

Get organised
Come to LPYS
conference

See page 5 for details

School students... FE students... YTS trainees

Youth take on Tories

THE YOUNG people of Britain are angry. At school they see teachers' jobs being cut. When they leave, millions have no choice but the Youth Training Swindle or the dole.

Now it is reported that even the dole will go if the Tories win the election. It will be slave labour on YTS or starve!

But the young are fighting back as never before. Last Thursday 700 London school students descended on County Hall to protest at the compulsory redeployment of 1300 teachers.

The mood was electric as the chants quickly turned against the Tory government. Labour Party Young Socialist (LPYS) leaflets were enthusiastically grasped.

Despite police objections, the students surged over Westminster Bridge to take their protest to Parliament. At the meeting which followed, speakers from the School Students Union and the LPYS were cheered when they said that this was a political fight and attacked the Tories and their YTS schemes.

Meetings of the London School Students Union agreed to escalate the action. They have called another rally for Thursday 26 March. This will again link up with the teachers' struggle to defend their jobs and negotiating rights.

The students are demanding that the Labour-controlled Inner London Education Authority stop carrying out Tory cuts but join the students and teachers in the fight to reverse them.

But as one student said: "We aren't just demonstrating about the redeployment of teachers, but about everything". That sums up the mood in the schools. Thursday's demo

By Dave Sirokin
(Secretary School
Students Union)

will be historic. And further action is planned by the School Students Union.

Meanwhile, students in further education will be demonstrating in Manchester to highlight the scandal of cheap labour on YTS. They have chosen Wednesday 1 April, the day when YTS trainees will get their first rise for 19 months—a miserly £1.20. Second year trainees will get nothing! A survey has shown that 92 per cent of young people think that YTS is cheap labour.

Training

A lobby of Keyboard Training, a management agency which profits from YTS, has been organised by the Further Education National Committee of the National Union of Students, under pressure from Further Education Labour Students. They will be joined by striking Manchester school students.

The aim is to launch a campaign to unionise YTS trainees to fight for trade union rates of pay, proper health and safety rights and decent training. Even the Manpower Services Commission admits that a third of trainees do not get adequate training.

Dave Nellist MP has put down a motion supported by 17 other Labour MPs fully supporting the demands of the demonstration, calling for a guaranteed job for all trainees at the end of the scheme. Collette Williams of

- ★ Support the teachers' strikes
- ★ No to education cuts
- ★ No compulsory redeployment of teachers
- ★ £35 a week minimum grant for all students
- ★ No to YTS conscription
- ★ Trade union rates of pay on YTS
- ★ A guaranteed job for all



London school students express their anger at education cuts last Thursday.

the NUS National Executive has called for a joint campaign between school students, further education students and YTS trainees to force the Tories to retreat.

Last Thursday's rally revealed the real mood of the

young. They see no future under the Tories. There are millions of young voters to be won to Labour, if action like this is spread to involve all students, trainees and workers in a united fight for a socialist future.

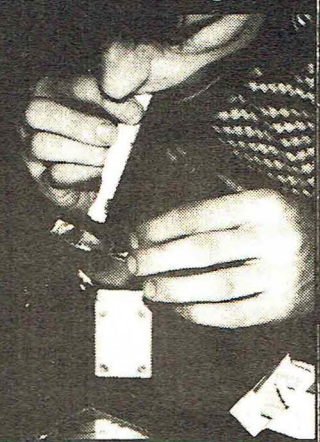
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Join the lobby in Manchester
Wednesday 1 April, 12 noon.
Victoria Statue, Piccadilly.

Militant

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No retreat on Cruise

NEIL KINNOCK has flown to Washington to try to reassure the Reagan administration that his defence policy will not undermine the NATO alliance.

Before he went he had already declared that if, when he becomes Prime Minister, the two super-powers are engaged in negotiations to get rid of intermediate-range nuclear forces (INFs), which would include American Cruise missiles in Britain, he would allow these weapons to remain until the talks had ended, rather than immediately closing US nuclear bases. They could even be kept for the full term of a Labour government.

Many Labour Party members will be alarmed by this willingness to make such concessions on one item of party policy on which so far the leadership have stood firm. It will arouse fears that the party leaders are bending under the pressure of the press and right-wing sections of the party, like the editor of the *New Statesman*, who are demanding a revision of Labour's stance on defence. Is Kinnock's step back on Cruise to be followed by a watering down of the Party's commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament?

A Kinnock government must not be allowed to follow the path of Papandreou in Greece and Gonzalez in Spain. The former stood for election on a platform of removing all US bases, the latter of opposition to NATO, but both reversed their policies when in office.

Moreover the strategists of the American ruling class will not be impressed with a pledge to keep nuclear weapons during disarmament talks, if they are then going to be removed regardless of the outcome of those talks.

As on other issues, Kinnock is making gestures to demonstrate his 'statesmanship' rather than following a consistent line. Neither Labour's enemies in the Pentagon nor workers in Britain are going to be convinced. He will end up satisfying no-one.

Yet many left-wing Labour MPs and CND leaders have been prepared to go along with his position on Cruise missiles. This reveals the illusions many of them share with Kinnock in the possibility of achieving real disarmament and peace through super-power negotiations.

The existence of huge nuclear arsenals stems from the fundamental conflict of interest between the Western capitalists and the Russian bureaucracy. For forty years they have tried to reach agreements to disarm, but they have not stopped the escalation of the arms race.

The Bradford University School of Peace Studies has estimated that the number of warheads will have doubled from its level of 15,000 in 1980 to 30,000 by 1990. The INFs which are currently under negotiation, are just one part of the firepower. In addition there are the strategic inter-continental missiles which are aimed at cities and the tactical 'battlefield' missiles, each with the strength of the Hiroshima bomb. There is speculation that germ warfare research is being stepped up as well.

The reason for the proposed super-power talks is that each side bears a huge burden of expenditure on arms. The Russian bureaucracy needs some of those resources to devote to the domestic economy to improve living standards and stave off an explosion from the workers. US imperialism has a record deficit, very largely because of its defence spending.

Therefore both sides have an interest in an agreement to reduce the numbers of certain types of weapons. The scrapping of the INF missiles would be a welcome advance, but they are only a small proportion of the NATO forces. In no way would that mean that the arms race was now at an end. It would certainly not mean 'peace'.

So long as power lies in the hands of a capitalist ruling class and a bureaucratic elite, which are only concerned with the defence of their wealth and privileges, there will always be arms stockpiles. Only socialist governments in both sectors of the world would have a real interest in total disarmament and, in a world socialist federation, create the possibility of world peace.

There must be no retreat on Labour's policy of getting rid of both American and British nuclear weapons. Instead of fostering illusions in the diplomacy of the super-powers, the Labour leaders should be exposing the class nature of the arms race and campaigning for a socialist solution to the problems facing British workers, as a first step towards the establishment of worldwide socialism and peace.

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

Labour must investigate convictions

Reports by Therese O'Meara, Liz Gaynor (Tottenham LPYS) and Gearoid O'Lee (Tottenham LP), all in personal capacity.

DEEP RESENTMENT and fear has set in among the community on Broadwater Farm, following the three life sentences meted out for the killing of a policeman during the 1985 disturbances. They are demanding to know:

- ★ Why no member of the police force has been disciplined or charged for their illegal entry, without a warrant, into the house of Cynthia Jarrett, during which she collapsed and subsequently died, leading to the events on the day of the disturbances?
- ★ What action will be taken against police interrogators who broke their own rules and the law, interrogating children under oppressive conditions?

- ★ What is being done about the underlying problems on the estate of youth unemployment, deprivation and what Lord Gifford, chairing Haringey Council's independent inquiry into the disturbances, considered was their primary cause—"racist and insensitive policing"?

- ★ How they can be expected to trust convictions based purely on 'admissions' made during police interviews, which were later retracted (and in one case never signed) by the accused, and which were not corroborated by witnesses?

WHEN THE PC Blakelock murder trial began two months ago there were six defendants. As the trial unfolded, however, the prosecution's case began to fall apart. One by one charges were dropped against three of the defendants on the judge's ruling. "It became clear," commented Mr. Justice Hodgson, "that the police in their attempt to find those responsible had broken numerous rules, and in respect of two of the youths had acted illegally." He criticised in the strongest terms Chief Superintendent Graham Melville, who "forgot" that one of the accused was a child!

Set example

Instead of tackling the real issues behind the disturbances, the police attempted to present a number of individuals as responsible for the violence, and impose heavy sentences as a warning to other communities like Brixton and Handsworth. Very harsh sentences of seven years for affray were handed out, for example.

A thirteen year old, charged initially with the policeman's murder, was held for three days without access to his parents or a solicitor. On his third day in custody he broke down and confessed while being interrogated wearing just his underpants and a blanket.

The evidence against another of those discharged in the murder trial was that a police witness, Jason Cobham, had seen him join-



Photo: Stefano Caproni (Report).

ing in the attack against the policeman. This was not Cobham's original statement, in which he admitted throwing rocks at the police and setting fire to a car. For this he was fined £200, while a former friend whom he incriminated received seven years for throwing three stones.

Under cross-examination Cobham admitted his earlier testimony had been "dotted with lies," and that since his fine last year, the police had secured accommodation for him, found him two jobs and even paid most of his bills—"except I have to pay for the phone bills," he told the court.

Right from the start of these trials it appeared to the local community that the

defendants would have to prove their innocence, while the state presumed them guilty. Again and again they have seen the racism exposed within the police. Even last week outside the Old Bailey when the murder verdicts were announced, several black youths were beaten by the police, two needing hospital treatment.

Workers' inquiry

The labour and trade union movement has a responsibility to organise its own inquiry into the cases of all the youths who have been charged after the disturbances, into the way evidence was collected against them and the sentences imposed.

An estate under siege

SINCE OCTOBER 1986 over 360 people have been arrested in connection with the disturbances on the Broadwater Farm Estate on 6 October 1985.

18 per cent of those arrested were juveniles. 271 homes, over a quarter of the whole estate, were searched by the police. There were 18 cases in which sledge-hammers were used. Smashing doors was carried out by a large squad which included armed officers.

Rupert Downing, a resident on the estate, described a scene that took place early on a Sunday: "There was a huge noise, I went out of the front of my flat and I was confronted by an officer with a very large powered rifle."

Howard Kerr, a 17 year old slow learner was interrogated for two and a half days at Barnet police station. He said that he was miles away from Tottenham on the night. Yet he signed a 50 page statement confessing to affray and naming 27 others, also giving detailed accounts of their actions. But

five months later in court six witnesses proved that Howard was in a pub in Windsor on the night in question.

Lord Gifford's report mentioned the case of Hugh Sutherland, a black council employee on the estate. Police followed him and his girlfriend, making monkey noises and making remarks like: "Climbed any good trees lately?" The police covered his car with 'I love Met' stickers.

He swore at them and a few days later seven of them ran towards him, grabbed his arm saying: "Well Mr F...king Mouthy Orange Capri, we've got you now, you c..."

They bundled him into a police van, kicking him, he was badly cut and swollen faced. He was charged with abusive behaviour. The case created much anger among his fellow work mates and the local trade union movement, who organised a demonstration at the Magistrates' Court and a one day strike in which 300 employees took part. The case was dismissed.

EVEN BEFORE the death of Cynthia Jarrett, tension was rising on Broadwater Farm. The shooting in Brixton of Cherry Groce had enraged the black community, especially. Police witnesses in the Blakelock trial had claimed: "The force in Tottenham had expected trouble days before the death of Mrs. Cynthia Jarrett."

On the day after her death a peaceful demonstration of family and friends of the Jarrett's assembled outside Tottenham police station at 3.00pm. A meeting was arranged for later, on the estate. That meeting agreed to march on the police station.

The police version of events is that youths leaving the meeting attacked the police with machetes, axes and petrol bombs. The alternative view from a number of witnesses is that as they left the meeting youths and older workers, were confronted by police intent on sealing them in. Lord Gifford's report concludes: "The youths leaving the estate were extremely angry... they are confronted by three police vans with riot protection containing police in riot gear... For many youths this blocking of their free movement at such a time is intolerable. They react to it by using any means which are available."

Liverpool's Liberals attack workers' gains

SINCE COMING to power courtesy of the Law Lords on 12 March Liverpool's Liberals have run amok.

They have shown their hatred of the trade unions and ordinary working people, showing what will come if they are elected in May.

They have:

- ★ Stopped a £106,000 grant to Merseyside Unemployed Centre—and proudly boasted about it.
- ★ Put on ice the recruitment of 100 YTS trainees at union rates of pay.—
- ★ Tried (unsuccessfully) to sack Sam

Bond and Beryl Molyneux.

- ★ Frozen all vacancies.
- ★ Prevented 29 new staff from being taken on in the housing department.
- ★ Put £25 million of housing contracts on ice which could leave hundreds of families in slums.

THE IMPOSED unelected Liberal regime in Liverpool is already attacking the council workforce with sackings and ripping up of agreements.

By Derek Hatton

Most sinister of all has been the threat from Pam Bradley, Liberal personnel chief, to examine the personal files of all workers who started since Labour won a majority in 1983.

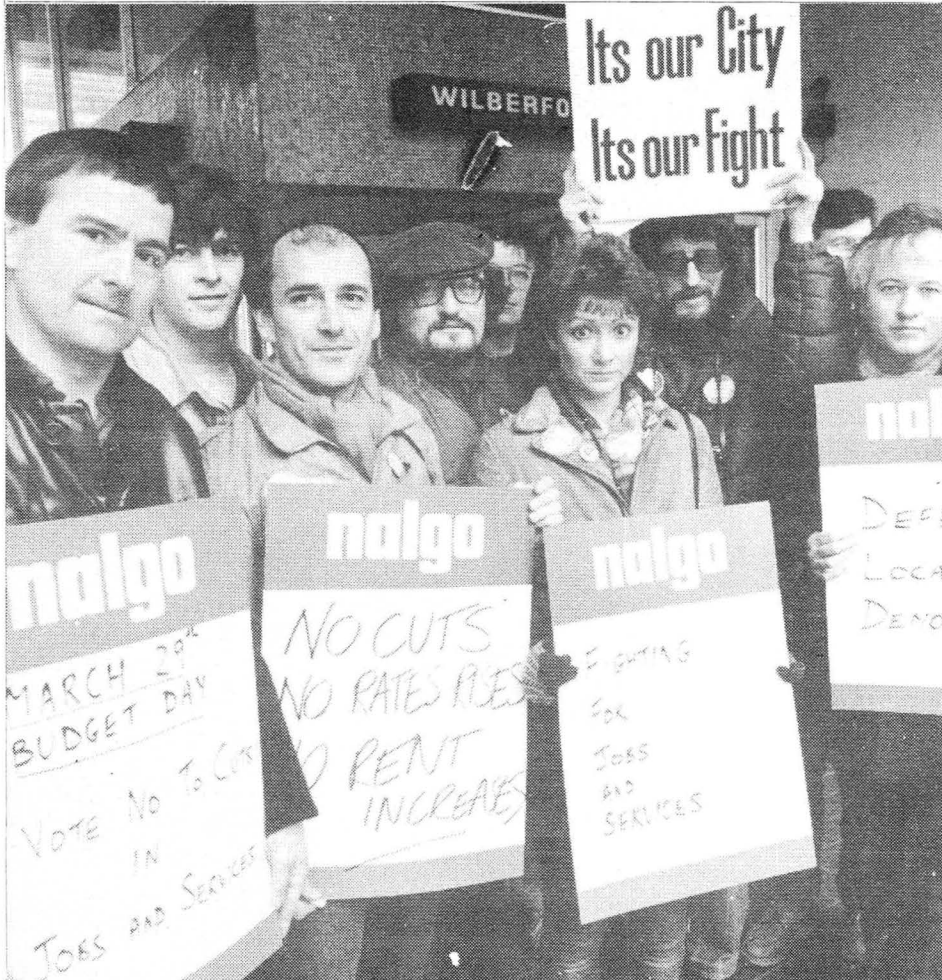
This is effectively a witch-hunt against any workers who have supported Labour in the past. Workers are quickly responding to these attacks.

The binmen in GMBATU branch 200 walked off the job on Monday. Management have ignored a manning agreement. If anyone on a wagon was ill or on holiday, it was agreed to replace them from the pool of men who do the other cleansing jobs. Now management are insisting that spare crew from unused wagons should cover.

This seems a relatively small concession to make but it would effectively mean workers from the pool losing the chance to make an extra £15 a week.

On the same day 29 men who were due to start on the bins were told "there is no job for you." Some of these men have been out of work for more than five years.

The static security service is their next target. Already they have ripped up an agreement for the static security to guard the municipal car parks. The



NALGO members backing the Labour council's stand in 1984. United trade union opposition will be vital in stopping the Liberals between now and May. Photo: John Smith (IFL) (iii)

Liberals' intention to carry out a 'review of the city's security needs' is a thinly veiled threat to dismantle the static force.

Members of the static have voted to take immediate strike action if any victimisation, or any major reorganisation was threatened for the long term future of the static security or if

there are any alterations to the existing manning levels.

Build unity

The mood of the meeting was serious and a showdown now looks inevitable. Unity will be essential in the future. One security guard said "Everyone will have to participate. It is not enough

simply to be on strike."

With all sections of the work force under attack the need for unity is paramount. The Joint Shop Stewards Committee (JSSC) has a key role to play. NALGO, NUPE and the NUT should rejoin the JSSC to ensure a united campaign in defence of jobs and services.

Liverpool defence fund

SUPPORT THE surcharged and disqualified Liverpool councillors with cash. £1,351 was raised at a mass meeting last week in a collection with a pledge from the GMBATU branch 5 to raise a further £10,000 to pay off some of the surcharge and court costs facing the councillors.

All donations should be sent to: Liverpool 47 defence fund, Account no. 502 111 95, to 7 Gambier Terrace, Liverpool 1.

Labour are confident in St Mary's election

ALL EYES in Liverpool are now turned to the by-election in St Mary's ward, Garston where Marxist Ian Rogers is standing for Labour on 9 April.

St Mary's is a Labour marginal held last May, by 400 votes. Even though the result was the second highest ever for Labour, the Liberals picked up the collapsed Tory vote.

The Liberals hope to score a victory this time but all canvass returns indicate that they are going to be disappointed. This by-election is seen as a test case for the local elections on 7 May, where 59 seats will be fought across the city.

We believe we can win this battle and the war in May. The attitude of many Labour voters has hardened and there is outrage on the doorstep at the vindictive judgement of the law lords to make the councillors pay the fines and surcharge.

Ian Rogers explained at a meeting of over 300 in Liverpool in support of the Liverpool 47 "When asked on the doorstep if I support *Militant* the reply is simple.

"If to build 5,000 new council houses and improve the environment of this city is *Militant*, if to provide improved nursery education for this city is *Militant*, if to campaign for the betterment of the underprivileged of Liverpool is *Militant* then by Christ I must be one of the biggest *Militants* around."

We have a fight on our hands. In Liverpool we have not seen the mass protest demonstrations of 1983 and '84. But I believe all the support and all the anger is there on the estates and waiting to be channelled through the ballot box.

By Kath Lee
(Garston Labour Party Women's officer)

SAM BOND has obtained an injunction from the High Court to prevent the Liberal Council from taking any further action to dismiss him from his job as Principal Race Relations Advisor.

This means that the city's councillors will be in contempt of court if they attempt to dismiss him.

The High Court order was sought on the grounds that the decision to sack Sam Bond was unlawful, in contravention of his contract of employment and the conditions of service, and in breach of the rules of natural justice; that Sam Bond was not given any kind of hearing and that the decision to sack him was instigated for purely party political reasons.

Sam Bond says: "This is a victory for me and for the black community. I will continue with my duties as before, continuing to fight for the black community."

Beryl Molyneux who works at a liaison officer between the Education Department and Parents' Associations has also been granted an injunction against sacking.

Mrs Molyneux angered the Liberals when she withdrew as a Liberal council candidate in 1984 because she had been convinced of the good work the Labour council had done.

Arrested Young Socialist remanded in custody

ERONE BROWN, a black member of the Labour Party Young Socialists was arrested during the LPYS's 18 October demonstration and accused of common assault and actual bodily harm against a policeman.

Erone appeared in court for the eighth time last week. The LPYS members who attended were amazed that neither of the police witnesses could give evidence without referring to their statements, which they admitted they wrote up together at the same time.

Despite this, they still got utterly confused when cross examined by the defence barrister—even the jury laughed at them. Both policemen denied holding Erone round the neck, and they both claimed they lost their helmets in the struggle to arrest Erone.

But photographs taken by the *Socialist Youth* photographer showed the police accounts to be totally inaccurate on both counts. Defence witnesses backed up Erone's claim that he bit the policeman because he was in agony. The prosecution made the jury gasp with the claim that Erone was "an animal."

The jury, who came from near the court in Knightsbridge, may have been unaware of the harassment that black youth face in the inner cities.

They found Erone not guilty of punching PC Stewart, showing that he had in fact been wrongly arrested. But they found him guilty of actual bodily harm because he used too much force to defend himself.

Basic justice

Because Erone is on a conditional discharge, the judge ordered him to be kept inside pending reports until sentencing on 9 April. He was allowed no visitors and taken away immediately to Chelmsford Remand Centre.

The police seem to be given a free hand to frame black youth. Such incidents show that the demand for police accountability is not just a left wing hobby horse, it is a matter of basic justice for young people in Britain.

Messages of support for Erone Brown to: M80959, Chelmsford Remand Centre, Springfield Road, Chelmsford, Essex.

NUS—Labour's opportunity missed, but socialist campaign wins executive place



Colette Williams, who was elected to the NUS executive after a socialist campaign, on a recent demonstration.

LAST WEEK'S National Union of Students (NUS) conference was a warning to the leaders of the Labour Party.

The elections to the NUS national executive offered the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) a great chance to secure a Labour victory and launch a massive campaign to win the youth and student vote.

After the elections NOLS remains the largest group on the 20 person executive but the loss of two places now puts them in a minority.

There is growing discontent towards NOLS within the NUS after five years in the leadership.

The Kinnockite NUS executive have been holding back student action against cuts and attacks waiting for the general election while at the same time the policies of Labour's leaders nationally were undermining electoral support for Labour amongst students.

The decision to withdraw the clear commitment to a £27 grant from the manifesto and Patricia Hewitt's recent remarks alienated

many conference delegates. The NUS leaders pandered to the mood of cynicism about politics. Vicky Philips Labour president of NUS opposed a move to change the constitution to enable NUS to back a political party. She complained that it was an attempt to get support for the Labour Party!

But the mood of conference was raised by Juan Ignacio Ramos, leader of the Spanish student movement who was very well received by conference (see interview page 10). The speaker from the Caterpillar occupation got a standing ovation, raising confidence in the possibility of struggle.

The election of Colette Williams from Further Education Labour Students (FELS) to the executive shows what can be done.

Standing on a clear socialist programme, Colette explained how a *fighting* NUS leadership could link up with the labour movement to beat back Tory attacks and win major reforms for students.

Six-day working at Margam

Thin end of Coal Board wedge

NEIL KINNOCK'S backing for six-day working in the proposed Margam mine in South Wales will be viewed by many miners with a mixture of exasperation and hostility.

As the detailed arguments on page 14 of this paper show, British Coal's propaganda hides the facts about the economic and health implications of six-day working at Margam.

Many ordinary miners understand these dangers and that this is the thin end of another Coal Board wedge into the unity of the National Union of Mineworkers

The lodge committees conference on 7 March at Porthcawl witnessed an angry debate. Many lodge representatives challenged the leadership's attempt to railroad agreement to the deal. They were met with manoeuvres, personal abuse and intimidation.

It is ironic that Kinnock, who failed to attend a miners' picket line until the last days of the '84/5 strike, should so readily intervene in such a controversial

internal debate in the NUM.

Despite his hatred of Arthur Scargill he would not have taken such an unusual step unless encouraged by the South Wales NUM leadership.

They have even taken the unique step of requesting backing from the Wales Labour Party and the Labour-controlled County Councils.

They are frightened of rank and file opposition to the deal and are trying to lean on the support of "respectable opinion", from the media and Welsh SDP to the regional and national Labour Party.

Vain attempt

It is yet further evidence of the collapse of former lefts like Kinnock and South Wales NUM leaders like 'EuroCommunist' Party member George Rees and Labour member Terry Thomas.

Instead of facing up to the fact that the '84/85 strike was unavoidable if the union was to try to halt the Coal Board's plans for massive closures and that new struggles are necessary, they

are hiding behind calls for 'realism' and 'Welsh jobs for Welsh workers' in a vain attempt to accommodate management.

The rank and file do not abandon the memory of bravery and sacrifice in a great cause so easily.

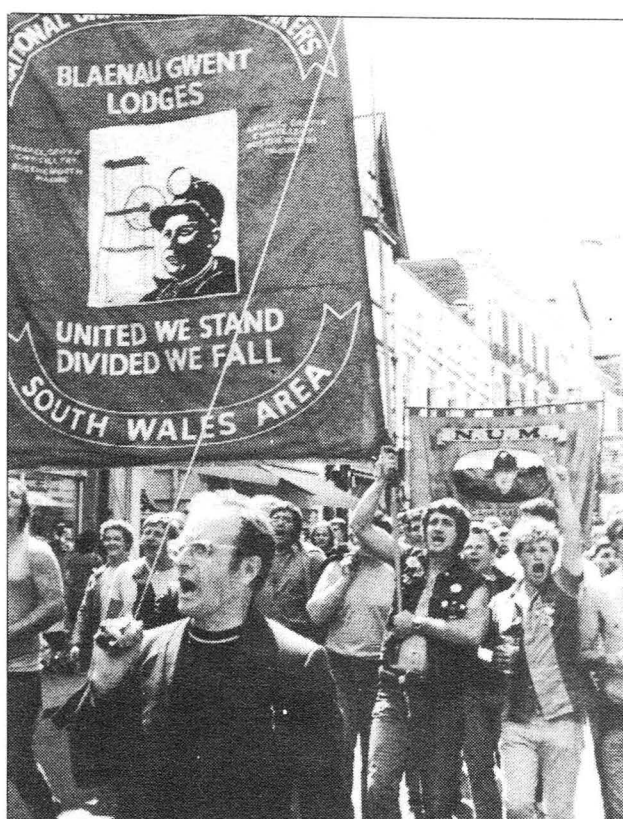
They know that blame for the collapse of South Wales mining jobs from 23,000 before the strike to 11,000 today lies with the Tories, their British Coal stooges and those in the labour movement who failed to support the miners' struggle.

That is why they will respond to the real facts as outlined by the NUM Broad Left. And, if allowed a ballot, will reject the dangerous and highly profitable extra exploitation which British Coal plan for all the coalfields.

And they will not thank Neil Kinnock for his mischievous and ill-informed intervention, which lines him up with the David Hunt, the Tory Energy Minister.

See also page 14.

By Ian Ilett



South Wales miners during the 1984-5 strike.

Photo: Jacob Sutton.

Right wing defeat in TGWU as Quinn appeal successful

THE TRANSPORT and General Workers Union Appeals Committee has unanimously upheld the appeal of General Executive Committee member Alan Quinn against the right wing's attempt to ban him for life from holding union office.



London Labour: unite for socialism

IN THE aftermath of the Greenwich by-election, amid recriminations among the party leadership, a group of trade union and Labour Party officials announced their intention to form a 'moderate' grouping in the Greater London Labour Party.

They claim that some of the measures put forward by some of the left in the Greater London Labour Party and introduced by some councils, on such matters as positive discrimination for ethnic minorities in job allocation and housing and promoting 'positive images' of homosexuals in schools, are alienating traditional Labour voters.

But far more serious damage has been done to Labour's standing by right wing councils which have collaborated in the implementation of savage cuts dictated by the Tory government, without any fightback.

The attempt by these right wingers to blame the left for the Greenwich defeat exposes their bankruptcy. They are reduced to looking for scapegoats. It is precisely actions like this which undermine Labour's credibility. They should put their time to better use by campaigning against the Tories rather than other sections of their own party.

Criticism of some left wing London councils is deserved, however. On issues of serious concern to the vast majority of London workers, they also have all too often capitulated when they should have stood firm and mobilised a fightback against Tory attacks. In seven years Thatcher has been allowed to get away with the ruination of public transport, the abolition of the Greater London Council and savage ratecapping.

Having lost on these major battles, some of the left have launched into campaigns on issues such as gay rights and positive discrimination.

But when public services and the living standards of all workers are being eroded, there cannot be any real improvement in the lives of particular groups.

The minorities which make up London's working-class population—blacks, Asians, Irish and homosexuals—have to be involved in the struggle against the Tories, not as separate groups, but as part of the labour and trade union movement which will be the decisive force in that fight. They will be drawn towards the labour movement not by promises of special measures just for them as minorities, but by involving them in the fight for a socialist programme which will end the unemployment and poverty which are the root cause of the discrimination from which they suffer.

Working-class unity is therefore vital. Occasionally however, the way in which the rights of minorities have been taken up by left councils has actually threatened to stoke up prejudice amongst other sections of the class.

That is why it is so important for Labour, while fighting resolutely against prejudice and discrimination, to appeal to the whole working class and go on the offensive to elect a Labour government and Labour councils committed to a programme to transform the lives and prospects of all working people.

By George Williamson

(Chair, Finance and General Purpose Committee, Greater London Labour Party, in personal capacity)



Members of the Labour Party Young Socialists last week lobbied the London HQ of Gold Fields, the South African mining company which uses its own private army to terrorise and torture its blacks workers. Photo: Howard Jones.

FRANK FIELD, the right wing Labour MP for Birkenhead who threatened to stand against the Labour Party if he had the temerity to deselect him, has finally come clean about his real political loyalties.

In the *Catholic Herald* on 9 January 1987 he revealed that his confidence in the Labour Party is such that he has "ever since 1983 (!) thought that the smart money should be on a hat trick for the Tories".

As if this stirring attempt to boost Labour's confidence was not bad enough, he went on to attribute the Tories' forthcoming third win to their "successes" of which "the Falklands apart, trade union reforms and council house sales are probably the two most

Labour MP tips Tories

important".

His support for the sale of council houses "ever since 1976" is well known. Not known until now is his support for the Tories' other great "success", trade union reforms. In an admission that has angered even some of the right wing, he says: "I regret not voting for them".

Revealing his contempt for the local party, he explains why he did not vote for them: "Perhaps simple cowardice accounts for why I didn't. I prefer however, to believe that, being already locked in a brutal struggle with my local par-

ty, I would have totally demoralised those people who were fighting to retain me as their MP by opening up another front where I was out of step with the national party".

Harmful rivalry

In other words he did not reveal his views so as to save his political skin.

He goes on to suggest that "some contingency plans must be developed to bring about a rapid realignment of radical forces

should the Tories notch up that third victory". An earlier reference to "the harmful rivalry between Labour, the Liberals and the Alliance" make it clear that his "realignment" would involve collaboration with Liberals and SDP! One consequence of Field's conduct has been that at the recent annual general meeting of Birkenhead Labour Party, in a state of total demoralisation, the mainly 'soft left' officers declined to stand again.

The secretary pointed to the collapse of morale in the party due to

members constantly reading in the press that the MP thinks that the local party is "irrelevant and boring". Hopefully those left wingers who voted for Field's reselection will have learned their lesson!

The membership secretary reported that the paid-up membership has fallen from 615 at the end of 1985 to 430 at the end of 1986.

To round it off, the meeting was told by the new right-wing vice-chairman that the party only had £200 to fight the election and would therefore have to approach the trade unions for funds. How that was to be done with an MP who supports the Tories' attacks on the unions he didn't say.

By Steve Bimson
(Birkenhead Labour Party)

Appalling waste

I WORK in a hostel for the homeless in Glasgow. Any day can be a bad day.

It just happened to be a Monday. Rita, the cleaner, found a corpse in one of the rooms.

This time it wasn't an old guy who'd fallen on hard times and drunk himself to death. This time it was a bit different.

When I opened the door for the police photographer I felt sick. A bit stunned. I also felt sorrow, bitterness and anger. He was crouched in a corner on the floor; his head bowed, his arms on his knees. The fingers on one hand stretched out.

On the table there was a syringe, a bottle of vinegar and some plastic bags. His last sight would've been a bleak, tiny room. He died of heroin. He was twenty four.

I waited in the lift as the undertakers straightened his body out onto the stretcher. What was once a young man was propped against the lift wall, taken to the ground floor, put into a van and gone.

The young man's death; the way that he died is a tragic pointer on the road to barbarism.

Tell your friends that. Tell them we either fight now to change the course or face an increasingly horrific future.

By Gary Stevenson

'Capitalism really screws you up'



Taking heroin in an attempt to escape the horrors of reality.

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

Drug abuse in South London

NICOLA IS 17 and is typical of Bermondsey youth. At school she did three days work experience a week in a hairdresser's and got £10!

After school she started YTS but as usual there was no job at the end. She now works for a printer's but unfortunately many of her class mates have not been so lucky and have turned to drugs to 'escape' boredom and unemployment.

Her best friend and brother both died from heroin abuse. Another was seriously hurt when he jumped off a roof when on drugs.

On her estate "the skagheads" meet every night in the garages or on the stairways ready to knife anyone who disturbs them. The pushers are prepared to sell to the youngest, one example was the local ice cream man being charged with selling heroin to school students.

Prostitution

However, the most disgusting example is the case where one pusher has tried to force 14 year old girls into prostitution to pay for their drugs. Sounds like Glasgow but it is what they call the "soft South"!

Nicola's mother works for Simon Hughes, the Liberal MP, during election time, but after our visit we are confident we will win her support for Labour.

In her own words she said, "the LPYS have been the only ones taking up the drug problems on the estates." Nicola is coming to the LPYS next week where we will be laying plans to link up with her family and friends and hold a public meeting on their estate to launch a campaign to get the pushers out.

By Sharon Gunning
(Bermondsey LPYS)

Major threat on every estate

DRUG ABUSE from being an unheard of problem ten years ago is becoming a major threat on every estate in Britain.

On Killingworth estate in North Tyneside drug abuse has turned from glue and solvent abuse to hard drugs in the last five years.

Drugs which are freely available and widely distributed include—smack (heroin), acid (LSD), barbiturates in the form of 'poppers' and valium, and softer drugs like Cannabis.

These drugs are distributed by pushers most of whom are addicts themselves. The average age of the pushers is around 20 and their

customers tend to be between the ages of 13 and 20.

The drug network is so extensive and well organised that price lists are freely accessible to most youth. The prices for hard drugs such as heroin start at just £5.

There are two main causes behind the dramatic increase in drug taking in Killingworth. Firstly, drugs are more widely available and accessible than ever.

Secondly, because of youth unemployment. Youth see no future and no hope and therefore turn to drugs to escape from their daily nightmare.

Under the Tory government school leavers getting a job have become a very rare species, only one

in 10 of 16 year olds in Killingworth have a job.

On top of unemployment a lack of community and youth facilities leads to greater frustration amongst young people. Teenagers through boredom hang around metro stations, market centres and even spend whole nights riding the elevators of flats in the area.

Give youth a future

This boredom and frustration leads youth to experiment with drugs: their attitude is: "What have we got to lose?"

If a Labour government is going to solve the drug problem in Britain, apart from stamping out the

availability of drugs they are going to have to guarantee youth a future—with both proper jobs and decent recreational facilities.

If Labour adopted a radical programme designed to lift youth off the scrap heap of unemployment they would tap an enormous reservoir of support—which at the moment is being poured down the drain.

It would encourage youth to take an interest in their future—by fighting back and smashing the main drug pusher—a decaying capitalist system!

By Andy Hull and Ged Grebby
(Benton and District LPYS)

Parents "have had enough"

A FEW months ago myself, Linda Woosey and Fred Gillard attended the National Parent Support Group meeting (against drugs) in the Town Hall courtesy of Liverpool City Council.

Being the parent of a drug addict myself I was angry that once again this uncaring government didn't even send a national spokesperson on drugs to the meeting, even though they were given eight weeks' notice.

So many young lives have been ruined, so many families torn apart with heartache.

Now we have the horror of crack to try and deal with

and crack is even more addictive than heroin.

Well, no more will we wait for help that doesn't come. No more talking, we have had enough. We intend to lobby parliament to demand more customs officers, and we don't want ten or twenty. We need hundreds more if we are going to stop the scum that are bringing drugs into this country.

The amount of cocaine from which crack is made jumped by 64 per cent last year 1985 from 45 Kilos to 74 Kilos and there was a record 4.182 of drugs seized with a street value of £104 million up from £97 million

the previous year.

Terry Fields came to the meeting, not for political gain or to cash in on human misery, but because he cares about what is happening to our youth.

I would like to ask all comrades to write to their local MPs to demand more customs officers for the sake of our youth.

On behalf of everyone who attended I would also like to thank our own Liverpool City Council for providing the facilities.

By Pat Murphy, Linda Woosey, Fred Gillard (Dovecot Parents Support Group)

6.2 MILLION YOUTH FOR LABOUR

Labour Party Young Socialists

THE CAMPAIGN to defend the Labour Party Young Socialists and extend the democratic involvement of trade union and student youth in the LPYS continues.

Further trade union support, which is crucial in this 'consultation process' has been coming in for Labour's youth. Sittingbourne SOGAT, Liverpool NUR No 5 branch and Southend UCW are among the most recent to back the YS proposals. Highroyds branch 227 of COHSE are also sponsoring one of their young members to go to LPYS National Conference.

Northern Region are leading the way at the moment, particularly with support from local ward labour parties.

USDAW F180 branch in Newcastle are also supporting the YS and Newcastle central EETPU will be discussing the proposals at their next meeting.

Every LPYS branch should ensure a discussion at each ward in their constituen-

cy. With a collection at each meeting the finance to continue our campaign can easily be raised. (Even where the majority do not agree with the YS proposals, individuals who do support the YS should be approached for a donation).

The LPYS branches themselves must not forget to discuss the proposals and send their views to Walworth Road.

Manchester Women's Council sent a resolution to the Regional Party Conference calling for the postponement of the consultation.

The LPYS '6.2 million youth for Labour' letter is gaining an echo wherever it is brought up in the Labour Party and its affiliates. If the campaign continues in every area with enthusiasm and in a methodical manner, Labour's youth will raise the cash and gain the support necessary to achieve the implementation of our democratic proposals.

LPYS conference '87

Come to LPYS National Conference, Blackpool 17-20 April. Friday 17 April 7pm: "Young workers for Labour" rally. Speakers include: Ron Todd (General Secretary TGWU), Diana Jeuda (USDAW) Linda Douglas (LPYS)





Build sales

"MILITANT SELLERS in Codnor Derbyshire are all into CB radios", a local supporter tells us. They spend a lot of time discussing politics. When they go down the local CB club they find loads of people have been listening to them discussing Liverpool city council's stand."

Such is the interest in *Militant* that they have just ordered another 25 papers to sell every week. Whatever method you use to sell, let us know.

One in five

Readers in Tyneside responded straight away to last week's centre page on Killingworth. The first day the paper was out they sold 55 papers in the area. With 5000 houses to knock on, the signs from the first 600 houses are that one in five are buying *Militant*. One new supporter who thought selling *Militant* would be a hard slog sold 14. Latest score 181 over one weekend!

The back page feature on the Basildon referendum against council house sales generated 80 sales on Thursday and Friday on one estate.

The front page article the week before on the Liverpool councillors' disqualification spurred Walton *Militant* supporters to a sale of 41 outside a local supermarket.

But you don't need a special feature to sell well. Sellers in Livingston sold 50 on the streets over one weekend. You can sell *Militant* anywhere. We've had a letter enclosing money for an average sale of 4 papers a week saying: "the paper is brilliant, keep it up! Yours Maddy and Dave Jenning, the Shetland Socialists".

By Ruth Campbell

Crime and pun

THE TORY government of "law and order" has been in office for nearly eight years.

There has been a massive rise in annual spending on policing from £1.1 billion to £2.9 billion.

The prisons are more full than any others in Western Europe; the prison population has grown from 42,000 to 50,000 in under eight years.

At the same time the crime figures are soaring. An extra quarter of a million crimes were recorded last year. The total of

recorded crimes has risen by 50 per cent since 1979.

Criminal damage such as vandalism is up by 91 per cent; domestic burglary up 97 per cent and robbery up 127 per cent in those eight years. In this same period, of course, unemployment figures have more than doubled, even by the perjured statistics issued by the government.

Michael Lee looks at the problems of crime and policing particularly in Manchester.

The Tories' criminal record

THE TORIES and the press make great play of violent crimes in order to justify more repressive laws and increased powers such as the Public Order act.

But by far the most common crimes in Britain are household and property offences such as burglary and vandalism.

It is no protection to have a raving reactionary in charge of the police. Greater Manchester, presided over by the notorious James Anderton, was recently described by the Home Office as having more crime than anywhere else, with a massive rise in burglaries.

Crime is a product of capitalism. The number of reported crimes shows a strong link to the dole figures, rising steadily since the 'full employment, never had it so good' days around 1960.

The Tories portray

Merseyside as a lawless violent area. In fact violent crimes vary little from the national average. But burglary is three times the national average in that city of high unemployment.

Desperation

The rise in crime under the Thatcher government is directly linked to their social policies of creating ghettos of unemployment, poverty and slum housing in many cities. Capitalism in crisis leads to desperation, want and crime.

The system not only creates the criminals. The victims too are predominantly in the working class communities of the inner cities and the outer council estates.

Recent surveys by Labour councils in Merseyside and Islington show the poorest areas are most at risk. In Liverpool, one household in

four is burgled every year in the inner city, eight times the level in the better off areas of the county.

The clear up rate on crimes has gone down yet again. Police in Manchester now solve only around 13 per cent of domestic burglaries compared to 25 per cent in 1980. Manchester ratepayers are entitled to ask what they get for the £60 per head they pay each year for the police, apart from Anderton's hotline to the Almighty, which doesn't seem to be yielding many clues!

The Tories' extra police resources have not been used to stop people's flats being robbed or their bikes stolen but as shock troops in their war against pickets and demonstrators, who Thatcher's cabinet see as public enemy number one. It would seem that the Tories would rather see people turn to

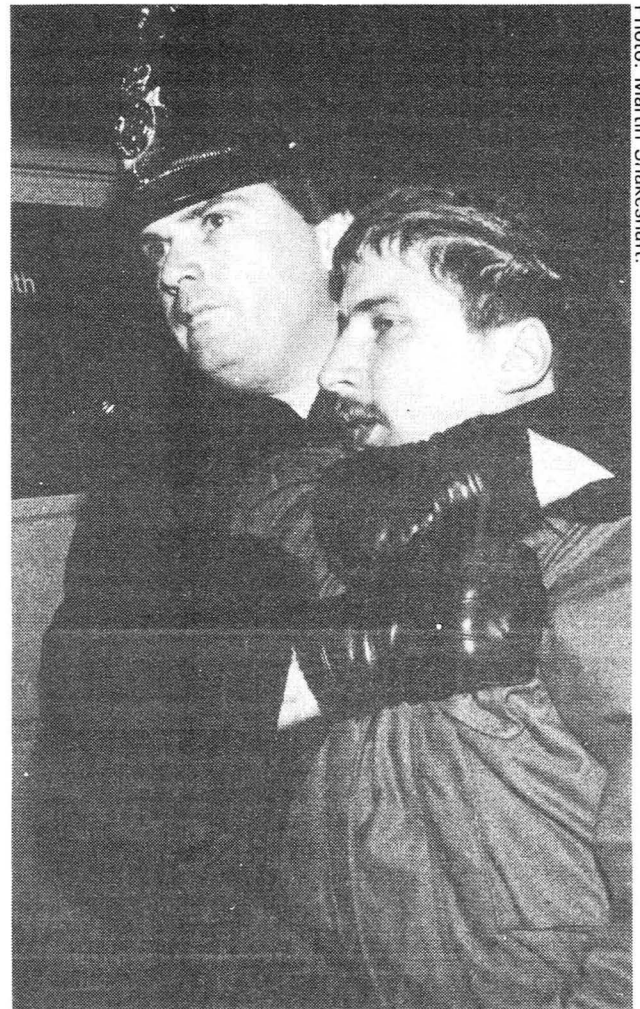


Photo: Martin Shakeshaft.

Above and right: Police in action in Wales during the miners' strike. The police have been used overwhelmingly against the organised working class while crime has grown.

crime than organise to fight back for a decent future.

In many ways this has lessened the scope for preventing crime even in the short term. For example, police overkill on mass pickets at Wapping regularly left working class areas of London ridiculously short of police cover.

Vicious circle

But the effects have been deeper than this. The vast majority of crimes have always been cleared up through information given by the public. That flow of information has declined.

It is a vicious circle; increased police powers, the lack of police accountability, the widespread stop and search, arbitrary arrest and deaths in police custody have led many working class communities, especially black youth and many women to

back away from any relations with the police.

In some of the less deprived working class areas but mainly amongst more affluent residents, 'Home Watch' or 'Neighbourhood Watch' schemes have evolved to try to overcome this. Despite the good intentions, they are at best a cosmetic approach to crime. At worst, they are channels through which not only the police but agencies like the DHSS can compile information.

Even Sir Kenneth Newman, in his last annual report as commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, thought it likely that such schemes only displaced burglaries to nearby neighbourhoods which had no schemes.

In the short term, Labour councils can help reduce some of the problems providing they are prepared to fight for the resources now

Left and Right

Hard for taskmasters?

THE TORY-led Merton council in London is experimenting with 'creative accountancy' and the only beneficiaries will be a private street cleaning firm.

The council are renewing their contract with Taskmasters, a subsidiary of Hawley group, without any "competitive tendering" because, they say, it would take too long and cost too much to go through all the red tape. And anyway "there are few serious contractors in the field" in other words, the game is now so monopolised that there is no likelihood of anyone being cheaper.

But to make things even better for

Taskmasters, the council have bought them a new set of vehicles because the poor contractors could hardly be expected to fork out on new vehicles when there is no certainty that their contract will continue.

These vehicles can be used anywhere, the contract only says they are 'likely' to be used exclusively on council cleaning services. To pay for all this without overspending government cash limits, they are looking into 'forward leases' and other 'creative accountancy' tricks. We eagerly await Merton's denunciation by cabinet ministers.

Keep it sterile

RESIDENTS OF Waterlow estate in

Bethnal Green had the novel experience of a visit from Prince Charles last week.

The prince was visiting an estate Tower Hamlets council gave to Barrett's last year. Local tenants protested at high rents, selling off of flats at exorbitant prices (£70,000 plus) and neglect of the old flats.

So the police told tenants that their access to the area would be restricted and the road would have to be free of all cars. The area would be searched and 'kept sterile' while HRH was in the area.

Sterile? Local imaginations ran riot. The consensus was that the police were worried because his royal highness, unlike the rest of his family, got no pay rise in the budget. Would he catch unemployment and poverty? He needn't have worried, it's a class transmitted disease.



Prince Charles: ignoring the protests.

ishment



Photo: Craig Stennatt

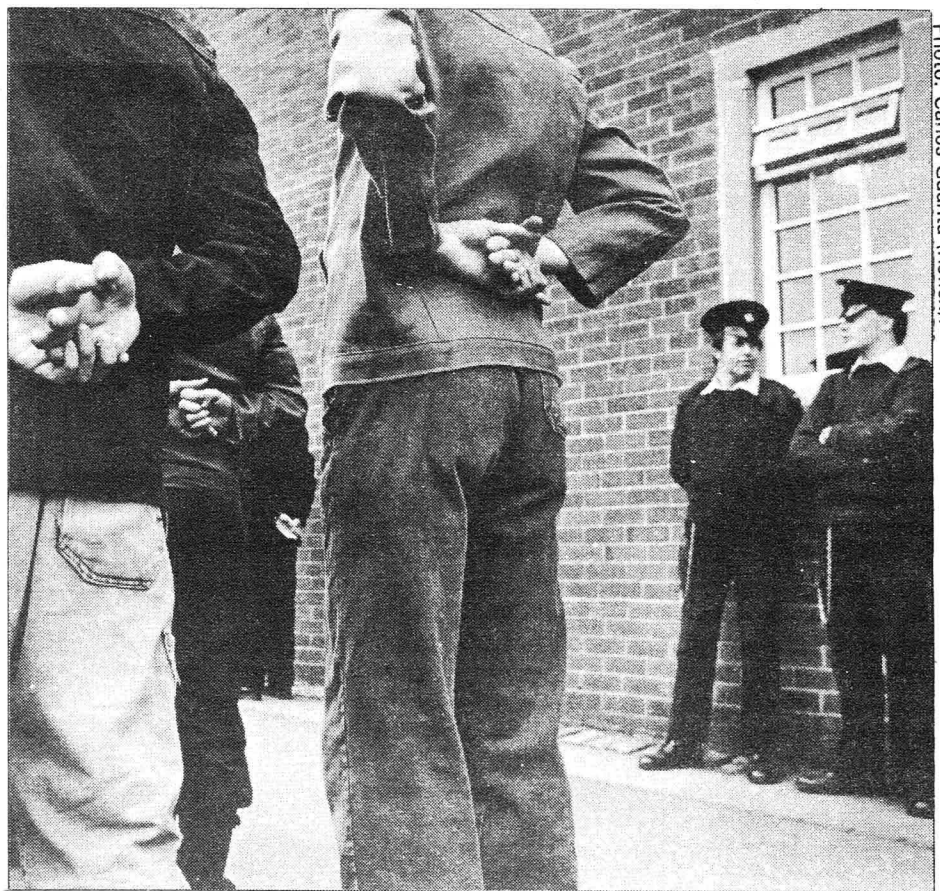


Photo: Carlos Guarita (Reflex)

In Glenochil detention centre, prototype for the Tories' short, sharp, shock treatment.

Government fear explosion in prisons

THE GOVERNMENT has considered releasing 6,000 non-violent short term prisoners because the overcrowding was causing tensions in the prisons.

John, an ex-inmate of Barlinnie prison in Glasgow told *Militant* the background to recent disturbances. "The untried prisoners' wing has probably the biggest problems. The Crown often use remand wings as 'sweat boxes', putting mental pressure on prisoners, guilty or not, to plead guilty.

"While I was on remand, I was locked in my cell every day for all except two 15 minute exercise periods. The only toilet facilities after 8pm is one chamber pot per prisoner. If there are three in a cell, the stench and embarrassment take their toll on cons and screws alike.

"Prison grub is awful, boiled egg and stale bread at breakfast then you're banged up till dinner. Remand prisoners don't go to the dining hall with other prisoners for hot meals; a trolley comes round for groups of twelve. You just hope you get in the first couple of groups or it's the dregs of the pot.

"The only way to get decent food is to bribe the passmen (the privileged prisoners) with tobacco; that can buy almost anything from spirits to heroin. The prison officers tend to turn a blind eye; one of them says

dope and drink are the only things that keep the lid on this place.

"Film night is the best; you get jam if the passmen don't steal it. There are more fights than any other time. Weekends are the hardest, with only one exercise on Saturday. Getting religion gets you out for a sing song and a chance to exchange some fags!

Scapegoats

"The ground floor of the remand hall is used for sex offenders, the 'criminally insane', grasses, junkies on cold turkey and people who need protection because of personal vendettas. They are called 'beasts' and get the worst conditions, food which is spat on and interfered with.

"Another prisoner told me: 'the beasts are seen as fair game for taking out your frustration' in other words scapegoats for the condition of our jails.

"You see violence between screws and cons. A prisoner 'verbals' an officer who calls on the 'multi squad', up to 6 officers in crash helmets and armed with rubber truncheons who put the prisoner in solitary. They usually come back in the wee hours, wrap the prisoner in a blanket and proceed to beat shit out of him, being careful to avoid head wounds.

"Particularly violent cons are attacked mercilessly, often getting limbs broken. They then get charged with assault, get 6 to 12 months added to their sentence and lose all remission rights. This is even before they get to trial.

"Last year I was charged on the flimsiest of evidence with a £6000 fraud. Because of previous convictions, I got no bail and spent three months on remand before the trial. They tried their best to get me to do a deal on reducing the charges but I refused to plead guilty to something I hadn't done.

"Eventually I was found not guilty due to lack of evidence; they don't have to give any evidence at remand hearings. I can't even claim for compensation but I've lost my job and been out of work ever since; my marriage has broken up.

"Is it any wonder it was the remand wing that blew up recently. Many prison officers share many of the grievances. Most of them are working class guys. The Scottish Prison Officers Association refused to take any more prisoners recently until the government reduced the prison population.

"The Tories don't care about conditions in jail. But they don't want to lose votes through more trouble in the prisons. What they're doing though, won't be enough to reduce the crisis in the jails."

and also ensure that an incoming Labour administration gives the needed cash.

Manchester city council recently applied to the government for £1.5 million to start improving the quality of front and back door locks in council housing; for mortice locks, improved window frames, telecom alarm fittings to flats and spy holes in council properties. The 'law and order' government refused them.

Control

Labour councils must also take up the issue of who controls the police. The police, as part of the capitalist state machine, are used to defend the bosses in strikes and demonstrations and to implement reactionary policies.

Councils must campaign for democratic control of the police through elected local authority bodies to vet the

work the police do and to control day to day activities. This must include the right to hire and fire chief constables like Anderton.

The Tories have miserably failed to curb crime. This will probably not stop them trying to force Labour's leaders to take up their 'short sharp shock' philosophy. Apart from the short term improvements in security which can come through more resources, Labour's best answer to crime is to fight for a new society.

Labour should be campaigning to free society from the ugly sores of slums and unemployment, of millions still living in poverty and squalor while the advertising hoardings boast of the expensive life style present day technology can provide.

A socialist society which could provide jobs and homes, and fully involve the

working class in running society would start to eliminate crime.

James Anderton in his infamous interview on Radio Four said: "an acceptable moral code is more important than an enforceable criminal law; its adoption should lead to the need for fewer laws and fewer policemen."

Hypocritical

The labour movement knows only too well what sinister ideas of morality the 'reverend' James has in mind. It is true that crime could be made irrelevant and socially unacceptable. But that could only come about through a socialist society where poverty and want have been eliminated. Anderton and his hypocritical 'morality' will not be on our side in that fight.

Fighting Fund

This week £2609

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 South East	874		2250
2 South West	487		1900
3 Southern	690		3050
4 London	2075		9350
5 Eastern	479		3200
6 Wales	419		4800
7 East Midlands	273		3250
8 Yorkshire	643		8300
9 Manchester	267		3850
10 Merseyside	543		7500
11 Northern	305		4600
12 West Midlands	311		4750
13 Scotland East	79		2800
14 Scotland West	39		3500
Others	6069		6900
Total	13551		70000

HOW MUCH IS Mrs Thatcher worth? We can't tell you, *Militant* doesn't go in for personal abuse. But *Labour Weekly* estimates that she got £5 million last year in total income, over three times more than in 1980.

As this is election year, we have a chance to get rid of all the overpaid Tory job wreckers. But to fight for a socialist alternative we need a more frequent *Militant*; a successful fighting fund is essential.

We have raised £13551 so far towards the £70000 we need by the beginning of May. Liverpool's 6/643 TGWU branch has sent £30 as "a token of our support for socialism and the return of a Labour government committed to

socialist policies."

Our thanks to them and also to TGWU at Rover Solihull which makes a regular monthly donation to our funds. Why don't you move a fighting fund donation at your union branch in support of *Militant's* defence of workers' rights and our fight for socialist ideas.

A recent *Militant* public meeting in Putney with strikers from Hangers raised £68 after expenses with donations from the strikers including £3 from Graham.

Readers should match this support with a donation to help us reach our target. Sellers should get out on the streets and on to the estates with *Militants* and collecting

tins. Given the hatred for the Tories you can collect thousands of pounds. £23 was collected in rattling tins in Derby and over £50 was raised in Birmingham on Saturday selling stickers and asking for the solidarity price on a local anti-apartheid demonstration.

Don't forget to plan now for a special May Day event in support of the fighting fund. Our thanks to Clare Doyle who collected £120 in 'drinks for *Militant*' on her birthday.

Thanks also to Hull EET-PU members £5.60; S Pragnell Southampton £10; South West LP conference £32; Mike Flanagan Wallasey £5; NUS conference £55.

Labour councils bow to Tories

HOUSE BUILDING, libraries, nurseries, educational standards, sports centres—everything that local Labour parties and Labour councils have struggled to provide—are now in jeopardy. The Tories are determined to crush the municipal reforms won over decades. But in general election year it is Labour controlled local authorities that are being compelled to preside over this counter-revolution in local services.

SINCE 1979 the Tories have slashed the central government contribution from 59.6% to 44.3% of local authority spending. £21.9 billion has been stolen from local authorities in government grants.

Labour councils have been faced with desperate choices. But Liverpool Council with its militant determination to defend jobs and services organised a mass struggle against the Tories for more resources. It achieved a record second to none among Labour authorities in employment, conditions of work and in its unrivalled building programme. Despite the refusal of the national Labour leadership to support them; despite the dropping away of the other Labour councils that had pledged to stand alongside; despite their isolation and the consequent setback to their campaign, the Liverpool councillors still succeeded in preserving most of these gains intact.

Counter-reforms

But now as other Labour councils complete their 1987-88 budget process, they are carrying through real, painful council reforms. Those authorities that left the self sacrificing Liverpool and Lambeth councillors to stand alone, are now making their own ratepayers pay, with the full brunt of Tory cuts.

In the 1984 campaign the other 'left councils' said to Liverpool that they should all wait a year, then with the extra propaganda weapon of rate-capping, fight together in 1985. But it was councils like the GLC and ILEA that led the retreat from that commitment to a united front.

Their excuse was that it was impossible to win. But even Lawson's budget and recent increase in public spending confirms that the money was there. A national campaign of twenty or more Labour councils backed up by the local labour movements and fully supported by

the national labour and trade union leaders, at the very least could have extracted the necessary extra cash from the government.

Other Labour authorities who then lost heart and felt there was no alternative to deserting Liverpool, can now see no alternative to cuts and rent rises.

Many of these councillors joined in the attacks of the Tory press, and shamefully of the national Labour leaders, on Liverpool's 'adventurism' and 'irresponsibility'. They urged Liverpool to accept the infamous Stonefrost Report, which meant draconian cutbacks without a fight. They claimed they were following Neil Kinnock's strategy of defending local people with a 'dented shield'. In fact it was the Liverpool councillors who stayed at their posts and against all the odds defended the interests of Liverpool workers, who really carried the 'dented shield'. Those other councils that shied away from the struggle have been wielding Kinnock's 'cardboard' shield, so frequently is it being pierced by the Tory onslaught. Now they are carrying through their own Stonefrost cuts and worse.

As Labour councils back away from the fight with the Tories responsibility for defending jobs and services has shifted to the trade unions. Activists and young shop stewards will be looking at ways to organise opposition to the cuts.

They should link up with left councillors and Labour Party activists still committed to an effective anti-cuts campaign. Broad lefts and joint shop stewards' committees will also become important. But ultimately the demands are the same—the government must be forced to return the lost millions and put more resources into local services.

The Liverpool councillors are a beacon, for the type of local Labour representatives local workers will be fighting for.

NO CUTS



Hackney council workers demonstrate during the anti-rate capping campaign in 1985.

Manchester

MANCHESTER DISTRICT Labour Party's special budget meeting on Wednesday 18 March has voted by an overwhelming majority to increase rents by up to £1.50 and rates by at least 20 per cent.

This is despite the fact that the district Labour Party voted in effect for a deficit budget two months ago. The group leadership spent the intervening time organising to overturn the previous decision, instead of launching a serious campaign to force the Tories to cough up the £33 million financial gap.

The vote has signalled the end of the two-year honeymoon for Labour's so-called left leaders in Manchester. They have risen on a tide of borrowing and creative accounting in the previous two budgets.

Militant supporters backed these budgets because they safeguarded jobs and services—but with the important proviso; that they were only a short term ex-

Southwark

THE CONTROLLING Labour Group on Southwark Council has voted by 21 to 18 (with four councillors absent) to balance the 1987-8 council budget by imposing various cuts and charges affecting workers and tenants in the borough.

They made this decision against their manifesto commitment of a 'no-cuts' policy and contrary to a deal demanded from the Local Government Committee representing the three Labour Parties in the borough, and from the council's Joint Trade Union Committee.

Southwark has lost £130 million in rate support grant from the Tories in recent years. Despite being rate-capped it has struggled through in the last two years through a combination of 'creative accounting', bank loan schemes, and hidden 'recruitment drag' of council posts.

But a £50 million deficit was looming on the council's revenue account for 1987-8 and there were no more accounting loopholes available. Either the Labour councillors could lead a fight by mobilising the trade unions and tenants; or they could capitulate and impose cuts.

It seems they have chosen the latter

Newham

NEWHAM FACES unprecedented cuts in jobs and services as a result of the Tories' 'ratecapping' measures. The projected shortfall for 1987/88 is £33 million and the Council asked each of its departments to submit budget estimates which would bridge this shortfall.

This has resulted in approximately 40 pages of swinging cuts across the board, which will have a particularly devastating effect on the elderly, the poor, the homeless, the unemployed, and council workers themselves.

If the cuts go ahead, the effects will be horrific. In education, supply teaching will be drastically reduced - and perhaps even withdrawn completely. Already, children are being sent home every day. Now, with these new budget proposals, this situation will get far worse. The teacher-pupil relationship is to be decreased, meaning teachers will be forced to teach larger classes.

In housing, rents are to go up by an average of £2 and 'savings' will be made by reducing central heating costs, but not passing this reduction on to tenants!

In social services, they propose to close at least one old people's home, increase meal charges for the elderly (at the moment Kensington Chelsea is the only London borough which provides less meals than Newham per thousand old people),

Edinburgh - rent rise

EDINBURGH DISTRICT Labour Party last week voted to give the labour council the go ahead to impose a £2-£2.50 a week rent increase on the city's council tenants. As well as obviously being a blow to council tenants, it represents the breaking of Labour's manifesto commitments to freeze rents.

Last year Neil Kinnock called on Labour councils to act sensibly and not jeopardize Labour's electoral chances. This was meant to be a warning to the so-called 'loony left'. But it's the 'lunatic right' who urge realism, which in effect means the working class must pay, who are proving to be an electoral liability. Edinburgh is a City with four out of six constituencies being held by the Tories, three of them marginals which Labour must win at the next election. Rent rises are hardly the policies to galvanise and enthuse the city's population.

Undoubtedly, the reason why the proposal was passed was the swing to the right amongst those members or fellow-travellers of the

Labour Co-ordinating Committee (LCC). Some of the former 'lefts' who were prominent in promoting the rent rise included group leader, Mark Lazarowicz, a typical member of the Labour Party Scottish executive, one of those once active around the students organisation NOLS. The LCC now does not even have a pretence of being on the left and are now firmly in the camp of Kinnock and Hattersley, proclaiming the need for 'realism'.

From the contributions made at the meeting by delegates and councillors who live in or represent some of the worst housing schemes in Edinburgh, there is massive despair about sub standard housing and lack of maintenance. The left will have to campaign to ensure that a future Labour government invests enough money to ensure the survival of effective and good quality council housing.

By Andy Clachers

What Barking could be doing



Since 1983 over 6,000 unsatisfactory council properties have been or are being demolished in Liverpool.

Like a house with a garden? Why the hell not?

There are 3,800 on the housing waiting list in our borough of Barking and Dagenham. There are thousands living in high rise and low rise flats - just like the Glasgow. Why shouldn't families have the right to expect a house with a garden?

The problem is due to Tory cuts the council for years has stopped building houses.

Yet 6,000 properties have been sold off recently, making this problem even worse. The council says it hasn't got the money to build more houses.

How could Liverpool Labour council do it?

Some of the 4,240 new houses and bungalows built or being completed in Liverpool since 1983.

—building new homes

This leaflet, produced by Militant supporters in Barking, highlights the success of Liverpool's housing programme compared to the lack of activity by Barking's Labour Council. It urges people to join Militant's campaign for a massive programme of house-building.

Here is Liverpool's housing record. Achievements since 1983:

- 4,240 houses built from tenants' rate payers
- 2,425 council flats to be demolished
- 1,218 council flats demolished or being demolished
- 1,718 council flats demolished or being demolished
- 1,218 new council flats to be built
- 4,240 houses and bungalows built or being built
- 4,240 houses and flats replaced or being replaced
- 4,240 houses and flats replaced or being replaced
- 1,218 council flats demolished or being demolished
- 1,218 council flats demolished or being demolished

What has Barking Council done over the last 3 1/2 years compared to this?

Not a single house built from tenants' rate payers. Not a single council flat to be demolished. Not a single council flat demolished or being demolished. Not a single council flat demolished or being demolished. Not a single council flat demolished or being demolished. Not a single council flat demolished or being demolished.

Militant 313 Highbury Road, London E9 5HD

dry attacks

er-rates up 20 per cent

pedient to buy time and build up a campaign to prepare for an unavoidable confrontation with the Tories.

Militant supporters opposed the budget this time, because not only is the rent and rate increase a direct cut in the living standards of working people, but also, contrary to the leadership's argument, it will not protect jobs and services. Such a large rate rise will leave Manchester next year to be rate capped. The only way to bridge the financial gap then will be redundancies. The balanced budget which was agreed will become a redundancy budget in the next 12 months if not sooner.

The group leadership and the union officials have sold this deal to the members and the Party activists on the basis of safeguarding jobs and services. Within a year the real truth will emerge.

Militant supporters have argued firmly and consistently for a deficit budget despite the slurs and snide remarks, hostility and downright lies over the

magnificent struggle of the Liverpool councillors.

Council leader Graham Stringer justified the capitulation at a district Labour Party executive meeting by accusing Liverpool of cutting 2,000 jobs. A letter from banned leader of Liverpool council, Tony Byrne, circulated to all delegates countering this lie forced Stringer to be silent on this issue at Wednesday night's meeting.

Militant supporters will continue to press the council to mount a massive campaign to ensure a successful struggle against the government and win more resources for the city.

Militant Public Meeting

Stand up to
Tory cuts

The Conference Hall, Manchester Town Hall. Friday 3 April. 7.30pm. Speaker: Tony Mulhearn (surcharged Liverpool councillor).

k-cuts to balance books

course. Many of those councillors in favour of cuts now were prominent in the past fight against rate-capping. But their confidence in a workers' and tenants' fightback has waned and they have joined the camp of the 'new realists' in the Labour and TU leadership.

Recruitment drag

Rejecting the call for a fight made by Militant supporter, Cllr Brian Kelly, a narrow majority decided to try and balance the budget through a package of cuts.

After a tortuous all-night sitting of the Labour Group, they agreed to cut council workers' overtime and allow open 'recruitment drag'—in effect the freezing of posts. They also decided to abolish agency staffing. The cutters tried to argue that it was 'progressive' to cut overtime and private contract labour. It would be, if basic wages were to be increased and direct labour taken on to compensate but that is not the intention: the aim is to cut the council's wage bill at the expense of services and council workers' living

standards.

The Labour Group also decided to transfer the loan allocation for the housebuilding and renovation programme to cover the deficit in the revenue—thus severely curtailing any improvement in the shocking state of council housing stock—one third of 64,000 units is unfit or in need of rehabilitation.

The Labour Group also decided to raise heating and other charges for tenants. A subsequent meeting decided on a £1.09 rent rise.

This package of cuts is an attack on working-class people in Southwark and can only damage Labour's chances in any general election. While the Tories are the cause, Labour will get the blame.

However, local Labour parties, tenants and trade unions are not going to accept these measures quietly, and those councillors who voted for cuts could find themselves in trouble with those they represent from now on.

By Bob McKee
(Bermondsey Labour Party)

m-services threatened

abandon day nursery expansion plans and charge £2 per hour for home helps. In the words of the Social Services Committee itself: "There is a serious danger in life and limb terms to Newham's elderly population".

Library closure

In leisure, the Beckton Lido and at least one library are to close and there will be a general reduction in community centres' expenditure. In environmental services there will be reductions in street cleaning and refuse collection.

Of course, most cuts in services means job losses. Up till now the councillors have maintained that there will be no compulsory redundancies. However, the proposals submitted by the various departments are abundant with calls for non-filling of vacant posts, redeployment and 'natural wastage'—in other words, job losses.

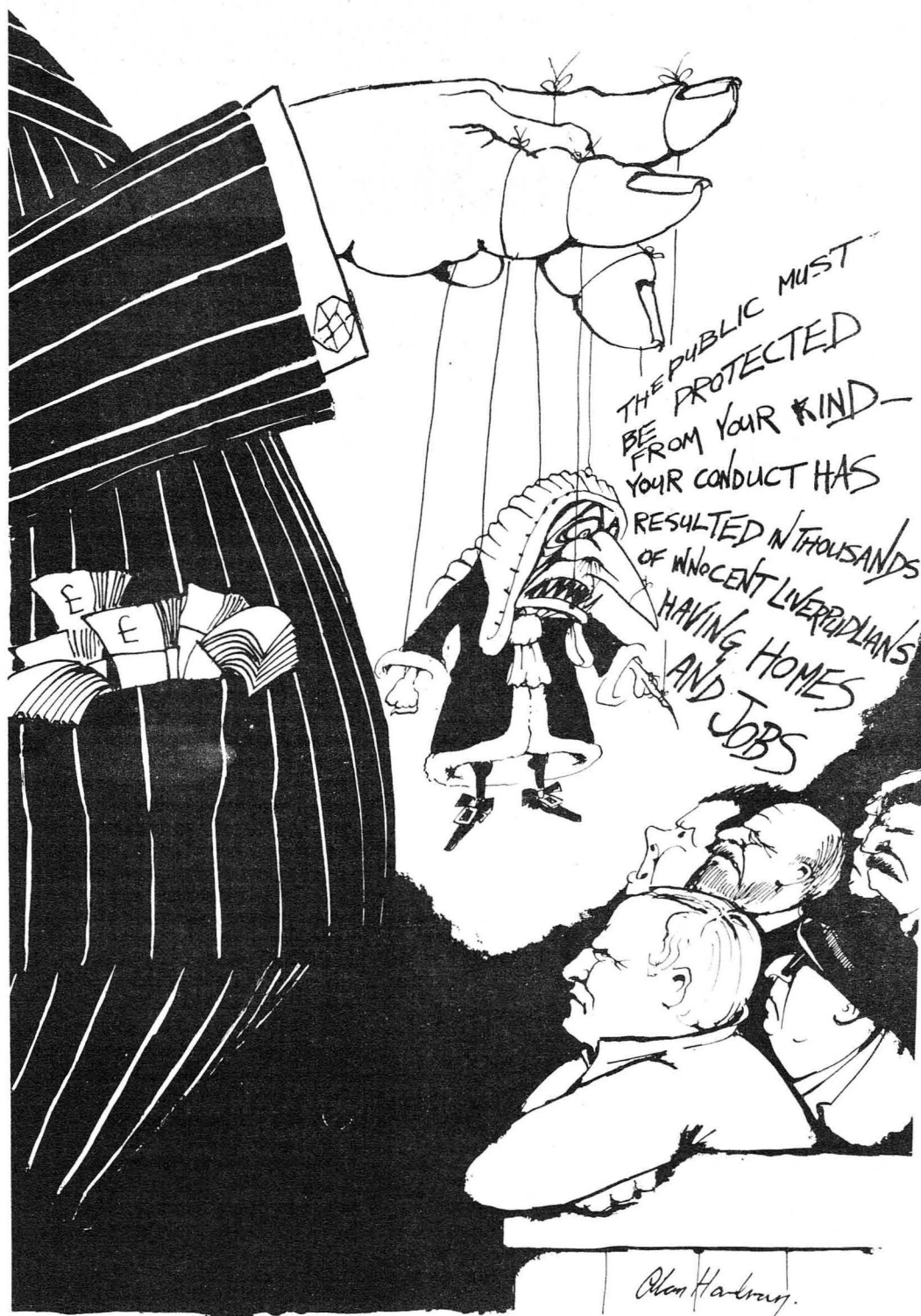
NALGO are opposing these proposals and calling on their members to refuse to cover vacant posts, accept redeployment or process work leading to a cut or closure. Some local Labour parties have passed resolutions demanding that the council takes no disciplinary action against council employees who take such action.

The leadership of the Council insists that it has no alternative but to pass on the shortfall brought about by ratecapping to the people of Newham. Earlier this year it mounted a campaign calling for a 'Fair Deal for Newham' and was rewarded with a magnificent demonstration of 8,000 people on 4 February. However, the Council failed to extend this support to wider layers of the labour movement—both in Newham and in other rate-capped boroughs.

Most of the Council's efforts have been taken up in arranging meetings to discuss how and where to implement the cuts, rather than how to build opposition to them in the ranks of the labour movement, through the tenants' associations and the community organisations where there would be a wealth of support for a fight.

There is only one way forward now—for a campaign amongst the council workers to oppose implementation of the cuts, starting with the calling of a borough-wide conference, involving workers in all the departments, to take up a campaign like that waged in Liverpool, with a series of leaflets, mass meetings and lobbies. The councillors should not be fooled—the fight goes on.

By Liz Floyd



LIVERPOOL COUNCILLORS were finally thrown out of office by the House of Lords, accused of 'wilful misconduct'. Yet out of the 1,174 members of this most respectable chamber, only a third attend regularly and nearly 400 never turn up at all.

Nearly half their Lordships are landowners owning five and a half million acres. Three quarters are old boys of Eton or other public schools.

Six peers who turned up 947 times never uttered a word—yet claim up to £92 a day in expenses. Lord Vivian, 80, cost the tax payer £7,000 for his silence.

ILEA angers teachers

SECONDARY SCHOOL teachers in London have been taking action, in some cases with spontaneous walk-outs, in protest at the Inner London Education Authority's (ILEA) plans for compulsory redeployment. Individual teachers are being named who are said to be 'surplus to requirements'.

The scheme for compulsory redeployment of 600 teachers has been rushed through at a time when the Inner London Teachers' Association (ILTA,

division of National Union of Teachers) was temporarily suspended by its national leadership for taking action against the Baker Bill.

These forced transfers are seen by ILEA as a way of saving £19 million and solving the teacher shortage in the primary schools. The scheme fails to answer the basic reasons as to why there are teacher shortages in some schools—reasons such as miserable pay, high accommodation costs and so on.

Larger classes

ILTA are determined to resist the scheme, especially in secondary schools where good teacher to pupil ratios have been established and the moves will mean larger classes. Barry Stead, chair of the schools sub-committee said that "teachers identified as surplus were doing valuable work... allowing

THE NATIONAL Union of Teachers' journal 'The Teacher' has commented favourably on a new deal for teachers in Liverpool which reduces class sizes, increases non-contract time and creates an expanded pool of supply teachers.

They say: "Almost the last act of Liverpool councillors before the House of Lords' decision on their future was

children to be taught in smaller groups or helping with curriculum development". But he said that those teachers who do not accept the move will have their pay stopped.

ILEA has now succeeded in infuriating the teachers, angering parents whose children are sent home because of lack of staff and aggravating school students who are protesting in support of the teachers. How can this be helping Labour's election chances in London?

The Greater London Labour Party executive opposes compulsory redeployment, so maximum pressure must be brought to bear through the constituency Labour parties and at London Labour Party conference to bring ILEA into line.

By Bob Sulatycki
(ILTA Divisional Council, personal capacity)

curriculum to be published by the authority."

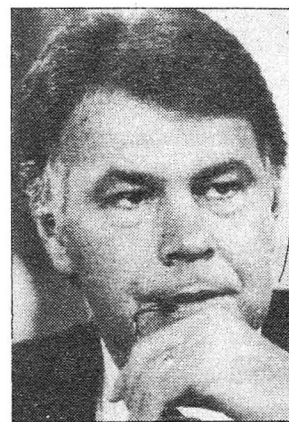
Compare Liverpool's record with that of the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA). Just below the article on Liverpool in 'The Teacher' is a report on ILEA's plan to "redeploy" as many as 596 teachers, a thinly disguised cut, in order to keep spending down.

announced was to conclude a deal giving protection to teachers in the city. Jim Ferguson NUT executive member for the area welcomed the deal....

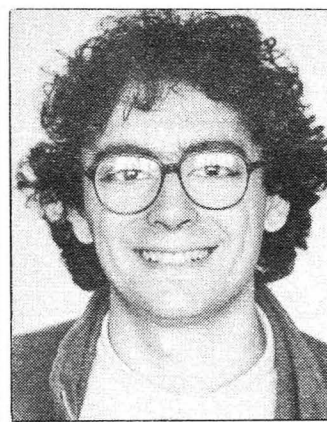
"The agreement also provides that in future head teachers will not be counted as part of the teaching staff for the purpose of determining staffing levels. Schools will be staffed in line with a minimum

Spain

We must fight like the Spanish youth



Felipe Gonzalez.



Juan Ignacio Ramos.

JUAN IGNACIO RAMOS, leader of the Spanish school students' union (SE), spoke to *Militant*. The SE, with a leadership supporting the ideas of the Spanish Marxist paper *Nuevo Claridad*, headed the recent, unprecedented struggle of the Spanish school youth for better education. Involving three million youth, the campaign forced a complete surrender by the PSOE (Socialist) government, and achieved historical gains—including, for the first time, free secondary education, and free university education for working-class youth. In Britain also, a period of struggle is opening up in the schools as the Tories press on in their attacks on education and teachers' rights. What lessons can be learned from Spain?

Could you explain the present situation and the struggles that are taking place in Spain?

Following the victory of the students' struggle, we've seen a series of struggles among the workers. This is a result of the economic crisis and the cuts that the PSOE (Socialist) government of Felipe Gonzalez has carried out.

There is a mood for a general strike in the whole of the country. For example, the miners in Asturias have been on strike for a month. The railway workers are on strike, building workers are on strike. There is a tremendous fighting mood.

Worst crisis

The present crisis is the worst the Socialist government has had to face. The workers are learning that they have to fight to force the government to change its policies and fulfill its election promises.

This process of radicalisation among the working class is spreading throughout the unions.

There have been reports of public clashes between Redondo, leader of the UGT (Socialist trade union federation) and Solchaga, the right-wing Minister of the Economy. What lies behind this?

Until now, the UGT has tried to carry out the policies of the government among the working class. Now it has reached a point where the

workers won't stomach this any more.

The UGT in Madrid has actually demanded the resignation of the Minister of the Economy.

Redondo is feeling the pressure from below, and he is now openly opposing the Minister of the Economy. The other day on TV there was a debate between the two, and Redondo accused Solchaga of being "on the other side of the barricades"—he used those words—and that he was carrying out the interests of big business instead of the workers.

If he carried on like this, Redondo said, he would see tremendous battles.

All this is preparing the way for a transformation within the unions.

What is happening with the students' movement now?

The movement lasted for three months, and it was a difficult struggle. Students had to make many sacrifices. Thanks to correct tactics we achieved a great victory. We received a great deal of support from the workers, who participated in our demonstrations in their masses.

Having forced the Ministry of Education to concede all our demands, we are now faced with the task of organising and building our union. We must ensure that the union is present in every school and college.

We have been holding provincial conferences, and this weekend we are holding

the national founding conference of the union, where the leading bodies will be elected, and the new programme of action will be formulated.

We have achieved an enormous historical step forward for Spain. For the first time the students have a campaigning organisation that unites them and fights for their interests.

Can you tell us more about the movement against US military bases in Spain?

The referendum on NATO signified a defeat for the PSOE government. A small majority voted in favour of staying in NATO, but almost seven million voted against. Large numbers who voted for the government in the last elections, voted against it on the question of NATO.

Promises

So the government was forced to promise that if they stayed in NATO, US bases in Spain would be reduced. Now they have to fulfill these promises.

But this government is defending the interests of big business. That also means defending the foreign policies of big business. That's why the government doesn't want to close down the US bases.

The problem is, they are now also under tremendous pressure from the workers and the youth. Last Sunday there was a demonstration in Madrid against one of the



Friday 13 February: 200,000 youth march in Madrid behind the banner of the SEM, *Nuevo Claridad* and JPS, Marxist youth movement.

For the first time Spanish school students have a campaigning organisation that unites them.

American bases in the area, involving at least 100,000 to 150,000 people.

The leaders of the anti-NATO movement are not posing the issue in class terms but as a middle-class campaign—"we don't want the bases because Spain should be a neutral country". These arguments don't hold much weight among the majority of the working class.

But such is the mood of the workers and youth that Gonzalez doesn't have a great deal of room to manoeuvre. Really the movement against US bases is only just beginning.

How important were the links you have built up between the school students and the workers?

The orientation of the school students' union towards the working class was the decisive factor in our victory. The Marxist leader-

ship of the union always said that the only way we could win was to link up with our class.

Right from the demonstrations of 4 December we started with a campaign, producing hundreds of thousands of leaflets and taking them to the factories to ask for workers' solidarity. This was a great success, and our struggle gained great prestige among the working class.

Active support

The workers sympathised with us, and themselves participated in our struggle. An important fact is that the students' parents, workers themselves, actively gave support to their children.

This had never happened before. In the past students' movements had always been looked upon as isolated, weak and not very serious—really, as petty bourgeois struggles.

We introduced new class methods into the struggle. Our own participation in the workers' movement is developing. We have already taken part in demonstrations called by the Workers' Commissions, and will participate in the general strike that this union is going to call in Asturias, probably at the end of April.

We will also participate in the May Day demonstrations which the unions have called.

We know that when we leave school we're not going to be bankers or company directors. We will be unemployed or workers. That's why we have to fight side by side with the workers in defence of living standards and jobs. If we don't, more factories will close, and more jobs will disappear for us.

That's why students and workers have the same struggle.

Media boycott press conference

FOUR COVENTRY school students, visiting the House of Commons last Thursday, had an unexpected opportunity of discussing with Juan Ignacio Ramos.

The occasion was a press conference for Juan Ignacio, organised by Dave Nellist MP. Throughout the historical movement in Spain, continuing for three months and winning unprecedented concessions from the government, the British media had remained tight-lipped. Obviously there was a conscious policy to keep the news from reaching British youth.

Now there was an opportunity to interview the youth leader who has become a household name in Spain. True to form, the capitalist

media boycotted the press conference.

As a result the Coventry students were able to raise their questions fully with Juan Ignacio, and hear an in-depth explanation of the Spanish youth movement. The discussion was undoubtedly on a far higher level than it would have been with representatives of the *Mirror* and the *Sun*.

Parents

One girl asked what his parents felt about his involvement in the struggle. Juan Ignacio explained that they were behind him all the way and that, as result, his father was won over to the ideas of Marxism!

Not just his parents, but

those of thousands of students were very impressed with the union's methods of struggle. Parents are now saying, in the factories and other workplaces, that they have to organise in the same way.

At the end the Coventry students commented that that thanks to the media they had known absolutely nothing about the Spanish movement. Now they would go back and build to fight against the Tories.

One of the girls said: "Just because we've had better education conditions in Britain, we shouldn't be satisfied with that. We must fight back against Thatcher in the same way the Spanish school students have done".



Meeting at the House of Commons: Dave Nellist MP, Juan Ignacio Ramos and school students from Coventry discuss the lessons of the Spanish youth movement.

USSR: no reform for workers

8 MARCH, International Women's Day, was important this year for a young Russian woman called Irina Zdenkovic.

At a public meeting in Belfast addressed by E. Legatin, a Central Committee member of the 'Communist' Party of the Soviet Union, Irina organised a protest, and finally achieved her aim of giving Legatin a personal letter addressed to Soviet leader Gorbachev.

Irina had married a non-Russian who settled in Northern Ireland. For five years she waited patiently before she was allowed to leave the USSR and join her husband.

For almost two years she has lived in Northern Ireland, and tried to get her mother a visa to visit her.

The Soviet authorities have consistently refused, saying it is "not in the interests of the Soviet Union".

Irina explained that she and her family are very ordinary, non-political people and in no way a threat to the USSR. They are not famous like Andrei Sakharov or Yosif Begun, and have no propaganda value. She knows that her case is similar to that of thousands of others. But she lives in the hope that some day she may see her mother again.

Refused

It was that hope which brought her to the Women's Day meeting to try to hand Legatin her appeal to Gorbachev.

Initially Legatin refused to take the letter, accusing her of trying to score political points. Irina was physically manhandled by a male member of the platform in an attempt to prevent her from speaking to Legatin.

After the meeting she waited for nearly 30 minutes before he eventually took the letter.

This one personal history speaks volumes about the regime in the Soviet Union. Despite Gorbachev's claims of increased democracy, it is clear that the USSR is not a socialist society and that the inhuman Stalinist dictatorship remains.

By Hilary Coleman
Belfast Trades Council
(Personal capacity)



Reagan and Gorbachev.

Comment from Poland:

- "Gorbachev was Solidarity's greatest victory. The Russians were forced to choose him because they thought the Polish disease might spread."—A Warsaw architect.
- Gorbachev's policies have "shattering" importance—especially his plan to meet the Pope.—An ex-CP intellectual.
- "Gorbachev is a policeman who does not use his truncheon. He is the same as all the rest of them. He is in it for what he can get. . . The harassment goes on, but in a different form."—A shipyard worker, Gdansk.

US youth get organised



A ghetto in Florida: life for millions of Americans.

A NEW mood is spreading among US youth—a mood of militancy, reflected in many incidents up and down the country. As in Europe, youth are angered by lack of facilities, cuts, police attacks and a future of mass unemployment.

On 24 January, 20,000 blacks and whites marched in Georgia against racism, in the biggest civil rights demo since the 1960s. On 4 February, high school students in California walked out in protest against plans to turn their school into a year-round school. A march is planned on 6 April in Sacramento, California's state capital, against cuts in education.

Most significantly, sections of youth are beginning to organise on socialist ideas. The Youth Defence Campaign, started in Seattle in 1985, last year formed a branch in Chicago. Now the basis is being laid for a branch in Sacramento. SHONDA HONKANEN reports from California.

OUR FIRST victory was won in the Sacramento suburb of Woodland on 3 March when 75 youth and other supporters flooded the city council chambers by invitation of 200 YDC flyers.

We were voicing our protest against a proposed council ordinance to pick and choose areas considered "dangerous" for use by bicycles, skateboards and just about anything else with wheels.

This vaguely written ordinance would leave it to the discretion of any police of-

ficer to ticket not only kids on skateboards but even a senior citizen on a bike.

Communication

Because of the concern shown that Tuesday night the council decided to postpone passing the ordinance until their next meeting. This gives an opportunity for the YDC to put forward amendments and a proposal for building a city skatepark.

Our group's first major project will be a benefit con-

cert in Marysville suburb on 28 March, with a \$5 ticket price. It is designed as alternative entertainment for kids in outlying areas who are unable to drive to Sacramento or San Francisco and pay \$10 or more for a concert.

The funds will go to pay for future projects. This event, as well as the YDC, has generated a lot of communication, organisation and unity within the youth in this area. Surely, this is only the beginning.

Kenya: Workers forced to fight

KENYA IS normally portrayed in the media, amidst views of sunsets over Mount Kenya, as a tropical paradise with a stable economy. This idyllic picture is far from the truth as President Moi turns to increasing repression as the only means of staying in power.

As Moi declared in a recent speech: "All government ministries must implement Presidential directives. . . during this year of discipline". (*The Standard*, Nairobi, 30 January)

In fact the regime is now isolated and unstable. Increased repression will not stop the real battles from starting up as the working class fight back against job losses, wage cuts and inflation.

Workers will use all the legal channels that are available to them, like the recent overtime ban by Mombasa local authority workers over non-payment of overtime and bonuses for six months.

At Uplands Bacon Factory, unions took the employers to court after workers were sacked without notice and without wages owed to them.

But, with strikes, demonstrations and political opposition illegal, workers are increasingly forced to break the law in order to de-

fend their rights.

Night meetings, held in remote locations and starting after midnight, will not stop at the say so of the government. Workers are increasingly being forced to take the road of struggle as poverty worsens.

Inflation during the last two years has been in double figures, and several small banks have collapsed, leaving small investors high and dry.

As with other ex-colonial countries, Kenya will stagger from slump to deeper slump as the world crisis of the imperialist powers is loaded on to the weaker nations.

Kenya's salvation lies not in the strengthening of the degenerate capitalist regime, but in ending the mismanagement of the country's resources, through a programme of socialist change that will open the way to real democracy.

Kenya's capitalist class have enriched themselves at the expense of the masses.

Over 200 government opponents have disappeared into prison, their whereabouts unknown. 69 more have been convicted on political charges. 1,000 former Air Force men have been detained since the attempted coup in 1982.

Many opponents



President Arap Moi.

Even in the economic 'boom' of 1985, while huge profits were made, *per capita* income dropped 9 per cent in real terms.

There is no economic basis even for limited reforms of a lasting nature. It is this that will drive the working class to struggle for power, pulling the tribal peoples behind them.

From a Kenyan correspondent

allegedly belong to the clandestine *Mwakenya* movement, accused by the government of wanting to change Kenya from a capitalist state to a socialist state. Several were leaders of the independence struggle in the 1950s.

International Notes



HAITI HOLDS up a mirror to the whole ex-colonial world of the processes that will unfold in every country.

The military regime that took power after the overthrow of the Duvalier dictatorship last year is "showing signs of panic" at the uncompromising determination of the masses to transform society, the *Guardian* correspondent reports.

Though democracy is unknown in Haiti, there is no enthusiasm for next Sunday's referendum on a

new, liberal constitution. The workers and youth have learned a great deal in the struggle, and are not interested in exchanging their military rulers for civilian exploiters.

"We're not going to vote", says an agricultural worker. "Look at the state of this road".

A youth: "They're all thieves. We want revolution".

THE ECONOMIST (7 March) has news for the poverty-stricken masses of Africa:

"Continuing the pace of past economic growth for another 100 years would leave the average African with a real GNP per head of only \$770 in today's dollars. It would take a further 440 years, until well into the twenty-sixth cen-

tury, to raise African incomes to *today's* American average." (Emphasis added)

(That is assuming, of course, that there will be no major economic crises in the next period to upset these calculations.)

By the 26th century, however, the American average will have increased by several thousand per cent (if nothing goes wrong with the system), leaving Africa with another slog of five or ten thousand years to catch up to that level—and so on.

To workers and peasants throughout the third world, what clearer argument can there be of the need to overthrow capitalism and replace it with the rule of the working people?

Unelected council imposed

Dear Comrades,
It must be a considerable comfort and relief to the thousands of people in Liverpool, faced with a future of humiliating unemployment and dilapidated housing, to learn that the first task of the new Alliance regime, which the buffoons in the Law Lords have seen fit to inflict on the city, is to resurrect the costly and irrelevant office of Mayor.

The people of the city did not elect an Alliance council and therefore should not acknowledge one. The trade unions must organise to run the city and maintain services.

The trade union rank and file must mobilise to prevent any further attacks on the city and defy the cuts which now seem inevitable.

Yours fraternally
Terry Givens
Merseyside

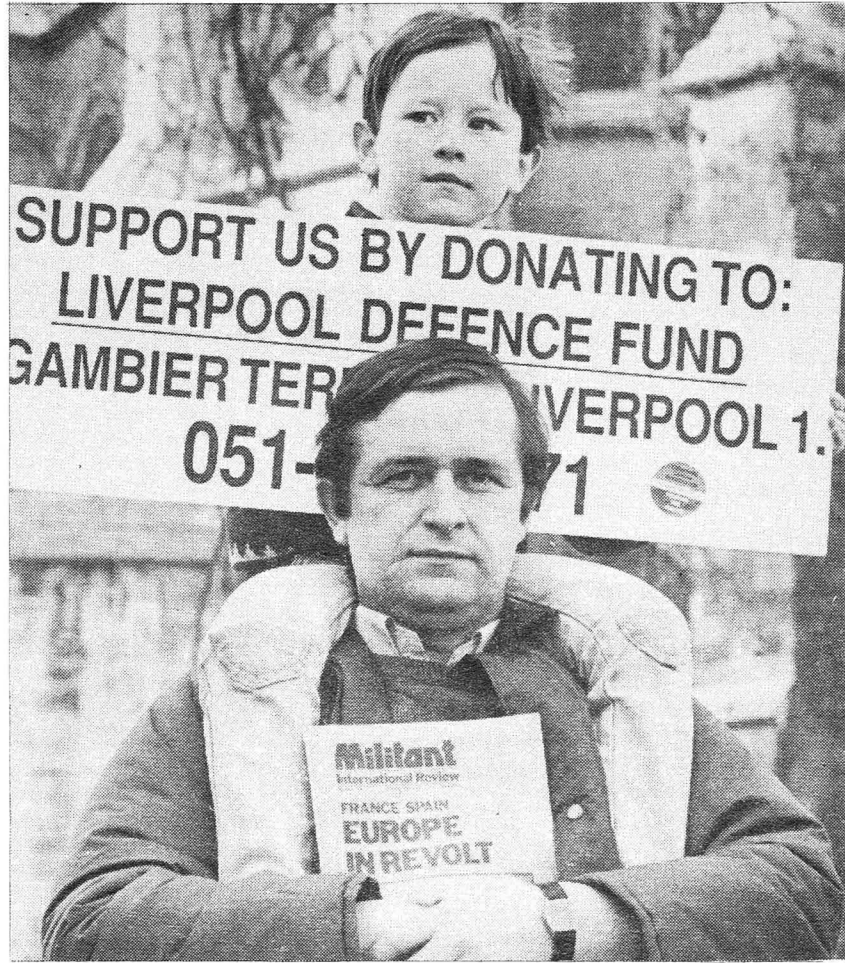


Photo: Dave Sinclair.

The 47 Liverpool Labour councillors have put themselves and their families on the line to defend the city from cuts.

Dear Comrades,
After the long, bravely fought battle of the 47 Liverpool councillors, chapter one of the Liverpool story is over.

Having suffered personal attacks to themselves and their families and gone to the point of bankruptcy, the people of Liverpool should be proud of their representatives.

I wish I could say that my Labour councillor had shown one per cent of the sacrifice the Liverpool 47 have.
Yours fraternally
Dennis Wareing
Eddisbury Labour Party
Young Socialists

Dear Comrades,
The *Guardian* of 14 March revealed that Liberal MP David Alton is to beg Mrs Thatcher for more money for Liverpool. "If we don't get it" he said "I am worried for the continuing unrest in Liverpool, which would be a breeding ground for *Militant*. *Militant* is not

about to lie down".
If only Labour's leaders woke up to this fact and adopted the same fighting programme on a national basis, David Alton and his cronies would have more than just Liverpool to worry about!
Yours fraternally
John Watts, Hull

Dear Comrades,
Who are these Law Lords anyway? 'Ten good men and true' dispensing wisdom and justice? Hardly. Apart from the conservatism that comes with age, (seven are over 65) their backgrounds and income make them naturally hostile to the labour movement.

All but one have been appointed by the Tories since 1979. Lord Chancellor Hailsham has held several ministerial posts in conservative governments and Lord Griffiths was a member of the Industrial Relations Court notorious for jailing the Pentonville Five.

Nine of the ten went to public school and eight went on to either Oxford or Cambridge. They are representatives of the ruling class, from an elite strata of society unfamiliar with poverty, unemployment or homelessness.

And these men sit in judgement over democratically elected Labour councillors. Where's the justice in that?

Yours fraternally
Bill Williams
Swansea

Workplace nurseries for the well-off

Dear Comrades,
Leicester City Council has just opened a new nursery for its employees. Because the City Council is such a large employer it is able to provide excellent facilities for less money than the average child minder or private nursery.

Lunch is provided for parents as well as children, and all feeding equipment and bedding is provided. Nappies are included in the price—when catering on a large scale things can be bought more cheaply.

So has socialism come to Leicester? Not quite. The nursery charges depend on your wages, but if you earn average or above average salary, the nursery counts as a 'perk', like a company car, and is taxed accordingly (since the Tories got in) so that you can end up paying £60 for one place! ie my total take home pay for a week.

Who said 'better off' women have nothing to gain from socialism?

Yours fraternally
Pauline Maniscalco
Leicester West
Labour Party

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

No aid from hard-hearted Tories

Dear Comrades,
I recently came across an advertisement asking for money for the British Heart Foundation, which finances research into all diseases of the heart and its circulation. As some years ago I successfully underwent major open heart surgery, my heart sank when I read that the BHF receives absolutely no government aid and relies entirely on charity via voluntary donations and legacies from the public.

It really makes me sick and angry when I see people in long waiting lists desperate for operations, and this government cannot see fit to adequately finance medical research.

Yours fraternally
Louisa Graves
Salford Labour Party
Young Socialists (TGWU)

International support for Militant

Dear Comrades,
Thanks a great deal for your letter, asking if I wish to continue receiving *Militant*. I am still in school and have been receiving the *Militant* regularly.
I must confess that the

Militant you send to me is read by many students in my hostel. Sometimes it takes me days before I can get it to read when it reaches the school. I am very sure some will soon send applications for subscriptions.

I wish to say I still enjoy reading *Militant* and wish to continue receiving it. I believe that it can be a 'light' in my school. Your work is not in vain.
Thank you
A reader in Ghana

SDP's true colours

Dear Comrades,
One of the founder members of the Social Democratic Party, John Horam, a junior minister in the last Labour government, has defected to the Tory Party.
Meanwhile, another of its

former MPs Neville Sandelson, said many Social Democrats sympathised with Horam and the SDP ought to form an alliance with the Tories.
The Alliance's 'radical' packaging is beginning to look decidedly tattered when

Sandelson states "The government's economic policy seems to be realistic and sensible and is showing signs of success".
Yours fraternally
Kevin Conway
Bootle Labour Party
Young Socialists

To the Manor born

Dear Comrades,
It was reported in my local paper this week that Lord Lichfield has pocketed £17,000 from the sale of two titles to Lordships of the Manor in Staffordshire. Last June he netted £49,500 for eight manorial titles in the country.
The value of these titles has increased dramatically recently. In March 85 the average price was £5,200. By

November 86 this had leapt to £9,200 - an increase of 77 per cent in 20 months.
This is good news for those of us scratching about to make ends meet. If you have any spare titles you are not using at present, cash them in while the 'price is right!'
Yours fraternally
Andy Bentley
Stoke South

Poorest pay the most

Dear Comrades,
Having difficulty paying your electricity bill? I suppose many people are after the coldest winter for some time. My last bill for £102 took me aback, but don't bother turning to the LEB for help!
On receiving a threatening letter 'suggesting' that I can be 'cut off' or pay up, LEB very 'generously' offered to let me pay £10 a week in order to stay in credit!
I worked out that my total electricity costs for the past year had been £269, a long way short of £520—£5.18 a week. If I wanted to have a meter installed there would be a charge of approximately £4 per quarter! What a con where the poorest pay the most for their electricity. Well I say, 'Power to the people'—for free!
Yours fraternally
Ruth Campbell
Newham

Dilemma facing parents of handicapped

Dear Comrades,
I feel that Rick Rooney's article on the Appeal Court decision to allow the sterilisation of a 17 year old severely handicapped girl was one sided in its approach.
I am a qualified nurse for the mentally handicapped and understand the anger felt by many people at the decision.
For years mentally handicapped people have been denied basic rights and treated disgracefully. This decision will undoubtedly fuel many of the ill-founded prejudices towards the mentally handicapped that still exist.
Our aim has to be to allow the mentally handicapped to lead as full and as normal a life as possible in the community whilst understanding that there are those whose handicaps are so profound that certain decisions will always have to be taken for them.
The move away from institutionalised to community care has been abused by the Tories in order to carry out cuts. The policy has been railroaded through without preparation and training.
The hospital where I used to work has 'lost' 30 former residents dumped in the community. Residents are either forced to live with families who cannot

cope, fall prey to profiteering in private hostels, or come under the care of local authorities.
However, no additional money is made available, provision has to be made from existing budgets which are being cut to the bone resulting in serious staff shortages.
Alex Carlisle, Liberal/SDP legal affairs spokesman, was quoted in the *Guardian* as saying that he was disturbed that the local authority seemed to be admitting that it was unable to prevent the girl from being sexually assaulted, but this will be the case as long as the cuts continue.
It is women, in particular, who have the burden of caring for the mentally handicapped. 'Community care' often means care in the home with no adequate back up and waiting lists for adult training places running into years in some areas.
The mothers of the mentally handicapped face terrible conditions and difficult decisions.
It is misleading to give the impression that a girl with a mental age of five would be capable "with proper education and training" to understand the implications of conception and parenting.
Deciding that a girl, who cannot

decide for herself, should be sterilised is fundamentally no different to deciding that an abortion should take place, which Rick says would be available "as a last resort".
I am sure that many mothers, like Genette's, who are under enormous pressure, are relieved to have the option of sterilisation available and would find it preferable to abortion.
Brian Rix the general secretary of MENCAP fears that sterilisation could be seen as an easy way out by "Carers who were not managing to cope".
The reason 'carers' cannot cope is because of the crisis of capitalism. That is why as Rick correctly points out, the Labour movement has to fight for better services and resources for the mentally handicapped so that agonising decisions like these might not need to be taken.
At the end of the day this, like many others, is not a moral but a political issue.
Yours fraternally
Chris Thomas
Bristol

Militant welcomes any further letters on this or any other issue.

Union breakaways

Stay and fight

The second part of Richard Knights' article on the history of breakaway unions in Britain.

Pilkington's

THE MOST recent attempt to form a genuine rank and file breakaway union came during the Pilkington glass workers' strike in 1970.

The workers were members of the General and Municipal Workers, which was bureaucratically controlled, standing on the far right of the labour movement.

In 1965 it signed an agreement with Ilford allowing unofficial strikers to be sacked. In 1969 during a strike at Ford it was the only one of the ten unions not to make the strike official. As a result it lost thousands of members to the TGWU.

The general secretary, Lord Cooper, was part of a union 'dynasty' where son followed father as union official.

He was also governor of the London School of Business Studies, director of Telefusion Yorkshire, Director of the National Ports Council and of the Atlas Foundation which was funded by the CIA.

The largest GMWU branch was at Pilkington's in

St. Helens, Lancashire. It had 7,400 members and mirrored the policies of the national union.

Branch meetings could only be attended by shop stewards, excluding the members from any direct say.

The pay negotiations were centrally controlled by a 44 man Joint Industrial Council made up of 22 from management and 22 from the unions. The union side comprised 15 from the shop floor and seven full time officials.

Basic pay lagged behind other industries. Unrest came to a head on 2 April 1970 with a spontaneous walk-out at the sheet works over a bonus payment.

The strike quickly spread to the other five factories

and the demand for a £10 per week pay rise came from the shop floor.

On the Saturday when the strike began the shop stewards committee called for a return to work.

By the Monday, with all six factories out on strike, even the stewards were forced to declare the strike official at 'branch level'. The other seven Pilkington factories in Britain then joined the strike.

On 8 April the GMWU bureaucracy despatched David Basnett, then the national official for the glass industry, to get the strike called off.

Staying out

When he addressed a mass meeting, brushing the workers' demands aside and calling for a return to work, he was shouted down.

An official ballot was conducted by the Electoral Reform Society. The result was never declared because it showed overwhelming support for the strike.

The JIC hastily convened and the company offered a £3 pay increase. It was angrily rejected by a mass meeting.

The old stewards were pushed aside by the Rank and File Strike Committee (RFSC), which with mass support, assumed the leadership of the dispute.

The GMWU leaders and management tried every trick to engineer a return to work, even organising meetings inside the factory gates on 2 May, but the strike remained solid.

However, on 16 May the so-called 'parsons poll', conducted by local clergymen, showed a narrow majority for a return to work.

With a split in the workforce developing and promises of assistance from the TUC general secretary, Vic Feather, the RFSC called the strike off on 22 May.

The RFSC stood at the head of the workers. It had organised 12 mass meetings

during the strike, produced regular bulletins and toured the town with loudspeakers vans to keep people informed.

The GMWU was even forced to close its local union office. The task now was to transform the Pilkington branch. But the RFSC was derailed by a tragic error which destroyed their influence in the union and ultimately cost them their jobs.

Such was the hatred of the GMWU that many workers raised the idea of joining another union or forming their own.

This received endorsement from many on the left, including the ultra-left, like the then International Socialists (now SWP).

The IS produced leaflets with the heading 'NUGMWU Scab Union' and the homily that the 'union cannot be reformed; it can only be replaced'.

Militant was alone on the left in arguing against the formation of a breakaway union.

On 5 June 3,500 forms were handed in to Pilkington asking to leave the GMWU. The RFSC changed its name to the Pilkington Provisional Trade Union Committee.

The TGWU refused to consider any transfer of membership due to the Bridlington Agreement and at the end of June the Glass and General Workers Union was formed.

Management and the GMWU bided their time to break the GGWU.

In August the new union imposed an overtime ban which led to suspensions and a three day strike at the Cowley Hill plant.

480 workers were sacked. Management later relented and offered some workers re-employment.

But 130 remained sacked, including the leaders of the CGWU, Gerry Caughey and John Potter. Within a few weeks the GGWU was wound up.

PILKINGTONS: UNITE TO FIGHT SACKINGS!

TED MOONEY A.E.F.

The "Glass and General Workers Union", the new union formed during the recent Pilkington dispute, the leaders admitted in discussion with the present writer, that to have formed such a body was undoubtedly a grave mistake. At the time of writing all that remains of the union is about 130 members who have been sacked and face little prospect of regaining their jobs. Many of these trade unionists have had years and years with the company and stand to lose quite a lot in terms of pension rights etc. In one case, two months until he retires, after a lifetime with the firm. Unfortunately, he will probably lose everything unless the unity of the workers is rebuilt and given real leadership!

Throughout the entire dispute the leadership of the G.&M. has played the most reactionary role. Over many years the G.&M. at Pilkington were content to sit back and vegetate. When the big dispute started in April they failed completely to give a lead to the workers. That was how and the others in the forefront of the that the dispute leaders fail to to the workers. in though they union machin- no victimisation are still 27 f. employed at who have not

ers have admitted that they have lost ground, that within the factory there is a dearth of leadership and that non-unionism exists.

The creation of the G.G.W.U. was an understandable impulsive reaction to the treacherous tradition of the G&M.W.U. leadership, but it was a mistake which has engendered much damage and set back the organisation of the Pilkington workers for some time to come. If the unity of the Pilkington workers is to be complete appraisal of the situation is made. It is not a question of simply apportioning blame, but one of learning from past mistakes. Unfortunately the big-named "International Socialists", the "Tribune" and the Communist Party, who advocated and supported the conception of the new union, have a large measure of responsibility for the situation. They are to blame for paving the way for the defeat of Pilkington workers. These elements who claim to be the "vanguard" of the Labour Movement have learned nothing from the past. They failed completely to learn the lessons of the "Blue Union" (see MILITANT No 64.) which to some extent apply to the recent Co-Op insurance agents' strike where a similar situation existed. If any portion of the blame can be placed at the feet of the leaders of the G.&M.W.U. then it is minimal. They were, self admittedly, naive and inexperienced, they are prepared to learn from their mistakes. But what must not be forgotten is the role of the G.&M.W.U.



(Left) Mass meeting of St Helens Pilkington workers at the end of May 1970. (Above) September 1970 issue of *Militant*, analysing the aftermath of the breakaway. (Below) David Basnett, sent to get the strike called off. He later became GMWU general secretary.



Classified ads

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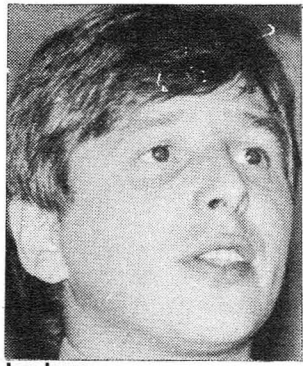
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Defend miners' conditions and national unity

Reject Margam six-day con



Ian Isaac

South Wales Miner IAN ISAAC reports on the recent decision of the area lodge committees conference to accept six-day working at the new Margam pit, and argues for rejection.

ON SATURDAY 7 March a conference of South Wales NUM lodge committees decided by 136 to 77 (on a card vote system, one vote for every 50 members or part thereof) to accept the 'concept' of six-day production at the proposed Margam mine on the basis of a reduction in aggregate working hours—144 hours and one week off with pay after a 3 week roster—instead of 145 hours.

The irony of the resolution is that the vote was taken on the understanding that when negotiations are completed a ballot of the members at the pit heads will take place. This promise from the platform was given under tremendous opposition to six-day working from speakers from the floor and from the rank and file in the coalfields in the previous week.

It was a surprise to many delegates that the question of a ballot was not printed in the resolution except perhaps for the vague reference to "subject to fullest discussion" between the membership and the Coal Board on shift patterns "within the statutory limit in existence at the time of production commencing."

Concern will continue to be expressed by the rank and file at the pits that they may not be allowed a ballot on the concept of six-day production and changes in shift patterns and hours following negotiations. It has already been rumoured that if a ballot does take place it will be in four years' time when the wedge will have been driven deeper on the question of six day continental style working.

In the meantime there is a growing awareness that they are being conned and cajoled, without a ballot, into ac-

cepting a fundamental deterioration in working conditions and hours of working. Studies have been completed in the Yorkshire coalfield which demonstrate that dust retention, stress and increased effort, are not compensated for by having extra holidays. The key to these safety and health factors is the length of the working shift and the number of days worked in a week.

Propaganda

Not since the days of the back-to-work campaign in S Wales during the miners' strike has the Board used the press and the media with such intensity as they are at present. This propaganda tries to kid the men into thinking that the changes in work patterns are strictly for Margam and would not be introduced across the coalfield. In reality the Wheeler plan (see *Militant* 837) is to be introduced in the whole of the British mining industry.

Speaking at the luncheon of the Coal Industry Society, quoted in *The Independent* 3 March, Sir Robert Haslam made it clear that: "the current campaign to persuade the NUM to accept more flexible working hours extends beyond the immediate dispute over the £90



Coming off shift at Brynlliw colliery, South Wales in 1980.

Resolution put to the lodge committee delegate conference, S Wales NUM on 7 March in Porthcawl.

"This conference of the South Wales Area of NUM, having considered the proposal of the Coal Board in respect of the Margam new mine, deplores the fact that the Board have attached certain conditions of a fundamental nature to the go ahead for this colliery.

"We are however deeply conscious of the burden placed upon us in relation to the question of job opportunities for 780 miners, and estimated 1,000 associated jobs in an area of high unemployment, and we acknowledge our responsibilities to our members - past present and future - and also to the school leavers and unemployed within S Wales.

"We have decided therefore, in the absence of a national conciliation scheme, to accept the

"concept" of six day production at the proposed Margam mine on the basis of a reduction in the aggregate working hours, and subject to the fullest discussion between the union membership and the Coal Board on shift patterns within the statutory limits that are in existence at the time of production commencing.

"This decision is compliant with the NEC decision of the 5th December 1985 which gave a commitment to the Board to maximise output from our coal faces, and also complies with the NEC decision of February 12 1987, ensuring that the S Wales NUM will be responsible for organising all miners to be employed within the S Wales area."

million Margam project in S Wales towards such things as the 1908 Hours of Work Act and the 40 year old five-day week agreement."

Margam is the start of a massive new closure programme with as many as 40 of the remaining 110 pits being closed in the course of the next few years.

The Board also try to kid people that Margam is only viable on six-day production. But they are being very economical with the release of figures in support of their claim.

They state in *Coal News*, (S Wales) March 87 edition: "British Coal will need to borrow £80 million for the construction of Margam at a rate of interest of around 11 and a half per cent and it will only generate sufficient income to cover itself by producing coal over six days which will produce a rate of return of 12.2 per cent. Previous plans based on five-day production have failed to create sufficient profits from production to cover interest cost."

This statement is very dubious to say the least. Some interesting facts have recently appeared which

bring into question the whole basis of the Coal Board's claim. It can now be seriously argued that five-day production at Margam, with a four-day week for miners working seven and a quarter hour shifts and facemen changing on the job, would in fact be a very viable proposition, using the Coal Board's own figures on costs and expected revenue per tonne.

Facts

FACT. British Coal admitted in a South Wales consultative committee, to a question from the Nacods area official, that half of the £80 million capital required is available from the Common Market at 7.25 per cent interest. This reduces the annual interest charge from £9.2m pounds based on 11.5 per cent for the full £90m, to £7.5m, thereby making a saving of £1.7m.

FACT. Margam coal's calorific value is 31 gigajoules per tonne, a very high quality coking coal. The NCB have set a requirement for investment in new pits of £1 per gigajoule or less for operating costs. This means

that at Margam operating costs are expected to be below £31 per tonne (31 gigajoules per tonne at £1 per tonne equals £31 per tonne, meeting the Coal Board criteria).

FACT. The NCB talk of competing with imported fuel into the Margam/Port Talbot steel works. The cost of coal coming into this steelworks from America and Australia and Poland is between £38-41 per tonne (including £3 transportation cost) fresh off the boat prices. In their costings the Board anticipate receiving a revenue of £43.77 per tonne, producing 1.2 million tonnes of coal a year on six working or one million tonnes on five days. The fact is that at a conservative £31 per tonne operating cost a profit of £3.57m will be made overall per year after deducting loan repayments.

It is more likely that on five-day production, costs per tonne of Margam coal will be £27 per tonne. On six days—£22 per tonne. The Coal Board stand to make a huge profit on six-day production and cannot justify using six-day production as the difference between

viability and non-viability.

Margam would be viable operating a five day production week and a four day week for miners in line with NUM policy and still employing the extra 130 men—but on the basis of a shorter working week and not on six-day production.

Opposition

Whatever happens, the mood in many of the pits is for rejecting the six-day threat. Of the pits which voted to support the Area executive in the Porthcawl conference, many have held pit head meetings where rank and file anger was expressed to their delegate.

And calls were made at a number of pits for a ballot on the concept of six-day production at Margam, for keeping the unity of the national union and to withdraw from area negotiations. The concept of six-day production should be determined by the national union through a national conference and a national ballot of Britain's miners. The result of which should be to reject the Americanisation of Britain's mining industry.



Miners have waged an historic struggle for public ownership of the pits, now the Tories are preparing for privatisation.

Industrial Reports

United action for civil service claim

CPSA, SCPS, IRSF and Nipsa members are balloting on a revised pay offer.

In response to the united union claim for £20 per week or 15 per cent; a minimum wage of £115 per week and the full rate for the job irrespective of age, the Tories have offered a miserly basic pay increase of £5.75 per week or 4.25 per cent, which ever is the greater.

The offer does nothing to solve the poverty wages of the clerical and typing grades, nor make up for the civil servants having fallen behind average earnings and price rises over the past seven years.

The united pay claim is the minimum necessary to restore pay levels and help to deal with the severe hardship faced by CPSA members.

Part of the claim is for 6 weeks leave and a 35 hour week to help improve conditions, defend jobs and relieve work pressures and stress, particularly in DHSS and DE local offices.

The Tories have replied by proposing to reduce the eligibility for six weeks' leave from 25 to 20 years service and to be phased in between now and 1991. This is an insult.

The service eligibility for five weeks leaves is to be reduced from an average of 15 years to two years, but phased in up to 1990!

However the offer is conditional on the unions giving an assurance that they will not use the im-

provements to argue for extra staff or renegotiating staffing formulas. What a joke! That's one of the reasons for the claim.

The offer contains bits and pieces for various grades, including an additional 2 per cent for executive grades to buy out a 1986 four per cent relativities claim.

A worrying aspect of the offer is that the unions have been given notice that the Tories are shortly to announce plans to give Departments discretion to pay an additional amount (thought to be £500 PA) for "dealing with the difficult circumstances of recruitment and retention in London, and South East and other particular areas."

No leadership

This means regional pay and attacks the collective strength of the unions. Unbelievably, John Ellis the new CPSA General and the right wing NEC have decided to make no recommendation to CPSA members on the offer.

As national officer John Macreadie said at the NEC meeting in arguing fiercely against the offer: "This is a disgrace and an abdication of leadership. The unions must stick together and fight together."

The SCPS leadership are recommending rejection of the offer. The IRSF NEC split 14-14 on the offer—the right wing President refused to use his casting vote.

Therefore they are also making no recommendation.

Alarming, IRSF members are being given a third option, neither accept nor reject and fight, but in effect leave the united pay claim and enter into separate talks and do sectional deals for some extra benefits and to hell with unity.

The united pay claim covering 400,000 civil servants was forged over the heads of the sectarian CPSA and IRSF leaderships. The rank and file must now reinforce unity and reject divisions being opened up by the Tories, the press and the likes of Ellis, Ainsworth and Christopher.

The discontent and anger on pay and conditions is self evident. The government have never been more vulnerable, with a general election fast approaching. Civil Servants have immense potential of bargaining power. Now is the time to fight.

At stake is not only poverty and discrimination against civil servants, but the spectre of regional pay and performance pay linked to annual staff reports. Unity is the key to our winning. Civil Servants must fight to improve their conditions now.

By Doreen Purvis

(CPSA Vice-President, personal capacity, BL Presidential candidate)



A VERY successful *Militant* public meeting was held last Wednesday in support of the 300 sacked artificial limb-makers in Roehampton. About sixty people, half of them Hangers workers, came along to discuss the issues of this six-month old dispute and the lessons to be learnt.

Cathy Wilson (pictured above with a Hangers lobby), secretary of Liverpool Labour Women's Council and a Hangers consumer, spoke of the origins of the artificial limb industry during the First World War and the rise of a profitable market, with Hangers and its associates making very good profits. When BTR took over a few years ago, however, profits were considered too low and they began to squeeze the workers harder by continual speed-ups and other measures, which led to the present dispute.

Graham Croucher, from the Hangers strike committee, spoke of the massive media cover up and the suffering the dispute is causing and the incompatibility of Hangers' greed with genuine health care. He called for the company to be taken into public ownership.

In the build up to the meeting the Roehampton estate opposite the factory was canvassed for money for the strikers and sales of *Militant* with the Hangers back page. In a few nights 40 copies were sold and £200 collected, which was handed to the strikers at the meeting.

Yorkshire miners fight back

KELLINGLEY colliery, 'Big K', the largest pit in the country came to a standstill last week when the pit's 2,000 miners voted to strike for a week.

The dispute which started over contracts for using new machinery turned into one about the 'Jack boot' tactics of British coal management.

The decision to stop out for a week was taken at a mass meeting and went against the branch committee's recommendation to work, so that negotiations could take place.

Either by coincidence or chance Arthur Scargill had addressed a meeting at Kell-

ingley club the Sunday before the dispute began on the Monday. In vintage Scargill style he told the miners there was no alternative, that they could "get up off their knees and fight."

Solidarity

The rest was drowned out in applause. In this part of Yorkshire there are signs that miners are beginning to take that advice.

The solidarity shown by men in the other Selby units shook management. A miner at Ricall said: "Management dared us to take action, they said we would only get the

support of 41 (the number left at the end of the strike-Ed). Well we've shown them that we are prepared to stick together."

This action follows closely behind the week strike by the Selby complex's 3,000 miners a few weeks ago.

That was provoked by management at Whitemoor pit who stopped a week's bonus after the men went home when they found a British Coal official was visiting the mine.

By a North Yorkshire miner

Six months of struggle for Ardbride workers

AS THE dispute at Ardbride Products in Ardrossan, Ayreshire, enters its sixth month, the 23 young TGWU members sacked by managing director Stuart Ross for joining their union, (see *Militant* 836) have received a boost in the form of a letter from Laura Ashley management to Brian Wilson, Labour Prospective Parliamentary candidate for Cunningham North.

The letter states that they are informing Ardbride Products that their contract with them (which accounts for 90 per cent of the outlets for Ardbride's lampshades and bases) has not been renewed. Only a temporary extension has been agreed between the two companies. Furthermore Laura Ashley are putting pressure on Stuart Ross to resolve the dispute before they will agree to further contracts.

This is as a result of the regular picketing and leafletting of Laura Ashley shops in Edinburgh and elsewhere by TGWU members and other supportive organisations and the effect this action is having on Laura Ashley's profits.

It is clear that a victory for the strikers is getting closer, but a successful end could have been achieved months ago had TGWU officials in Saltcoates and Glasgow not been so ineffective in providing support for their members and so obstructive

to branches organising support amongst rank and file members.

Nine crucial weeks passed at the start of the dispute before the strike was declared official; the strikers have still not received a single penny in strike pay; no pressure has been placed on the Health and Safety executive to prosecute Ardbride Products for breaches of the law (the fines for which could cost Stuart Ross up to £40,000).

Support within the TGWU is spreading, with branches in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee moving motions calling our elected officials to task to provide the necessary financial and legal assistance to turn the tide further in favour of the victimised workers at Ardbride

Products.

Should the officials ignore these calls it will have serious implications for all TGWU members. In denying the membership the rights to which they are entitled they will be setting a dangerous precedent. These and all young workers need a union that will protect them from attacks from the bosses and the Tories' union laws with the same enthusiasm that the Tories protect the profits of their class.

By Paul Collins

Messages of support and donations to: Anna Druggan, Ardbride Strike Committee, 28D Montgomerie St, Ardrossan. KA22 8EQ.

By Paul Collins, TGWU Edinburgh

Workers' Paradise?

THE BALLOT on industrial action against job losses in the Scottish Shoppers' Paradise stores has produced a substantial two to one vote in favour.

These Usdaw members have shown their determination to fight the Dee Corporation's plans to sell off two hundred Shoppers' Paradise and Gateway stores nationally.

Management are now under pressure. The day after the members' union branch (Scotland Fine Fare) announced their intention to conduct the ballot the company began discussion on redeployment.

Hull RI workers keep out privateers

250 HULL Royal Infirmary ancillary workers went on strike last Thursday to march and lobby the Health Authority meeting discussing privatisation of the cleansing services.

The workers were incensed that the Authority was recommending the tender from Reckitt Cleaning Services, which though the cheapest, would have meant all NHS cleaners being sacked with those re-employed being on less than 16 hours a week, with loss of sick pay, holiday pay and employment protection.

The pressure of the lobby resulted in a vote to accept the in-house tender by 256 to 6. Whilst this represents a victory in keeping out 'privateers' it can yet be overturned by the Regional Health Authority and does involve jobs losses and saving of about £200,000. The trade unions will have to renew the fight for improvements in hours and conditions.

By Alistair Tice
(Nupe Hull hospitals branch)

Sutton bakery strike

THE SUTTON'S bakery strike in Coventry is continuing. A ballot to make the strike official produced an overwhelming majority in favour.

Despite management claims in the local press that production levels will be maintained, the strikers are confident that once the necessary solidarity action has been organised they will win the dispute even if it takes several weeks.

School students living in the local area have stood on the picket line in solidarity. "I want these casual workers to have permanent jobs in the bakery so that I have a chance of a job here when I leave school," one of them said.

By Matthew Davies
(Coventry South West LPYS)

Militant

Miners
Margam: NUM ranks oppose
6 day threats — pages 14, 4
Kellingley strike — page 15

Solidarity with Manchester engineers

ENGINEERING workers at Senior Colman in Manchester have been on strike since January against management's attempts to smash union negotiating rights, and sack 12 workers. This dispute is a test case for all Manchester engineering workers.

Colmans' management have broken with the Engineering Employers' Federation in a Murdoch style bid to crush the union at the Sale plant.

John Tocher, AEU Divisional organiser, number 11 division, told *Militant*:

"In my view this was pre-determined. No employer starts recruiting new labour within two days (of a strike). Obviously this employer has taken a leaf out of Rupert Murdoch's book".

Solidarity from all engineering workers is now vital. A mass meeting of shop stewards has already agreed to action to make other employers put pressure on Colmans and to call a demonstration in work time on 27 March.

Colmans' shop steward Paul Goodacre and convenor Graham White said:

"Support for the strike is growing in Manchester North and South districts of the AEU. We've had very good support from the miners, from Nottingham,

Manchester engineers

Yorkshire, Lancashire and South Wales.

"This battle is being monitored by other companies. If the management win, the others will follow".

"We have to hit them where it hurts, every factory in the group has been visited. We had a very good response from the Labour Party, and at the North West Labour Party conference last week an emergency resolution was carried supporting us.

Tony Lowe, secretary of the strike committee said:

"On Friday 27 March in Sale Town Hall thousands of

AEU engineering and other trade unionists will be demonstrating their support for the 97 Senior Colman workers on strike for ten weeks.

Start levy

"The battle will be won with regular workplace demonstrations, increased financial support and implementing the levy."

The strike committee is holding a weekly mass meeting and producing a weekly newsletter to ensure the strikers are well inform-

ed and involved in the strike.

John Tocher urges the strikers "to visit other factories, see the convenors and shop stewards to explain their case. The key to winning the dispute is to get effective blacking. The demonstrations are good morale boosters and good publicity, but the blacking must be very effective to win.

"We have to hit them economically to get to the customers and suppliers. The company is worried about its profits.

"After this demonstration

if there is not any movement then we could approach the North West Region of the TUC to organise a conference of trade unions to build support. Such a conference would get more people involved in the dispute and in the blacking.

"You are dealing with Maggie Thatcher's own ambassadors in this company, they are going to show how they can turn the tide of history and put the trade unions in their place, that's what they are about".

By Bryan Beckingham

Labours national executive latest

THE LABOUR Party national executive committee, at its meeting on Wednesday 25 March, has at last agreed that Liverpool Broadgreen Labour Party can hold its annual general meeting and restart its activities.

But they also decided, without any justification, to refer two Broadgreen party officers, Josie Aitman and Elaine Bannister, to the National Constitutional Committee and to remove them from the panel of candidates for council elections.

On the youth allowance the Party leaders conceded that, under a Labour government, students are to receive not less than they would if on benefit, but that it should still be means tested.

The meeting expressed opposition to the recent conference of supporters of black sections within the party. They then threatened disciplinary action against any party member who speaks in favour of black sections!

Party members opposed to black sections will be outraged at this heavy-handed attack on free speech, which is an attack on the democratic rights of all members.

STOP PRESS

Unbelievably, in an election year, Labour's NEC also decided to launch an inquiry into the Young Socialists' national chairman, John Ellen and Linda Douglas the YS representative on the executive.

Their 'crime'—to circulate the YS response to the NEC's consultation proposals on the reorganisation of the youth structure.

Every YS branch and local party must protest immediately at this major new turn in the witch-hunt.

Militant Public Meeting

Support the Senior Colman Strikers
 Thursday 2 April.
 7.45pm.

Sale Hotel, Marsland Rd. Speakers: Senior Colman Strike rep. Councillor John Byrne, Aileen Ingham. Chair: Andy Walsh of the BIFU national executive.

Caterpillar occupation goes on

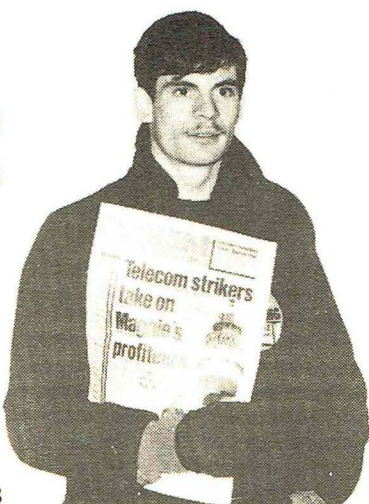
American owners are taking legal action to evict the strikers. Support Caterpillar workers; Send money and messages to Caterpillar Occupation Committee, c/o Thomas Stevenson, 17 Campsie View, Bargeeddie, Glasgow.



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