion pounds in defending jobs and services. This year alone eight London boroughs are trying to bridge a deficit of £300 million.

One of the major themes at the weekend was the proposed use of local government to create jobs. Out of the million new jobs that are proposed, 300,000 are earmarked for councils. But this would clearly be impossible while councils are saddled with these massive debts. Proposals outlined by Jack Straw to allow rescheduling of the debt and a relaxation of borrowing restrictions are welcome, but that can only be a start.

## Million jobs

At present more than quarter of local authority budgets go back to the money-lenders. Straw's proposals would increase this proportion. As the leader of Camden council put it (they have had £131 million stolen): "We are fed up with being the sticking plaster of capitalism". Ted Knight, former leader of Lambeth council added: "If Nicholas Ridley can put a bill before parliament in 24 hours to make him a legal thief, then we can expect a Labour



Council workers march to demand a fair deal for Newham. See story below.

government to act as quickly for us."

The Labour leaders must be committed to return all the £21.9 billion taken by the Tories, and to remove all penalties imposed on Liverpool and Lambeth councillors who have been surcharged and disqualified for carrying out party policy. Liverpool has shown the way, with its insistence on building houses, improving services and creating jobs.

But the central demand on the next Labour government must be to free councils from the yoke of the market economy. This will mean the nationalisation of the banks and insurance companies as part of a socialist plan. This would enable a socialist government to wipe out the councils' debts at a stroke and then provide interest-free loans for housing and other necessary projects.

For the first time, local authorities would then be free from the anarchy of the market and could really plan to meet people's needs.

By Davy Brown

## ...but not by raising taxes

**ROY HATTERSLEY** has performed an action replay of his spectacular own goal for Labour. At the party's local government conference he repeated his promise that a Labour government would reverse any income tax cuts made by the Tories in the budget in March.

Nothing could be more calculated to give back to the Tories some of the support they have lost since 1983. It will certainly not inspire a wave of enthusiasm for Labour.

There is no objection to higher taxes for the very rich, but none of Hattersley's arguments justify a Labour government reimposing taxes across the board. They should be promising them lower taxes.

It is true that Tory tax cuts will help those already better off. Since 1979, the top one hundred thousandth of earners have become 202 per cent better off, while the bottom tenth of earners are on-

ly 2.9 per cent wealthier. Further tax cuts will reinforce this tendency towards greater inequality.

It is also the case that within a capitalist system, tax cuts will lead to far fewer jobs than if the money were used on public expenditure. Hattersley estimates that £3 billion of tax cuts would create 40,000 jobs whereas 'targetted' public expenditure would create 300,000.

## Constraints

The basic flaw in Hattersley's argument, however, is that he sees the next Labour government operating within the constraints of capitalism. He accepts as fixed the amount of money available for either tax cuts or public spending. So he has to reassure big business that he is not promising more than he will be able to 'afford' within the present financial limits.

But the total amount of

wealth available is far greater. It is the capitalist market economy and the need to make profits which restrict production. If a Labour government were to take over the capitalist monopolies, banks and insurance companies which stifle the potential production, and plan the economy under democratic workers' control would be no problem.

Production could be increased, first by using the 20-30 per cent of existing capacity which is not being used and then by expanding capacity by investment in new technology. It would then be possible both to cut workers' taxes, and massively increase public spending on vital services and create jobs.

That is the programme on which Labour has fought if it is to win back voters and seal the Tories' fate.

By Pat Craven



THE GOVERNMENT has introduced legislation to abolish the £25 universal maternity grant and the system of supplementary benefit single payments for maternity. They are to be replaced with a maximum £80 for people receiving the new 'income support' or family credit.

Dave Nellist, Labour MP for Coventry South East, spoke in the debate:

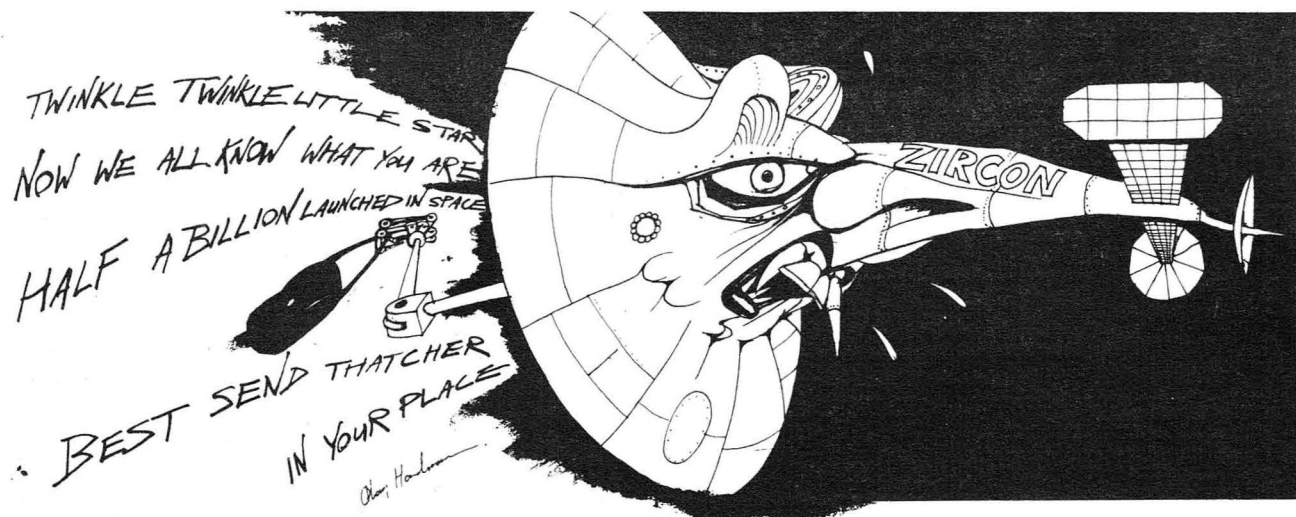
"We have the first woman Prime Minister in Britain but she has shown through sponsorship of the bill and in previous acts that she is ruthless in reversing the gains made by working class women in the past few decades.

"The Health Education Council gives every expectant mother a list of the items which she should get before her baby is born. That list adds up to £376.46, yet we are talking about only £80 being given to meet the needs of working class women.

"The original amount of benefit is £25. My wife and I had a baby some 18 months ago and we received the £25 benefit. We were only able to buy two maternity bras, a box of breast pads, some sanitary towels and enough wool to make the baby's first cardigan. That is all that the £25 bought. All the other essential items will not be covered even if the grant is increased to £80."

## Victory

WALTER YAO, the Ghanaian whose struggle against deportation from Britain was taken up by Terry Fields MP, has won the right to stay. Walter thanks everyone who campaigned on his behalf.



## Zircon—Tory status symbol

THE GOVERNMENT'S frenzied efforts to hide the news of the £500 million Zircon spy satellite has failed. They have banned the BBC's 'Secret Society' programme, but the film has been shown to overflow audiences in London and other major cities.

Now we can see the real reason why the government panicked. The programme shows there was no threat to 'national security'. Nowhere does it detail the satellite's technical capacities. It merely says it is a device for

GCHQ to listen in to Russian broadcasts. Professor Jeff Richardson admits in the programme that as soon as it is up in orbit the Russians will monitor it and know that it is a SIGINT or listening satellite.

Sir Frank Cooper, former permanent secretary for defence, said that "school children in Milton Keynes" could find out the position of everyone's satellite, as of course could the school children in Leningrad, Budapest etc.

The programme has not

given away anything that the Russians either don't know or won't know shortly. The real reason for the ban is the £500 million it is rumoured to cost. The secret is being kept from us; parliament has had no discussion on it. The Tories are afraid of a storm of protest at spending half a billion on something US satellites do already, while health, education, and the jobs are neglected.

Zircon is no more than a "status symbol". British capitalism is completely in the pocket of American

defence strategy. Thatcher wails about 'national security', but miners, print workers, GCHQ trade unionists and radical journalists know which 'nation' Thatcher defends—that of the rich and powerful.

Labour must come off the fence and Neil Kinnock must stop agreeing with Thatcher about threats to 'national security'. The united power of the working class is the only defence of workers' democracy and security.

By Pete Watson

## Newham Council make tenants pay

LAST WEDNESDAY over 13,000 Newham council employees took strike action and 6-10,000 took part in a march and rally calling for a "Fair Deal for Newham". It was the largest demo in the borough for decades, with the manual unions well represented, showing a determination by workers to fight cuts in council spending.

Despite this overwhelming support, the Council's Labour Group has voted to hit local council tenants with a £3 rent rise.

The council faces a crisis, with a shortfall in the budget of some £33 million due to rate-capping. This is the Tories' answer to the problems of the second poorest borough in Britain which faces enormous education and housing problems.

Even the £3 rent rise will provide a mere £3.5 million revenue for the council, and will enrage many of the very

people they need to win over to fight the government. The council has already made it clear they intend to 'balance the books', in other words implement 'humane cuts' 'as gently as possible'.

This step back from confrontation with the government will hit the poorest sections of the community. The council will have an impossible task to win the backing of the local workforce and tenants if it continues on the road of cuts.

Many cuts are proposed; in education there are moves to worsen teacher-pupil ratios, end swimming classes and close school nurseries (80 per cent of the nursery provision in the borough).

As two tenants' associations reps commented at the meeting: "They're supposed to be working for us...I bet they're Tories—I ain't."

By Anne Lewin  
(Newham NE LPYS)



# The LPYS replies to proposed attack on Win youth vote for

A general election is getting closer each day. Labour should be urgently turning its attention to winning the essential youth vote and mobilising the willing forces of the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) to inspire young voters to come out on the day.

But the National Executive Committee's (NEC) latest proposals, initiated by ex-left, Tom Sawyer, are an attempt to tie the LPYS into a political straitjacket.

Overwhelmingly young people put Labour well ahead of the Tories. But a majority polled, do not intend voting. They do not see the point.

There is no time to lose. The NEC cannot be allowed to waste valuable campaigning time, threatening the democracy and identity of the Young Socialists.

A period of consultation on these proposals with local parties, unions and the YS has now been opened, but it ends on 22 May.

Party members and Young Socialists must alert every organisation of the labour movement to reply, in time, to the NEC. They must prevent this attack on the YS being sneaked through the back door. Rather than curbing the LPYS, they must demand more resources and facilities for winning youth to Labour and socialism.

Below, LPYS members past and present outline how Labour's youth should be built.



Above and far right: Labour Party Young Socialists on the march, October 1986.

## Sawyer's proposals—treading same old path

THE WHOLE history of Labour's youth has been of active, left wing youth organisations facing attempts to stifle them by party officialdom. But what should alarm Labour workers is that each time political attacks have been launched against the youth section, the

party has failed at the polls, and particularly it has failed to capture the imagination of young people.

Davy Dick, a member of the LPYS national committee 1968-70 looks back at the struggle to develop a socialist youth movement.

The Party's first youth section, the Labour League of Youth, was set up in 1923. It was not allowed to have a national organisation or committee nor was it allowed control over its own paper, 'New Nation'. And until 1926 the age limit was 21.

By the 1930s relations between Transport House (Labour Party HQ) and the youth movement had reached rock bottom. The League of Youth supported the United Left Front, with the Communist Party and in 1938 it was disbanded. All that remained were individual youth sections in constituencies, without any structure or contact.

By 1945 the youth movement had begun to pull itself together. However the age limit was again kept at 21 until 1948, and discussion of policy matters was strongly discouraged.

During the 1950s a witch-hunting atmosphere was rife in the party. The League of Youth was attacked along with the rest of the left. In 1949 League members demanded a democratic structure including;

- ★ an annual delegate conference.
- ★ an executive committee elected by conference.
- ★ a seat on the NEC for the League.
- ★ control of League publications.

The NEC's response was to close the more militant youth sections. By 1955 the League of Youth had been organised almost out of existence and was formally disband-

ed by the NEC.

Labour's right wing policies led to three successive general election defeats during the 1950s, and without a campaigning youth section Labour had fared particularly badly among the first and second time voters. The 1959 Party conference conducted a post mortem on that year's election defeat. It heard an NEC Working Party recommend a national structure for the youth.

The new Young Socialists was born in a time of great turmoil for Labour. The 1960 Party conference had voted in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament, a policy which the vast majority of YS members supported. The right wing under Gaitskell vowed to overturn it.

### Radical

The YS were to pay for their radical political attitudes. The YS paper, 'New Advance', would not be under the control of the YS. A national conference was allowed, but all delegates and resolutions from branches had to be agreed by their constituency Labour parties.

In 1965, the YS was renamed 'The Labour Party Young Socialists'. A tight control was still kept over the youth. Two discussion documents would be presented to each LPYS conference, written by Transport House and only resolutions with special concern to youth would be discussed. The problems of society at large, the need

for socialist policies should not apparently 'concern' young party activists. The LPYS National Committee was not elected by the LPYS but picked by the adult regional executives.

However, prior to the 1970 general election concessions were given and the LPYS were allowed to elect their own National Committee and write their own documents and present them to conference.

'Focus' was replaced by a new paper 'Left', whose editor was elected by the LPYS National Committee.

These measures appeared just in time to arrest the serious decline of the LPYS which had taken place under its unaccountable right wing leadership. For years there had been no national campaigning work, no national activities.

The number of delegates to the 1970 YS conference, after years of continual decay, had reached an all time low of 126 with 361 visitors. But that conference, chaired by Davy Dick, marked a turning point in the fortunes of the youth movement.

On the basis of genuine democracy in the LPYS, Marxism had won a firm majority. Every year since 1970, the LPYS has organised at least two or three major national events, with increasing support—the 1971 demonstration had 1,500 attending, while the 1986 demonstration had 10,000 marchers.

A campaigning socialist youth

movement is being constructed, that is outgoing, optimistic, confident in the working class and above all absolutely committed to the need to change society along socialist lines.

However, despite the lessons of the past the youth are faced with yet more measures directed against them. Tom Sawyer's proposals are just the old formulas from 1923 repeated in vain over the years.

His proposal that 'the main emphasis of the LPYS activities should be on youth culture' is a return to 20 years ago when 'Focus' wrote of the YS: "We are not dismal Jimmies who spend every night of the week plotting the revolution. We have our fun—dances, barbecues, bowling, parties, trips abroad—and if the truth were known, we are probably just as good a marriage bureau as the Young Conservatives."

British youth are concerned with unemployment, YTS conditions, nuclear weapons and a host of issues, far beyond Tom Sawyer's contrived limits of 'youth culture'. And they want answers from the Labour Party.

The Tom Sawyer proposals are nothing new. Nor are the reasons they are being put forward. The right wing of the 1950s and 1960s had no answers to socialist policies but expulsion and repression. At an NEC meeting last year, Sawyer was reported as saying: "it is impossible to beat *Militant* socialist views by argument."

But political ideas cannot be defeated with repression. That is true in Chile, South Africa or Poland. And it is true in our own Labour Party!

The youth of our party will keep reasserting itself, because the future of youth depends on a Labour victory, with socialist policies which will radically alter the way the country is owned and run.

## YS—plugged in to Telecom strike

DURING THE Telecom strike the LPYS have continued their record of supporting all workers in struggle.

Russell Taylor and Wendy Milne, Livingston North LPYS (personal capacity) report: "LPYS members have been at the forefront of initiating support and have been greeted enthusiastically by the pickets throughout the Lothians. In West Lothian, the regional secretary of the NCU phoned a leading YS member in Livingston to congratulate the YS for its support with the comments, 'the first group to respond' and 'you organise the public meetings and we will send the speakers because you know better than us how to organise a campaign.'"

"Collections and support are being organised by the local LPYS branches in the East of Scotland and the NCU has already agreed to hold these collections jointly in a number of areas."

The results of such solidarity can be seen by a letter received by John Ellen, National Chair of the LPYS:

"Please could you send me some details on how I can join the Labour Party Young Socialists. I recently attended the 'Red Wedge' event in Oxford and thoroughly enjoyed myself, as well as finding the evening very informative. I am a member of the National Communications Union and we spend quite a lot of time on the picket lines discussing your Party and its ideas etc. I think more and more of our members are becoming fed up with our present situation and are very interested in your ideas on privatisation. Keep up the good work, Mark Bentley."



# democracy

# Labour

**Militant is reprinting a letter being circulated throughout the labour movement by the LPYS, detailing their answer to the NEC's proposals.**

THE ELECTION of a Labour government could depend on the 6.2 million 18-25 year olds. Yet 60 per cent say they will not vote. Only 1.1 million intend to vote Labour.

As a priority, the party must launch a campaign to win this age group, highlighting our commitment to a £27 a week grant for all young people over 16 in full-time education, and for a minimum wage, as the majority of young people are now low paid. The LPYS are laying down plans in every constituency to canvass the youth vote, and persuade a majority not only to vote Labour but to actually join us and campaign for Labour. The election year will give us an enormous opportunity to build.

However the NEC has taken the decision to plunge the entire movement, into a constitutional discussion on the LPYS. We have made it clear, that we welcome the discussion on what type of youth movement Labour needs. We are more than willing to discuss how we achieve the increased participation of young people. We have several proposals of our own which we wish to see implemented, particularly around the involvement of young trade unionists.

However, to ask us to turn our attention to the constitution in an election year, can only serve to hamper our campaigning work.

The timetable for 'consultation' shows that the NEC are not really serious about listening to the views of the rank and file but want to railroad the proposals through as soon as possible.

★ Only three months is being allowed for consultation, including April, during which many CLP's and wards do not meet because of the May elections.

★ The NEC agreed to call a conference of young trade unionists through "Trade Unions For Labour" as part of the consultation process. They are now refusing due to lack of time.

★ Tom Sawyer proposed and the LPYS agreed that Labour Party regional executives should hold one day youth events to discuss the proposals and the election. Not one region intends to comply because of the general election preparations.

These proposals from Tom Sawyer and the NEC are clearly an attempt to curb the influence and activity of the LPYS.

The LPYS is a valuable campaigning arm of the movement. It has twice been instrumental in forcing the Tories to back down over compulsory YTS.

We want a genuine discussion and debate on Labour's youth movement and how to build it, with ample time for the rank and file membership of the Labour Party and trade unions to participate.

Below we explain our alternative to the NEC proposals which safeguards LPYS democracy and allows a wider participation of young workers and students within the Party's youth section.

We are asking your organisation to protest at the undemocratic nature of this consultation process, demand that the NEC postpone any further action on this for a year until after the election, but also discuss our alternative proposals for building Labour's youth movement.

**a) The establishment of youth campaign committees at regional and national levels which are representative of the whole of Labour's youth.**

We support the establishment of these campaign committees but they must represent young people. The first



1970 LPYS conference—activity has been built up from this lowest ebb.

**1971** Unemployment—two rallies held in London of 750 and 2,000.

**1972** Spanish Young Socialist Defence Campaign set up. 2,000 attend 'Smash Franco—for a Socialist Spain' rally.

**1973** Conference on Spain—250 trade union and Labour Party delegates attend.

Campaign for Socialist Action—series of rallies held.

**1974** General election(s)—hundreds of young socialists pour into the marginal constituency of Bristol South East to canvass for Tony Benn. Rally against Racism—3,000 attend in Bradford.

**1975** Common Market Referendum—3,000 on LPYS demo for a 'No' vote. Liverpool demo—3,000 march against unemployment.

**1976** Youth Campaign Against Unemployment—regional rallies held. Andy Bevan appointed the Labour Party's full-time youth officer.

**1977** YCAU National Assembly—1,450 delegates attend.

**1978** LPYS thanked by leader of Jamaican Peoples National Party for work among black youth.

**1979** LPYS fully involved in counter demonstrations against the National Front.

**1980** School Students Charter launched. Chile Socialist Defence Campaign formed. 5,000 march in London over unemployment.

**1981** National LPYS week of action. 600 attend LPYS meeting in Brixton after riots.

**1982** Youth Trade

Union Rights Campaign—3,000 take part in lobby of Parliament. 10,000 on LPYS march in Liverpool against unemployment.

**1983** Black Youth Conference—400 attend. Young Workers Assembly—2,300 delegates and visitors. General election—one million youth leaflets distributed.

**1984** Miners' strike—hundreds of joint NUM/LPYS meetings are held. LPYS raises over £1 million for miners. 500 young miners join the LPYS.

LPYS 'Young Miners Rally' at Labour Party Conference attracts 1,200. 3,000 on LPYS contingent, on CND march against Reagan's visit.

**1985** YTURC Campaign—LPYS pioneers work with popstars Billy Bragg and Paul Weller. 5,000 attend lobby of parliament against proposed 'YTS conscription'. School Students Action Committee is formed from 200 school students at LPYS conference.

10,000 school students attend LPYS rally in Glasgow in March. 250,000 join the school students' strike all over Britain on April 25. The biggest movement of young people ever in Britain.

**1986** South Africa—LPYS launches major campaign against apartheid regime. Moses Mayekiso, leader of the South African Metal Workers Union speaks at conference.

LPYS pamphlet *For a Socialist South Africa* is banned by Botha. Tories Out demo.—over 10,000 on LPYS march against the Tories in Bermondsey.



national campaigns committee did not have one member under 26.

They must be made up of young people under 26, with 3 representatives from LPYS, NOLS and the unions and a representative from Red Wedge. All of whom should be democratically elected by the organisations which they represent.

We are opposed to these committees being made up of appointees. The appointee system was abandoned as unworkable in 1970, when the LPYS rank and file won the right to elect its leadership. We must prevent the appointee system being introduced by the back door.

**b) The possibility of the youth representative on the NEC being elected by a wider franchise ie not merely restricted to the LPYS**

Although not spelled out, the thinking behind this proposal is to actually limit those who vote for the NEC position to those members of the national youth campaigns committee which at present has a membership of 20 at the most. The NEC want the appointed guardians of the youth to elect the position and not the youth themselves. We defend the right of the annual LPYS conference, with a wider representation as outlined below, to elect this position.

**c) The establishment of an annual youth conference made up of delegates from the LPYS, CLPs, womens' organisations, NOLS and the trade unions.**

It is clear that the three main areas for youth recruitment and participation is the LPYS, unions and NOLS. For that reason we are proposing that all three be brought together through the following proposals.

1) LPYS branches to have the same representation at conference as at present.

2) Trade unions to be encouraged to affiliate to the LPYS with the right to send one voting delegate for every 5,000

young members under 26 who are affiliated to the party, those delegates to be elected through democratic youth structures within the individual unions. 3) NOLS, as an affiliated organisation (42% of NOLS members are LP members) affiliate to the LPYS on the basis of one voting delegate per 1,000 members under 26.

4) Every delegate to have one vote, the NEC representative to be elected collectively by conference.

5) Expand the existing LPYS national committee by adding 5 places for the trade unions to be elected by those trade union delegates present at conference. 6) The election of one place on the national committee to be elected by the student delegates present at conference.

**d) The possibility of reducing the age limit for membership of the LPYS to 21.**

Reducing the LPYS age limit to 21 would halve the LPYS membership and cannot be taken seriously as a step towards building Labour's youth movement. It would also disenfranchise most of the trade unionists whom we wish to involve. The existing youth structures within the trade unions accept this and consequently every trade union youth section has an age limit of 26.

The idea of reducing the age limit to 21 was first introduced 60 years ago as a means of limiting the growth of the youth organisation. Since then it has been used 3 times by the right wing to weaken and attack the political ideas of Labour's youth. We consider that the proposal today has the same aim in trying to limit the political influence of the LPYS.

We believe our proposals are a positive step forward for Labour's youth and we appeal for the support of your organisation.

Finally, we believe the number one priority of the Party must be winning the 6.2 million new young voters to the banner of Labour—that is the task to which the LPYS remains committed.



# The strike they can't kill



**NEXT MONDAY 16 February Channel Four will be showing the documentary film 'Simon Ngubane, still on strike' starting at 11pm. It deals with the strike by members of the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) at the BTR Sarmcol plant in South Africa. Sean Kelly reviews the film.**

'EACH TIME you talk about democracy and freedom in South Africa, I suffer, I suffer...what is this bullshit?' asks a character in a play the workers have put on about their long and bitter struggle, featured in the Channel Four film which shows what democracy means for them.

It will soon be two years since BTR Sarmcol workers were sacked in a dispute with their British based multinational employers over recognition of their union. 'Simon Ngubane, still on strike' brilliantly details the struggle against BTR and the determination to build a union which can take on and defeat the bosses.

MAWU has grown rapidly during the BTR dispute despite the detention of workers' leader Moses Mayekiso, the murder of eight MAWU stewards (two of whom play a part in the film), attacks from the state and from state hired vigilantes.

**THE SARMCOL strike started at the end of April 1985 when 1000 workers at the plant in Howick Natal struck for union recognition. A few days later BTR sacked all the strikers and brought in non-union labour.**

The multinational had taken over Dunlop, with large concerns in South Africa, a month before to make it one of the biggest British firms in South Africa. One of BTR's subsidiaries in Britain is JE Hanger who sacked 300 workers at the Roehampton artificial limbs factory.

BTR made about £20 million on its unsuccessful bid for Pilkingtons. It bought a 3.8 per cent stake in the glass company at £4.40 each. After the BTR pull out, the shares were up to £6.71.

When Labour MP Terry Fields

MAWU activists explain their struggle to develop democratic accountability in the union, and commitment to workers' control and socialism as the only means of transforming South African society. At the start Moses Mayekiso explains to a workers' rally that 'in order to be powerful we must organise more than half the industry—we must aim for 100,000 members.'

The bosses are worried as the workers identify capitalism with all their ills. At Highveld Steel, subsidiary of the giant multinational Anglo American, the bosses are trying to counter the growth of the union with 'Free Enterprise' classes for employees' children and elementary explanations of the 'merits' of capitalism for the workers themselves.

## Comedy and anger

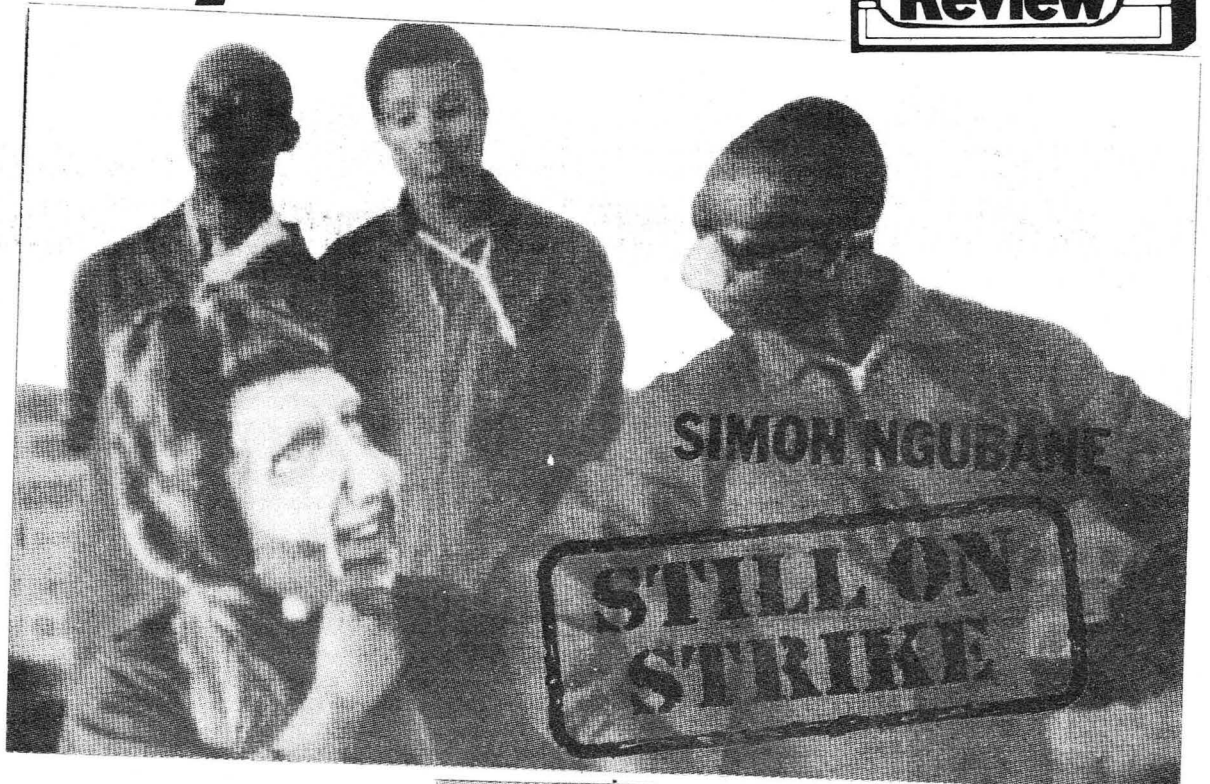
But the filming of the BTR Sarmcol strikers will perhaps most interest socialists in this country who have been campaigning to expose the British multinational, and to raise funds for these strikers. The documentary captures vividly the resolve to continue their dispute, and focuses on the organisation of the strike and the strikers and the community.

It shows the BTR workers' play 'The Long March' which relives the

raised the question of Hangers in parliament last November he pointed out that BTR made large profits out of its South African connection.

They pay new workers about £80 a month, 40 per cent below the South African poverty level. Wages later rose to about £100 a month. BTR's managing director Sir Owen Green put up his salary from £97,000 a year in 1984 to £147,000 in 1985 while his workers were striking for a living wage.

The members of Thatcher's cabinet, the Profitburo, have extensive links with the big businesses which make Britain the biggest investor in apartheid. At home and abroad, the Tories are on one side of the fence and the workers on the other. Support the Sarmcol strikers.

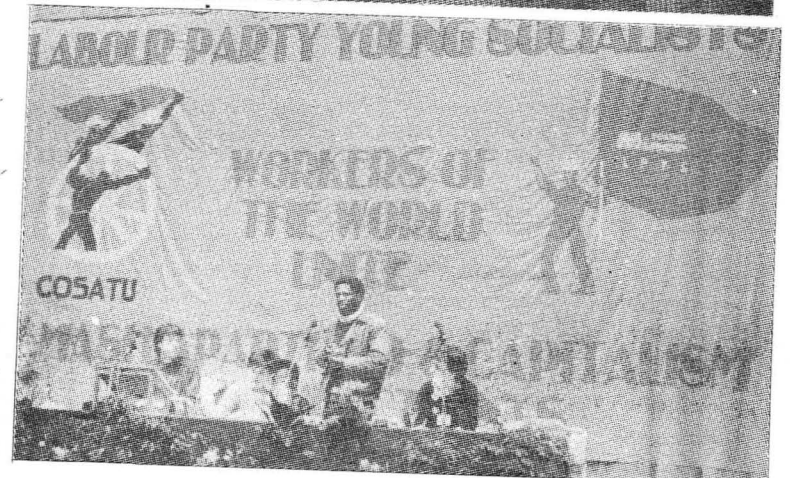


bitter struggle. It achieves this with a combination of comedy, through the workers' portrayal of Thatcher—who cannot escape derision even in South Africa. It also ridicules Owen Green the chairman of BTR (who when informed over the phone of the workers' demands responds sympathetically with the bosses' easiest remedy 'Fire Them').

The comedy is rooted in anger and vividly grasps at the roots of the workers' bitterness, and the suffering they have endured in two years of struggle.

The determination to build MAWU and transform society is summed up by the defiant words of two MAWU shopstewards; Simon Ngubane 'Still on Strike' who was brutally murdered by Buthelezi's reactionary Inkatha in December last year and by David Modi-moeng, a MAWU shop steward whose wife was killed in a grenade attack on his home.

The documentary gives a sense of the South African workers' growing confidence of their ability to carry out the socialist transformation of society, and of the great struggle this will require. Don't miss it!



Postcard showing Moses Mayekiso speaking at LPYS conference. Show solidarity with the strike. Cards 30p each for orders over 5. 60p singly. From SALEP, PO Box 77, London, E8 4TB.

**MOSES MAYEKISO**, general secretary of the Metal and Allied Workers' Union and chairman of Alexandra Action Committee, detained under South Africa's State of Emergency since July, has now appeared in court.

Together with six other community leaders from Alexandra, a militant black working-class area north of Johannesburg, he has been charged with unspecified offences under the oppressive security

laws. Two hundred supporters filled the courtroom, many of them MAWU members wearing T-shirts proclaiming their support for Moses Mayekiso. Present also was Jay Naidoo, general secretary of the Congress of SA Trade Unions. MAWU officials have declared the union's complete support for Moses's participation in the community struggle.

## Get Militant at the workplace



CAMPAIGN 87 is well underway. Sellers of *Militant* are pointing the way to a twice weekly.

Last week's middle page feature on the Engineering industry in Manchester has given brilliant results. After local *Militant* supporters sent out a sales letter, AEU Stewards Committees took out bulk orders of 15 at BICC, and other stewards committees at Renolds and Platts took out orders. At the last count 15 factories

had new orders. Other new sales include 8 sold at British Aerospace at Preston, 5 outside Ferranti's and 8 at GEC Trafford Park.

### Picket lines

NCU picket lines are buying *Militant*. Sellers in Guildford report a sale of 9 at an NCU meeting. More sellers are attending the Fords Dagenham sale and sold 8 last week just outside

one gate. At the lobby of the Confed unions last week 25 were sold.

50 students at Southampton University bought the paper and estate sales have also proved very productive. Sellers in Newham South and Fulham in London each sold 10 papers on an estate in less than an hour! It's so easy!

What is your area doing to increase sales. Write in and let us know.

## Left and Right

### Splitting image

**JOHN RYMAN** who is threatening to split the Labour vote in Blyth Valley is not new to controversy, even before he moved to the North East. As long ago as 1964 he stood as Labour candidate in Gillingham. His agent was forced to resign because she and other members of the party thought Ryman too right wing and that he had not adequately "nursed" his constituency.

The fox hunting Mr Ryman went out at the end of his campaign, on horseback (!), to try to win Labour support but the Labour vote went down by 3.7 per cent despite Labour wiping out a 100-seat Tory majority nationally.

### Stalling Stalinists

"BEFORE SOCIALISM comes to Africa it will be not only long, not only very long, but very, very long" "After the fall of apartheid South Africa will stay linked to the west" "The young comrades (in the townships) do not understand socialism" "The situation in SA should not be allowed to get out of control"

Who made these statements? Top capitalists, US 'advisors', right wing politicians? No, they all came from leading foreign policy officials from

the USSR in discussions with their West German counterparts. Among other things they want the reactionary anti-union Inkatha to be included in negotiations about the future of South Africa.

### Liberals' loot

**THE LIBERAL** leader David Steel told the recent Alliance rally that it was against the interests of democracy for the Tories to be so dependent on the City's money.

A caller on a London radio station the next day challenged Steel about the money the Alliance got from Norwich Union and Commercial Union insurance companies, the British School of Motoring and Tate and Lyle.

When Steel denied getting any money from Tate and Lyle, notorious for their expensive anti-nationalisation campaigns just after the war, the caller told Steel they gave the Alliance £2,500 in 1983/84, it was in their company report. When Steel conceded the point the caller asked if he was going to give it back. Steel said "You say its £2500. I don't feel really that's somehow corrupting the party; sums of that sort."

The Liberals in reality want to be more "corrupted". As Cyril Smith used to tell the top companies, the Tories aren't the only safe capitalist party, the Liberals are a good insurance policy for the rich.



# Old rebels - new establishment

**THE TRIBUNE newspaper celebrates its fiftieth anniversary this year, saying it "is proud to have been reporting 50 years of struggle on the left."**

*Tribune*, however, began its life 50 years ago as a paper that not only reported on struggles of the left, but actively campaigned for left policies. Labour MPs Stafford Cripps, Aneurin Bevan and George Strauss, founded the paper and within a very short period of time were expelled by the party leadership for calling for "the maximum of militant opposition to the National Government."

Throughout most of its history, *Tribune* was seen as the standard bearer of the left in the party. Many prominent figures from the left have sprung to national positions from the *Tribune* group of Labour MPs, including the last two leaders of the Labour party, Michael Foot and Neil Kinnock.

From being a persecuted opposition, *Tribune* has now become part of the party establishment. This represents to some extent the shift to the left in the Labour party in the 1970s, but it mainly proves that the official left of the party has now moved irrevocably to the right, as it has assumed the leadership.

## Gloom laden

To celebrate its anniversary, *Tribune* held a rally, with what the chairman Ian Mikardo called "a galaxy of star speakers." There were almost as many 'stars' in the 400 audience as there were on the stage. The audience, mainly trade union officials, MPs and professional politicians of various description reflected where *Tribune's* support comes from nowadays.

Some of the "galaxy", however, were reduced to astrological prophesies for their perspectives for the future of socialism.

To most of the speakers, the fact that *Tribune* had existed for fifty years and yet socialism is as far away on the horizon as ever, presumably meant that the next 50 years was going to be pretty much of an uphill struggle as well.

Glimmers of light occasionally appeared in a cloudy night in the galaxy, notably from Ron Todd and Tony Benn, but for the other speakers, it was gloom and doom, confusion and despair.

David Blunkett correctly analysed that Britain's

By Ken Smith

economic decline was due to the policies of all post war governments (ie they didn't adopt a socialist programme). That was why Thatcher could beat the left with the argument that there was no alternative: "I do not hear the clarion call from our leadership as to what our alternative is."

The assembled ranks waited for his alternative only to be told that Labour couldn't build a majority out of the disadvantaged minorities (and disadvantaged majorities such as the working class, presumably) but had to appeal to the morality of the majority and show that patriotism was close to the heart of democratic socialists.

Ron Todd, the general secretary of the T&GWU told the rally that the recent results in political fund ballots were an answer to those 'new realist' faint hearts on the left and right wing who said that the trade union movement has lost its class roots with the struggle for socialism in the Labour party. In a veiled warning to Neil Kinnock, Ron Todd said that the future would see the trade union movement remaining at the heart of the Labour party.

Norman Buchan, the MP who was sacked by Neil Kinnock recently, was ironically given Neil Kinnock's old job of raising money at the *Tribune* rally. He extolled the audience to sell more copies of *Tribune*, as he was sick and tired of being asked to buy a copy of *Militant* at every meeting he went to. (What, even at the meetings of the Parliamentary Labour Party?)

Tony Benn was confident that the future belonged to socialism, the question was, what type of socialism should it be? He said that Labour could not win the election just with balloons, pop music and T-shirts. It had to have socialist policies.

He said it would be wrong for socialists such as David Blunkett and Neil Kinnock to get caught in the trap of arguing about the North-South divide. The divisions were not between North or South but were between classes. He said: "Once the labour movement forgets about the centrality of class—you abandon the



David Blunkett speaking at last week's *Tribune* rally.

basic socialist critique of capitalism."

He criticised the party leadership and Labour's NEC for their attacks on *Militant* supporters and the Liverpool council:

"One of the recent tragedies, is that the party should have spent so long telling the public that the threat to democracy in Britain came from some Liverpool councillors who wanted to build more houses, when the threat to democracy has always come from those who have power and privileges and express them through state institutions... The witch hunt that began against *Militant* has delivered us bound hand and foot to the point where Duncan Campbell's house is raided."

## Polarisation

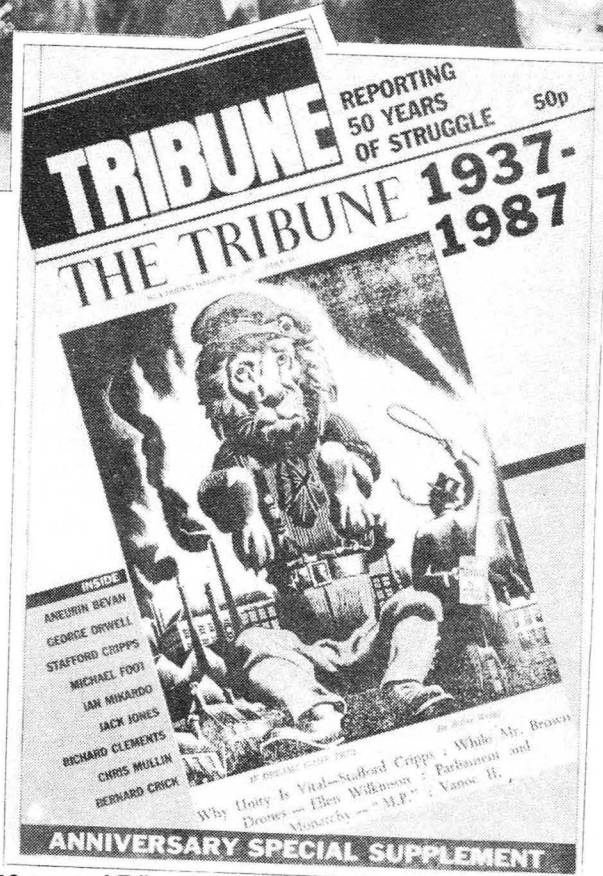
These statements earned the most vigorous applause of the meeting.

Tony Benn concluded by saying that the most important lever in achieving socialism was the rebuilding of the Labour movement in Britain along class lines because of the class polarisation in society. He felt this was a time of enormous optimism and he saw that more people of socialist persuasion were being formed now than he had ever seen in his lifetime.

So the *Tribune* has been around for 50 years, through the depression of the 30s, the second world war and the

boom of the 50s and 60s, when on the basis of economic 'health' many significant reforms were introduced by Labour governments influenced by *Tribune* MPs.

But the history of that half century shows that capitalism cannot be reformed but has to be abolished completely and a socialist society established. In 1974 a writer in *Tribune* said: "We, like millions throughout the world, refuse to accept the permanence and desirability of the 'realities' of capitalism and totalitarianism or even concede the 'realism' of changing those systems and removing the stupidities which spawn by feeding and appeasing them." The writer—NEIL KINNOCK.



50 years of *Tribune*.

## Obituary—Tom Williams

COMRADES IN Swansea are sad to report the death of Tom Williams, aged 88, a class fighter and life long socialist.

After starting work at 13 down the Rhondda pits Tom carried his socialist convictions into the Labour Party, where he was a member for 75 years and also into the shopworker's union USDAW where from 1920 he recruited thousands of members.

During the first world war Tom was jailed as a conscientious objector where the harsh treatment he received led to a lifetime of illness. He was one of the founder members of CND in Swansea during the 50s and was nicknamed 'Tom the March' by right wing opponents because whenever there was a demo or picket Tom would be there, marching, even up to his mid-eighties.

As a delegate to Swansea Trades Council and Labour Association for 30 years Tom was firm in his beliefs.

Despite ill-health he would make exceptional efforts to attend the Association and speak against proposed witch-hunts.

Just days before he died when a couple of Party members visited him in hospital he said we shouldn't be wasting our time here but should be on our way to Wapping or Cheltenham. Even in his last days he was concerned about the struggles of his class.

We salute the passing of a fine socialist and send our condolences to his widow, children and family.

By Alec Thraves

## Capital to punish the Tories

THATCHER'S HEIRS were in full voice at the Young Tories' Annual conference. To the tune of 'Here we go', they chanted 'String them up! String them up!' and demanded a referendum on the return of capital punishment.

As for Thatcher's speech to conference can you honestly believe her rosy forecast of 'More jobs, lower unemployment, living standards higher than ever, and a new confidence not seen for a generation'?

Young people are turning to Labour's youth and *Militant* precisely because we of-

fer a way out of the nightmare which millions face in Britain.

This is shown by the Fighting Fund collection of £168 at LPYS Southern Region Conference, and £135 at FELS conference— young people who have very little, prepared to sacrifice to build support for the ideas of Marxism.

What we want you to do now is to get other people to share in that sacrifice. Take your rattling tin on all sales. Ask every new reader you meet in the sales campaign for a donation or at least the £1 solidarity price—ask all

regulars as well.

Thatcher's bully boys (and girls!) have got nothing to offer. Let's raise the cash to get a more regular *Militant* so we can offer the alternative of socialism.

Thanks also to: *Militant* supporters in the CPSA, £60; East Scotland EIS and ASTMS expenses, £60; J Maguire, Broadgreen, £30; Stevenage public meeting, £225; Kim Leech, Leyton Labour Party, £70; Tim Halpin, NUPE and Walthamstow Labour Party, £20; S Hayton, Well-ingborough DLP, £8; D Wilkinson, Notts NUM.

## £250 000 Fighting Fund

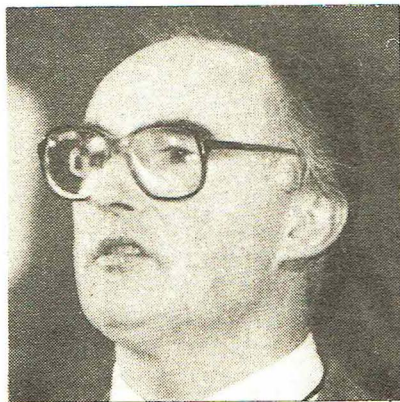
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# The RUSSIAN REVOLUTION October

# The revolution shook the world

1987 IS the 70th anniversary of the Russian revolution. *Militant* will be celebrating this—the greatest single event in human history—with a series of articles which will chart the course of the revolution in the tumultuous months of February to October 1917. To introduce the series, Peter Taaffe, editor of *Militant* summarises the story of 1917 and its lessons for workers today.



## Vital role of Bolshevik leadership

THE REVOLUTION, and the introduction of a planned economy, laid the basis for the transformation of Russia from the 'India' of Europe to the second most powerful economy and country on the globe. Despite the squandering of the advantages of the planned economy by the monstrous one-party, totalitarian regime, the Russian Revolution has been more than justified in the colossal development of industry and society and also the living standards of the mass of the population since 1917.

It is impossible to understand the present world situation without understanding the Russian Revolution and its subsequent degeneration. But the Marxists will also be analysing the revolution from another standpoint. Only in Russia, following the overturn in October, did the workers take power and establish real workers' democracy. In the last 70 years there have been not a few opportunities for the working class to follow in the path of the Russian workers of 1917.

In its sweep, scope, and potential for victory of the working class, the Chinese revolution of 1925-27 was equal to, if not greater, than even that of Russia. The working class in Spain, not once but ten times between 1931-37, attempted to take power.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, a revolutionary wave even greater than that which followed the Russian revolution, swept Western Europe. In 1968 in France, the working class organised a general strike of ten million. De Gaulle fled to Germany believ-

ing that 'the game was up' yet the French workers were not able to emulate their Russian counterparts of fifty years before.

And we have had the experience of the Portuguese revolution of 1974, when the capitalist state disintegrated. The great majority of the Portuguese officer caste were radicalised, groping in the direction of 'socialism'.

In the Russian revolution, the officers remained hostile to revolution. And yet nowhere except in Russia did the working class take power.

### Lenin and Trotsky

The one factor that was missing in all these revolutions, but which was present in October 1917, was the 'subjective factor', a workers' leadership capable of preparing in good season the working class for the socialist transformation of society. It was the policy and the tactics of the Bolshevik Party, under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, which led the Russian workers to victory.

Lenin prepared for the Russian revolution by a study of the lessons of the Paris Commune of 1871 and the first Russian revolution of 1905. In the same way, the advanced workers today can prepare for their struggles, which will be on a higher plane even than 1917, by examining the process of the Russian revolution.

Events will not develop in exactly the same fashion as, nor with the speed of, the Russian revolution. Nevertheless, the struggles of the working class are similar in all capitalist countries. The laws of

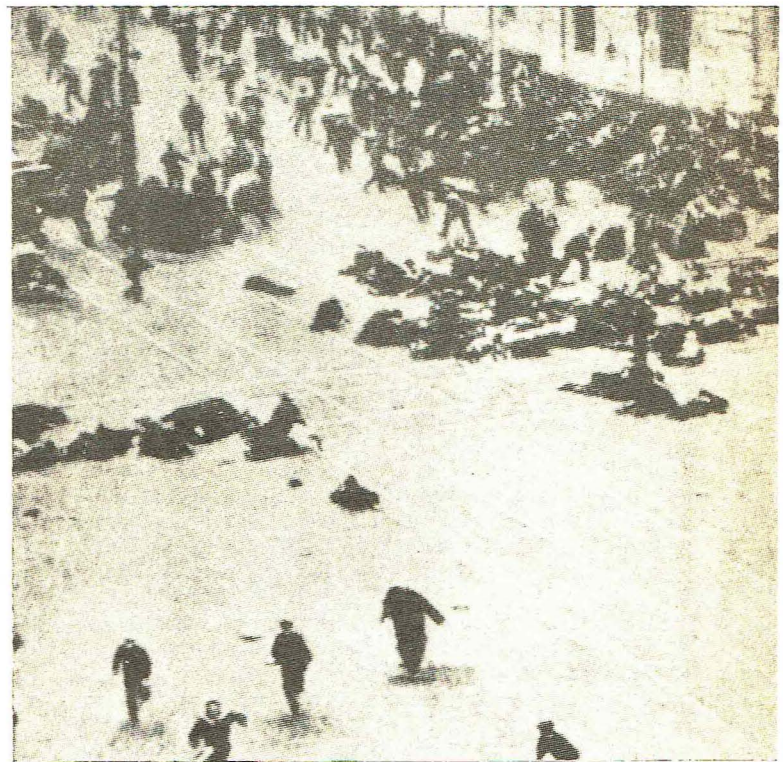
revolution and of counter revolution, which Trotsky brilliantly analysed in his masterly *History of the Russian Revolution*, apply in all countries.

The first condition for revolution is the split in the ruling class. "Revolution starts from the top" said Marx. Feeling the subterranean revolt of the masses, the summits of society split into different groupings. One section seeks a solution in the suppression of the mass movement. Another sees the need for 'reforms from the top' in order to prevent revolution from below.

Although only in outline at this stage, we see a similar process developing within the Tory party in Britain in the split between the 'dries' and the 'wets'.

Miliukov, the leader of the capitalist Kadet Party, in urging concessions from the Tsar in 1915, declared: "We are treading a volcano...tension has reached its extreme limit...a carelessly dropped match will be enough to start a terrible conflagration". Albeit in more diplomatic language, this is the warning that Heath has given many times to Thatcher and her cabal in the Tory cabinet.

The Chirac government in France did 'drop a match', and was only saved temporarily from a conflagration, a movement involving the majority of the French working class by hasty concessions to the students. In Spain today, the refusal of the Socialist government to retreat before the students threatens to ignite an explosion of the working class.



July 1917—Troops loyal to the Provisional Government disperse workers

## 'We cannot live li

THE FEAR of Miliukov in 1915 was well-founded. Russian workers and peasants were groaning under the burdens placed on them by the war. Two and a half million Russian workers and peasants were killed, and an additional two and a half million were wounded in the war. The Russian soldiers based in France were sent to their slaughter by the French general staff eager to conserve French troops. The workers and peasants were just cannon-fodder. "The one thing the Russian generals did with a flourish was to drag human meat out of the country. Beef and pork are handled much better" (Trotsky).

Striking workers were automatically sent to the front, thereby increasing the circle of agitators who began to raise their heads and find support amongst the soldier mass in opposition to the war. The army itself began to disintegrate with desertion and the shooting of officers. Fabulous war profits were made by the capitalists while the court jeweller, Faberge, boasted that he had never before done such flourishing business.

In Britain today we have Stock Exchange spivs fainting with greed while pocketing £100 million from 'insider dealing' as in Guinness, while the army of the poor has reached a staggering 16 million.

The opposition of the Russian

working class was reflected in the colossal increase in strikes. A widespread strike developed in January 1916 in Petrograd on the anniversary of 'Bloody Sunday' when workers were massacred in the 1905 revolution. The number of strikes doubled during that year. From economic strikes to political strikes, from partial and sectional struggles to the idea of a general strike, the movement of the Russian workers and peasants took on a convulsive form in 1916.

The Tsarist regime introduced bread rationing, whilst at the same time colossal inflation developed in 1916-17.

### Highest tension

The year 1917 opened with strikes and food riots in Petrograd. The idea that "we cannot live like this any longer" gripped the working class and peasant masses. Thus another condition for revolution, the preparedness of the working class to go the whole way, developed in the months before the February revolution.

The intermediary layers, particularly the peasantry, were drawn behind the working class in this period. Trotsky points out: "A revolution breaks out when all the antagonisms of a society have reached their highest tension". It



# October 1917

# That

# World



March 1917—Meeting of the Petrograd soviet.

# Can this any longer?

is possible that in 1916 if the Tsarist regime had made concessions, events could perhaps have developed differently in the first period of the revolution. But the process would not have been fundamentally different.

The tasks which confronted Russia were those of the capitalist democratic revolution, a thoroughgoing land reform with land to the peasants, the solution of the national question with the right of self-determination to the oppressed nationalities, democracy and the development of a modern economy.

Lenin, unlike his erstwhile disciples in the leadership of the Communist parties today, had taught the Russian workers that the Liberal capitalists were incapable of carrying through the capitalist democratic revolution. Trotsky, in his famous theory of the Permanent Revolution, and Lenin in his April Theses, showed that the industrialists and bankers were bound with iron hoops to the semi-feudal landlords.

The capitalists invested in land and the landlords invested in industry. 4,000 million roubles were owed by the landlords to the bankers and the expropriation of the landlords would endanger the investments of the bankers and industrialists. The landlords and

capitalists were linked with the bureaucracy and the system was crowned by the Tsarist regime which was used to alternatively stupefy the masses and crush opposition.

The capitalists had wanted the monarchy to give limited democratic reforms. But this would not have fundamentally altered the course of the revolution as the experience of the Spanish revolution between 1931-37 showed. King Alfonso replaced the dictator Primo de Rivera, only to follow him later into exile.

Running like a red thread through Lenin's teachings is distrust of the liberal capitalists by the workers. This policy is diametrically opposed to that pursued by the present leaders of the Communist Parties on a world scale.

In Britain, the 'Communist' Party advocated support for and collaboration with the Tories in the anti-Common Market campaign in 1975. It also advocates blocs with 'progressive capitalists' in its 'broad democratic alliance'. Lenin was utterly opposed to a programmatic bloc with the liberal capitalists. He argued that only by the decisive action of the working class was it possible to tear the middle class, including the peasantry, away from those parties.

## The working class takes power

THE HONOUR of beginning the February revolution fell to the women textile workers of Petrograd on International Women's Day. Indignant at bread rations, whilst the capitalists made fabulous war profits, and with many of them having husbands and sons at the front, 90,000 came out on strike.

The next day, half the industrial workers struck in support. Slogans of "Down with the aristocracy, down with the war" were raised by demonstrating workers who fought with police, but attempted to win over the soldiers and the Cossacks (who had suppressed the 1905 revolution).

An attempt to use the troops against the workers failed, with only the officers being prepared to fire on demonstrators. After clashes with workers, the troops turned on the officers and the Tsarist army collapsed.

Thus by 28 February the 1,000 year old Tsarist autocracy had collapsed. The working class was the real power, but they were not conscious of this.

The Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries handed power to the capitalists. Even the Bolshevik leaders in Petrograd, led by Stalin and Kamenev, gave 'critical support' to the capitalist coalition. Only Lenin in Switzerland and Trotsky in New York understood the significance of the February events as the beginning not only of the Russian revolution but of the 'international revolution'. Lenin demanded that the workers place no trust in the Provisional government.

However, the Bolsheviks were only 8,000 strong after the February revolution. Lenin explained that it was necessary for the Bolsheviks to base themselves on the consciousness of the masses. In the first phase of the revolution, the masses had taken the line of least resistance, giving massive support to the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries. Big events would teach them the correctness of the perspectives, strategy and tactics of the Bolsheviks.

But the working class learns rapidly in a revolution. The Bolsheviks grew quickly. They numbered 2,000 members in Petrograd in February 1917, 16,000 by April (with 79,000 nationally) and by late June 32,000 members. By the time of the October revolution, they had developed to a force of 240,000 on a national scale.

But the revolution did not develop in a straight line, as subsequent articles will demonstrate. Within the nine months between February and October, there were many sharp turns in the situation.

In the April days, with the continuation of the war, already the workers of Petrograd were becoming disillusioned with the Provisional government. Even the workers' and peasants' councils, the soviets, which the masses



March 1917—Meeting of the Petrograd soviet.

themselves had improvised based on the experience of the 1905 revolution, supported the continuation of the war. The national soviet congress in April, dominated by the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, refused to ratify the eight hour day.

The 'July Days' saw the working class of Petrograd, 400,000 strong with soldiers participating, demonstrating for the eviction of the ten capitalist ministers from the coalition: "Down with the offensive, and All Power to the Soviets".

The 'July Days' was a stage we have seen in all revolutions. The 'June Days' of 1848, the 'Spartacist Uprising' in January 1919, and the 'May Days' in Barcelona in 1937, represented the understanding of the masses that the gains of their revolution were being snatched out of their hands, and their attempts to prevent this.

### Bitter experience

The Bolsheviks opposed the July demonstration, but were compelled to go along with it. Already the workers of Petrograd were ready to overthrow the government, but the Bolshevik leadership opposed this. Lenin and Trotsky warned that the rest of the country and particularly the peasants and soldiers at the front, needed time to see through the coalition of Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. The masses could only learn this through bitter experience.

The July days led to reaction, with repression against the Bolsheviks and the imprisonment of Trotsky, while Lenin was driven underground. But when the counter-revolution, in the figure of General Kornilov, attempted a coup in August, it was defeated by the working class, with the Bolsheviks playing the most prominent role. The troops of Kornilov refused to take action against Petrograd once the real situation was explained to them by delegates

and agitators from the soviets. The railway workers completely disintegrated the army of Kornilov by stranding them in railway sidings etc.

Revolution sometimes needs the whip of counter-revolution. The August events gave an enormous access of strength and support to the Bolsheviks. In the two months that followed, the majority of the workers' and soldiers' soviets were won over to the Bolsheviks. Using the 'Military Revolutionary Committee' set up by the soviets in Petrograd, under the leadership of Trotsky, the working class took power on 25 October.

Some European and American capitalists dismissed the October revolution with the prediction that it would be over in a week. *The Times* quoted approvingly Naklukoff, the overthrown Kerensky government's ambassador to Paris: "The situation must be regarded seriously but not tragically. Even if the facts be true there is no occasion for undue alarm... It is better that it should have taken place and be disposed of once and for all. The maximalist (Bolshevik) movement by its arbitrary action is already doomed. I have no doubt that the movement will be stopped by the first Cossack regiment that appears on the scene". (9 November 1917).

The capitalists in Russia, however, took a longer and more 'tragic' view than this worthy. General Zalesky mournfully surveyed the situation: "Who would believe that the janitor or watchman of the Court building would suddenly become Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals, or the hospital orderly manager of the hospital, the barber a big functionary, yesterday's ensign the commander-in-chief, yesterday's lackey or common labourer burger-master, yesterday's train oiler chief of division or station superintendent, yesterday's locksmith head of the factory?"

## Now to complete the work begun in 1917

LENIN AND Trotsky had seen the Russian revolution merely as the prologue to the international revolution. In isolation, Russia was not ready for socialism. The beginning of socialism meant a higher level of productive forces than even the most developed capitalist economy. This was only possible on a world scale. In the phrase of Lenin, capitalism had broken at its weakest link. But the Russian revolution was envisaged as the beginning of a series of revolutions in Europe and on a world scale that would usher in a world socialist federation.

Lenin's perspective was entirely justified by the convulsive events of 1918 and particularly 1919, when the ruling class itself believed that it was about to be overthrown. The only thing that saved them were the leaders of the Social Democratic Parties.

The isolation of the revolution in turn allowed the growth of a privileged bureaucratic caste in Russia itself. Gradually power was taken from the soviets and concentrated in the hands of millions of officials in the state machine, the party and the army. The mass

of the working class was elbowed aside and the original democratic and internationalist aspirations of the Russian revolution were suppressed.

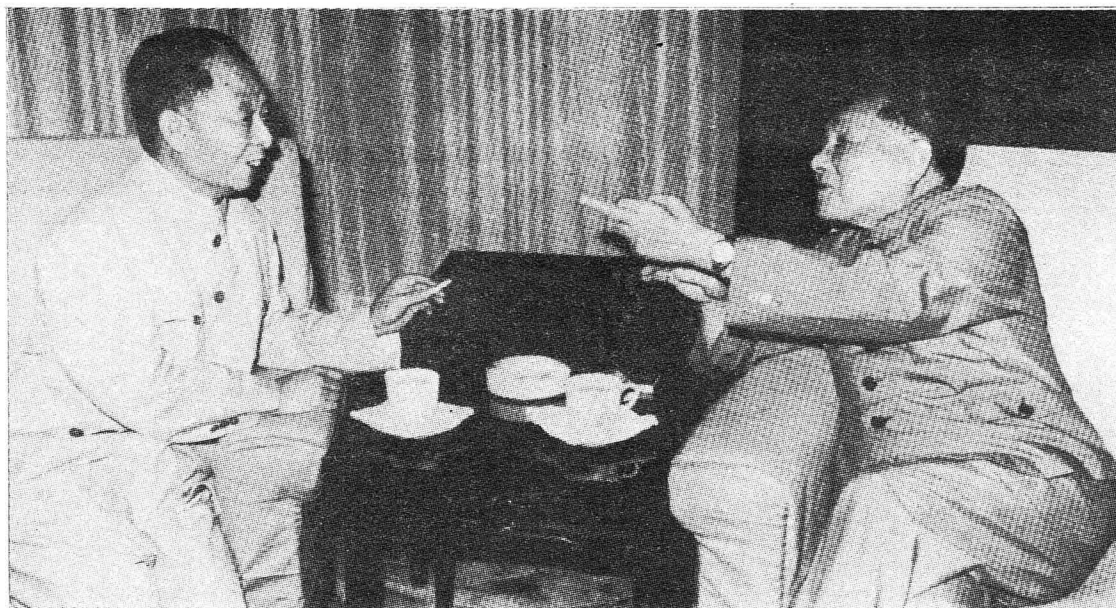
The Gorbachev regime today, despite its recent declarations on 'democracy', is a million miles removed from the Russian revolution in the heroic period of Lenin and Trotsky. There was more democracy in the weak Russian workers state of October 1917, beset by civil war and the 21 armies of imperialism, than in Russia today.

### Political revolution

It will take a new revolution, a political revolution to restore workers' democracy, before Russian society can begin to move towards socialism. Drawing on the treasure trove of ideas of Lenin and Trotsky in this way, it will be possible to complete the work that the Russian workers began 70 years ago and establish a socialist Britain as the first link in a world socialist federation.



# Deng draws the line at democracy



Flashback to 1980: CP leader Deng in discussion with general secretary Hu Yaobang, now dismissed.

**WHEN CHINA'S student protestors put up posters demanding democracy, they signed them with pseudonyms. They remembered that the last big wave of student and youth protest, the Democratic Movement of 1978-79, was suppressed, and over 200 of its leaders jailed.**

By Lynn Walsh

But one of the demonstrators' favourite signatures 'Volcano', expresses their confidence. They were encouraged by cracks in the top of the bureaucracy, and undoubtedly felt support from wide strata of society.

Student marches began on 5 December in Hefei, provincial capital of Anhui. Within days, there were student demonstrations in at least ten other cities, including Beijing and Shanghai. The marches continued into January.

The students' demands were vague: "democracy and freedom", especially freedom of speech and the press. In Hefei, they called for free elections to local assemblies, with the right to put up their own candidates against Party nominees, and this was taken up elsewhere.

One student told a reporter: "Every person has different ideas about what democracy is....demonstrating is a device. We use this to stimulate changes because we can't freely express our ideas. Newspapers don't emphasise what is in the people's minds. They emphasise what is in the mind of the Party."

## Right to publish

Another said: "We should have the right to publish private newspapers, without going through any party organisation."

Many of the students come from families which are part of the privileged ruling elite and want to see China transformed into a more advanced, richer country. Among other things, this would fulfill their ambitions for professional careers.

But as with students in the West, they are not yet immersed in their careers and are not primarily concerned, for the time being, with the practical problems of daily life. Their ideas, therefore, tend to be far more radical than those of the bureaucracy's own liberal wing.

Some of their criticisms, while falling far short of a worked-out programme of political revolution, nevertheless call into question the whole structure of bureaucratic rule.

As one student said: "You can say democracy is the biggest issue. But I think the real problem is reform of the cadre system." By "cadre system" they mean the structure of bureaucratic appointments, the hierarchy of officials who control the party, the economy, and all other institutions, controlled ultimately from the apex of the apparatus in Beijing.

"In recent years", continued another student, "the leadership



Students burning the CP newspaper in protest against its hostile coverage of their movement. For the leadership, this was going too far.

has had a bias in pushing economic reform. Now we need political reform. This includes reforming the cadre system....We want the selection to come from the bottom up, instead of from the top down."

Is it surprising that demands like this should set alarm bells ringing in Beijing? Some students are evidently confused. One said: "A lot of debate is going on. We don't know if capitalism is best or socialism is best."

This is no doubt what western correspondents like to hear. But it is also clear that many students are firmly committed to the idea of democratisation on the basis of socialism—and many of their marches ended with enthusiastic singing of the Internationale.

This wave of student demonstrations appears to have been largely spontaneous. It is a new generation of students on the march, younger, fresher and (for the time being) more cautious than the generation which followed the Cultural Revolution and disillusionment with the Maoist leaders' betrayal of their radical demands.

The radical implications of the students' demands were underlined by the bureaucracy's response. At first, the leadership appeared very tolerant. Within days, however, their attitude began to change sharply. The students were now criticised for endangering 'national unity', and big contingents of police were mobilised to curb the marches.

## 'Bourgeois liberalism'

By mid-January it was clear that the state, while refraining from crude repression, was determined to bring the demonstrations to an end.

Deng came out against the students. Amid growing official denunciations of 'bourgeois liberalism' a number of prominent intellectuals who had openly sup-

ported the students were removed from their posts. At the same time, the disappearance from official functions of the Party's general secretary indicated a possible split in the leadership, and this was soon confirmed by Hu Yaobang's enforced resignation.

What triggered off the students' movement?

At the beginning, there was a suspicion that the students were being orchestrated from within the top leadership. Deng himself had originally encouraged the Democratic Movement of 1978, leaning on it to strengthen his position against the Maoists still entrenched in the leadership. When it had served his purpose, and threatened to go much further, Deng suppressed it.

## A split has appeared in the reformist wing of the bureaucracy, revealed with the sacking of many prominent figures in the party and academic establishment during the past month.

In recent months, Deng has again faced intensified opposition from within the leadership. This time it is not from radical Maoists, but from the most conservative section of the bureaucracy.

The established 'cadres' (bureaucrats) fear that if managers, scientists and other specialists are given more initiative, their own powers and traditional perks will be eroded. They also fear the adverse effects of economic reforms.

Under Deng there has been rapid growth. Since 1979 agricultural output has grown by 10 per cent a year; the gross national product has more than doubled. But there has also been an undermining of traditional job security, and extremely high inflation by China's

standards.

The mushrooming of personal fortunes for those directly benefiting from the reforms has undoubtedly provoked wide resentment.

## Fear of relaxation

Above all, the conservatives fear the growing demands for political liberalisation. In their eyes, any relaxation of the Party's monopolistic control of social relations and political life poses a threat to the rule of the bureaucracy.

These fears are well founded. But the bureaucracy faces a contradiction, because, as Deng realises, under modern conditions it cannot just continue on the old

which was revealed publicly with the sacking of numerous prominent figures in the party and academic establishments during the past month.

These purged leaders represent a reformist opposition within the bureaucracy itself. They argue that the economic reforms, if they are to be effective, must be accompanied by political liberalisation.

Their position is comparable to that of the reform movement within the bureaucracy in Czechoslovakia under Dubcek in the period leading up to August 1968. In China, the reformers are similarly demanding scope for scientists, economists, managers and other specialists to take decisions without constant reference to party 'cadres'. They are also pushing for the freedom to debate policy publicly, and to question and criticise the party leadership.

## 'Four modernisations'

Without such freedom, the reformists argue, the 'Four Modernisations' (of industry, agriculture, science and technology, and defence) espoused by Deng will not be successfully carried out.

For questioning the absolute control of the party they are now being denounced as 'bourgeois liberals' by the hardliners. Most of the reformers, however, have a completely empirical approach. They want to see the modernisation of China. They are eager to introduce western science and technology, and are prepared to rely to a much greater extent on foreign capital and market methods.

Deng has been the driving force behind economic reform. His dilemma is this: unlike his conservative opponents, who want to preserve an outdated apparatus intact, Deng wants to overhaul the machine to cope with the needs of economic development and modernisation. This is necessary to preserve the base of the regime by adapting it to today's conditions.

Nevertheless, giving more scope to managers and experts inevitably strengthens demands for more scope for their own initiatives and for free debate. This unavoidably calls into question the bureaucracy's decisive control over the economy and the state.

The reformers within the bureaucracy do not themselves pose a threat to the system. But if they are allowed to call the leadership into question and open up splits, they could trigger off forces in society which would pose the overthrow of the bureaucracy.

This is especially true when the acceleration of economic growth over the last decade has enormously enhanced the position of the industrial proletariat in China. Far better educated than in the past, and much more open to outside developments, we can be sure that the most conscious workers are already questioning the role of the bureaucracy and beginning to draw conclusions for the future.

In China, too, the students are like a sensitive instrument, a seismograph, registering faint tremors—early warnings of eruptions to come.

basis.

Deng's problem is to push through economic reforms against the conservative opposition, while blocking demands for 'liberalisation' which could threaten the stability of the regime. This dilemma in China is just a variant of the contradiction that faces all the Stalinist states.

Despite speculation that Deng had encouraged the students, by the turn of the year it was clear that he was doing everything he could to bring the movement under control. In doing so, Deng clashed with some of his reformist allies who had encouraged the student marches.

Thus a split appeared within the reformist wing of the bureaucracy,



## Spain, France, Netherlands, Mexico

## Spain: workers and youth united

MADRID, 10 February.

**THE DEADLOCK** of negotiations last week between the students' union, ES, and the Ministry of Education has led to this week's action campaign.

The union, led by Marxists supporting the paper *Nuevo Claridad*, rejected the Ministry's offer. On Monday, up to 95 per cent of students supported the strike in Madrid, Andalucia and certain other regions.

The Ministry has asked for fresh negotiations on Wednesday. But even if an agreement is reached, mobilisation will go ahead and the offer put to meetings.

Concrete agreement has been reached with the CCOO (Workers' Commissions, a major union federation) for a joint demonstration with the ES on Wednesday. In Madrid, the CCOO have put out 10,000 posters.

A mass march on Madrid has been called for Friday. Coaches and trains have been organised from all over Spain. Factories

have been approached, and many have agreed to hold meetings during breaks with representatives of the students.

The ultra-left organised in so-called "Coordinating Committees", have tried to upstage the union by provoking violent clashes with the police. Naturally the media have played this up. In fact their support has been minimal: 400 outside Parliament, 1,000 on their illegal march to the Moncloa Palace, 50 out of 1,500 demonstrators in San Sebastian last week.

## Explosive

Spain is in an explosive mood. The week of action was planned to coincide with important struggles by teachers and other sectors.

Forty-eight hours before the start, a bad deal was signed on behalf of the teachers; but agricultural workers are still coming out, coal miners in Asturias (two days), copper miners in Rio Tinto (four days), teachers in the

private sector, and others.

On Friday the dockers will be out, and the Seat and Renault car workers in Barcelona. Even the small shopkeepers in Madrid are taking action.

One word from the unions' leadership and there could be a general strike. The ES have urged this. But the leaders have held back.

Significantly, however, Marcelino Camacho, leader of the CCOO, raises the possibility of a general strike in March or April, when wage bargaining comes to a head.

The students' movement has transformed the psychology of all the classes in Spain. It has galvanised into organised struggle the bitterness and frustration that was already present among the youth and workers. But the struggle will not end here. The turbulent events of this week are indicative of what lies ahead if the right-wing Socialist government continues on its collision course with the working class and youth.



## Mexican students on strike

**YOUTH UNREST** is flaring up around the world. In Mexico City, over 200,000 students and trade unionists have demonstrated against plans to increase university fees.

The National Autonomous University, with over 350,000 students, has been on strike. Students completely controlled the university, checking the ID of everyone entering, running political education classes, and flying the red flag.

The Institutional Revolutionary Party, which has 'won' every election for the past fifty years, is deeply unpopular. A university lecturer says: "The student protest is clearly symptomatic of a national mood."

By Steven Hedges

## Dutch dockers take action

**ON MONDAY** 19 January no general cargo was moved in the Rotterdam docks. All 5,000 dockers working in that sector were on strike.

Thousands were at a mass meeting on the same day. This followed the bosses' announcement of 350 redundancies, with a further 500-600 jobs having to go up to 1990.

Workers were especially outraged because only one year ago an agreement was signed, promising no forced redundancies until 1990. To get this they had to give back their Christmas bonus, plus 7.6 per cent of their wages, thereby paying for shorter working hours.

The bosses also want so-called "flexibilisation"—the introduction of compulsory night shifts and weekend shifts, etc.

## Nationwide effect

This represents a major attack on all workers. Successful struggles on the docks in the past had a nationwide effect. If the docks bosses succeed now, other employers will follow their lead.

Through struggles in the past, dockers have won 100 per cent pay if there is no work. The Rotterdam bosses point at Antwerp because dockers there only get 70 per cent if there is no work, and have to work harder for less money.

Dockers are determined to fight until victory. The union has organised a series of

lightning strikes, with up to 1,300 dockers on strike every day for the past three weeks.

Strike leaders say it is more difficult to keep the men at work than to get them out. The tactics employed are meant to prevent ships from being diverted to other docks, and to protect the union strike funds.

The bosses, however, seem determined to see it through, and therefore this tactic might cause a dangerous exhaustion in the longer run. Also the government has intervened, with a so-called arbitration proposal, which union leaders have called acceptable.

At best, this proposal could only delay the fight for some time. But it looks as if the bosses won't accept it. There is a clear case for all-out strike action.

With the other 5,000 dockers involved in the bulk and container sector in Rotterdam already involved in work stoppages over their own demands, and several solidarity work stoppages in the Amsterdam docks, the union could lead the fight to victory on a national level.

With even worse working conditions in Antwerp docks, a bold internationalist approach can unite Dutch and Belgian dockers.

Messages of support to: Gezamenlijk Aktiekomitee, Vervoersbond FNV, Westzeedijk 78, 3016 AG Rotterdam, Netherlands.

By Peter den Haan  
PvdA, Rotterdam

## French teachers' struggle escalates



January: riot police attack railworkers' picket. Now the teachers are under government attack.

**THE THREE-DAY** national strike called by the inter-union "National Coordination", representing rank-and-file teachers in 28 Departments all over France, reflects the mood that has built up among teachers during their weeks-long struggle against the assault by the right-wing Chirac government.

Many teachers say they have been "waiting for the call for a national strike". (*Le Matin*, 6 February.) This week's action must be seen as testing the water for an all-out action.

On 4 February, between 10,000 and 20,000 primary school teachers demonstrated in the capital. Many more were involved in local demonstrations all over France.

In Paris the mood was very lively, with teachers putting anti-government words to children's songs. "We've had enough of bosses", they chanted.

The teachers are incensed at the "Master/Director Statute", which is a serious threat to their rights. One clause says headmasters should "ensure access to schools during school hours"—a clear threat to their right to strike.

Other clauses say headmasters must

provide the educational authorities with "any information they request" on teachers, and be responsible for teaching methods. For the teachers, this represents an attempt by the government to control them, turning the clock back a hundred years.

In fact it is part of an attack by the right on the whole education system. Like the Tories in Britain, they are determined to cut spending to the bone.

## Lit the fuse

Monory's decree has lit the fuse to the simmering discontent in the schools. The initiative for action has come from the teachers themselves, in particular in the Paris region. Some are now in their fourth week of strike action.

General assemblies have been formed in many areas, uniting the different unions as well as non-union members, reflecting the strong urge for unity.

In the absence of national leadership, action has varied from one region to another. But guerrilla action is not going to shift Monory who, according to reports, "wants to see the FEN (the

main teachers' federation) on its knees", and "break co-management in education".

A growing number of teachers can see the need for all-out action, but are sceptical whether the union leaders will deliver. Up to now the leaders have dragged behind the movement, but have been forced to back the actions now taking place.

It is their conservatism that is placing the initiative for organising national action with the newly-formed "National Coordination".

Union leaders are worried that strikes will be unpopular with parents. But striking teachers already have parents' support where meetings have been organised to explain the issues. In some schools they have organised rotas with parents to look after the children.

The teachers are fully prepared to continue the fight until victory. With the present right-wing government in power the struggle is going to be long and hard.

From our correspondent in Paris



## US Youth Campaign

Dear Comrades,

On Sunday 19 January we held a meeting to start a Youth Defence Campaign (YDC) branch in Chicago, Illinois. There already exists a branch of 250 members in Seattle, Washington.

Fifteen youth turned up and all of them joined. Jay Bradshaw, chair of Seattle YDC and a supporter of the Marxist paper *Labor Militant*, told us how they have successfully united many different sections of working-class youth.

This is a tremendous achievement because of the massive gang problems and the segregation of youth and workers generally, mainly on the basis of race.

We raised a magnificent \$70 at the meeting, sold all our YDC T-shirts and a few *Labor Militants*.

There is enormous potential to build a mass socialist youth movement in America. There is no Labour Party to fight for youth and a weak, ineffective trade union leadership.

Any messages and donations for the Chicago YDC will be greatly appreciated. Write to: YDC, c/o 416 W Webster, Chicago, Illinois 60614, USA.

Yours fraternally Rachel Harris, Chicago

## Turning back the clock Saving the environment

Dear Comrades,

I have just finished reading *Ragged Trousered Philanthropist* which is about the building trade at the turn of the century and the horrendous working and living conditions of the workers.

I can remember my earliest years during the so-called 'prosperous 60's' having to go hungry some days. My mother was widowed having lost my dad through cancer that he got through working with chemicals. He worked in a dye factory. There was no compensation awarded.

Now my husband, who is in the building trade, has been unemployed for two

years. The conditions on jobs he has had in the past have been as horrendous as those in the book. He has had to work in ragged jeans and holey boots, working in freezing conditions, with no washing facilities even after using toxic chemicals.

One day he came home glowing red, the splash-back from the chemicals had sprayed his skin. I used to think there was no hope in improving conditions for the working class and now I know the only way it can be done is through socialism.

Yours fraternally  
Jackie Chesney  
Manchester

Dear Comrades,

The letter by Michael Supko (*Militant* 833), raises an interesting question concerning environmental politics.

At the moment we are seeing the environment being destroyed by capitalism where the short-term profits for a few individuals are more important than the long-term effects on the world.

One example of this is the large-scale destruction of the tropical rain forests in South America. Vast areas of forest are bought and the trees cut down and sold. This is producing enormous areas of wasteland, where nothing

will grow, and is having a long-term effect on the earth's climate.

In the industrialised countries coal and oil being burnt in power stations is causing damage to the environment in the form of acid rain and the 'greenhouse effect'.

There is a need to develop non-polluting energy sources such as wind, wave, solar power and nuclear fusion. This will take long-term investment and research which is not possible within the capitalist system and could only be achieved under socialism.

Yours fraternally  
Simon Chester  
Lancashire

## Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.



### Post Office blunder

Dear Comrades,

Last Friday I went to cash my giro. To my amazement I was told the Post Office hadn't received any money from the district post office. I was told to come back on Monday.

Luckily I had previously

cashied my Housing Benefit cheque but what about all those claimants and pensioners who had to go without until Monday?

Yours fraternally  
Sandra Reddie  
Leyton Labour Party  
Young Socialists

### Look in the Militant..

Dear Comrades,

In the pub after a recent ward meeting I attempted to sell a paper to a member who for months had refused to buy *Militant* on the grounds that *Militant* supporters are divisive.

I asked him if he knew about the 24 hour general strike in Greece, or the strike movements in France and Spain. He confided that the daily he read never mentioned this.

I explained the conspiracy of silence of the so-called 'quality' press. Five minutes later he slid 30p across the table and quietly asked for a paper saying that his father, an old communist, would be interested in reading it.

This episode brought home to me just how crucial a daily *Militant* will be to cut across the lies and distortions of the capitalist press.

Yours fraternally  
Ed Waugh  
Wallsend Labour Party

### A thorn in their side

Dear Comrades,

Like Tony McNulty (*Militant* 832) I experienced similar feelings of revulsion to the new 'washes whiter than white' Labour Party image.

I received my new Party card last week and but for the inclusion of Clause 4 could have been persuaded I was joining a gardening club by mistake.

However, the glossy advert for Labour's new 'rose badge' takes the biscuit. Apparently the wearing of the rose emblem is a subtle way of broadcasting

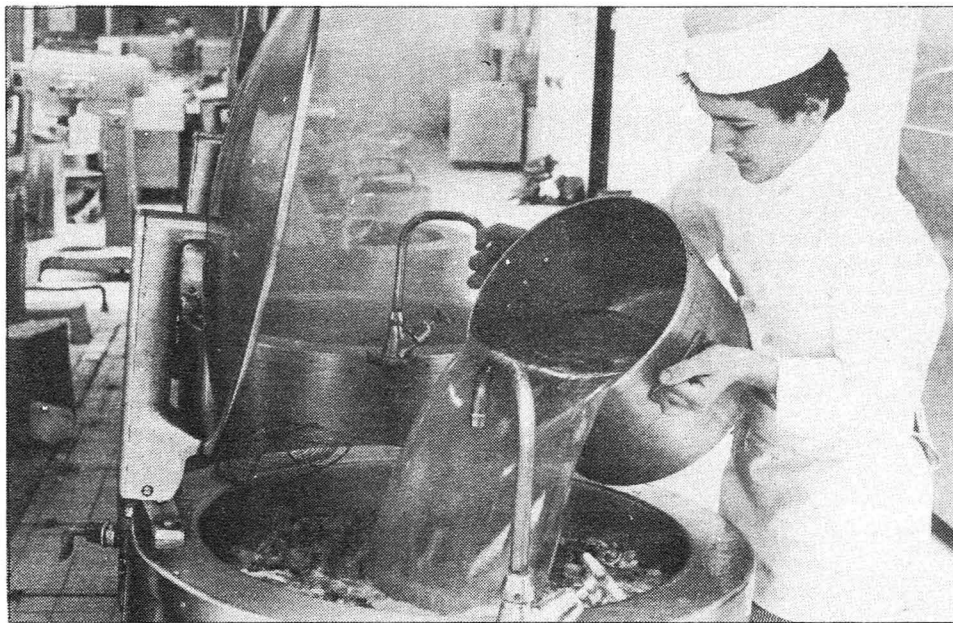
support for the Party.

When I joined the Labour Party in 1970 we had a badge downright blunt in its message, 'Labour Party' and 'Liberty' were boldly emblazoned.

But perhaps even then many of our leaders were subtle in broadcasting their support for Labour as I cannot recall so many wearing the badge of pen, torch and worker's shovel as have adopted the emblem of a feudal monarch.

Yours fraternally  
Kevin Gent  
Co. Durham

## Conditions in catering



Dear Comrades,

Last October I started as a night cleaner in the canteens at the Nabisco factory, Aintree, Liverpool.

The company I work for, the American Restaurants Association (ARA) are the biggest catering company in the world, who won the contract to provide the catering facilities in the factory during the middle of last year.

Prices have increased, wages slashed and jobs have been lost since ARA took over. I get paid £80 gross compared to the £137 the night cleaners got when Nabisco did their own catering.

All ARA workers receive a three month contract when they start, after that they receive either a permanent contract, another three

month one or the sack.

Compared to 99 per cent of the jobs advertised in the Liverpool job-centres the one I've got is well paid, showing the level of poverty wages in Tory Britain 1987.

In the employees' handbook it states: "The company is keen for you to enjoy your present job and also to have the opportunity to advance to the fullest extent of your abilities."

The only time I and millions like me will enjoy their job and advance to the fullest extent of their abilities is when we've got rid of the big business bosses and we're given decent wages and conditions etc.

Yours fraternally  
Rob Owen  
GMBATU branch 48 (personal capacity)

## 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.

○ Banners 6'x 4', one colour lettering, £60 including poles. Extra colour, sizes, logos available. 25% discount for LPYS enquiries—Phil 051 260 3111.

○ *Militant* enamel Red Flag badges. £1 each with SAE. Send to Mick Griffiths, 20 Trilby St, Wakefield, W Yorks. Tel. Wakefield, 375 022.

○ May Day Greetings in *Militant*. We invite your organisation to send May Day Greetings to the labour and trade union movement. Closing date is Friday 17 April. Rates: Semi display 3 col centimetres £6, 6 col centimetres £12. Display sixth of page £20, eighth of page £30, quarter of page £60. Cash with copy please. Made payable to 'Militant Publications', 3/13 Hepscoot Rd, London E9 5HB.

○ *The Burden is 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.

○ 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.

○ Hangers Benefit social/disco. Florence Nightingale pub, 199 Westminster Bridge Rd. Saturday 21 February, 8pm till late. Nearest tube: Waterloo, admission £2.

□ *Militant* Readers Meeting. "Kick out the Tories. Labour to power on a socialist programme". Saturday 14 Feb 7pm. Chillingham Arms, Heaton. Speaker Frances Curran.

□ Bradford *Militant* public meeting "Women and the Struggle for Socialism". Speakers include Margaret Crear (National Labour Women's Committee, personal capacity). Queen's Hall Morley St. Saturday 21 February 2pm. Crèche available.

### Councillors on the line

Dear Comrades,

Whilst travelling to London on the train this week, there were some Labour councillors from Liverpool in my carriage. They were travelling to the House of Lords. Also on the train was 'Sir' Trevor Jones leader of the Liberal Party in Liverpool.

The difference between the two is not just the £12 difference in fare, him in first class, them in second.

But of him and his party doing nothing for the people of Liverpool when they were in office, while the Labour councillors have put everything on the line to defend jobs and services in the city.

When Labour comes to power I hope they defend working class people like the Liverpool councillors have.

Yours fraternally  
Caryn Matthews  
Liverpool

### More Wapping lies!

Dear Comrades,

Myself and other comrades from London Labour Party Young Socialists witnessed some appalling scenes of police brutality outside Murdoch's Wapping plant on the anniversary of the print dispute.

Predictably, the *Sun* newspaper viciously condemned the pickets, apparently printing a photograph of an injured

policeman. However, this week the *Guardian* reported that the photograph used was actually taken at the 1981 Brixton riots—apparently the *Sun* didn't have any pictures of injured policemen at the demo!

Yours fraternally  
Val Kavanagh  
Brentford and Isleworth  
Labour Party  
Young Socialists

### Government schemes to juggle the figures

Dear Comrades,

In the news(?) on 28 January, Employment measures announced offer the Job Training Scheme at benefit rate wages, the Youth Training Scheme for all unemployed under 18, with a revamped restart, which in fact means that if you don't accept JTS or YTS you will lose your benefit.

The real reason for all this nonsense is to juggle the unemployment figures. I quote Lord Young: "Any youngster still unemployed

by Easter will have chosen to remain so".

They then, in the lead up to the next election, can proudly say that the number of youngsters unemployed is now reduced.

I am a mother of three sons, 18, 15 and 13 years of age, with no hope of finding employment. They laugh if I use the old saying "work hard at school so you can get a better job".

Yours fraternally  
Arlene Houghton  
Hamilton

### Owner-unoccupiers

Dear Comrades,

One hundred per cent Tory, Bracknell District Council claims that the sale of council houses has been beneficial for the district.

Bracknell has a desperate housing shortage, but now the council have decided to sell off a whole council housing estate.

Skimped Hill, one of the oldest estates in the new town of Bracknell is to be knocked down and replaced with a retail park. The estate is being sold off for an estimated £16 million.

This money will not be spent on new houses but on a luxury swimming pool complex. Council house tenants and owner-occupiers alike are to be moved out.

Councillors refused to accept a petition from residents at the full council as prior notice had not been given that it was to be presented.

This is typical of Bracknell Tories' heartless approach to the homeless. Their answer to a long council house waiting list was to ban any single person under the age of 25 from going on it.

Yours fraternally Jacqui Mendoza



# Labour students denied rights

THE TORIES' miserable 3½ per cent increase in grants for the next academic year is yet another blow to students' living standards. The real value of the student grant has fallen 21 per cent under Thatcher since 1979. Even the committee of vice chancellors and the Tory dominated parliamentary select committee on educa-

tion condemned this year's increase as inadequate.

Thousands of students have been protesting in the NUS week of action 9-13 February.

Labour students should be at the forefront of the battle to defend education and build for an election victory. But while

the Further Education Labour Students (FELS) is emerging as the left leadership in the FE sector, the right wing National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) officers and the Labour Party student organiser, seem more concerned with obstructing those labour clubs they do not agree with politically.

THE NOLS leadership have plumbed new depths in preventing rank and file participation. All decision making has been centralised in the hands of the seven strong officers' group, accountable to no-one on a day to day basis.

The following catalogue of abuses would never be tolerated in any other part of the labour movement.

★ There have only been two national committee meetings with full agendas in the last eight months.

★ No treasurer's report has been given.

★ No copies of *Labour Student* produced.

★ Labour clubs have been ruled out for NOLS conference, without being informed how to appeal to the conference credentials' committee.

★ Despite requests nobody has been told who is on the credentials' committee, who selected them or when it will meet.

★ The student organiser has not given a report for eight months. So clubs inaugurated in October 1986 have still not been accepted into NOLS membership.

★ The student organiser has not produced a list of affiliated clubs, although she has had the necessary information from all clubs since 12 December, the deadline for reaffiliation. Normally the list is produced soon after that, giving clubs not accepted the chance to appeal. It has now been announced that the list will be produced on 20 February, just seven days before the conference. There can be no plausible excuse for this. It is totally unacceptable. If



Delegates at the FELS conference.

unchanged, clubs will effectively lose the right of appeal.

If the list is not published there is no opportunity for checking the validity of affiliated clubs, nor, more importantly, the delegates attending the conference.

This last occurred in 1984. Eight clubs which had not been accepted by the NOLS NC suddenly appeared on the affiliation list. The then student organiser, John Den-

nis, closed down that conference, after claims that the leadership were ballot rigging, because they were scared the left would win a majority.

Now with growing opposition amongst labour students and within the NUS, are the NOLS leaders preparing to repeat history?

All Labour clubs must protest forcefully with letters and phone calls to the NOLS office demanding:

★ List of affiliated clubs to be produced immediately.

★ All Labour clubs to be informed of credentials' committee meetings. Any club ruled out must be given seven days notice of any of these meetings.

★ All clubs ruled out to be allowed to appeal to conference.

★ Right of all NOLS NC members to examine all conference material, including delegates' cards.

40 SUSSEX University students including *Militant* supporters and other Labour club members are being disciplined by the university authorities, for their involvement in action against the threat of 90 job losses and course closures and mergers.

Letters of protest must be sent to: The Registrar, Sussex House, University of Sussex, Brighton.

Full report next week.

## FELS conference adopts socialist candidate

OVER 40 colleges represented at the Further Education Labour Students conference unanimously agreed to back Collette Williams, the FELS member standing for a part time position on the NUS executive.

Collette Williams has been a full time student union official for the past two years at City College, Liverpool. She became involved in FELS as a single parent during the campaign

for free creche facilities in the colleges in Liverpool in 1984.

Cheryl Varley the FELS member on the FE National Committee of NUS told the conference: "Standing Collette would be a historic step forward for FE students. For the first time in the history of NUS there is the possibility of the election of a candidate on to the NUS executive, representing 1½ million students, committed to a

programme of building a united movement of workers and students to defend education.

Standing Collette is only part of the campaign to win support for our demands and to fight for a socialist leadership of NUS. The election gives FELS an excellent opportunity to build its membership—that campaign must start now. All FELS members and supporters must stand for delegates to NUS con-

ference on the FELS programme by 26 February. We must use this oppor-

tunity to reach as many colleges as possible with our policies.

170 DELEGATES and visitors attended the FELS conference on 31 January. Messages of support to the conference came from Peter Heathfield (secretary NUM), Dave Nellist MP and Tony Benn MP. Speakers on the day included Cheryl Varley and John Macreadie, who stressed the need for students to link up with the organised working class.

Rod Alexander, the newly elected FELS organising secretary, showed how this can be done. He told conference how he had discussed with the NATFHE (college lecturers' union) secretary at his college, resulting in the union's London region sending out a call to its members not to cross student union picket lines during the NUS week of action.

## Coventry fights for homes

COVENTRY 1987—17,000 homes unfit; up to 6,000 lacking at least one basic amenity (hot running water, inside toilet or fixed bath). 11,000 people swell the council waiting list, and 1,600 are condemned to exist in squats or boarding houses etc.

These conditions, along with long-term, mass unemployment undoubtedly contribute to the cases of tuberculosis, dysentery and other preventable diseases which are occurring in the city.

Dave Nellist, Labour MP for Coventry South East is to speak at a public meeting in the Stoke Aldermoor estate, Lower Stoke, to discuss Labour's answer to the city's housing crisis.

### 'Privileged'

Council tenants in areas like Stoke Aldermoor are expected to be satisfied with living in damp and cold, and still pay exorbitant rents for the 'privilege'.

Not only council tenants

suffer. Mortgage repossession have gone up 38 per cent. In the last six years, Coventry City Council alone has had to repossess almost 1,800 properties, losing £150,000 in the process in costs and unpaid arrears.

Work for a Worker's MP. Canvass for Labour—Saturday 14 February and Sunday 15 February. Meet at Labour Rooms, Horizon House, Warwick Rd, Coventry. 10.30am each day.

ERIC HEFFER will officially open the offices of Coventry South East Labour Party. These offices will provide a base for MP Dave Nellist and be a vital asset in the general election campaign.

Coventry South East Labour Party are appealing to all sections of the movement, organisations and individuals, to help fund this step forward for the party. Please send donations to: The Secretary, Coventry SE CLP, 52 Ashby Close, Coventry CV3 2LN. Cheques payable to Coventry SE Labour Party.

Lower Stoke Labour Party Public Meeting. Housing Crisis—Labour's Answer. Wednesday 18 February, 7.30pm. Stoke Aldermoor Community Centre, The Moorfield, Stoke Aldermoor. Speakers—Dave Nellist MP, and local Labour Party members.

## Old Bolsheviks remembered Kamenev



We continue our series on those Bolshevik leaders murdered by the Stalinist bureaucracy, as part of our campaign for their rehabilitation.

Lev Borisovich Kamenev joined the Russian Social Democratic movement in 1901. In exile between 1908 and 1914, he was one of Lenin's principal aides, until Lenin sent him to Russia to edit *Pravda*.

After the 1917 February revolution, Kamenev and Stalin were the Bolshevik's main internal leaders. They proposed co-operation with the Mensheviks and critical support for the Provisional government. This line was strongly opposed by Lenin and Trotsky in exile. When Lenin arrived in April, he convinced the party to abandon this course, but was opposed by Kamenev. Again, on the eve of the October revolution, Kamenev publicly opposed Lenin's plan for armed insurrection.

The revolution's victory however healed these conflicts. Kamenev went on to accompany Trotsky to the peace talks with Germany at Brest Litovsk. He then became president of the Moscow soviet and prepared Lenin's works for publication.

As Lenin's health deteriorated, Kamenev supported Stalin's bid to succeed him. But when Stalin moved to the idea of 'socialism in one country' Kamenev was pushed towards support for Trotsky. Then, as power shifted to the state bureaucracy, he again lined up with Stalin.

This vacillation proved fatal. The catastrophic forced collectivisation of agriculture and the defeat of workers' movements in Western Europe exposed the bankruptcy of 'socialism in one country'. The purge trials which were staged to create scapegoats for the bureaucracy took Kamenev to his death.

Kamenev's commitment to socialism was never in question, but events proved too much for him. Lenin in his final testament wrote: "I shall mention only that Zinoviev's and Kamenev's October episode was not merely a chance event. But that cannot be held against them any more than non-Bolshevism can be held against comrade Trotsky".

As future generations move into struggle, their victory will give those revolutionaries who sacrificed everything their rightful place in history.

By Keith Baldassara



# Industrial Reports

## Margam blackmail a threat to all miners



South Wales miners at the end of a shift.

BRITISH COAL management in South Wales have been given the OK to develop the new Margam Drift mine at a cost of £90 million. They have used the announcement to hold a gun to the head of the union leadership and the miners themselves. They have declared that they want six day coaling and a nine hour shift agreed by the union or they will not go ahead with the project.

This is clearly industrial blackmail. Within days of the announcement, which was to be ratified by discussion on flexible working arrangements with the union, it became clear that it was a threat to the working practices of miners in the whole British coalfield.

To the credit of Arthur Scargill the National NUM President, he has declared that: "We want the Margam development and we want it desperately. But we don't want to be blackmailed into unfair practices in order to get it."

He went on to add that it

was not acceptable to the NUM and that we want to see a reduction in the working week from five days to four with no increase in the number of hours worked per shift, as recompense for the massive increase in productivity miners have created in the last two years. (*Western Mail* 9/2/87)

South Wales miners will be horrified at the prospect of any negotiations which have as their basis the type of continental shift scheme that would also include a nine hour working shift.

Whenever work is required of an essential nature on Saturdays or after the normal 7¼ hour underground shift, it is always paid at premium overtime rates and it is not compulsory. This situation will be threatened as well because these hours will be integrated into the new normal shift pattern of nine hours. This will mean an extra 1¼ hours worked underground and an extra hour on the surface.

The choice is clear—21st

century mining techniques with 19th century hours and conditions in return for 800 jobs and a new mine for 20 years at most. Yet, the revamped Margam project will virtually rape the best bits of coal and sterilise at least 30 million tonnes of winnable deep mined coking coal.

Only two seams, the Gelli-Deg, and the Lower Nine Feet will be mined. This leaves three other coal seams that are winnable. The Bute seam, the Six Feet seam, the Five Feet seam will be abandoned in a coal reserve that is five miles by two miles (that is, ten square miles of coal.)

This ploy must be resisted. A leaflet should be drawn up and used in mass meetings from the national union explaining the progress made in reducing the hours of work that mineworkers in

Britain have made.

The Board must be taken up on their figures for the price of coking coal and the productivity aims of 4.7 tonnes per man shift at an annual output expected at 1.2 million tonnes per year. There has been a massive increase in productivity achieved by the miners' skilful use of modern heavy-duty machinery and longer coal faces in mainly short-term conditions in South Wales.

### Union leaders

It is time that some recompense was given and a reduction in the working week achieved.

The area director decided to announce his plans directly to the media without prior consultation with the unions in the hope that the union leaders and the members

would resign themselves to acceptance.

The NUM have no choice but to respond with every weapon at their disposal and build a campaign to win support from the men to halt this Americanisation of the South Wales and British coal fields.

This resistance needs to be expressed now and not put off until the election of a Labour government. That way we would be protecting the interests of future generations of miners and defending our own present working conditions which are deteriorating fast on the altar of the incentive scheme and are now under threat of the nine hour shift and Saturday working.

By Ian Isaac  
Ogwr NUM (personal capacity)

1842 10 hour day worked.  
1850-1890 Struggles throughout coalfields establish 8 hour day on district by district basis.  
1886 Board of trade report 54 hour week in Wales and Midlands.  
1909 8 hour day established (on descent from pithead to

ascent to pithead).  
1919 Sankey commission recommend 7 hour day reducing to 6½ hour day by 1921.  
1926 7 hour day suspended.  
1930 and 1932 Coal mines acts establish 7½ hour day for underground workers.  
1941 More shifts worked and hours of work extended as

part of war effort.  
1947 5 day week agreement: 7½ hours day for underground workers, 42½ hour week for surface workers.  
1960 National reference tribunal establish 7¼ hour shift for underground.  
1969 Surface workers achieve 8 hour day.

## Trent bus victory

On Monday 2 February bus workers in the Derwent district of the Trent bus company were locked out by management after union officials had refused to have buses fitted with the new 'Wayfarer' electronic ticket machine. After widespread industrial action management were forced to back down.

The workers do not oppose the introduction of these new machines but argue that they are a significant step forward in terms of productivity. The computerised machines make the driver a clerk and could lead management to make redundancies amongst the Nalگو office staff.

Faced with the lock-out a mass meeting was called which recommended an immediate indefinite stoppage. Meetings at every Trent depot were followed by walkouts in

Mansfield. The two local NUR bus branches agreed not to do Trent work.

By the afternoon nearly all the Trent depots were out. Management then agreed that the machines would be taken out if the unions agreed that day so a return to work could be organised next day.

This is a victory over a newly-privatised company. But management will seek to reintroduce the machines at the first opportunity. The TGWU should be looking for an agreement with the Nalگو members to only accept the changes on the basis of a mutual agreement which benefits all Trent bus workers.

By Kevin Cocker  
(Mansfield NUR personal capacity)

## Locked out workers fight for jobs

SUE WILKIE spoke to Sandra Sadler, T&G shop steward and Joseph Fray, strike committee organiser, outside Birmingham City Council.

The strikers were lobbying the leader of the Tory group on the council called Bosworth and another prominent Tory, Coombs. They are the two major shareholders of Metalrax the parent group of companies of which Joseph Fray is one.

THE DISPUTE began last November when the union put in a pay claim to improve the present £81 a week. We exhausted procedure, had a secret ballot and decided to work to rule. On Tuesday the 18th management suspended two workers for not working normally.

We went home at 4.15pm that day. Next morning when we turned up to work we were locked out. The manager asked us to work on their terms, we said we would work a 39 hour week and no overtime.

On 5 January we were sacked. There are about 20 scabs, mostly unemployed, who have started since then. 111 people were sacked.

Four people have had writs served on them to get off the premises.

We are fighting for our jobs. We have been offered £20,000 between 91 of us and 20 jobs. We were then offered £40,000 between all 111 of us, then £60,000. Some have worked there for 39 years, 25 years... The settlement is an insult.

We are going to picket until we get our jobs back or the factory is forced to close. If Labour gets in it will help us. We are all looking forward to that. Frays has victorian style management. We are paid below the minimum time rate.

Please invite speakers, so you can hear the case of these low paid workers who have shown courage and determination in fighting intolerable conditions which is Thatcher's policy to enforce.

Please send donations to: Sandra Sadler, 58 Ruskin Court, Aldridge Rd, Oldbury, West Midlands. Tel. 021 422 7529.

## Staff fight extra hour

Midway through January management of Harrods, the exclusive Knightsbridge store, informed staff that from 1 February opening times would be extended by one hour on four nights a week.

The union, Usdaw, was not consulted despite having sole negotiating rights. The staff were given three choices of new working hours, 9am to 5pm, 10am to 6pm or 9am to 6pm, at a flat rate for the extra hour.

The majority of staff stayed on 9 to 5 hours but management intimidation has forced some on to 9 to 6.

Seniors and middle-management have been told they have to stay until 6pm.

A ballot on industrial action was held by the union. Out of a turnout of over 50 per cent, 80 per cent voted in favour.

The following morning a leaflet was given out by management which stated that the ballot broke the Trades Union Act of 1984 because it did not include "by taking industrial action you could lose your job."

It also stated that from the next

day free tea and coffee would be available in the staff restaurant! Most staff and union members see the leaflet as a pathetic attempt to try and soften up the union. Because unfortunately for management any specific decision on action will only be made by the branch at a general meeting supported by a second ballot conducted according to the 1984 Act.

Since the 2 February 40 to 50 union members have been protesting outside of Harrods giving out leaflets to shoppers and staff. A meeting to discuss what industrial action to take

if management still refuse to negotiate will be held as soon as somewhere large enough can be found.

It will be the first time that Usdaw has taken industrial action inside of Harrods and marks a new turning point for the union. The overwhelming mood of staff is dissatisfaction with the company, if the union can win it will grow from strength to strength.

By a Harrods worker

## Mersey bus battle

"WE QUIT this city" screamed the headline in last week's *Liverpool Echo* as Crosville Bus management announced their decision to close the Love Lane depot and sack the 280 workers.

The dispute started when management introduced six second-hand buses from West Midlands Bus Company. The first one was in such a bad state of repair that it broke down in the Mersey Tunnel and had to be towed into the Love Lane depot.

The principal complaint was the lack of power steering on these buses, which meant that on tight corners, a driver had to stand up in the cab to get the wheel round.

When drivers were ordered to take these buses out they came out on strike on 5 January. A return to work was negotiated on 13 January. The TGWU branch committee met and recommended that drivers would take the buses out on split shifts ie. not at peak hours.

Before this could be put to a mass meeting, management provoked another strike by insisting that the 'second-hand' buses be taken out at all routes at all times.

On 24 January, Crosville managers sent out letters to all staff informing them of the closure of Love Lane. The clear impression that a dispute had been engineered was reinforced by the fact that the original date on the letter was 9 January, which was whitened out and 19 January put in, then over that was 24 January.

### Unanimous

A mass meeting was convened on Monday 26 January and it was carried unanimously to occupy Love Lane and to appeal to other depots for support.

Five out of the eleven depots in the North West struck in support of the Liverpool busmen.

However, Crosville drivers have been critical of the slowness national support being given to the strike, the lack of which was used by some stewards to recommend normal working.

Local talks with management were referred to binding national arbitration which were due for last Friday but have been delayed for a week.

In the meantime, in response to a High Court writ, workers have lifted the occupation and are now picketing the plant to stop management taking the buses away.

Workers are critical of the way managers handled de-regulation by tendering for too many subsidised routes and thereby running at a loss.

Crosville workers are determined to fight for their jobs and force management to back down. Messages of support to Ray Paterson, c/o TGWU Islington, Liverpool.

## Enter A Different World Harrods



## Industrial Reports

## Solidarity with Caterpillar

**WORKERS** occupying the Caterpillar tractor plant at Tannochside have called on the trade union movement to black all Caterpillar equipment. After visiting its sister plant in Leicester, the stewards were hopeful that any work normally done at Glasgow would be blacked there.

John Gillen, AEU deputy convenor was confident that the dockers in the container port at Greenock where a shipment of Caterpillar parts is bound for the United States would also lend similar support.

Summarising the new intensity in the campaign John Gillen said: "Discussions on the floor of the House of Commons are all very well, but what we are looking for is action. That's why we've stepped up our campaign. Hit them where it hurts, right between the cheque books."

Letters sent by management to the homes of every worker demanding the en-

ding of the occupation and a return to normal working conditions under threat of losing redundancy payments were unceremoniously dumped in a large bin in the factory.

The occupation committee immediately turned the tables and sent letters to the homes of the local managers, asking them to join the occupation to safeguard their own jobs.

This defiant mood can also be seen in the way in which they have stayed one jump ahead of management all the time. Threats of writs to end the occupation and sit-in have been quashed for the moment after the stewards secured a caveat in the courts which forces Caterpillar to inform the occupation committee before it seeks an injunction.

Andy Hotchkiss of the AEU, who operates a tractor in the factory, spoke about the occupation's aims: "We are used to Caterpillar reversing decisions. They build a

factory unit next door to this one, costing millions of pounds, supposedly to produce the new D8H tractor, then changed their minds. They told us we'd be getting £62.5m investment and changed their minds. We'll get them to change their minds on this closure too."

Although the main thrust emphasised is for an about-turn by Caterpillar the unions are prepared to consider other alternatives. £10m is available from the government according to Malcolm Rifkind for a possible takeover.

## Investment

This reveals two important things: firstly, the Tories are resigned to the fact that Caterpillar will not reverse its decision and therefore they are not going to pursue pressurising them to stay; secondly, it also reveals there is cash available.

If Rifkind is prepared to put £10m in to finance a

takeover then the stewards and union must demand that he recognises this is paltry for a plant that size and push to take the plant into full public ownership if no new buyer emerges.

Full political support could easily be obtained for taking Caterpillar's Tannochside plant under public control with a very minimum compensation to the multinational owner after its behaviour in this dispute.

In the 1970s Rolls Royce was nationalised virtually overnight by the Tories and they can be forced to repeat this at Caterpillar today. Even a takeover would not guarantee the jobs of 1,200 and the long term future of the factory. One job lost in this area of Lanarkshire is too many as the area is rapidly becoming one of the industrial wastelands of Western Europe.

On Monday it was announced that the second biggest employer in the area around Tannochside,

Tandem Shoe factory, is also to close with a loss of 220 jobs (details next week).

The response to the occupation from the local population has been remarkable. Lorry drivers pass by and stop to give support and donations. Two young school girls aged 12 and 13 came down to the factory and gave their 30p bus fares to the occupation appeal after walking home from Belshill four miles away.

LPYS branches in East Kilbride, Motherwell and Ballieston have organised public meetings and marches to the plant to rally support for the Caterpillar workers. A benefit concert with BMX Bandits appearing amongst others, organised by the LPYS in Tannochside, is all set for next week.

The occupation committee has agreed to send three young workers through to Portobello for the LPYS Scottish conference on 21 and 22 February where they

will speak to the 400 strong conference and other rallies, as well as raising cash on the streets.

The actions and attitude of the Caterpillar occupation are an inspiration to the whole labour movement and an answer to those who argue that workers are not prepared to struggle to retain their jobs and dignity.

Andy Hotchkiss caught the mood of these workers when he told me: "We are not handing those keys back until we get everything we want. Why should we? This factory is under our control now and we've got them running scared."

★ Support the occupation  
★ Join the STUC demo on 28 Feb  
★ Black all Caterpillar products  
★ Nationalise Caterpillar

Messages of support and donations: Caterpillar Occupation Committee, c/o Thomas Stevenson, 17 Campsie View, Bargefield, Glasgow.

By Colin Fox

## Tass strike

PAUL KERNEY, Tass shop steward, spoke to *Militant*.

"AT 11.50am on 4 February, management at Planning Consultancy Ltd sacked two Tass members for refusing to accept a shift system and an £8 per week pay cut.

"In response to this attack the other six young Tass members walked out in protest—demanding full reinstatement for those sacked, a 20 per cent shift allowance and union recognition.

"The strike has now been made official and a picket maintained outside PCL's workshop, Enterprise House, Woodfield Place, London. The picket has successfully turned back a number of delivery vans.

"On Thursday 5 February, management sent out letters to the strikers saying that unless we returned to work on Monday 9 February, we will all be sacked. Our response was to organise a mass picket against these management attacks."

Messages of support and donations should be sent to: Paul Kerney, c/o Tass, Wessex House, 520 London Road, Mitcham, Surrey.

## Nursing home

The strike by Nupe members employed at Sutcliffe Road Nursing Home who walked out because of appalling conditions for staff and patients (see *Militant* 832) is continuing.

A demonstration was organised at short notice with 50 attending. Pressure is being put on the District Health Authority and Sefton council for proper inspection of nursing homes.

By Anne Bannister

## Silentnight

SILENTNIGHT strikers have voted to call their strike off. The decision of the executive several weeks ago to withdraw official recognition has led strikers to finally give up their long and brave struggle.

The strike committee is planning to hold a social on 28 February in Nelson or Colne for all those who have supported the strike.

## Manchester workers in struggle

## Airport

FIREMEN AT Manchester airport have been on strike for just over two weeks.

The cause of the dispute is undermanning resulting from new safety measures introduced in response to the 737 runway accident.

A new fire station watch room takes firemen away working on service vehicles and has created a shortage of leading firemen from 24 to 28.

It particularly hits the rapid intervention vehicle,

the first to the scene of any accident. The firemen want replacements recruited.

At a meeting with operations management no agreement was reached and as part of the disputes procedure the status quo was asked for and agreed.

## Labour chairman

Hours later management revoked the agreement, which covers many airport workers, and triggered the strike.

Manchester Airport PLC has a majority of Labour

councillors on it, including chairman Keith Barnes. He has made statements attacking the firemen, as one TGWU member said: "better than any Tory could do."

This reduces the pressure on the chief executive to end the dispute. Lay offs and sackings have already hit workers on aircraft cleaning services and Serviceair.

But the dispute is costing the airport £100,000 a day according to management.

Last Friday the TGWU branch met and

unanimously voted to support the firemen and pay a levy to the strike fund. The 52 firemen have voted again this week to continue the dispute.

Ironically, before the strike a number of Labour Party members had begun talks with Labour Party officers to get a workplace branch started at the airport. This is an ideal forum to unite the airport's 6,000 workers and put pressure on Labour councillors.

By John Hall  
(Woodhouse Park Labour Party)

## Hospital

OVER 50 local residents and children staged a sit-in in the Ancoats Hospital casualty department at 9am on Sunday, the time set for its closure by the Regional Health Authority.

Maggie Law, a local campaign organiser told *Militant*: "This casualty department covers an area with 37,000 people. There is still quite a lot of industry and it is the closest hospital for the city centre.

"What happens if there is another disaster like the Woolworths fire? Sir John Page (the Regional Health Authority chairman) says they will re-open it for the 'walking wounded' but if so, why close it now? He has told us the closure is not to save money, but we don't believe him.

"Ambulances are supposed to take local people to Crumpsall hospital, but with so many unemployed, they can't afford the bus fare home. It took one woman there recently and she had to walk home at 2 in the morning.

"The staff at Crumpsall have said they won't be able to cope. They are talking about erecting porta-cabins. Can you imagine them resuscitating people in porta-kabins? And what about the extra pressure on ambulance drivers and local GPs? There is a lot of anger and the local community is 100 per cent against this closure."

By John Hunt



Nupe members on the picket line

## Engineers

"We want our jobs back" said one disgruntled striker at Senior Coleman in Sale Manchester, in rejecting management's attempt to break their resolve with redundancy payments. The vote not to accept was unanimous.

After one month the strikers are better organised and more confident. After this failure management have agreed to negotiate. This is a

breakthrough as union recognition is one of the workers' demands.

Support from the labour movement has been an essential ingredient in getting the dispute to this stage despite management threats, intimidation and use of scabs. More pressure through blacking is needed, however, and support for the planned demonstration and rally.

By Gordon Cormack  
(Davyhulme Labour Party, personal capacity)

## Demo in support of Senior Coleman strikers

10.30am Saturday  
14 February  
Sale Town Hall

Speakers: John Tocher  
AEU District Secretary,  
Stan Orme MP, Alf Morris  
MP, Tony Lloyd MP, John  
Nicholson PPC Davyhulme,  
Barry Brotherton Leader  
Trafford Council.

## Nupe HQ lobby

Irate NUPE members from North Kent lobbied the union's national headquarters last Wednesday in protest at what they see as the victimisation of their Area Officer, Nick Bradley in a bureaucratic and arbitrary attempt to move him from Kent (see *Militant* 833).

Grantley Clement, from the Sheppey and Swale branch, explained to Nick Toms why he was there: "I got sacked at work for allegedly attacking my supervisor. Nick Bradley took up my case and spent a lot of time with me drawing up support. The case went for two days and he eventually won.

"He was tremendous in supporting my case and came down week after week. I've never known anyone stick up for his members like Nick. He really cares.

"What they are doing to him is unbelievable. It'll be everyone's loss, theirs and all his members. At Sittingbourne pool, Sheppey Sports Centre and Sheerness swimming pool support for Nick Bradley is fantastic. I took the day off to come here because I thought it was the least I could do after all he did for me. The members are very upset."

A leaflet was distributed to head office staff explaining the case of the North Kent branches which was well received. Such was the impact of the lobby that eventually Tom Sawyer, the deputy general secretary, was forced to come out to meet them. But he failed to answer their questions satisfactorily and they remain angry.

The North Kent members were particularly annoyed that they were denied access to their own head office. As Martin Craig, a shop steward from Dartford Council said: "We paid for this building yet we can't use the facilities. We've got to make an appointment even to use the bog."



# Militant

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 Russian Revolution,  
 seventieth anniversary  
 — pages 8,9

## Telecom workers go back undefeated

BRITISH TELECOM workers are returning to work, but the solid vote against management's offer in the strong, big city areas, has given a warning—that they will not be pushed around.

Glasgow voted by 1,296 to 377 to reject the deal. Newcastle voted 1,069 to 406 against. In London, LNCL branch polled eight to one against.

In these large militant branches there was intense anger against their union leadership recommending the offer. Glasgow, Stirling, LNCL passed motions of no confidence against the union executive.

The British Telecom engineers' strike has shown a determination and solidarity which has amazed BT management and their Tory backers.

The strike has united the membership as never before. The mood on the picket lines has been tremendous. Thousands of worker shareholders who left the union during the struggle against privatisation have rejoined—bad news for Thatcher and 'popular capitalism'.

BT management wanted to break the union, lengthen the working day, humiliate the membership. They have failed. The rank and file are stronger than ever. The 98 per cent vote in the Sunday meetings to continue the dispute underlined their determination.

### Led by members

The branches have organised magnificently. Local marches of thousands have been organised in many cities. Regular mass meetings and 24-hour picketing has taken place. Picket captains have organised rotas and ensured discipline. Short wave radios, motor bike messengers, local printing facilities and TV and radio coverage have been used.

The strike has been led by the members. The official leadership has failed miserably. They have been taken in by BT management. The right wing executive

By PHIL LLOYD, Swansea NCU secretary, personal cap.

believed they could negotiate a satisfactory compromise. But those days are gone.

The executive were forced into the strike by a BT lock-out. They hadn't prepared for it. The response of the members took them completely by surprise. Then they failed to take advantage of the position of strength created for them.

They allowed BT to insist on separate negotiations for engineering and clerical sections, and both executives failed to unite the two sections when the opportunity arose.

The leadership's incompetence was revealed even in the conduct of negotiations. Golding was constantly on TV effectively acting as management's mouthpiece. The constant references to a settlement being close and a return to work—whilst BT often said the opposite—were taken up by the media to undermine the members' resolve.

The strike was beginning to bite. Major faults were piling up. Any longer and the network could have been crippled. BT management were under severe pressure to get us back to work. If the NCU leaders had only shown the same determination as the pickets, all our demands could have been won.

BT have dropped certain demands they started with,



"The membership of our union have led this dispute throughout. When it came to the national leadership, they did not have the same commitment. Had they been prepared to recommend the continuation of the fight, by Monday we would definitely have won." — George Blackmore, London North Central Internal branch.

particular for extending the working week, but the union leadership has given up on the fundamental issue of the strike. Despite Golding's claims they have accepted a massive regrading and reorganisation package in return for a paltry pay rise.

Management want one person to do two two people's jobs as they introduce new technology and working practices.

According to BT they want 70,000 job losses, over half the membership of the union. The other implication of the deal is the destruction of national negotiations as 'job repatterning' and efficiency measures are introduced on a local basis.

The Broad Left has con-

stantly warned against management's intention to localise wages and conditions. Such measures undermine the strength of the union and threaten its existence as a national union.

### Broad Left

The task now for activists in BT is to build on the confidence and strength displayed in the strike. There will be immediate battles as management attempt to impose their job cutting strategy. Golding's dream of a two year peace is empty.

The strike has shown we can stop them. But it has also shown the necessity for a disciplined left leadership committed to action to stop

BT destroying our jobs and our union. The forthcoming executive elections offer an immediate opportunity to take a step in that direction.

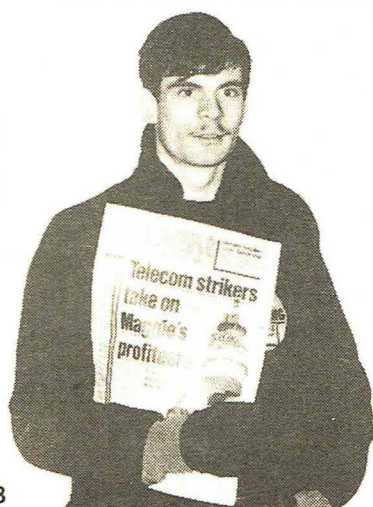
This dispute has answered again all those bemoaning that workers are not prepared to struggle. A new layer of workers has been blooded in struggle. The young NCU pickets have learnt a lot in three weeks about the class struggle, and what type of leadership is needed.

The Broad Left must put its efforts into building in the branches, including previously right wing areas which have been radicalised by the strike and step up the campaign to transform the union.

### 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.

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