

Militant

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Labour to
power on a
socialist
programme



Tory tax lie

The top one per cent own 21 per cent of all personal wealth, 83.7 per cent of land and 81.2 per cent of shares. The bottom 51 per cent own just 7 per cent of personal wealth, very little land and hardly any shares.

Inside...

Special broadsheet giving the facts about Tory Britain

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Thatcher puts women last

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THE TORIES are engaged in a gigantic electoral con trick, to cheat their way back into office. They are playing up their 2p in the pound budget tax cut, and the bribe of another 2p if they are voted in on 11 June.

But Thatcher has been promising to reduce taxation since 1979. Every ordinary family knows different. For eight years, she has been increasing taxes for workers and slashing public spending and state benefits. Even unemployment benefit has been taxed. All to pay for big cuts in the tax bills of the rich and of the big companies.

"There are too few rich and too

few profits," Thatcher declared in 1975. So the only commitment she has carried through is to give to the rich at the expense of the rest. Government for the rich by the rich, that is Thatcherism.

She has given the top 20 per cent two thirds of the cash from cuts in direct taxes. Thanks to her the super rich on 700 per cent of average earnings (£1,500 per week) have enjoyed a 10 per cent cut in the proportion of their income taken in tax.

But the average tax payer and those below average earnings are now losing a larger proportion in income tax, and through the doubling of VAT, and by inflated rates bills due to cuts in government grants. While the richest 10 per cent pay a sixth of their income in in-

direct taxes, like VAT, the poorest 25 per cent lose 26 per cent of their small incomes.

If Thatcher is allowed back she will step up her tax war against the working class. VAT will be extended to more essentials like food and children's clothing, and books too. She has already extended it to take away food. And as for the miserable 2p tax cut, with a new economic crisis brewing, that will be the first thing to be stolen back.

The Labour leaders must expose Thatcher's lie, expose the handouts to her rich friends. They must bring to the forefront of their campaign the commitment to a minimum wage.

But they are playing into the Tories' hands with Roy Hattersley's determination to take back

the 2p tax cut, from an already excessively overtaxed and exploited workforce. If Labour has to raise tax income, let it really 'squeeze the rich until the pips squeak'. They can afford it. Thatcher has seen to that.

Labour should be campaigning on a bold socialist programme, to nationalise the top 200 monopolies that own the industrial and financial wealth of the nation. And compensation should be paid only on the basis of proven need. Give the pampered sharks who run those companies nothing.

Then within a planned socialist economy, Labour's programme for jobs and social reforms, and much more, could be paid for, and the tax burden on ordinary people drastically reduced.

Militant

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Tax claw-back: Roy Hattersley's own goal

THE TORIES believe tax cuts are a vote winner. They are out to make their budget cut of 2p off the standard rate (which will appear in 20 million wage packets from 17 May) a central campaign issue. And they will hammer away at Roy Hattersley's election commitment, to take the tax cuts back.

Tory finance minister, John McGregor, gleefully announced in the Commons last week that the tax cuts were "open, plain, right and popular, and not to be reversed, as the Labour Party would do. Therefore, I am delighted that our major policy debate at this stage is on this clause. Nothing underlines the difference between the Conservatives and all other parties on tax policies more, and the country now has the opportunity to make the choice."

But contrary to their proclamations of being the government of reduced taxation, the total tax burden for the working class, of income tax, national insurance, VAT and even rates has grown massively since 1979. While of course the super rich and the big companies that finance the Tories, have got away with minimal tax deductions.

There is widespread support from overtaxed workers for tax cuts. This makes Labour's determination to claw them back, and to campaign on it during the election, even more incredible. How can Hattersley and his advisers possibly believe this is popular? Even the more serious press talks of the 'Mondale factor', after the US Democratic hopeful in 1985, who campaigned on tax increases, and duly defeated President Reagan in just one state!

Neil Kinnock reaffirmed the pledge to reverse the tax cut in his Welsh Labour Party Conference speech.

The Labour leadership is obsessed with proving that Labour's economic sums add up, but strictly within the confines of a decaying capitalist economy. They are desperate not to allow the Tory press the opportunity to attack Labour's spending plans as profligate. But instead they have given them a propaganda gift—Labour will maintain your already excessive tax bills. And the *Express* and *Sun* are already seizing on it for all it is worth.

Committed to the maintenance of the profit system, Hattersley sees lower taxes or an increase in public spending as mutually exclusive alternatives. It will be averagely paid workers, already concerned about the heavy deductions from their pay packets, who will have to pay extra for Labour's million jobs pledge, not pampered big business. Even the suggested new wealth tax will only apply to the fabulously rich and not even "add to the tax burden of the top 5 per cent." (*Guardian*).

With full socialist measures, taking over the commanding heights of the economy and introducing a democratic plan of production geared to need not profit, Labour could utilise industrial capacity to the full. Productive wealth could be enormously increased, and Labour could afford to eliminate unemployment, rebuild the welfare state and slash workers' taxes.

Currently Labour's manifesto promises a £6 billion boost to public spending to fund the jobs package. But Hattersley reassured bankers at a city lunch last month that £2.5 billion of that would come from reversing Lawson's 2p tax cut.

Even the Alliance, in its election programme, is talking of a £4 billion boost to public borrowing. And they show at least some grasp of voters' sensibilities, saying that if they are elected to government taking back tax cuts will not be automatic, but will depend on circumstances.

According to the SDP's Ian Wrigglesworth, their programme "emphasises the importance of having a clear sense of priorities within the context of a controlled expansion of public expenditure." "Labour's well-publicised economic programme," comments the *Financial Times*, "will be couched in cautious terms. The only firm commitments will be to the £6 billion jobs programme and the £3.6 billion social security package, financed by higher taxes on the better-off."

The Labour leadership's obsessive moderation and devotion to capitalist economics, could leave many voters wondering what the difference is. Labour activists must ensure in their campaigning activities, that they stress the positive aspects of Labour's programme, expose the hard faced Tories' record, including their lies on taxation, and explain what could be possible if Labour's traditional socialist aims were fought for.

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Poll tax

Robbing the poor to pay the rich

OVER THE past eight years Tory policy has been to rob the poor to pay the rich. In 1984 the richest one per cent of the population owned 21 per cent of personal wealth, while the income of the poorest 40 per cent of households fell from 9.5 to 6.3 per cent of the total between 1979 and 1983.

By Davy Brown

If the Tories are elected they will continue this process. Nothing illustrates this better than their proposed 'poll tax', which they have renamed a 'community charge', to replace rates.

A bill to introduce the new charge in Scotland, which the Tories rushed through parliament just before the dissolution, is seen as a forerunner for England and Wales.

'A tax on the right to vote'

At present rates are levied on each household and based on the value of their property ownership. There are rebates for those on low incomes.

This would be replaced by a flat rate charge which every individual would pay, regardless of their income. The head of Burton's, Sir Ralph Halpern, who 'earns' a million pounds a year would pay the same as a worker on £100 a week. The burden of financing local services would shift to those who can least afford it.

On average everyone over 18 would have to pay £200, though the Tories have tried to counter this by claiming that groups such as low-paid pensioners and unemployed will only pay 20 per cent of the charge. Even so, Age Concern have calculated that under this new scheme, a third of all single pensioners could lose up to £5 a week.

It is estimated that three adults living in a house in



Photo: Dave Sinclair.

Rich and poor householders, in Brighton (above) and Bradford (below), will pay the same rate of Poll Tax.

Barnsley would pay £10 a week more, while the Thatchers in their £500,000 retirement home in Dulwich would be £37 a week better off. On average the Tory cabinet would gain £40 a week.

The hardship this new charge would cause to the poor was recognised even by the Tories themselves in their 1981 Green Paper, where they spelled out what the poll tax would mean:

"A poll tax is assumed to be levied on all adults in the household irrespective of income... The lower income households would pay a higher proportion of their income in tax. Moreover since domestic rate payments tend

to increase with income—though less than proportionately—replacing rates with a poll tax will mean that higher income households gain more or lose less than lower income households of the same type."

Scotland

In Scotland, Sheriff Officers have calculated that the number of warrants for non-payment of rates would quadruple from the present figure of 25,000. In Scotland, the consequence of this can be that all the property in your home is seized and sold at auction at ridiculously low prices.

One inevitable consequence of this charge is widespread attempts at evasion. Whole sections of the population could become disenfranchised as they will not be prepared to register to be taxed in this manner. In Scotland there is to be a £2000 fine for those who are caught not registering for the charge.

It would in effect become a tax on the right to vote. So this is not only an attack on living standards, but on basic democratic rights. It is the perfect issue for Labour activists to use on the doorsteps to expose the Tories as the defenders of the rich and powerful and a threat to democracy.

Marxist wins despite right-wing MP's sabotage

FRANK FIELD, the right-wing Labour MP for Birkenhead, has failed to bring about the defeat of Tranmere ward's Marxist Labour candidate in the local elections, Geoff Barker.

Field's call on Labour voters to "stay at home on 7 May" (which was the headline on an SDP leaflet—see right) had very little effect. The vast majority of Labour supporters were either unaffected or very angry at his 'advice'.

Geoff Barker's record of fighting for workers in the area and his socialist campaign cut through Field's attempts to sabotage the Labour vote. He had the third largest Labour majority in Wirral.

The turnout was only fractionally down on similar safe Labour wards. It was actually 1.6 per cent up on 1983, when Geoff Barker was first elected.

At the count Field gloated that this was the worst ever result in

Tranmere. In fact, in 1982 the right-wing candidate received only 2,138 votes compared to Geoff Barker's 2,983 in 1983 and 2,794 this time.

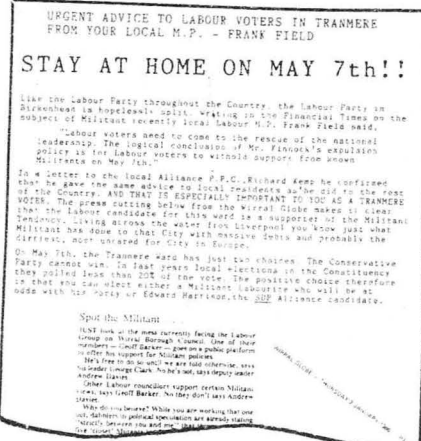
Both the SDP and the Tories, however, increased their vote, the SDP just gaining second place.

Short of actually voting for the SDP itself, it is hard to see how Field's conduct could have been more prejudicial to the Labour Party's interests.

Elsewhere in the Wirral, Labour made one gain from the Tories, but narrowly failed to take two more marginals (including the Tory leader's seat).

The confusion sown by Field amongst a few Labour voters, which was not restricted to Tranmere ward, may have allowed the Tories to retain power in these seats and keep control of the council.

As one defeated Labour candidate said at a meeting on Friday, where a



resolution condemning Field was passed: "If Field is not going to support us, at least he should keep his mouth shut".

By Steve Bimson
Birkenhead Labour Party

Labour's class fighters

THE TORY press keep plugging away at one theme. "Thatcher is in the lead; there's no hope for Labour" they claim. The Tories want to demoralise Labour voters and activists.

But opinion polls show that the Tories are only 'popular' because they are seen as a 'strong' government. Labour can win if the party shows the same determination in fighting for a real socialist alternative.

In constituencies where Labour's candidates are standing on bold socialist policies, the campaign is being taken on to the streets, the estates, the factories, offices and dole queues and reaching out for young first time voters.

Bradford North

'I want a bloody great poster'

LABOUR CANVASSERS in Bradford North are putting up a vigorous socialist campaign to get class fighter and lifelong Labour Party member Pat Wall into parliament.

Three meetings with the veteran workers' leader from South Africa, Nimrod Sejake, had been organised even before the election. The first meeting last Tuesday got very good press reports, with a front page article headlined: "Hero visits Bradford."

Notice to quit

On Monday, 18 May, the Labour Party Young Socialists plan to picket local Tory headquarters and hand in a huge redundancy notice from the youth of Bradford.

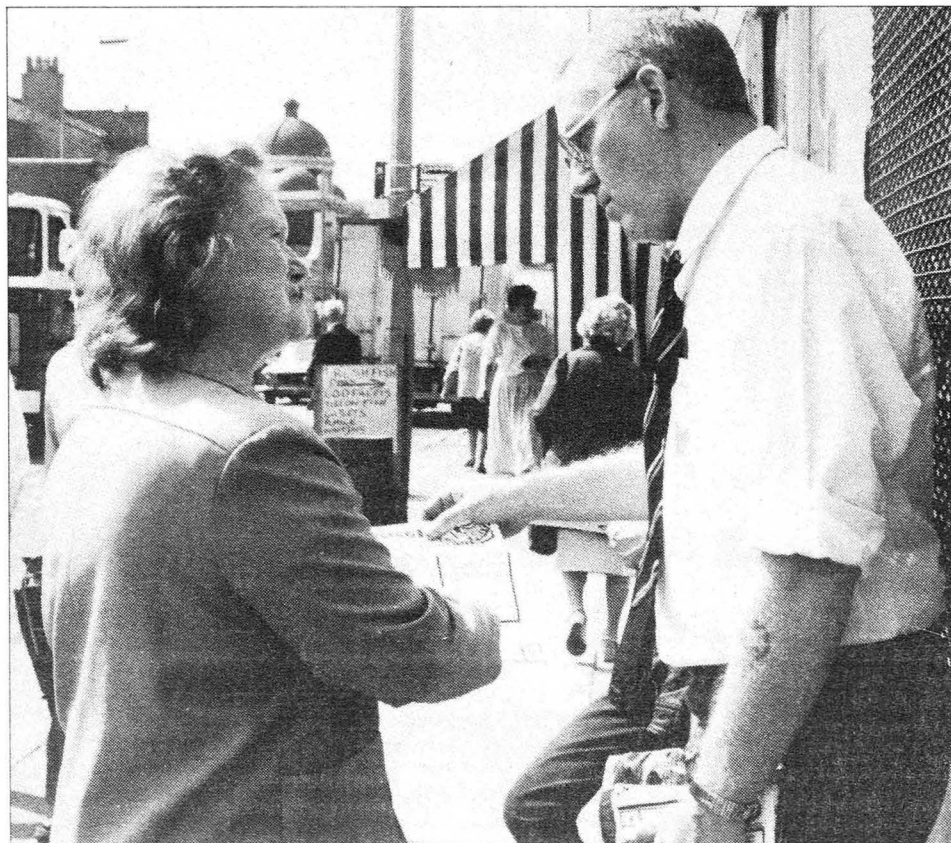
On 6 June, the LPYS plan a huge "Tories out" demonstration and rally in the city centre to convince thousands of youth not only to vote Labour but to get active in the fight to get rid of the Tories. Speakers invited include Pat Wall, Max

Madden, prospective candidate for Bradford West and Arthur Scargill.

There will be canvassing every evening, mass canvasses every weekend and public meetings in every ward. The response so far has been encouraging. In Bowling ward of 1363 people seen up to now, 864 said they'd vote Labour, 96 said Tory and 21 Alliance. 382 were don't knows or doubtfuls.

One canvasser in a more affluent part of the ward put a leaflet through the door of a rather big house. The owner came out and complained that the leaflet wasn't big enough. "Have you got a big poster, a bloody great poster to put on my front garden wall saying something like 'all Tories are greedy bastards.'"

Perhaps if Labour's leaders nationally were as bold as that, there wouldn't be so many don't knows. In Bradford we certainly will be bold, fighting on socialist ideas to inspire people to vote for a workers' MP on a worker's wage.



Terry Fields canvassing in Broadgreen. The local LPYS branch held a public trial of Thatcher on Saturday. One YS member had a Thatcher mask and was armed with a cardboard axe for swiping at services. While YS members gave evidence, one little lad threw tomatoes at 'Thatcher'. She was found guilty unanimously and condemned to live in an LPYS member's flat for two weeks with the rats and cockroaches, on his dole money of £48. Now for putting the real Thatcher on the dole!

Liverpool Broadgreen

'A credible alternative'

TERRY FIELDS Labour candidate in Broadgreen told *Militant*: "We've had tremendous problems with the national party leadership's attacks on the district Labour Party, and the local party which is still suspended.

But we have been campaigning consistently and the people we've spoken to in shopping areas and housing estates want Thatcher out. What we've got to pose to them is a credible alternative. That is why we are standing on a socialist programme.

Any party workers who were a bit downhearted have been rejuvenated by the local election results. Against all the odds we maintained power in the city as we did

in 1983, 1984 and 1986.

Canvassers have faith that we will win Broadgreen for Labour. We will have the

people on the streets to cut across the press and the opposition who will descend to the gutter against us."

TERRY FIELDS' campaign in Liverpool Broadgreen was given a flying start with a donation of £2,200 from Terry's own union, the Fire Brigades Union. FBU general secretary Ken Cameron has agreed to come to the constituency.

Tony Benn is to speak at a rally on 23 May and there will be a city wide labour movement rally on the eve of poll.

The party is hiring an open-top bus to campaign round the constituency. Special events will include two youth public meetings on 26 May and 4 June, a students' day of action on 5 June organised by the NUS as part of their campaign in 'student marginals', four debates in Further Education colleges and a special pensioners' rally.

On 26 May Granada TV will be spending half a day in Broadgreen to conduct a MORI poll and interview the candidates.

Coventry S. East

Coventry's other winner

COVENTRY WAS the only area of the West Midlands which swung to Labour in the May local elections. The campaign to re-elect Coventry SE MP, Dave Nellist, is out to build his majority.

They have already arranged a major public meeting in each ward and a rally with Tony Benn speaking on 8 June. Retired TGWU leader and pensioners' campaigner, Jack Jones, will speak at a pensioners' rally.

A public meeting to outline a socialist programme for women has been organised for 26 May in Lower Stoke, and an anti-racist meeting for 28 May in St. Michaels. A youth rally is planned for 6 June.

Election leaflets are being drawn up for women and for black and Asian workers, and the campaign's introductory leaflet was distributed to every household over the weekend. Dave Nellist's election slogan is: "A workers' MP on a worker's wage." It is not anticipated that Tory or Alliance candidates will make the same pledge!

By a Militant reporter



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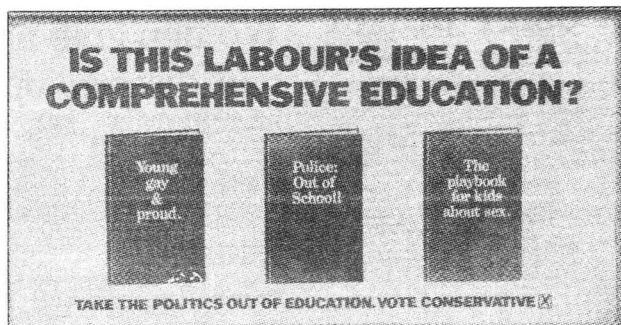
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The truth is that "Young, gay and proud" was listed by Haringey council as "recommended reading for parents". No Labour authority has recommended "Police out of schools". "The playbook for kids about sex" was on ILEA reading resources lists for head teachers only.

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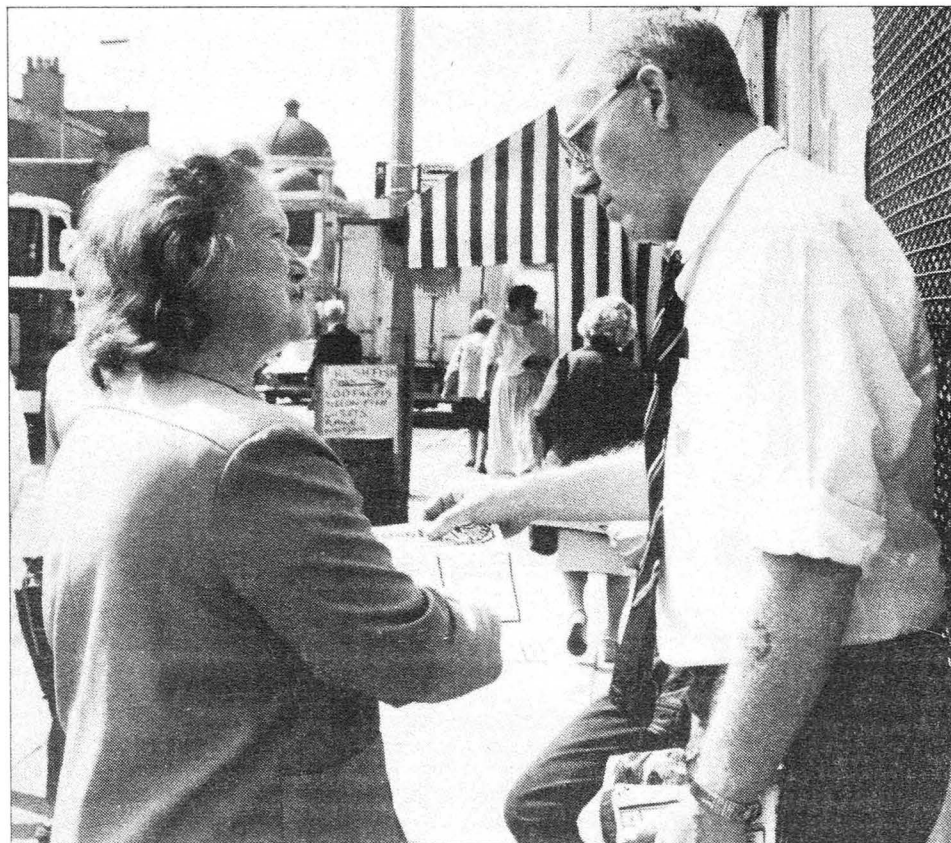
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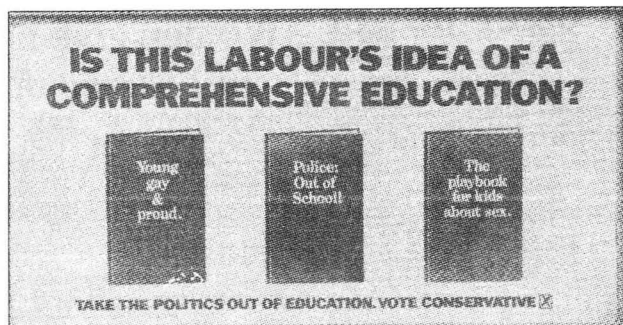
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Media watch



Too right wing for the Sun

ANY LABOUR leaders who still think that caving in to the demands of the Tory press will be rewarded by favourable coverage should read last Wednesday's *Sun*.

Its editorial claimed that the Labour manifesto was "a watered-down version of what the party really stands for". So was the *Sun* pleased to see this move away from "the ravings of the loony left"? Not at all. It showed its gratitude to the party leaders with a kick in the teeth:

"What a disgraceful state of affairs when the main opposition party is ashamed—and afraid—of its own policies. Instead of a red rose as its symbol, Labour should have a white feather".

They put the boot in when Labour has what they define as 'extreme' policies yet if they retreat from these they damn them for cowardice! The abandonment of socialist commitments to appease the sharks of Wapping and Fleet Street will disillusion potential Labour voters and yet not win a whisper of thanks from the editorial writers.

ONCE A week, Labour's deputy leader has a column in *The Guardian* to counter the deluge of Tory press propaganda. In his first 'Endpiece' since the election was called, Roy Hattersley could have exposed some of the Tories' lies and pushed Labour's policies.

But did he? No. Saturday's column was concerned with the burning question of... the use of metaphor! Here are some extracts:

"readers who are bored with syntactical analysis will be relieved that there is no detailed examination of Mr Jenkins' litotes".

"Every Labour Party ought to have a syntax section".

"Metaphors are intended to provide, not to demonstrate, knowledge. Vote for plain English on June 11".

Maybe this whimsical humour goes down well in university common rooms. Maybe not, given the Tories' attacks on university spending. But Labour workers will be incensed that one of the few chances the party gets to promote their views is frittered away with such trivia.

School students fight YTS conscription plans

THE SCHOOL Students' Union's (SSU) day of action on 14th May was a significant step forward in building the union. Despite heavy rain and widespread threats of suspension and expulsion during exam time, many school students took action.

In Newport 200 school students attended a rally. Ogmere saw 120 at a meeting, 20 of whom joined the union straight away, while in Manchester 150 school-students occupied the Job Centre. In Blyth, 100 students marched to the Job Centre and then occupied the local council controlled training scheme. 50 names were collected for the union. In Brighton 15 school students raised £30 in the shopping centre.

In the Midlands, Dave Nellist MP for Coventry SE, debated with the Tories and Alliance in front of 50 sixth formers at Whitley Abbey school. Hundreds of school students went on strike in Dudley and Wolverhampton saw a rally of 50.

The SSU recruited five new

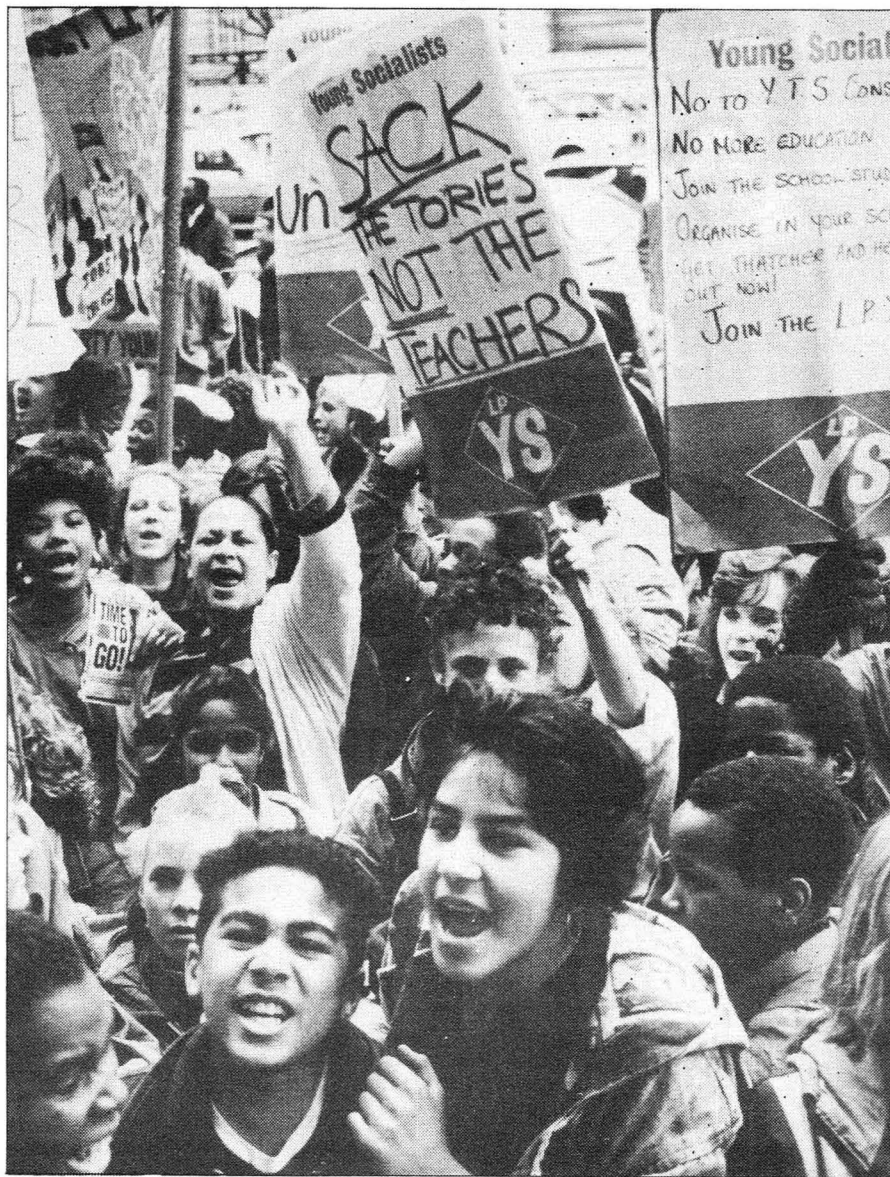
members in Folkestone and 30 more in Coventry. In Newham, school students lobbied the town hall while 40 Leyton school students occupied the local Job Centre.

Build the SSU

Overall, the day of action was a first step towards fighting the Tories youth conscription plans. It represented a further stage in building the SSU, strengthening action committees already set up and founding new ones across the country.

With the election now called school students have four weeks to halt the Tories by campaigning for a Labour government armed with a socialist programme for jobs. In Brighton the School Students Action Committee has planned its general election campaign. In other areas school students should canvass with the LPYS and organise debates in their schools.

By Dave Sirokin
(Secretary School Students Union)



TORY EMPLOYMENT Secretary, Kenneth Clarke, announced at the Scottish Tory Party Conference that the Tories will abolish the right of 16 and 17 year olds to claim supplementary benefit. He argued that "any young person under 18 you meet who tells you that he is unemployed, has chosen to be unemployed."

This is just the start of the Tories' attacks on dole payments. As the bosses' mouthpiece, *The Times* said in April, "to restrict the unconditional payment of social security... it is sensible to start with school leavers."

Stockport

DESPITE THREATS of victimisation 100 school-students attended a rally in Stockport, the biggest movement of Stockport youth in living memory. Students from Pristnall school came out en masse and marched to the rally singing and shouting slogans. After listening to the speakers a call went up to march to Stockport town centre. As the march approached the Job Centre a spontaneous occupation was organised.

At a Youth Action Committee meeting in the evening a lobby of Parliament and a picket of the local MSC Offices were two suggestions put forward for the next stages of the campaign. Thirty names and addresses were collected for the YS.

By Gordon Ross

● A comrade at the rally was approached by a woman for information 'for her daughter'. As he was explaining the issues she lent forward and a walkie talkie fell out of her jacket. Was she going to radio the information to her daughter?!

Barnsley

ONE HUNDRED Barnsley school students were picketing their school at dinner time when their headmaster ordered them back onto the premises. He was met with jeers and more students joined the picket. Then the police were called.

Students were herded back into school under threat of arrest. Union organisers argued they had a democratic right to strike and free assembly. The police threatened arrest for a likely breach of the peace or obstruction!

Manchester

THE EXPERIENCE of school students at Barlow High School, Manchester showed the difficulties still facing some school students in taking part in strike action.

At this Roman Catholic school an impromptu debate over YTS and the right to strike took place on the school grounds between an angry Headmaster and a *Militant* supporter. 250 students listened closely, cheering the *Militant* supporter and booing when their Head said that although he had been on strike, he could not support the school students' action. A unanimous vote was taken in support of the *Militant*

supporter's ideas and a chant went up of 'Here we go'. They had to use a human wall of nuns and teachers to prevent the students from escaping to join the strike.

At other schools students also faced threats of discipline. Despite a comparatively low turnout of 150 at the rally, representing 15 schools, the enormous enthusiasm of those present indicates that the Tories will face an avalanche of protest if they dare to go ahead with their plans for YTS conscription.

Strike action has now taken place in 30 schools in Greater Manchester on this issue this year. The leaders

An angry mood developed when a policeman shouted that he had been on the front line in the miners' strike and had enjoyed every minute of it. Shouts of 'Here we go' echoed around the playground. Although the strike was prevented by a thin blue line across the school gates, a mood of anger has built up as a result of such brutal tactics. School students eagerly await future calls to action and will ensure they are better prepared next time.

By Jane Ibbitson

of the Manchester Youth Action Committee are 14, 15 and 16 year old *Militant* supporters. Two of them have already given talks on *Militant* in their schools, one getting marks of 30 out of 30! They have handled the press and TV sharks, they have led two marches, they have defeated threats of victimisation and addressed hundreds of school students. Now the task is to build the School Students' Union in the schools and prepare for further action in the autumn.

By Phil Frampton

'Red Wedge' election tour

RED WEDGE has announced details of its 'General Election Tour' of concerts in several key marginal seats. Performers such as The Blow Monkeys, Billy Bragg, The Men They Couldn't Hang, Jerry Dammers, Captain Sensible, Lloyd Cole and the Commotions and The Style Council will be playing and also joining the day time campaigning in

each seat, visiting Unemployed Centres, Youth Clubs, Colleges and YTS schemes. There is also a 'comedy tour' involving Skint Video, Ben Elton, The Vicious Boys, Robbie Coltrane, Harry Enfield ('Stavros' of Saturday Night Live), Jenny LeCoat, the Joan Collins Fan Club and Lenny Henry.

LPYS branches are being

asked to help publicise these events, including the day time activity. In particular sales of the election special edition of *Socialist Youth* should be organised and the evening performances leafleted—to recruit young people to actively help the LPYS in the campaign to dump Thatcher.

Red Wedge Tour details
29 May—Lydney Town Hall
30 May—Southampton (venue to be confirmed)
31 May—Birmingham (venue to be confirmed)
2 June—Porchester Hall, London
3 June—Islington Town Hall
4 June—Cambridge (venue to be confirmed)
5 June—Wolverhampton Civic Hall
6 June—Leeds Polytechnic
7 June—Coventry Polytechnic
8 June—Victoria Centre, Nottingham

9 June—Leicester University
10 June—The Chi-Chi Nightclub, Norwich

Comedy Tour details
4 June—Stockport Town Hall
5 June—Bolton (venue to be confirmed)
6 June—Barrow Civic Hall
7 June—The Westerhailes Education Centre, Edinburgh
8 June—The Albert Hall, Stirling
9 June—Newcastle City Hall
10 June—The Assembly Rooms, Derby

Thatcher's legacy of poverty wages

Putting women last

MARGARET THATCHER speaking to the House of Commons in January last year said: "The number of people in work has increased by 700,000 since October 1983. . . Yes, many of the jobs have been part-time and what is wrong with that?"

The last eight years of Tory government have seen the erosion of well paid, full-time jobs in manufacturing with low-paid, part-time jobs in service industries taking their place.

Between September 1981 and June 1986 male employment fell by nearly a million whilst female employment grew from 9 to 9.4 million. Over half the increase in women workers were part-timers.

The number of women registered unemployed has trebled since 1979, to 1,001,600 in 1986. Most of these job losses will be full-time work in manufacturing industries.

A study by the union GMBATU shows that virtually all increases in employment have taken place in the private service industries and by 1990 a quarter of all jobs will be in just two areas: the 'professional' services such as legal, accounting, banking, insurance and finance, where they anticipate an increase of 263,000 jobs and in 'miscellaneous' covering hotels, restaurants, leisure and professional services accounting for a further increase of 539,000.

During the same period, it is anticipated that while male employment will fall by about half a million, female employment will rise by an equivalent amount. Again, these jobs will be predominantly part-time and low paid, and in many cases will see women becoming the main breadwinner.

The overall trend shows that women will represent 50 per cent of the workforce by 1990. This enor-

By Theresa Mackay
(TGWU 1/2116 branch)

mous increase in part-time work makes the demand for a national minimum wage of £120 or two thirds the average wage, with pro-rata payments for part-time workers, even more important.

Women have nothing to thank the Tory government for. Latest opinion polls show that although women are moving away from the Tories, Labour has so far failed to win their support. This could easily be done if Labour leaders promised to implement the demand for a national minimum wage.

Although the Labour Party is committed to a national minimum wage, the Labour leadership has refused to set a rate in the manifesto. Yet this demand alone, if based on £120 could have had a dramatic effect on persuading workers as a whole, and women in particular to vote Labour.

Between 1979-84 the lowest paid

"It's nothing to do with competitive tendering; it's just about wage cuts. They cut our hours and took away the bonus scheme and I lost £17 out of £52 a week. And we can't take a proper pride in our work now, the standards are getting lower and lower. I now have four hours to clean three wards instead of four and a half to clean one."

manual workers had a pay cut of two per cent, with those under 18 having a pay cut of six per cent. Compared with the top 31 UK executives who 'earned' from



The 1980's have seen a massive growth in part-time, low paid jobs for women.

Photo: Militant.

£150,000 to half a million pounds per year receiving a 33 per cent increase over the same period.

The 1986 Wages Act has forced the contracting out of services in the public sector. It has significantly reduced the workforce and

competitive tendering; it's just about wage cuts. They cut our hours and took away the bonus scheme and I lost £17 out of £52 a week. And we can't take a proper pride in our work now, the standards are getting lower and lower. I now have four hours to clean three wards instead of four and a half to clean one."

In 1979 only 7.3 per cent of workers in the 'miscellaneous' sector (ie. hairdressing, laundries etc.) and 15 per cent in distribution were organised into trade unions, and only one in five of part-timers.

Trade unions must seriously begin drives to recruit these workers by taking up demands for full rights and pro-rata rates of pay for part-time workers.

The government has also been

forced to postpone lifting the restrictions on night working for women. Any attempt to reintroduce this must be fought. Equality of the worst aspects of working conditions is not equality.

All these demands can be implemented by workers' struggle and a Labour government committed to a socialist transformation of society. Demanding that a Labour government legislate to make more of the top jobs available for women will not improve conditions for the mass of working class women. The nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies, the banks and insurance companies under democratic workers' control and management is the only way forward for women and the working class as a whole.

Thousands die needlessly

TWO THOUSAND women die unnecessarily each year from cervical cancer and 15,000 from breast cancer. Women have been demanding proper cancer screening programmes and Well Woman clinics for years.

In election year the Tories have announced plans for the introduction of a breast cancer screening programme, which will provide screening by mammography every three years for all women between 50 and 64, extend the computerised call and recall systems for cervical cancer and lower the age groups covered.

This is clearly an election gimmick from a government which has

brought about millions of pounds worth of cuts in the National Health Service. The extra resources go nowhere near the amounts required to fund such services.

For breast cancer screening an extra £6 million is being provided to fund seven new centres, although the Forrest Report (commissioned by the government) recommends 100 new centres.

New clinics

We also need to ask if the resources have been provided to take into account the sudden increase in demand on surgeons' and pathologists' time. Or will the breast cancer screening programme run into the same difficulties which

already affect cervical cytology screening—which will get worse as the screening is extended to include the younger age groups.

The time between the patient having a smear and the doctor receiving the results can be eight to 12 weeks. The reliability of the testing is also questionable. In Liverpool a mistake has been made in the method of detection of abnormalities on cervical smears and 500 women who were tested between March 1983 and December 1985 are being recalled. Already 100 have been found to need treatment while 50 women have yet to be found. A delay of three years can mean the difference between minor and major surgery—or even life and death—what would have been the consequence if these 500 had not been recalled? (see left)

The Labour Party must make a commitment to a massive improvement in the Tories' proposals. The Labour Party must commit itself to an annual recall cervical and breast cancer screening programme to be available for all age groups—not just those most at risk. Mobile screening units should be available to go into all workplaces and estates. All these services are available now if you can afford to pay for them.

The Labour Party must be committed to an end to the Tory cuts and to a massive injection of funds so that it can provide all the necessary care, and will not have to let people die needlessly because resources are not available.

By Ann Bannister
(National Labour Women's Committee, personal capacity)



Screening in chaos

PAT MALLON spoke to a female hospital worker among the women who have been recalled for cervical cancer checks in Liverpool.

"I went for a smear test in 1984. I heard nothing afterwards so I took it for granted that I would be alright. About nine weeks ago I got a letter saying that I was in a batch of women they wanted to recall so I went for another smear test.

"A week later I got another letter to say that that smear test wasn't fit for diagnosis so I had to go to Mill Road hospital for another test.

"After that was examined they told me that I have got to go for a biopsy. I think I have abnormal

cells."

Pat: If they had looked into your cervical smear test at the time, you could have been seen a lot sooner.

"Yes, I could have and I wouldn't have had to have the biopsy."

Pat: Do you blame the cuts in the health service for this?

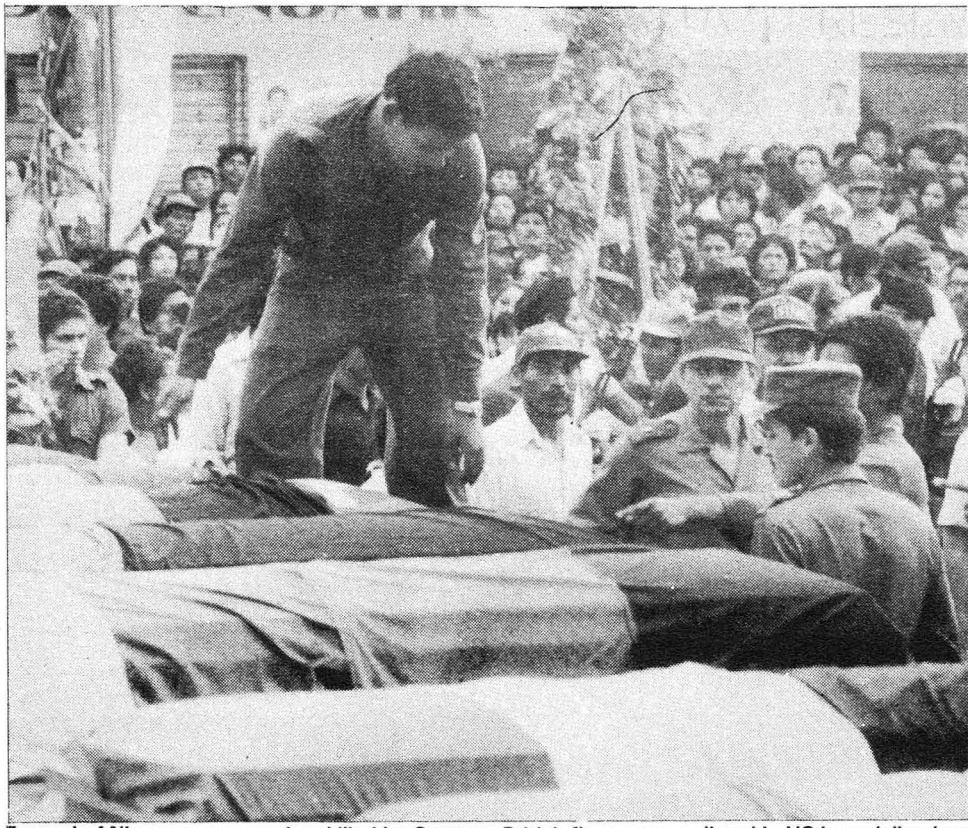
"Yes, it must have something to do with it because people aren't doing their jobs properly and they are cutting corners. I am upset about it and worried, but you just have to get on with it. I believe there is going to be a top level inquiry about it, but that will probably get brushed under the carpet like everything else."

SOME HIGH ranking military and political figures involved in the Irangate scandal have appeared in front of a special committee of the United States Congress.

Ex general Secord has shown the involvement of Reagan's officials. Former national security adviser Robert Mc Farlane showed how the reactionary Saudi Arabian government gave £30 million to the Contras for their terror campaign against Nicaragua.

The phenomenally rich Sultan of Brunei gave £10 million to the Contras but it went into the wrong numbered Swiss bank account!

But what about the British Tory government's involvement in Irangate and in other secret wars?



Funeral of Nicaraguan reservists killed by Contras. British firms were enlisted in US imperialism's attack on Nicaraguan revolution.

Thatcher's secret w

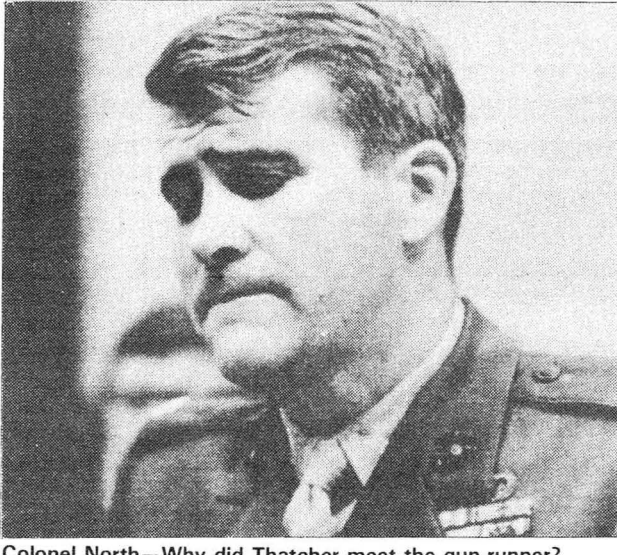
SPECIAL UNDERCOVER operations all over the world, run by British mercenaries because the government would not be able to justify its own involvement, sounds like a James Bond fantasy.

But the Thatcher government are closely implicated in many of these operations. In particular, they are accessories to the crimes of the Reagan administration in supplying arms to the Contras.

Thatcher herself is implicated in the arms deals and is said to have met with Colonel North who managed a world-wide network of routes for arms traffic into Central America.

The ex-CIA chief, William Casey was expected to appear before the Congress inquiry, but he died. He was widely suspected of masterminding the whole scheme. According to the Tower Report, North said in March 1986:

"We are trying to find a way to get 10 Blowpipes and 20 missiles from (a South American country)



Colonel North—Why did Thatcher meet the gun-runner?

been aware of any such deal, as all arms shipments have to get an export licence which involves both the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence.

Colonel North wrote in a secret memo to Admiral Poindexter in June 1986: "What we most need is to get the CIA engaged in this effort so that it can be better managed.

Thatcher met with Casey several times in mid 1986.

On 3 March Terry Fields asked the prime minister in question time whether she had approved of the supply of Blowpipe missiles. She categorically denied any approval, yet sources inside the US administration suggest that she met North twice to discuss sending the missiles.

The Irangate scandal in-

for the Contras.

Part of the British connection in the Iran-Contras arms deal was made by a London based security firm, KMS, run by ex-SAS officer David Walker. This firm has also come under the spotlight of the Tower commission. It supplied helicopter pilots and teams of ex-SAS men to train Contra troops. Walker is named as a contact in a memo by North, subpoenaed by the commission.

Militant (21 November 1986) reported exclusively that Walker had been invited to take part in a special operations conference in London, organised by the International Strategic Studies Association (ISSA), a Washington based organisation run by another ex-CIA chief.

The conference discussed "the lessons learned" of "recent US special operations" in Central America, among other places. A journal produced by the ISSA's publishing section, the Defense and Foreign Affairs Group, talked of the "possibilities of increased

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Tory Britain the facts

Display this on your union notice board or LP committee room

The Tories say they are proud of the results of eight years of their rule. Tory Home Secretary Douglas Hurd stated that they "...have nothing to fear from fighting on such ground. In each major area we have a record which deserves support."

But *which* 'record' do the Tories stand on? The myths of the kept media, of 'booming Britain', of rising prosperity in a new 'property-owning democracy'? Or the real record, of a fundamental change for the worse in the quality of life of the mass of the population, of a counter-revolution on behalf of the rich which eight years of Tory rule has meant?

In this feature *Militant* exposes the true record of the Tories, putting into facts and figures the everyday experience of ordinary working class people.

Collapse of industry

Manufacturing output is 6 per cent lower today than when the Tories came to office in 1979.

- ★ In 1986 the level of investment in manufacturing industry, the key to the future prospects of the economy, was 24.2 per cent lower than in 1979.
- ★ The rate of companies going bankrupt has more than trebled under the Tories, rising from 4,378 in 1979 to 14,427 in 1986.
- ★ British capitalism has a trade deficit in manufacturing goods of £5.4 billion in 1986. In 1983, for the first time ever,

In the new 'sunrise' industries, British capitalism is "being eclipsed before it has



Labour Parties are welcome to use Alan Hardman's cartoons during the election campaign. Left; homeless mother in London.



Housing crisis

"Our goal is to make Britain the best-housed nation in Europe." The Tory Manifesto, 1983.

- ★ In 1985 over 100,000 families—around 250,000 people—were officially defined as homeless by local authorities. Over 15,000 families were in bed and breakfast accommodation. One million people are on council house waiting lists.

- ★ Between 1979 and 1985 the British economy grew by just 3.4 per cent, the slowest rate of growth of the seven major capitalist countries. In the same period British capitalism's share in world manufacturing exports fell from 9.7 per cent in 1979 to 7.6 per cent today—a fall of 22 per cent.
- ★ In the 'new tech' industries, the trade deficit in office and data processing equipment rose from £227 million in 1979 to £670 million in 1986; in electronics engineering from £164 million to £1,000 million in 1985.

even risen according to Professor John Ashworth, head of the National Economic Development Office's Information Technology Committee.



Unemployment

What they said

Oct 1983:	3,010,000 officially unemployed. 'Distinctly encouraging' Tom King, then Employment Secretary.
Jan 1984:	3,200,000 officially unemployed. 'I believe that levelling off starts this year.' Margaret Thatcher
Oct 1984:	3,225,000 officially unemployed. 'Today's figures suggest there is not the severe worsening there appeared to be last month.' Tom King
Jul 1985:	3,235,000 officially unemployed. '... there are grounds for hoping the better trend will continue.' Tom King
May 1986:	3,271,000 officially unemployed. 'The country has never had it so good.' Lord Young

2.5m 3m

The truth

'... There is no use pretending any longer. We can't hope to go into the next general election with the same figures and win.'
Jeffrey Archer, September 1985.

The Tories have made *nineteen* changes to the way the unemployment figures are worked out in a desperate effort to massage the figures down before the election. In fact on the basis of the figures used in 1979, unemployment would have risen from 1.3 million then to 3.6 million today.

The real situation is clear. Jobs in manufacturing industry have fallen by 2 million from 7.1 million in June 1979 to 5.1 million in December 1986—an undisguisable decline of 28 per cent. Wales, Scotland, the North, the North West and Yorkshire and Humberside have lost a third or more of their manufacturing jobs, and the West Midlands almost a third. Even in the allegedly 'prosperous South', Greater London has lost 45 per cent of its manufacturing jobs since 1979.

In June 1979 there were 22,638,000 workers employed in manufacturing, services, energy, water, construction and agriculture. In September 1986 there were 21,070,000

Poverty spreading

"Our record on social security is excellent"
Margaret Thatcher, 7 May 1987

- ★ The number of people receiving supplementary benefit doubled from 2,256,000 in 1978/79 to 4,430,000 in 1986/87.
- ★ In 1986 10.43 million people were living on or below supplementary benefit levels—a 17 per cent increase over 1983. Another 7.61 million people live within 40 per cent of the SB level. In total over 18 million people, a third of the population, live in a state of poverty.
- ★ Before 1979 pensions were uprated yearly by the rate of price rises or rises in earnings, whichever was the higher. The Tories abolished this link. As a result a single pensioner, since 1979, has lost £1,249.60; a married couple, £1,960.20.

1,387 pensioners died of hypothermia or cold related illnesses in 1985.

Tax: the big lie

"I feel very strongly that people on comparatively low wages pay too much tax."
Margaret Thatcher, 31 July 1985

- ★ Since 1979, the Tories reduction of income tax

has resulted in a gain of £3,645 million to the richest 10 per cent of the population.

- ★ Under the Tories the amount of tax paid has increased. Britain's tax burden rose from 39 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1979 to 44 per cent in 1985.
- ★ A family with two adults and two children on average earnings lost 38.3 per cent of their income in tax in 1986/87 compared to 35 per cent in 1978/79. Even with income tax cut to 27p the share of income taken will still have risen compared to 1979—to 37.6 per cent in 1987/88.

- ★ The number of council houses being started each year has fallen from 173,800 in 1975 to 33,600 in 1985 as the Tories cut spending on public housing.
- ★ The government's own Social Trends survey classed 1.2 million homes as officially 'unfit for human habitation'—yet such is the housing crisis that one million households are still forced to live in these 'unfit' homes.
- ★ One million homes lack basic amenities and 3 million 'fit' homes need repairs costing over £2,500 or more. The National House Improvement Council estimates that £46 billion is needed to bring all housing up to a basic standard—five times the *total* spent on housing, including mortgage relief, by the Tories in 1985-86.

A home of your own?

- ★ In 1984 10,950 families lost their homes through defaulting on their mortgage; in 1985 16,500 and in 1986 over 20,000, eight times more than in 1979. In mid-1986 66,930 mortgages were over 6 months in arrears compared to 8,420 in 1979.
- ★ To save £23 million—against the £4,750 million spent on mortgage tax relief—the Tories have changed the rules for mortgage payments for the unemployed. Previously all the interest—not the capital—was paid. Now, an unemployed home-owner will have only half of the interest paid, and only for 4 months.
- ★ Nearly 500,000 properties classed as 'unfit' are owner-occupied. Over 20 per cent of privately owned homes are in need of repairs costing £2,500 or over.
- ★ The Tories help for homeowners has been concentrated on the most wealthy. On an income of £30,000 a year in 1985, mortgage tax relief was worth as much as £1,480 a year. A homeowner with an income of £5,000 would receive just £150 a year.

Over 10 per cent of homeless people in 1985 had become homeless because they had defaulted on their mortgage payments compared to 4 per cent who had become homeless through rent arrears.

NHS threatened

Prescription charges have risen 1,000 per cent since 1979 from 20p to £2.40.

A Parliamentary Committee last year revealed the truth about the NHS. Spending had to grow by 2 per cent a year to improve services—to compensate for the rise in costs of drugs and new, more advanced medical equipment above the rate of inflation, and the rise in the number of elderly people which increases demand. Spending has only grown by 1 per cent which has led to a cumulative underfunding of the NHS of £1.3 billion.

- ★ If the NHS is expanding why have the number of hospital beds available fallen from 450,000 in 1981 to 421,000 in 1985?
- ★ The in-patient waiting list has grown from 736,600 in 1981 to 802,600 in 1985.

Lies, damned lies and Tory statistics

IN THE run-up to the election, the Tory press will be falling over itself to paint a glowing picture of the economy. But with a new and worse world economic downturn looming, what price 'booming Britain', which exports a third of its production? However, behind the fairy-tales of government ministers there is a special crisis of British capitalism, which Thatcherism has greatly exacerbated. John Pickard exposes the Tory economic lies.

All the rosy economic forecasts that the Tories and their press will highlight during the campaign, will be built on the temporary, short-term position of the economy, while the long-term crisis of British capitalism will be overlooked.

Many of the current economic indicators do seem favourable to the Government. "Just a few months ago," writes *The Financial Times*, "Mrs Thatcher could scarcely have dreamt of a more auspicious economic background to the general election."

The decline of the dollar on the world currency markets has had the temporary effect of strengthening the pound, which would normally make exports more expensive and imports cheaper. But for the moment, the Government is using this strength to reduce interest rates, putting pressure on building societies to temporarily lower mortgage rates, so important for the Tory vote. It also has the effect of lowering costs and therefore increasing profits for industry, and the added advantage of preventing exports from being priced out of the world markets.

At present, exports of manufactured goods are increasing and probably for the first time for a decade, British capitalism's share of world trade has risen slightly. It is not much to boast about, but for the first time in eight years, half the cars being registered in Britain were made in Britain.

Tory ministers will brag

that for the last few months manufacturing output has been rising at an annual rate of four per cent, and non-oil exports by 10 per cent.

But all these figures are based on short-term considerations and the most favourable comparisons for the Government. The data on manufacturing output, for example, is compared to previous figures that are so bad that almost any improvement would seem dramatic.

Manufacturing output is still 5 per cent below the level of 1979. Two million manufacturing jobs have been lost, and they continue to disappear only more slowly than before. In the first quarter of 1987, 5,000 jobs a month were going.

Exports

Exports may be rising, but so also are manufactured imports. The position may have improved temporarily in relation to cars, but three quarters of all manufactured goods sold in Britain last year were imported.

Meanwhile the international background is anything but favourable for the resurrection of British capitalism. The collapse of the dollar and growing trade wars between the main trading blocs do not augur well for exports.

British capitalism is still heavily dependent on 'invisible' exports and oil earnings. Indeed, while she has allowed manufacturing industry to collapse, Thatcher has only been able to survive thanks to the fortuitous

cushion of oil earnings. But by next year oil production will begin to fall by between 5 and 10 per cent a year. Meanwhile, the deficit in non-oil trade was an enormous £880 million in March, up from £550 in February.

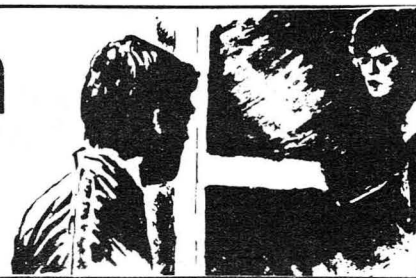
But even these figures, let alone the Tories' artificial good-news, give only a 'snap-shot' of the economy. They show just a glimpse of what is a long-term irreversible decline of British capitalism, in comparison to all its major capitalist rivals. Despite a very temporary and very weak recovery in recent months, the Tories have presided over an economy falling further and further behind.

The hired Tory Press may point out that British economic growth is a single percentage point ahead of other European countries. What they will not say, is that that lead would have to be maintained for a minimum of thirty years for living standards to catch up to those of West Germany.

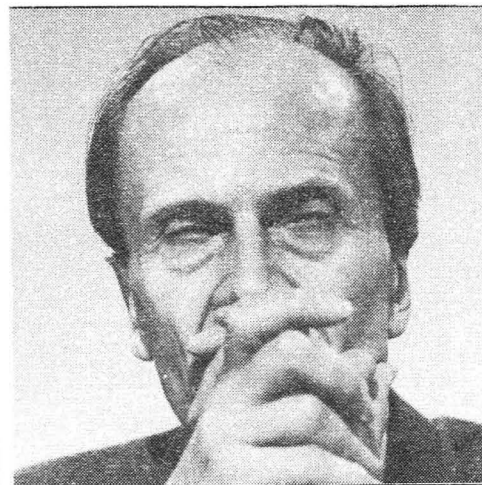
All the economic and social indicators that relate to long-term economic performance point to British capitalism weakening further. In recent months Britain has been overtaken by Italy in gross domestic product, falling from fifth to sixth place in the league table of the major capitalist powers.

How little hope there is for manufacturing in the longer-term can be gauged from the low level of manufacturing investment—still 20 per cent below the level of 1979 and now not

Campaign Forum



Militant looks into the election issues



even keeping pace with depreciation. It decreased by 4.5 per cent in 1986 alone. British capitalism spends over half its research and development in the field of defence projects, whereas the proportions for West Germany and Japan are, respectively, five and one per cent.

Research

Whereas Britain's industrial research and development outlay has been falling by 1.4 per cent a year, it has been rising in France by 3 per cent, in Germany by 3.2 per cent, in USA by 4.7 per cent and in Japan by 10.6 per cent.

Far from 'catching up' with countries like West Germany in the next 30 years, British capitalism will be competing with the poorest countries of Europe to see which will be the first to reach 'Third World' status. For purely electoral

reasons—because they are even more worried about a Labour Government than about Thatcherism—the Confederation of British Industry, the bosses' organisation, are backing the re-election of the Tory Government. But behind the scenes, those sections of the capitalist class most closely associated with manufacturing are seriously worried about their prospects for the future.

Despite the lunacy of Thatcher, the economy has no future without a strong manufacturing base, and without increasing manufacturing investment. Service industries can never take the place of manufacturing as the creator of real wealth and provider of jobs. Lord Weinstock of GEC asked a Lords Select Committee: "What will the service industries be servicing when there is no hardware, when no wealth is actually being produced... We will supply

the changing of the guard, we will supply Beefeaters around the Tower of London!"

Trotsky, in the 1920's, described the capitalist class in Britain as "tobogganing to disaster with its eyes closed." There is little chance that members of the House of Lords will be readers of Trotsky, but that same Select Committee came to exactly the same conclusion in a special report last year. British manufacturing, they said, is "on a cresta run" to disaster.

The real position of the British economy should be used by the Labour leaders to show up the record of the Thatcher years, and the lie about economic prosperity and improving employment prospects. They must explain that capitalism can offer British workers nothing but insecurity and instability in the future. This should be their justification for full socialist change.

Fighting Fund

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 Scotland East	279		2800
2 Wales	480		4850
3 East Midlands	248		3250
4 London	769		9400
5 Yorkshire	704		8450
6 Eastern	182		3050
7 Scotland West	187		3500
8 Merseyside	309		7500
9 Northern	170		4600
10 South West	85		1900
11 Manchester/Lancs	113		4050
12 South East	62		2250
13 West Midlands	167		4850
14 South	39		3100
15 National	6495		6950
Total	10287		70000

Best ever start—keep going

WHAT A MARVELLOUS start to our new quarter. With £10,287 collected in just eight days, we are off to the best start ever. An anonymous donation of £4,500 from the sale of a house, has given the fighting fund an early boost. While at the CPSA conference, over 250 delegates and visitors attended the *Militant* readers' meeting and raised the huge sum of £4,060. More money was collected in tins around the conference during the week taking over £5,000.

CPSA members at DNS Glasgow collected £7.44 at work and SCPS pickets in Essex contributed £10.

But during the election period we need extra money to ensure our voice is heard.

We need cash to answer the lies of the Tory press.

We need to get those collecting tins out onto the streets and around the doorsteps on our estate sales, throughout the general election. Remember to ask for the solidarity price—it is the easiest way to raise money. Sellers in Aire Valley raised £17.02 last week. See how much you can get next time you are out.

Campaign

We appeal to all our readers to make a contribution to our campaign funds, so we can reach more and more workers over the next four weeks and beyond. Already workers around

the country are sending money in. Ian Sinclair, NALGO Northwest Gas, has sent £20, Pam Roberts, East Ham NUT, £75 and Keith Morrison, Stockton AEU, £5.

Whether you are new to our ideas or are a long-standing reader, contribute now to the only paper that fights for a genuine socialist programme. But do not leave it there, take our cash campaign to your friends and workmates. The overwhelming majority of working people want to see Thatcher kicked out. Help us do it.

By Nick Wrack

Clampdown in the Punjab



Security forces on the streets of Amritsar, capital of the Punjab, in 1983.

IN THE Indian state of Punjab, the elected Akali Dal government has been removed from office by Presidential decree following waves of terrorism by Sikh separatists and communal violence between the Sikh majority and the Hindu minority which have left 300 dead this year.

Reintroducing direct rule from New Delhi, the central government of Rajiv Gandhi said that Akali Dal was "incapable of maintaining law and order". Within 24 hours over 100 government opponents were in prison, and 60 more companies of security forces were called for to reinforce the 50,000 troops in the state.

This clampdown is also dictated by Gandhi's need to

reassert his crumbling authority elsewhere in India, where his Congress(I) party has been staggering from setback to setback in state elections.

On 17 June elections take place in the majority Hindu state of Haryana, bordering on Punjab. Gandhi's strong-arm act against what is seen as Sikh violence is intended to increase Congress(I)'s support.

In fact it is a clear admission that Gandhi's much-vaunted 'peace settlement' in Punjab, which resulted in the election of the 'moderate' Akali Dal government in September 1985, is in ruins.

Direct rule will further inflame the sense of national oppression among the Sikhs, and lead to a new spiral of separatist violence.

On the basis of capitalism,

bringing with it mass poverty, landlessness, suffering and brutal repression of the poor, neither direct rule nor regional government can create stability. The Punjab reflects, in an acute form, the deepening, uncontrollable strife that will engulf the entire Indian sub-continent until the nightmare of capitalism is ended.

A RECENT report shows that the "flesh market" is thriving in the 'modern', 'democratic' India of Rajiv 'Mr. Clean' Gandhi.

Tens of thousands of Indian girls are sold into prostitution as a result of poverty, starvation and, it appears, official corruption. Even rescue homes and social workers, the report says, are selling off girls entrusted to their care.

The report is based on interviews by a nun with 1,100 girls in brothels. One was sold by her parents for £300 to feed the other children; another for £800 to raise the dowry of her elder sister. Some girls are sold at the tender age of nine.

BRITISH TEACHERS will be strengthened in their determination to defend trade union rights by the horrifying repression meted out to fellow-teachers in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. An estimated 100,000 teachers, on strike for higher pay, were recently imprisoned after defying a government decree to return to work.

Just how many jails do they have in Tamil Nadu, one reporter wondered. "Not that many", explained an Indian journalist. "They just packed them in tight."

About twenty teachers died as a result.

Sao Paulo: A tale of two cities

GREATER SAO Paulo, with 14 million people, is the biggest urban sprawl in the southern hemisphere. Concentrated within it are all the contradictions between wealth and poverty, luxury and squalor which has turned Brazil into a revolutionary time bomb.

The life-style of the city's rich is epitomised by Mount Olympus, the newest block of luxury apartments. Here a nine-roomed flat costs £125,000, including four bathrooms, a heated private pool, four-car garage and servant's quarters.

Out of sight of Mount Olympus's "dazzling view of the city" lies the Sao Paulo of the masses. Over two million people live in the *favelas* (wood-and-tin shanties) and another 600,000 in wretched *corticais* (slums).

But the concept 'slum' is very relative. Of all houses in the city, two thirds have no drains and half have no running water. An official health report reveals:

"In general people make use of open holes, dry lavatories and septic tanks,



Angry shoppers in a Brazilian supermarket protest against skyrocketing prices.

and drink water from shallow wells, which are usually contaminated by the proximity of the open holes".

In February workers were dealt a savage blow when President Sarney's 'democratic' government ended the rent freeze. Immediately rents shot up from as little as £10 per month to as much as £100, with even

shanties now going for £40 per month.

Landlords have ruthlessly enforced the increases, cutting off water and electricity, and even smashing down walls, to force out tenants who can't afford to pay. Now parks and open ground are being transformed into tent cities, already inhabited by 20,000 people driven from their homes.

Not content with this, the authorities have sent wave after wave of police to evict the 'squatters', with tear gas and cavalry charges trampling men, women and children underfoot.

In this seething cauldron of class struggle, Brazil's honeymoon with Sarney's PMDB administration will come to an explosive end. Class polarisation is deepening, with even the left of the PMDB being pulled towards the workers' parties.

Brazilian labour has enormous strength. As the struggle deepens, the right-wing generals will again threaten to impose 'law and order' under their own brutal dictatorship. The power of organised labour, mobilised on a socialist programme, can defeat them and transform Brazil to liberate the slum-dwellers, the homeless, the landless peasants and the starving poor from the horrors of capitalism.

By George Collins

Pakistan PM's rent-a-crowd rally fuels anger

MOHAMED KHAN Jonejo, Pakistan's prime minister, was due to arrive in the Punjabi town of Jhang on 27 April on an official visit.

Jonejo is also head of the ruling Muslim League, the main capitalist party. At his request a public meeting was to be arranged in the city.

For the local bureaucracy, the main question was where the people would come from. In the recent past people had been refusing to attend meetings of the Muslim League.

On instructions from above, the bureaucrats had to use every means to get an audience together.

Three days before the meeting, about 600 private buses were taken into official custody to provide free transport. The owners were not supposed to be paid for these three days.

As a result, the rest of the private buses in the area were taken into hiding. The transport system collapsed. Students could not reach school, so most of the schools were closed.

Some buses were seized halfway to their destinations. Passengers were asked to get out. They did this shouting anti-government slogans, mostly slogans of the Pakistan People's Party (the mass-based opposition party).

Local councillors were then instructed to fill the buses with people for the meeting. They promised free transport, free food and a daily allowance of 30 Rupees. Public sector workers such as police, officials, teachers, sweepers, nurses, *patwaris* and others were all forced to be present. (£1.00 = 29 Rupees)

As one low-paid worker remarked: "Isn't it better to wave to the prime minister than to sweep all day?"

Local councils were also ordered to provide special funds to accord a "tremendous welcome" to the prime minister. This was good news to corrupt councillors. One, in charge of publicity, got 5,000 posters printed but claimed the cost of 25,000 together with other bogus expenses.

It was also a field day for the corrupt police officers, who allowed private buses to operate normally after receiving huge bribes from the owners.

The day of Jonejo's arrival was like a public holiday. All government employees had to go to the meeting, resulting in the closure of all government offices, hospitals and schools.

Some buses on their way to Jhang stopped near a PPP office, and the people described how they were forced to be on 'official duty'. But they made it clear that they would willingly take part in the May Day demonstration being organised by the PPP three days later.

"A warm and enthusiastic welcome for the prime minister... Over one hundred thousand attend", were the headlines of the government-controlled media the next morning. In reality, the people were filled with the utmost hatred towards the Muslim League for the dirty tactics it used to force them to the meeting.

In Jonejo's speech at Jhang there were no concessions for the masses. An estimated two and a half million Rupees were spent on this one visit - buying increased hatred for him and his regime.

Jonejo's unpopularity is an important factor in the popularity of the PPP. Despite the right-wing policies of the leadership, the PPP remains the only rallying point for the masses in their struggle to overthrow the regime, to end capitalism and landlordism, and create a democratic socialist Pakistan.

By a correspondent in Pakistan

Middle class New Socialist

Dear Comrades,
As I buy *Labour Weekly* I thought I'd try *New Socialist* the Labour Party 'theoretical' magazine. What a load of rubbish. Two issues was enough of it's middle class twaddle.

As I wrote cancelling "I'll stick with the *Militant* which gives a proper socialist alternative" and is written by workers involved in the struggle.

Yours fraternally
Gary Freeman
Nottingham North
Labour Party
Youth Officer

A source of splits in force

Dear Comrades,
Last week I attended my team's last match of the football season. On entering the ground I was searched by a black policeman. He asked me what was in my pocket and I replied that I had my working men's club card and Labour Party card.

He asked to see them and then said quietly, so no other police could hear, that he was also a Labour Party member. He stated that he opposed black sections because he saw it as divisive and sectionalising the labour movement.

This incident brought home to me that although police will be hard to win over, there are police who ally themselves with the working class movement and will be the source of splits in the police ranks in the future.

He also saw that the strength of the working class is in unity and not in sectioning one group off against another.

Yours fraternally
Martin Page
Leicester (IRSF)

Peace treaties explained

Dear Comrades,
It was very interesting to read the article on the PLO (*Militant* 846). As an Arab who has lived in Iraq the whole question of the Arab world is important to me.

I found John Pickard's description of Arafat's position on peace treaties coincides with my experience in Iraq. At the time my friends at school and I could not understand why one day we are shaking

hands with Syria and the next we are saying they are traitors.

It is only since I became a regular reader of *Militant* that I have understood why the leaders of the Arab world will never be permanently reconciled.

These leaders are only interested in preserving their own power and privileges. They change their position as the economic position of the country changes.

The different organisations that represent the Arab working class and peasantry must start to look at the analysis of Marxism as the only way forward for the mass of the Arab population.

Yours fraternally
Muna Al-Baldawi
Staffordshire

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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



Multiple share applications may be illegal but only ordinary workers face the sack for it.

Club members only

Dear Comrades,
Hundreds of TSB staff face disciplinary action and the possibility of the sack for making multiple share applications during the flotation of that bank.

Yet Tory MP Keith Best passes off his multiple share applications for British Telecom as either 'a foolish mistake' or 'an accident'.

Doesn't this small example show the true nature of Thatcher's Britain. It's okay to play the system so long as you are a member of the club. The sooner that system is smashed the better.

Yours fraternally
Andy Walsh
Manchester

Classified ads

15p per word, minimum 10 words. Semi-Display £2 per column centimetre. Three weeks for the price of two. *Militant* meeting ads free. All advertisement copy should reach this office by first post on Friday, the week before publication.

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

○ **New stickers** "Kick out the Tories" and "No slave labour on YTS". Now available. Cost £1 per 100 plus 25p p&p. Available from 3/13 Hepscoth Rd, London E9 5HB.

○ **Moulsecoomb Ward** Labour Party still fighting the witch-hunt and for a socialist Labour government.

○ **Offensiv camp in Sweden.** Monday 6 - Saturday 11 July 1987. Camp takes place close to Gothenburg in the middle of a forest beside a lake. Political seminars, swimming, football, canoeing, walking etc. Bring a tent or stay in the houses. Translation to English arranged. For information write to: *Offensiv* Brahegatan 2, S-415 01 Göteborg, Sweden. Tel 031 844162.

□ **Jack Collins Memorial Meeting and Social.** 13 June 6pm. Chislet Miners Welfare Club Hersden, near Canterbury. For invitations please phone 0304 367840 any weekday morning, or write to: Magness House, Mill Hill, Deal, Kent.

○ **Coventry South East** Labour Party members welcome Clara, 71b 6oz, 2nd daughter for Dave and Jane Nellist on 15 May. Another reason to fight for socialism.

○ **TRAVEL X.** We cater for ALL types of holiday and flights at competitive rates. Telephone 01 942 1234 or 01 942 7156. 7A Coombe Rd, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 4PX.

Great result in Liverpool

Dear comrades,
I would like to thank all those comrades who helped me get elected to Brighton council on 7 May, especially those LPYS members and school students who came out in the campaign.

Not only did we maintain the Labour vote in the Tenantry ward, despite increased Tory presence, but were able to send canvassers to assist three other wards.

Labour has retained control of Brighton, but for me the great news of the day was the Liverpool result. This must be a vindication not only of the socialist policies of Liverpool city council, but of the hard work put in by *Militant* supporters in Liverpool. So much for the predictions of Tories, Alliance, Labour faint-hearts and the bosses' media! With a socialist campaign Labour can win the General election

Yours fraternally
Kate Packham
Brighton borough councillor
(personal capacity)

John Silkin 'thought deeply about politics'

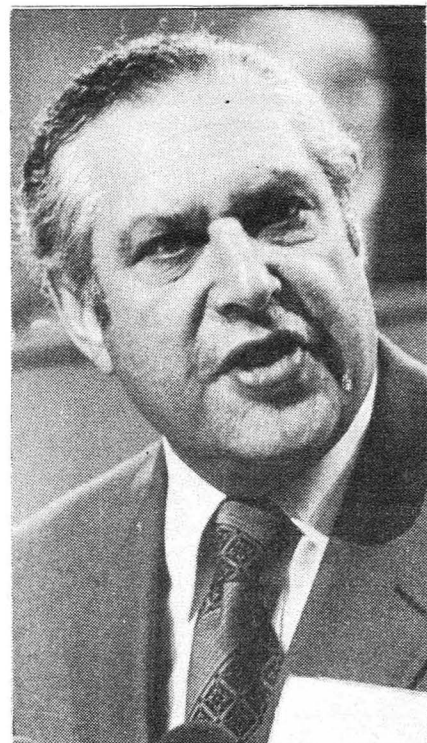
Dear Comrades,
According to Joe Haines in the *Daily Mirror* on 1 May "John Silkin was a rich man, rich enough not to need to draw a salary when he was in the cabinets of Harold Wilson and Jim Callaghan". He was also a left-winger, a passionate believer in unilateral nuclear disarmament and a dedicated opponent of the common market. He thought about politics in a deep way.

Silkin, according to Haines, did more for his country and his party than any group of activists. He was always civil in a manner foreign to the militants who took over his Deptford constituency.

Silkin may have been all the things Haines said, but what did he achieve for the people of his constituency, and his country?

Silkin's wealth may have enabled him to think deeply about politics, but it also left him totally divorced from ordinary working people. I don't think he will ever be remembered for the number of houses he built or jobs he created and that's what really does matter to ordinary people.

Yours fraternally
Dave Pollock
Scarborough



Silkin: divorced from working people.

End this barbaric sport

Dear Comrades,

In *Militant* 845 Dylan Murphy raises the question 'is boxing a socialist sport?' using quotes from the *Ring* magazine, which is a very informative magazine for boxing fans but takes a one-sided view. In whose interests does boxing serve? In the main those who have most to gain. Boxing is big business. *Ring* supports boxing and those who control it, big business.

Big money

You can be blinded by the money that Sugar Ray Leonard and Marvin Hagler made, \$11 million and \$12 million each, but such fights as that come once in a lifetime. The gate by the way was estimated to earn \$100 million. Big business made a fortune that night.

Let's take up the argument of *Ring* that there are dangers in other sports where there is heavy physical contact. True, but *Ring* leaves out one small detail, the object of other sports is not to render your opponent senseless with a continued barrage of blows to the head which could maim or even kill by accident or otherwise. (It is legal to kill in the ring)

What about the boxers who never make it to the top, the bread and butter fighters who make up the sport, the forgotten men of boxing. Many of these fighters have to work for a living while training for a fight, which impairs their ability to attain 100 per cent fitness in many cases.

You quote *Ring* again: "Boxing once again revealed what it is: A highly dangerous, keenly focussed public exhibition of human will and intelligence

transformed into articulate energy."

I agree it's highly dangerous, if you believe the rest you believe in fairies. *Ring* magazine is not going to condemn boxing, rather it will be an apologist for those who make a fortune out of the poverty of others.

The vast majority of world champions past and present came out of the slums of the world and see in boxing a way out. Many past champions after they finish boxing end up shadows of their former selves, for example Joe Louis and Muhammed Ali, two of the greatest heavyweights of all time. There are many others too numerous to mention.

A socialist sport is, to use the words of *Ring* "An exhibition of human will and intelligence transformed into articulate energy". It is neither intelligent nor articulate to smash someone into submission for the enjoyment of some and the profits of others.

Barbaric

Boxing is a social sport, not a socialist sport. I am not a 'middle class liberal'. I do not believe boxing can be made safe, especially under capitalism where the emphasis is to make money by the exploitation of others in what could only be described as a barbaric sport.

My understanding of boxing is not out of a book, but practical experience of fighting in the ring for nine years. In 1974 I was Northern Counties Flyweight Champion, English semi (ABA quarter-finalist) British ABA semi-finalist.

Yours fraternally
John McEwan
Cleethorpes

Tory privatisation strategy

The prospect of sinking a new mine at Margam in South Wales has been used as a political football since 1976. Various studies and costings have been conducted. Some £3m has been spent on legal and preparatory work including the laying of huge power cables necessary to begin major earth works.

But now British Coal are using the threat of not going ahead to blackmail the NUM into accepting six-day working. This is part of the Tory strategy to prepare for privatisation of sections of the mining industry.

In this article Ian Isaac, former

NUM Lodge secretary at the nearby recently closed St John's colliery, in a joint study with Oxford economist Andrew Glyn, argues that British Coal have got their figures wrong and that the proposed Margam New Mine in its proposed lay out will make a huge return on capital expenditure whether based on six days a week production or five as at present.

They argue that a four day week for miners on their present seven and a quarter hour underground shift with the mine producing on five days could still employ the extra 130 jobs. British Coal say six day production

would provide (780 jobs instead of 650 on five days' production).

Why has the NUM in the South Wales Area not researched the cost of a project which could result in the most fundamental change in work practices in British industry since the industrial revolution? What are the consequences for occupational health and safety?

Hardly a day went by in the month of March without a mention in the media of the Margam project. British Coal sought to drive home their advantage on the so-called 'concept' of six day production at the new mine.

The NUM in South Wales at a

conference of Lodge Committees unconvincingly carried by card vote a recommendation to enter into negotiations on the basis of accepting the 'concept' of six day production.

Many miners believe that the Area Executive, themselves having voted in favour by just four votes to three, only carried the day on a verbal promise of a ballot vote of the membership. There are no screams from the national media about a ballot for the miners this time, however.

In February the Area Director assured the NUM that the change in shift patterns and six day work-

ing applied to South Wales and Margam alone.

The Board now concede that the concept will apply to all new developments and have earmarked 'Hawkhurst Moor' new mine near Coventry as one of the future pits to have six day production.

This makes the claim that they only require six day production at Margam to make it economically viable very dubious. This article examines their projected figures given in an internal Coal Board document 307F/SEC, I presented to the mining unions in Wales in February.

BRITISH COAL'S original figures were based on five day working by 650 men producing an annual output of one million tonnes, with an output of 6.8 per man shift.

Given capital expenditures of £79.9m spread over four years and with the average proceeds being £43.77p per tonne, British Coal claimed that the pit would show a rate of return of 9.4 per cent, below what was required to cover annual interest costs of 11.5 per cent.

But a proper "discounted cash flow" appraisal of their figures shows that such a low rate of return would only be earned by the project if operating costs, including depreciation were £37 per tonne.

By no stretch of the imagination would Margam's costs be as high as this unless they intend paying the miners £25,000 per year each! Average wages are currently around £10,000 per annum. Current results from low cost pits in Notts and South Yorks show operating costs of between £22 to £27 per tonne with an output per man shift of between 4.3 and 5.8 tonnes.

A more realistic, even conservative, estimate of operating costs (reported in the International Coal Report for 27 March 1987) would be £26 per tonne (on a five day production week) with proceeds of £43.77 per tonne.

This would give a rate of return of 20 per cent, far above that required to justify the investment even in narrow financial terms. On six-day production the rate of return is more than proportionally higher.

It is also reported that British Coal, following the revelation by Arthur Scargill that a concessionary loan at 7.5 per cent of half the capital was available from the European Coal and Steel Community, has revised down its estimates of the proceeds from Margam's coal to £38 per tonne. Current fresh off the boat prices for coking coal at Port Talbot steel works are between £38 and £41 per tonne inclusive of £3 transportation costs.

Even this shifting of the goal posts only reduces the profit rate for five day production to 15 per cent. Still way above the 11.5 per cent financing costs and again above the figure given by British Coal for five day production of 9.4 per cent and 12.2 per cent on six day production.

With this price of coal, six day production and the slightly reduced operating costs it would bring by reducing the depreciation charge per tonne, British Coal would have a profit rate again of over 20 per cent. The 12.2 per cent appears increasingly suspect.

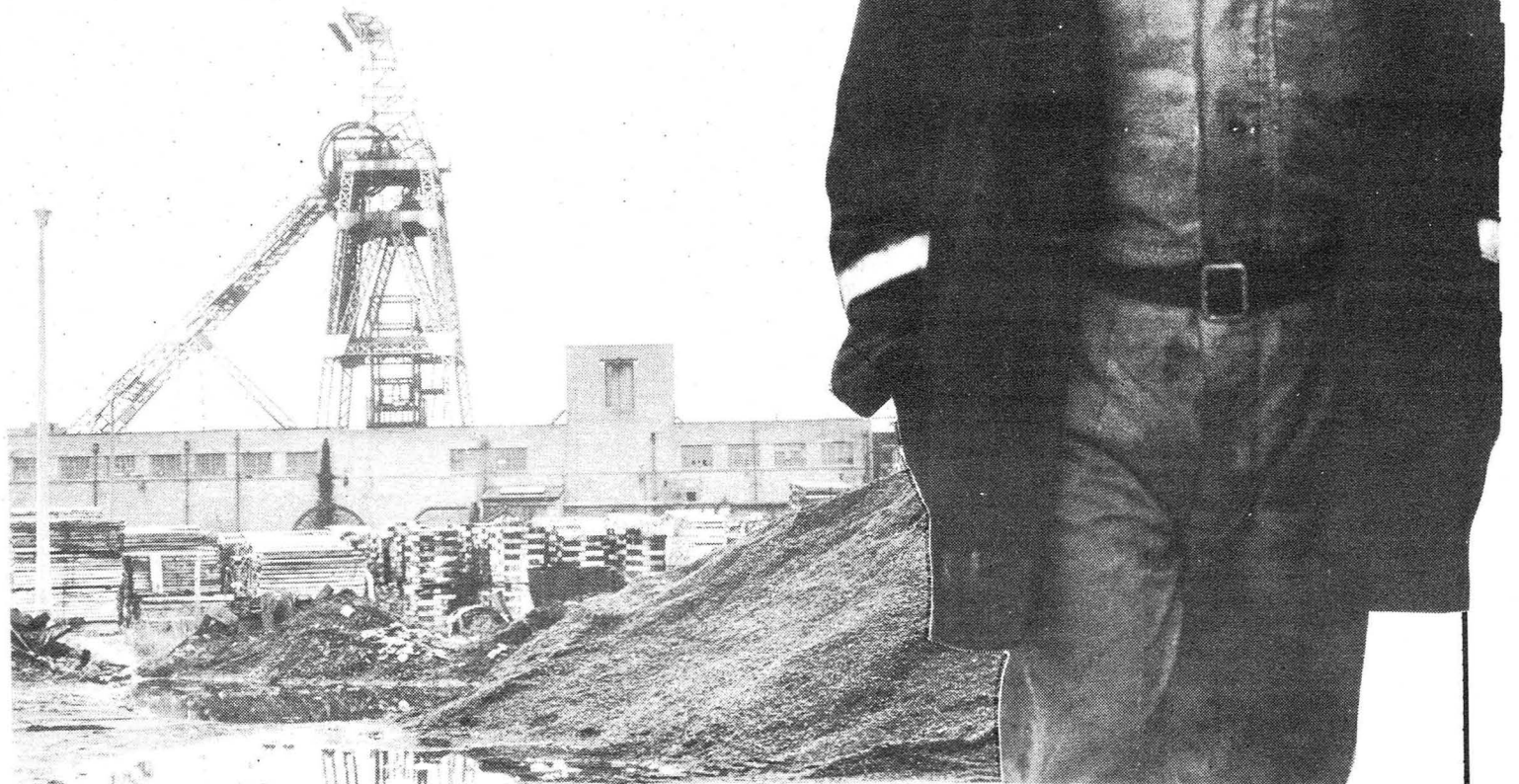
British Coal's figures simply don't add up. It is no surprise that they have been so 'economical' with the truth by failing to give the NUM proper details of operating costs, or their deception would have been obvious. Though it doesn't explain why the South Wales NUM research department didn't challenge them.

The facts are that assuming no increase in Margam's annual profit over its life, it would earn a rate of return far above what is required to pay interest on the finance for the pit and thus justify the investment. Receipt of a Common Market loan would reduce financing costs from 11.5 per cent to 9.5 per cent, which would further increase Margam's profitability.

A real 'cost benefit' analysis of Margam would show far higher rates of return than those shown here, since the government would benefit from the savings in dole and extra tax payments that result from the creation of jobs.

But even operating with British Coal's narrow financial criteria the pit would justify itself on the present system of working and still break even with a four day week without loss of pay and no increase in hours underground.

British Coal's Margam blackmail



Under the 1908 Hours of Work Act underground shifts are restricted to 7½ hours. This would have to be repealed to increase shifts to eight or nine hours.

If the South Wales NUM negotiate six day production at Margam then legally individual miners can refuse to work the extra time. The law would have

to be changed to force them to work the extra.

There is a dilemma for the NUM. If they negotiate six day production with semi continental shift patterns groups of men can refuse to work the extra time. If the Hours of Work Act is repealed then it opens the way for the negotiation nationally, regionally or pit by pit of full

continental shift patterns based on a seven day production week as exists now in the steel industry.

For the first time in the history of the industry miners would have no control over the number of hours they work. Even in the 19th century the number of hours was based on

the task or 'stint' with a certain amount of control exercised over how long the man laboured at his task.

The conclusion seems inescapable that British Coal has fiddled the figures to make six day production appear necessary if the Margam mine is to pay its way.

It is the thin end of the wedge. By increasing the number of jobs at pits which introduce six day production it appears that the system increases the number of jobs created. But this is a false impression.

By increasing production in the most productive pits the pressure is increased to close down the less productive.

For example, the additional

200,000 tonnes of saleable coal produced at Margam is shown in British Coal's figures as increasing the numbers of jobs by 130. What they do not point out is that, according to the International Coal Report the extra production would be sold in the steam coal market (ie. power station, domestic or industrial) thus displacing production from other pits. 250 or more mining jobs would be lost elsewhere.

Exactly the same would happen in other pits if British Coal succeeded in getting six-day production elsewhere.

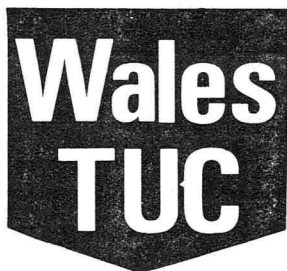
In addition, six-day working exhausts the seams more rapidly, reducing the period over which the additional jobs would be provided at Margam.

The NUM would be well advised to undertake major studies into the costings of the Margam project and its potential effects

on occupational health and safety. The Maesteg area desperately needs the Margam New Mine. They deserve to have it on the best terms, either on the status quo or improvement in hours and conditions and on terms that will be of long term benefit to the community. The implications for the unity of the NUM and opposition to Tory privatisation plans must also be considered.

Industrial Reports

Lucas pensions victory -now retire the bosses



THE WELSH TUC tends to be a non-event. Every year it gets more dominated by national and regional trade union officials. The Trades Councils are the more genuine voice of the working class at the conference.

The theme this year was Labour unity. Unfortunately it was based on policies such as six-day working at Margam new mine and single union deals.

On the other hand motions from Swansea Trades Council on South Africa, including a call for direct links with the independent trade unions, and on YTS calling for guaranteed jobs for trainees, were defeated by the General Council.

Of course they haven't got direct links with workers in Wales let alone South Africa. As for a guaranteed job—"I'm alright Jack".

TGWU

There was one significant incident, however. A motion from South Glamorgan GATC: "Conference is opposed to the Job Training Scheme in its entirety and calls on the General Council to campaign against its use in Wales" was opposed by the General Council on the basis that youth with no rights and no pay need trade unions to negotiate no benefits for them. This time they were defeated.

TGWU Regional Secretary George Wright, however, felt his delegation could not draw on a clear union policy and so had the TGWU abstain. Ron Todd, sitting on the delegation, who earlier that week threatened to withdraw from the MSC over the issue, must have felt a bit perplexed.

Neil Kinnock's speech received a standing ovation. There were no concrete policy commitments, however, and unfortunately he wasted his time attacking "Tendencies and ideological groupings" in the party.

Although *Militant* was not enthusiastically welcomed by conference, over £330 was raised for the fighting fund and two rank and file delegates wanted to know how to get involved with us in the struggle for a socialist Labour government.

By Neil Williams

CAR COMPONENTS manufacturer Lucas have scaled new heights in robbing their workforce. For the last two years the company have used the surplus in the pension fund to take a two year holiday from paying their contributions, using up £40m. In the past, if the fund's investment return was good it was ploughed back in.

The workforce were told on 2 March that they would continue to pay their higher than normal contributions while the company would pay no fixed contributions at all. To quote them: "rather than continue to add money not needed now by the pension funds, the company will make sure that its money is used to invest in our own business to help make them

competitive in world markets."

The pension escalation has been reduced to give more to the shareholders. At the same time very senior management are giving themselves massive share options.

A company 'contribution holiday' will increase the Lucas share price and hence the value of these options. They are boosting Lucas trading results by £30m a year out of the workers' pensions.

To top it all the company announced to the press and the City that they were going to take all the investment gains the funds make, before there was any opportunity for the unions to answer.

The union put out a call for industrial action including a one day strike, demanding all surpluses be

used to improve benefits. It was massively backed, closing down Lucas throughout Birmingham for a day, despite an attempt by the union leadership nationally to sabotage the action with a letter telling workers not to strike on the grounds that procedure had not been exhausted.

Backed down

As a result of the action, however, management have backed down, saying they will pay into the fund. What amount they are paying has not been released yet.

With the prospect of engines coming into Britain fully 'dressed' (ie. with all the parts already installed) the long term future of Lucas, who make distributors, windscreen wipers and many other parts

is under threat.

There will be few jobs for skilled engineers in the car component industry if the car industry in this country is reduced to assembling. With job security like that no wonder pension plunder is a hot issue.

Recent Tory legislation now makes it legal not only for companies to take 'holidays' from paying in but to take directly out of pension funds. But pension funds are deferred wages in the eyes of the workers.

In the eyes of the boss they are a valuable company asset, often worth more than the company itself (Lucas pension fund owns 17 per cent of the company shares).

There has been a spate of mergers in the USA and Britain to get at pension funds. It has even led to a new breed of lawyers specialising

in defending pension funds from the company.

We must demand trade union control of pension funds with fixed regular contributions from both company and workers. In the future, however, there should be no need to pay out of your wages to get a decent pension.

Workers who spend the vast majority of their lives producing wealth which they see nothing of should be guaranteed a decent standard of living when they retire.

Warren McDivitt, AEU convenor, Gt Hampton St, Birmingham and national works pension committee delegate talked to Sue Wilkie.

NUJ

22 MEMBERS of the NUJ are on strike in the Sefton and Wirral areas in support of two colleagues sacked for refusing to work new technology without an agreement.

The employer, Trinity Weekly Newspapers, owned by the *Liverpool Post* and *Echo* have bulldozed through plans which involve making NGA members redundant and introducing new technology for NUJ members at an increased rate of £3 per week.

The journalists are not opposed to new working practices but agreements nationally have averaged £20 per week increases.

Managing Director Alan Powell following in the footsteps of Shah and Murdoch is trying to use new technology to smash effective trade union organisation.

So far one scab has crossed the picket line which should not be sufficient for any papers to be produced.

By Angela Corcoran and Kevin Conway (Southport Labour Party)

Edinburgh engineers

A TWO week long strike over pay at Blakes Engineering Limited of South Fort Street, Leith in Edinburgh which is a member of the Engineering Employers Federation, looks set to continue after management sacked the strikers on Tuesday 28 April. Russell Taylor (AEU Pilton branch) spoke to Tass shop steward John Douglas and G&M Boilermakers steward Rab Stevenson.

A small sheet metal and fabrication shop employing around 40 people organised into AEU, Tass and the Boilermakers section of the GMB, Blakes is run on a family basis by a team of brothers.

They have refused to concede the workers demand for a £10.00 across the board pay rise only offering £8.50 on 'a take or leave it basis'.

After conducting a ballot under the Tories' anti-trade union laws the vote was a very definite 28 to 2 for strike action. The management embarked on a programme of intimidation sending threatening letters to every member of the strikers homes.

The final letter told them that they have breached their contract although the workforce do not have a written contract despite approaches to obtain one in the past.

This intimidation did have an effect however with five of the original

strikers crossing the picket line.

Management have managed to maintain some supplies of raw materials however, due to the slowness of local full time officials to contact other unions regarding the official nature of the dispute.

Management have also helped the situation by insisting to local delivery men that the dispute is not official and that they would be disciplined if they refused to deliver.

MSC connivance

One disturbing feature of the dispute has been the connivance of the Manpower Services Commission who are aware of the situation where YTS trainees who were only doing simple welding operations as part of their training are now welding whole tanks!

They have been told that if they do not turn up for work they will be thrown off the scheme and have their benefits stopped for 13 weeks.

The management have also advertised the strikers' jobs in the local job centre asking for 'temporary workers only' but also offering the rate the men are on strike for!

Approaches are being made to the CPSA members in the local job centre and at the MSC to boycott this company as an act of solidarity.



Photo: Morning Star

Last Friday saw national protests against Tory attacks on resources for further and higher education. 2,000 attended a rally at Central Hall Westminster, writes Pat Jones of London College of Printing Nalfo branch. There were motions of support from Nalfo and Nupe. The National Union of Students staged sit-ins and protests in many colleges. In Manchester (picture above) 500 marched from Manchester Polytechnic to a rally in the city centre.

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The need for a Socialist Labour government committed to restoring full employment, and an end to poverty and low pay has never been greater. The last eight years of Tory rule has seen the rich get richer while the poor suffer. The policies of the party of big business interests have been to cut health care, and representation of ordinary workers, so as to maintain and increase profits to the ruling class. The Tory impression that Tories must be exposed by the masses.

Produced by Militant supporters in the Union of Communication Workers. Price 50p + 20p p&P. Post free over 5 copies. Write to World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

Westminster Tories' Iron Lady

ON Wednesday 29 April Westminster Nalfo members took one-day strike action to protest against the City Council's plans to further privatise services and to withdraw from the 'National Joint Council'.

Withdrawal from the national negotiating body effectively tears up all contracts of employment and means a return to local negotiations on pay and service conditions.

The response to the strike was very good with all local social services, housing offices, libraries and leisure centres closed and many other staff, including environmental health, planning, printing and solicitors out too. Many Nupe

members also refused to cross picket lines.

During the day a mass meeting was held with over 400 workers attending with a guest speaker from the Hangers strike. This was followed by a march to lobby the councillors at their meeting that night. Nalfo was joined on the lobby by Nupe members and a delegation from Westminster LPYS.

Privatisation

Lady Porter, (Westminster's own 'iron lady') and her cronies' plans for privatisation include street cleaning, refuse collection, housing management and meals on wheels for the elderly.

This will inevitably mean a loss of jobs, worsening of the conditions of workers 'lucky' enough to be kept on after the private contractors take over and a cut in service to the public.

The plans to withdraw from the NJC are in line with the Tories' plans to bring in 'pay by performance' and further drive down the wages of the workers.

Lady Porter is not alone in wanting to do this. Tory authorities up and down the country will be watching to see what happens in Westminster and looking for a green light from the general election.

By Gill Harris (Westminster Nalfo, personal capacity)

Industrial Reports

CPSA right wing suppress election results

THE CIVIL and Public Services Association conference in Blackpool demonstrated the massive radicalisation which has taken place in the civil service as a result of Tory government's attacks on the wages and conditions of its workforce.

The most controversial issue of conference was the refusal of the President to announce the result of elections for the national executive committee, deputy general secretary and president despite a requirement by rule that the results be given by the end of conference business.

After repeated attempts over four days Lytham Land Registry delegate, *Militant* supporter Chris Baugh managed to challenge the President's ruling not to announce the results. He was successful but failed to get the two thirds majority necessary to overrule her.

Earlier a motion of censure on the NEC had been passed for their conduct during the controversy over the general secretary election and the decision to re-ballot because of the left's victory. Also the accountants, Pat-



erson and Brewer, who had advised the NEC during the re-run were removed by conference, despite the pleas of general treasurer and BL 84 member Chris Kirk.

Many delegates are suspicious that similar manoeuvres are taking place

again. The Broad Left is confident that they have won the three sets of elections. The weak excuses of the right wing about postal disputes holding up the arrival of votes have not been substantiated and what details were initially provid-

ed have been withdrawn.

Militant supporters successfully moved motions calling for a campaign in favour of reaffiliation to the Labour Party within the next year and to campaign now for a Labour government. The latter was passed with an

overwhelming majority.

On pay, it looks as though there will be a new, but unacceptable offer. The campaign of selective regional two day strikes continues. A motion calling for a definite date for all out strike was defeated but the mover of the motion which was passed gave a commitment to an all out strike. This must be pursued.

Massive pressure must be mounted throughout the union to get the election results announced without delay. The election of a Broad Left president, deputy general secretary and national executive would be a tremendous boost for the pay campaign and help get a Labour government elected to stop the Tories attacks on civil servants.

Fuller report next issue.

Scots health Broad Left

CATERING WORKER and porter Steward Maclean and Peter Cuthbertson of West Fife hospital, Dunfermline told a *Militant* reporter how their fight against privatisation convinced them of the need to build the Broad Left in their union Nupe.

THERE HAD been talk of privatisation coming into the catering and domestic areas on and off for some time. But things came to a head a couple of months back when our union Area Official was brought down from Dundee to 'negotiate' with management on the introduction of vending machines instead of proper catering on the night shift.

Management wanted to buy vending machines at £30,000 instead of night shift meals so that they could save paying the wages of the two night cooks. What amazed us however was that our Area Official didn't seem particularly keen on fighting it. In fact he seemed willing to accept the arrangement with a few 'amendments' like 30 hours extra overtime split up amongst the workforce.

Management brought the machines in regardless and we point blank refused to fill them. There was another meeting between management and the Area Official. He came to see us and said there were two options - to accept the offer or take industrial action. He got a shock when the vote for industrial action was unanimous.

Jobs

So now we are on an overtime ban and management are trying to attack the workers through the back door by arbitrarily changing our shift rotas etc.

There must have been hundreds of small disputes like this in the past couple of years in the hospitals but we've been allowed to be picked off one by one instead of staging a co-ordinated national fight back.

We need to build a Broad Left in the union to stop privatisation and fight for a national minimum wage of £125 a week because low pay is the biggest issue for our members. Both of us have a take home pay of about £65 for a basic 40-hour week.

We certainly haven't seen anything of Thatcher's booming Britain, Labour should get itself in gear and win the election.

Kent Tories 'reorganise' cuts

I AM currently involved in an industrial dispute where I work, which arose over 'reorganisation', namely loss of jobs, cuts in services etc.

I am a Nalco shopsteward for 25 workers at the central council repair depot near Maidstone. We are part of a larger department, County Supplies, and through the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) I represent around 250 workers.

At present the Kent County Council, Tory true blue, are re-organising all sectors. They are trying to keep them separate—the old divide and rule tactic. In all over 4,000 members will be affected.

The 25 workers I represent at the council depot have taken a stand, though up to now we have been the only ones to do so. Our dispute stems from the lies, distortions and intimidation that management have waged against us.

We have stated that we will not co-operate with any

reorganisation review, external or internal, and have proved that the management want the review to rubber stamp job losses and cut services.

Support

We have discussed strike action and could easily escalate to that the way things are going. We have good solidarity; 98 per cent of staff are unionised. Everyone knows that we are making a stand for the whole local authority. This from

workers who have never been in a dispute in their lives. We now have support from the NALGO NEC.

We are putting out a general leaflet to all the council workforce in Kent against the Tory reorganisation. We will be asking stewards to hold meetings at workplaces where we will offer to speak. We have also contacted Labour councillors, although one visited to say we had to accept job losses—must be a Tory in disguise!

What is needed now is a

countrywide public sector alliance. Other unions where I work favour this. We need to develop a united strategy, or else we will be picked off one at a time. These 'reorganisations' must be happening nationally; it would be interesting to hear from the comrades in other areas.

In the end the only solution is to ditch capitalism and put all managers under workers control.

By Gary Nightingale
Kent County NALGO

Behind AEU's Caterpillar stance

FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENTS at the Caterpillar dispute in Scotland and the role of the AEU leadership, it is worth commenting on the discussions and behind the scenes manoeuvres surrounding this issue at the recently held AEU National Committee.

At the beginning of the week's proceedings it was the general consensus that one of two resolutions supporting the dispute would get on the order paper.

The left caucus, consisting about 40 per cent of the delegates, agreed to support the stronger resolution which "Fully supports the action of Caterpillar workers," and "to give 100 per cent support to whatever action Caterpillar workers deem necessary."

If only the other resolution, pledging full support to the fight against redundancies was on the order paper, the decision was to amend this, ensuring it contained a clause supporting the occupation. It was agreed to support whatever the workers wanted.

Three days before the issue was discussed (Mon 6 April), four Caterpillar workers arrived in Eastbourne to inform the delegates of the workers' opinion. Clearly, this was to support the stronger resolution.

By the Wednesday night, (8 April) it was obvious many discussions had taken place between the workers, right wing and left wing delegates,

and a number of EC members.

A number of these discussions were still taking place on Wednesday in the Eastbourne Trades Club, where many delegates socialised.

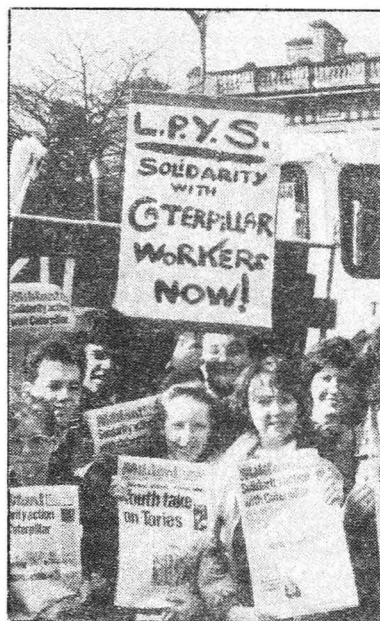
I could see, as the saying goes, 'There was a rabbit away.' Strings were being pulled, behind the scenes deals were being struck, but worst of all, the Caterpillar workers had been 'leant on' enormously.

The next day, Thursday morning, the standing orders committee report notified the delegates that only the 'weak' resolution was on the order paper and would be discussed after dinner.

Occupation

At about 10am the same day, a busload of Caterpillar workers arrived in Eastbourne. When the meeting broke for lunch, we were informed of an emergency left caucus, taking place at lunch time to discuss this issue.

Along with the left delegates, Caterpillar steward John Gillan was also present. The chairman informed the meeting of the 'latest' situation. That the right wing were not going to vote against the weak resolution, and for the purpose of unity, a show of strength for the TV cameras and the best interests of the workers, that the left should not move an amendment and only two delegates should speak on the issue



and not go 'over the top'!

Further more, John Gillan had been convinced this was the only feasible option. There was no other choice. And this at least would buy an extra ten days for the dispute. This was accepted by the left caucus, although some delegates were disgusted at the decision.

Worst of all, however, was the discussion in the conference itself.

Two right wing delegates moved and seconded the resolution, both giving left wing speeches. (The bus

load of Caterpillar lads were present in the meeting).

Then Jimmy Airlie, the only left on the Executive Council summed up on their behalf. When he announced that 'only an hour' ago he heard the news that the Scottish Development Agency had been instructed to find a buyer for the factory there were load cheers.

Myself and some other delegates were astounded. Imagine if the information had been passed on to the left meeting during lunchtime!

An amendment could have been moved, demanding almost anything, had this information not been withheld. What is more, it certainly would have been carried!

The result of the discussion was a unanimous vote for the weak resolution, a nice presentation for the press. But not for the Caterpillar workers. Both the right wing and 'left wing' leadership were let off the hook.

AEU members will draw the conclusion that only by transforming the present Broad Left into a democratic campaigning body, with accountability of leadership to the rank and file, can we transform the AEU itself into a union truly representing the members interests on all issues of wages, conditions and policy.

By John Killen
(AEU Youth Delegate
Executive Council Div 3)

Militant

Thatcher's secret war
—page 6
Margam mine blackmail
—page 13

THE LIBERALS in Bermondsey are on the run. Their candidate, Simon Hughes is "very nervous" about the big campaign being put up by the Labour Party and its candidate John Bryan. This was admitted by Hughes' brother to a fellow worker at Maudsley hospital.

By Paul Couchman

In a conversation with John Bryan, Hughes conceded that he was not being helped by the Liberal 'extremists' in neighbouring Tower Hamlets: "They are a bit of an embarrassment actually".

The Liberals' fears are confirmed by the reception that Labour canvassers are getting. The day after the election was called, they met voters who are changing their allegiance from Liberal to Labour.

Russell McCloud, the friend of a Bermondsey LPYS member, came to his first Labour Party meeting on Tuesday night and afterwards said he thought John Bryan's speech was brilliant:

"I agreed with everything he said. I used to be a Liberal. My mum was a Liberal local council candidate and at the last council elections I delivered over 900 leaflets on the Bonamy estate and tried to convince everyone to vote Liberal.

"One of the reasons I did this, together with my mates, was that Simon Hughes had promised us all jobs in 1983 on a plush new river barge which would take local residents on riverboat trips up the Thames. Well we got him elected and we haven't heard from him since.

"I was young and inexperienced then and I think tonight I saw the light. The Liberals have done nothing for working people in Bermondsey.

"Jobs and unemployment are the main issues which will decide how youth vote. I even tried Thatcher's way. I tried to start my own business. I'm a trained builder, but I couldn't get a grant and I went bankrupt within a couple of months.

"When young people have been unemployed for a long time they turn to drugs and petty crime. Drugs are a real problem here and I'm confident that you lot are doing something about it."

Asked if he was going to join the LPYS, he said: "I never thought I'd say this. Give me the form and tell me what I can do to help. I'm available every day for the election campaign.

"My mum'll definitely be surprised. She's already disillusioned with the Liberals. I don't think we'll win her

Bermondsey Liberals fear defeat

"John Bryan's speech was brilliant: I agreed with everything he said."

to Labour, but I'll have a go."

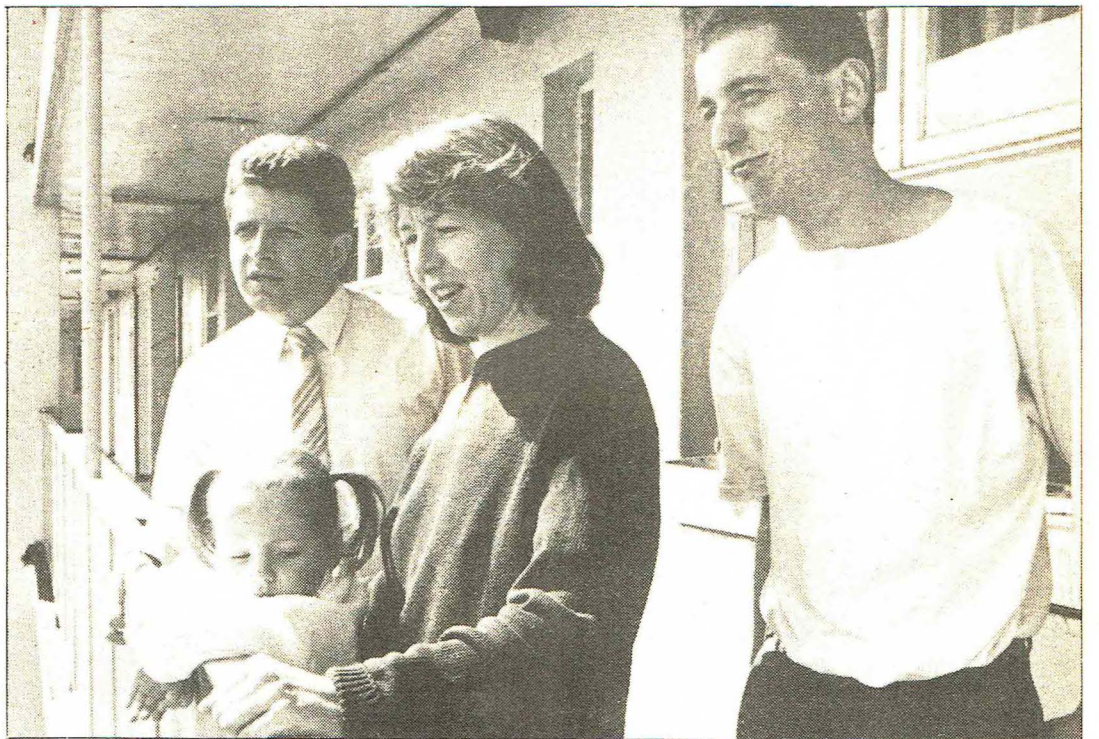
Nicola Sayles is a new member of the LPYS. Her mum was a canvasser for Simon Hughes in 1983 and up until last week would have still regarded herself as a Liberal.

On Monday, Nicola had a haemorrhage and was rushed to Guy's Hospital. She had to wait for an hour to be seen, then had to wait for a bed to become empty, and after she had been dealt with had to vacate her bed immediately for a heart attack patient.

Whilst in the Casualty department, they overheard a conversation between two nurses, who were saying they had run out of bandages, lint and safety pins.

This stark realisation of the state of the health service made Nicola's mum decide that Thatcher had to go. After a discussion with two LPYS members who explained that only Labour could defeat her and that John Bryan was the best possible candidate, she decided to reconsider her vote and meet John Bryan.

Other campaign reports—see page three.



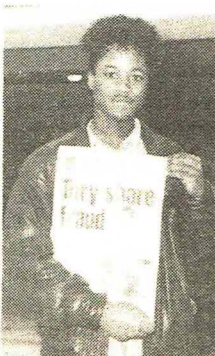
Labour candidate John Bryan (left) canvassing in Bermondsey

Photo: Dave Sinclair

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- A minimum wage of £120 a week tied to the cost of living for all, including sick and disabled people.
- A socialist plan of production democratically drawn up and implemented by committees involving the

- trade unions, shop stewards, the unwaged and small business people.
- Opposition to the capitalist Common Market, the EEC. For a socialist United States of Europe as a step towards a World Socialist Federation.
- Workers' management of the nationalised industries. These should be run on the basis of one-third of the places on the management board coming from the unions in the industry, one-third from the TUC representing the working class as a whole, and one-third from the government.
- Opposition to the Tory government's anti-union

- laws and reversal of attacks on the trade unions.
- Massive cuts in arms spending. Support for unilateral nuclear disarmament, but with the recognition that only a socialist change of society in Britain and internationally can eliminate the danger of a nuclear holocaust.
- Nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies, including the banks and insurance companies which control 80 per cent to 85 per cent of the economy. This should be through an Enabling Bill in Parliament with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need.

Return to the Circulation Department, *Militant*, 3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB.