



After the election
what now for Labour?

Militant public rallies. See page 12.



Cecil Parkinson. Founder of own company, Parkinson, Hart securities.



Kenneth Clarke—responsible for inner cities. But is MP for rural, commuter seat.

Tories couldn't care less

THATCHER'S NEW Cabinet of yes men and blue eyed boys, is a government of get rich quick bankers, financiers and businessmen. But they are desperately trying to create the illusion, that they are 'caring' and 'considerate'.

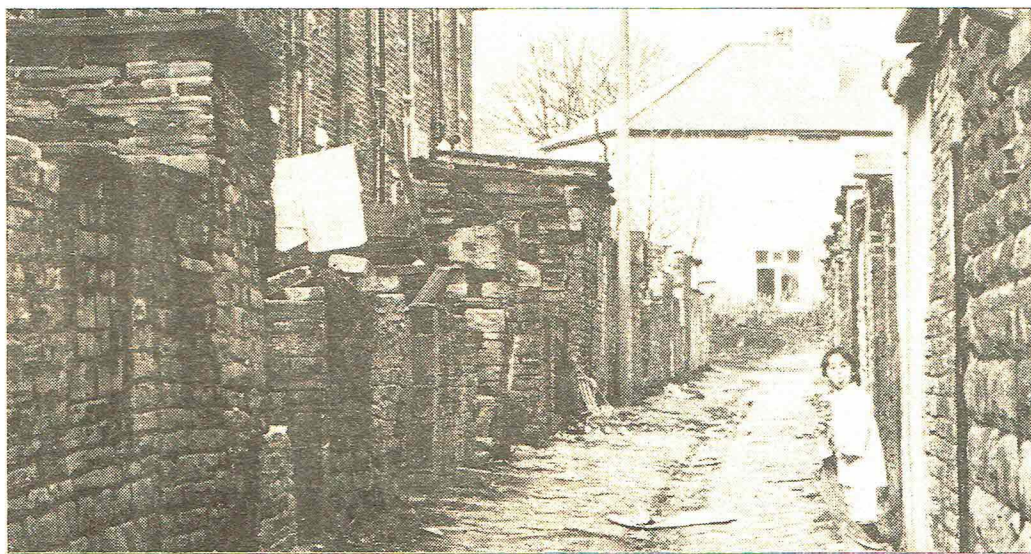
By Jeremy Birch

The only thing they really care about is defending their profit system, which has condemned 4 million to the dole queues and one third of the population to a life of poverty.

What does new health and social security secretary, John Moore, know about the poor, or the plight of the old and sick? As a stockbroker, Lloyds underwriter and former chairman of the subsidiary of an American investment bank, has he ever had to worry where the next penny is coming from?

The new minister for unemployment, Norman Fowler, has come fresh from his triumph privatising parts of the health service and forcing up the cost of prescription charges.

Kenneth Baker, the Secretary of State for Education, has had no personal contact with state education. He went to a public school, and he sent his



Inner city Britain. Tories say they will revive it, but they are responsible for its decline.

children to a public school. As a former director of Geest Holdings and advisor to Avon Cosmetics, he will not have learnt much about the intolerable pressures facing the millions of ordinary children and teachers.

Cecil Parkinson made a £750,000 killing in one go, selling shares in a construction firm. John Wakeham was a director of 20 companies.

This Government is a million miles removed from the daily struggle to get by of millions of families. The Tories do not care, they are responsible for the cuts, the closures and the attacks on the working class.

Yet even with their 100

majority, this government of the rich is uneasy. Even they have recognised the terrible hatred of Thatcherism, and the deep divisions not just between North and South, but between inner city and outer suburb. A yawning chasm between the classes, that guarantees, however many MPs the Tories may have, inevitable explosions of discontent.

But who is in charge of the new 'caring' programme for the inner cities — Lord Young, and Kenneth Clarke who has attacked those on the welfare system, as an "army of scroungers".

Unelected Lord Young is threatening to by-pass the elected, mainly Labour, inner

city local councils to push through his programme. And his model is the London Docklands development, where local people have been pushed aside in favour of rich city slickers, who can afford astronomical property prices and who probably vote Tory.

The new faces and the striving for a smoother image, cannot hide that this Tory Cabinet is committed to the same hard nosed, callous policies as ever.

The labour and trade union movement must organise now to avenge the general election defeat. Show the Tories the same compassion they show everyone else and throw them on the scrapheap.

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Yorkshire miners gala.

100 years of struggle
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Lessons of Labour's defeat.

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The Liverpool effect.

Broadgreen's campaign
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Militant

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No more retreats

WITHIN DAYS of Labour's election defeat, the Tory press have begun to offer the Party their 'remedies'. As always their advice is to move right on policy and make the Party less democratic.

Unfortunately sections of the Party leadership have already begun to bend before this pressure, having swallowed the myth that the election was lost because the Party was 'too far left' or 'too tied to the unions'.

The reality is that right-wing policies and candidates led to defeat. Any more moves now to jettison socialist policies and to plunge the party into a new internal battle, would play further into the Tories' hands.

There should be no support for the ideas now coming from the formerly left-wing group, the Labour Co-ordinating Committee (LCC), which amount to abandoning any policies for fundamental changes in society.

The LCC has blamed Labour's loss of Battersea and Fulham on the popularity of selling off housing estates and Tory economic policies. They have virtually conceded that socialism is no longer relevant to workers who have bought their homes or live in the South.

They want to "polish up Labour's policies on share ownership, housing co-operatives and industrial democracy, that will appeal unashamedly to the self-interest of working-class voters". "Workers owning shares in their industry is after all in line with socialist objectives" says LCC leader Peter Hain.

Workers have no interest in such Tory policies which are no more than confidence tricks. They may provide a short-term benefit to a lucky minority of workers who can afford to buy their council house or a few shares, but economic crisis and the Tories' policies to transfer wealth to the millionaires will see these benefits taken back with a vengeance and leave these 'better-off' workers worse off than ever.

If Labour adopts policies like these, next there could be a move to attack Clause IV of the constitution, and the press is even speculating about a future Labour-Liberal agreement.

The organisational changes being discussed in the press threaten to engulf the Labour Party in a new internal civil war. Contrary to the impression given in the press, they are designed to reduce the role of ordinary members.

'One member one vote' in the selection of MPs ignores the crucial role of the members of affiliated unions, who would be disenfranchised if this procedure were adopted.

It should not be forgotten that the 'democrats' of Labour's right-wing Solidarity Group who are pushing this reform opposed the introduction of reselection of MPs at all.

Even more dangerous is the idea of abolishing the National Executive Committee. The present committee could hardly be less sympathetic to the left, but it is answerable to Party conference.

What is being proposed is some kind of federal body, elected from regional executive committees, the Parliamentary Party, trade unions and council Labour Groups, little more than an advisory body. Under this system, without a committee to execute its resolutions, conference would become little more than a talking shop.

Alongside these changes are threats to take further disciplinary action against the 'hard left'. Expulsion is already facing some members due to appear before the the National Constitutional Committee. The Labour Party Young Socialists are fighting for their democratic rights.

The Party has already been damaged already by these futile battles. The four wasted years of purges of *Militant* supporters contributed to the election defeat. To start new purges would be suicidal, especially since the intended victims would be those whose policies and campaigns have proved to be the most effective.

As even the political commentators of *The Independent* had to admit: "It would be ironic indeed if Labour leaders were now to move against men like Terry Fields, the *Militant* supporter who won one of the biggest pro-Labour swings in the country in Liverpool Broadgreen".

It would be an outrage and would prove that the Party leaders have learned nothing from this election defeat. Rather than attacking members like Terry Fields, the whole party should be learning from him how socialist policies and a campaign to reach every voter could defeat the Tories nationally as decisively as he did in Liverpool.

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Photo: John Harris (IFL)

THE ARGUMENT that left-wing policies and candidates contributed to Labour's election defeat is resoundingly answered by the results from four constituencies where Marxist candidates fought on a clear socialist programme:

	1983	1987		1983	1987
BRADFORD NORTH			COVENTRY SE		
Tory	16,094 (34.27%)	19,376 (39.5%)	Labour	15,307 (41.08%)	17,969 (47.64%)
Labour	14,492 (30.86%)	21,009 (42.8%)	Tory	12,625 (33.88%)	11,316 (29.88%)
SDP	11,962 (25.47%)	8,656 (17.7%)	Lib	9,323 (11.20%)	SDP 8,095 (21.38%)
Ind Lab	4,018		Green		479 (1.26%)
Others	387				
	Poll 70.76%	Poll 72.7%		Poll 70.91%	Poll 72.9%
	Maj 1,602	Maj 1,633		Maj 2,682	Maj 6,653
	Swing 9.9% SDP to Labour			Swing 5.3% Tory to Labour	(0.8% in W Midlands)
LIVERPOOL BROADGREEN			BERMONDSEY		
Labour	18,802 (40.87%)	23,262 (48.6%)	Lib	17,185 (49.85%)	17,072 (47.4%)
Tory	15,002 (33.88%)	7,413 (15.5%)	Labour	12,021 (34.87%)	14,293 (39.7%)
Ind Lib	7,021 (15.30%)	Lib 17,215 (35.9%)	Tory	4,481 (13.0%)	4,522 (12.6%)
SDP	5,169 (11.20%)		Others	782	Comm 108 (1.26%)
	Poll 72.06%	Poll 75.9%		Poll 61.73%	Poll 64.9%
	Maj 3,800	Maj 6,047		Maj 5,164	Maj 2,779
	Swing 12.4% Tory to Labour			Swing 3.6% Lib to Labour	(0.5% swing from Lab to Tory in London!)
WHOLE COUNTRY			Tory	13,012,316 (42%)	13,763,134 (43%)
Swing 2.5% Tory to Labour.			Labour	8,440,351 (28%)	10,033,633 (32%)
			Alliance	7,780,949 (25%)	7,339,912 (23%)

Defeat for Italian Communists

IN THE Italian general election, as in Britain, the main workers' party has suffered a heavy defeat.

By Soraya Lawrence

The Communist Party (PCI) received its worst result since 1968. Its vote fell to just below 27 per cent, a fall of 3.3 per cent from 1983. The Christian Democrats (DC), Italy's conservative party, increased their vote by 1.4 per cent.

But the Socialist Party (PSI) increased its vote the most, by 2.9 per cent, picking up votes from the Republican, Liberal and Social Democrat parties. The MSI (Italy's fascist party) also lost votes.

Feeble campaign

The votes lost by the PCI mainly went to the Greens, who shot up from nothing to 2.5 per cent and to Proletarian Democracy. This was the price the Communist leadership had to pay for their record before the elections and their feeble election campaign.

An analysis of the results shows that the PCI lost more votes in the North than in the South and mainly in working-class districts of Turin, Milan, Rome and even areas that had been Communist stron-

gholds.

In Milan (where the vote fell from 27 per cent to 22.9 per cent) the Communist-dominated trade union had signed an agreement at the Alfa Romeo plant accepting a 40 per cent increase in production and the laying off of 1,600 workers.

In Genoa as a result of an agreement the union signed against the dockworkers, their vote fell from by four per cent.

Votes were lost to the Greens on the question of nuclear power stations.

As with the Labour Party in Britain, socialism was conspicuously absent from the PCI's election campaign. They talked of 'a progressive and reforming alternative', giving no indication of which parties they would form a coalition government with.

They only said that it would not include the DC, but were open to all other parties. Their vague proposal of 'full employment' failed to explain how this would be achieved. They also made vague promises of tax reform.

This campaign did nothing to inspire either workers or youth to vote PCI. For example in Milan, there were only three workers in the lists of candidates.

The youth simply did not vote for them. In Italy there is a vote for the 'senato' (House of Lords) where you have to be over 21 to vote, and for the 'camera' (House of Commons) where the age is 18. The party actually lost votes for the 'camera' in relation to those for the 'senato'.

No stability

Yet this defeat for the PCI does not mean more stability for the next five party coalition government. It will mean the opposite. This time the DC has increased its vote at the expense of the smaller parties in the coalition and will therefore be pushing for the position of Prime Minister.

On the other hand the PSI with the biggest increase will have more bargaining power and will also be pushing for Prime Minister and top ministerial posts. The Socialists have reserved comment on what sort of government they will form. (The distribution

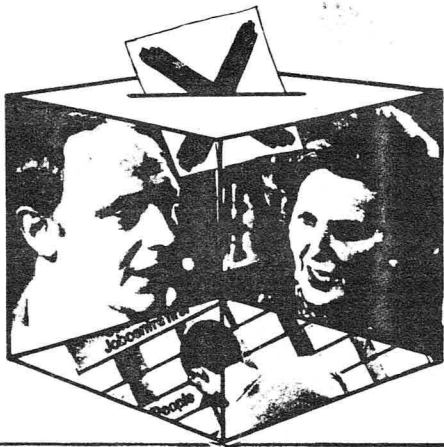
of votes in Italy is such that a government cannot be formed without either the PSI or the PCI.)

This points the way to more wrangling between the parties; probably there will be a temporary government for the summer, but they could still be without a government by the autumn.

Whatever government is formed it will be under pressure from the Confindustria (Italian bosses' union) to attack workers' living standards and will have to face the prospect of fierce industrial battles. For example the announcement of 16,000 sackings in the steel industry was saved for after the elections.

Outside the government the disastrous results open up a period of crisis within the PCI. Although their existence is denied, there will be an increase in the clashes between factions in the party.

The right wing will probably use the increase in the PSI vote as a justification to continue their reformist course. But this will only provoke further resistance from workers in the party as they come more and more under the attack of the bosses.



Election round-up

Labour's Scottish landslide

NOT SINCE 1910 has the Tory Party in Scotland been routed so decisively. In a huge Labour landslide, which also swept away Roy Jenkins of the SDP in Hillhead and SNP leader Gordon Wilson in Dundee East, the Tory Party was reduced to a miserable rump of ten seats out of 72.

In the traditional Labour strongholds of the West, Tory candidates were massacred. In Strathelyde they are left clinging on to two out of 32 seats. In Glasgow Labour won decisive majorities in all eleven seats and the Tory vote has been reduced to twelve per cent.

Suburbs

Perhaps the most significant feature, however, was the gigantic movement to Labour in apparently comfortable middle-class suburbs, despite the Tories' crude attempt to bolster its support in these areas by pledging to abolish domestic rates. Left-wing Labour

candidates were victorious in former Tory strongholds.

The 8,000 majority of Defence Secretary, George Younger, was slashed to 182. This result must be a major embarrassment to Thatcher, with her Rule Britannia defence policy. It is also a powerful answer to Labour's right wing who argued that it was impossible to defeat the Tories with a non-nuclear defence policy.

The Scottish election results are an anticipation of what will take place in the Midlands and South of England in the near future.

In 1955, the Tories won over half the Scottish vote and took over half the seats. Even as recently as February 1974, the Tories trailed Labour by only four per cent in Scotland. On 11 June they finished twenty per cent behind Labour and are now in danger of complete collapse.

Labour, with 50 MPs, is now in a stronger position than ever. With Thatcher now likely to wreak revenge on Scotland and the North, the working class will be looking towards Labour to organise effective action to defend jobs, social services and living standards.

By Alan McCombes

Midlands disappointment

THE ELECTION results in Birmingham and the Black Country were a disappointment to Labour supporters. Instead of winning a number of Tory marginals, Labour lost their marginal of Wolverhampton NE to the Tories. Labour now hold 14 seats to the Tories' 11.

While other parts of the West Midlands swung to Labour, by as much as 5.9 per cent in Coventry SE, fought by the Marxist MP Dave Nellist, the Northfield marginal in Birmingham, which includes the Longbridge car factory, with right-winger John Spellar as Labour's candidate, saw the Tory majority increased.

Northfield

Labour had a majority of 10,597 in 1974. In 1983, the Tories had a 2,760 majority and now in this election, it has increased to 3,135.

In previous elections, car cavalcades festooned with red bunting would leave the car factories and drive straight to the marginals in the city. None of that happened this time. Instead it was left to Neil Kinnock with his TV and photo-opportunity campaign to bring out the vote.

In Birmingham as a whole, Labour increased its vote by 14,000 to 214,000, but the Tories also went up by 9,000 to 218,000. In the Black Country, Labour was



Dave Nellist MP.

up by 29,000 to 255,000 whilst the Tories increased by 34,000 to 267,000.

In Wolverhampton NE, both Labour and the Tories increased their vote at the expense of the Alliance. Labour saw its majority of 214 turn into a Tory majority of 204.

One reason for these results was the lack of any campaigning by the right wing. Hardly any public meetings were called (except those organised by the Labour Party Young Socialists).

The election over, West Midlands workers will turn once again to their trade unions to defend their jobs and conditions. The union leaders who were telling us before the election that you couldn't beat Thatcher with industrial action will have to give a lead in the coming period or stand aside.

By Bill Mullins

The Cabinet Shuffle

New dance craze hits London

MAGGIE'S SONG AND DANCE ACADEMY



Alliance partners in crisis

THE ELECTION has left the SDP/Liberal Alliance in ruins. They have only 22 MPs, only five of them Social Democrats.

By Roger Shives

Thatcher was too soft.

Another SDP luminary Neville Sandelson called for his party's supporters to back Thatcher and accused Shirley Williams of "crawling along the pavements of Grunwick" in 1977 and associating with Communists!

Owen will probably eventually shuffle off to his real home in the Conservative Party. Others in the Alliance, having noted an exit poll of voters defecting from the Alliance showing that many were afraid of letting the Tories back in, will try to become more 'radical'.

Too soft

Owen himself is a Tory out of place, and it shows. He said he would rather work with the Tories than with Labour if there was a hung parliament. In the miners' strike, he thought

The SDP was formed by right-wing Labour careerists scared by the leftward shift in the party. They hoped to destroy Labour. They failed to do this, but in the last two elections the Alliance have given the Tories victory.

Shirley Williams, the supposedly popular SDP candidate, has now lost three different constituen-

cies in successive elections. She and other SDP members will be looking for a new home, and a deal with a new 'moderate' purged Labour Party would be their preferred option.

The Liberals are an openly capitalist party, but they put forward a 'left of centre' image. *The Guardian* suggests that Steel wants to offer Labour an electoral front with the Alliance, giving Labour the task of winning Scotland, Wales and the North, while the Alliance, they hope, win seats in the south.

Nonsense

The price would be proportional representation to make it far harder for Labour to win an outright majority, and presumably a further swing to the right by Labour's leaders.

Labour must have no truck with this nonsense.

Only Labour's failure to put a socialist alternative to Thatcher has let the Alliance portray themselves as 'radicals'. Even without Owen, they would still be a bosses' party.

The Alliance support Thatcher's anti union laws and back privatisation. Liverpool Liberals were prepared to implement the Tory government's wishes when the fighting Labour council were sacked by the Tory judges.

In Tower Hamlets the Liberal council pursues vicious anti working class housing policies and tries to stir up racism by ensuring the brunt falls on Asian families. Like chameleons they will appear radical or reactionary at will to gain votes from Labour.

Labour should welcome the opportunity to expose the Alliance's real nature and put forward a genuine socialist alternative to the Tories.

Left victory in Mansfield

IN MANSFIELD there was a nail-biting finish as Labour candidate Alan Meale won by 56 votes after two recounts.

The responsibility for this close result rests with the right wing of Mansfield Labour Party during the 'Concannon years' when the majority fell from over 20,000 to 2,000.

Many local Party members believe that without the selection of a new candidate, and the new campaigning attitude in the party, the seat would have been lost. Labour's vote actually went up by 640 and the Moderate Labour Party polled a derisory 1,580 votes. The selection of a left winger was certainly not a vote loser. In the two neighbouring constituencies of Sherwood and Ashfield, right wing candidates suffered badly.

In Ashfield Labour's majority was cut by 3,000. In Sherwood, the biggest mining constituency in the country, Labour's candidate Willie Bach's statement that the UDM is a

natural Labour union, set up under a real sense of grievance" (*Independent* 2/6/87) did nothing to attract support for Labour. The Tories' majority went up by 3,000 votes.

In all the Notts mining constituencies, socialist policies will win miners to Labour and also persuade UDM members to see the need for a united union in the Notts coalfield. Already more miners were returning to the NUM in the pre-election weeks, as a result of dissatisfaction with the UDM's pay agreement.

A major factor in Labour's success on election day was the enthusiasm created by the support for Labour of Mansfield bus-drivers, with most buses and drivers plastered with Labour stickers. That support is a direct product of the permanent campaigning conducted by the Marxist leadership of Mansfield NUR no.2 branch.

By a Mansfield Militant supporter



LPYS on the march in Bradford North

Greater Manchester gain

THE LOSS of Manchester's last Tory MP illustrates why the Tories are panicking about the inner cities. The Labour victory in Withington was undoubtedly a victory for the left of the Party, with a six per cent swing to Labour, the highest in Greater Manchester.

While Withington consolidated a solid belt of 20 Labour MPs, it remained as Labour's only gain in the region.

The right-wing nature of Labour's campaign in

Wythenshawe cut the swing to Labour to just one and a half per cent and in the Tory marginal of Bury North, Labour secured a three and a half per cent swing to the Tories, whose vote rose by 5,000.

Similarly in Hyndburn, where former left Liverpool councillor Keva Coombes ran a campaign peppered with denunciations of the *Militant*, he managed to achieve, in the second most marginal Tory seat, a further swing to the Conservatives!

Barnsley waits for revenge

BARNLSLEY LIES at the heart of the Yorkshire coalfield. It contains the now-redundant Cortonwood pit around which the great miners' strike began.

When the Board announced its closure in April 1984, they unleashed bitterness and anger. Miners decided that 'enough was enough'. They made a stand for their entire community and future generations. The whole town then rose up to stand alongside the NUM.

To commemorate the 100th Yorkshire Miners' Gala, *Militant* has spoken to mining families in the Barnsley area. Their experiences reveal the comradeship and determination found when workers enter struggle. They also show the hardship, and the bitterness felt at the end of the dispute.

Old scores

That great struggle has burned deep into the consciousness of an entire population. There are still many scores to settle.

Total employment in mining fell from 19,353 in 1983 to 11,307 in mid-1986. Unemployment in Barnsley stands at over 20 per cent, almost twice the national average.

This appalling statistic hides even worse local variations. On the Athersley estate, male unemployment is now 31 per cent. Workers have paid dearly for the defeat of their union.

Every strike has its martyrs, but the sacked miners have endured for too long the pain of victimisation. After the strike, 1,014 miners were sacked, of whom 662 have since been reinstated. In Yorkshire, 70 miners remain sacked.

The strike has left its legacy. The Tory Party and its hangers-on are treated with contempt. The police either tread very gingerly on the beat or in dense packs. Their attempts to rebuild links with the community since the strike have failed dismally.

The gala will show that the miners' organisations, and their traditions and fighting spirit, remain intact. But the experience of 1984-85 will never be forgotten. Discontent constantly finds its expression through industrial action. 'Ragouts' are now a weekly occurrence in the coalfield.

The Yorkshire miners' spirit has not been broken... Barnsley waits to get its revenge.

Yorkshire miners 100 years of struggle

Yorkshire Miners' Gala, 20th June.

THIS YEAR'S Yorkshire Miners' Gala in Barnsley is the hundredth.

The first, organised by the South Yorkshire Mineworkers Association in 1863, was also held in Barnsley.

During the '84/85 strike NUM President Arthur Scargill was derided for his claims about pit closure hit lists and planned job cuts. Two years after the end of the strike, even local Barnsley Tories have been forced to admit that Arthur Scargill was right. 66,000 jobs have been lost and 42 pits closed since the end of the strike. There have been 19 colliery mergers. In Yorkshire NUM membership has fallen from a pre-strike figure of 55,000 to 34,500 today.

The British coalfields have witnessed an unprecedented management assault as British Coal have attempted to take back the rights miners have won

By Nigel Pearce
(Denby Grange NUM
personal capacity)

over the years. This has been coupled to a remorseless drive to make the industry 'profitable'. To facilitate this process management have attempted to cut NUM officials at pit, area and national level by direct communication with the workforce. Video display units, glossy pamphlets and magazines have been used. Area, and even individual colliery newsletters are sent directly to the miners' homes along with the company's own colour newspaper *Coal News*.

All these publications, which must cost a fortune, stress the need for profits. League tables of colliery and even individual coal

face performances are produced. 'Make a profit or close' is the message. Such is management's desperation to increase the exploitation of the miners, that in the South Yorkshire Area, even pit holidays appear to be under threat. The September 1986 Treeton Newsletter contained the following gem: "Holidays cost money; it is no exception when this pit is on holiday. It cost £318,000 during the holiday fortnight without any income from production, therefore, this was an operating loss." Unfortunately for management, most miners see these publications as the blatant propaganda they are and treat them accordingly. Indeed, management attempt to get miners to contribute to them—without success.

Houghton Main Newsletter in October 1986 lamented: "As previously stated there is no intention of constructing a propagan-

da machine, but if the only input is from management it is bound to give that impression. Once again, therefore, we are asking for your contributions." Even the competitions in the pit newsletters are always won by members of management because NUM members won't enter. The prizes are dismal anyway.

More seriously, the constant pressure on miners to increase production has led to a steady increase in accidents (see table)

Year	Accident rate per 1,000 shifts
'80/81	1.16
'81/82	1.69
'82/83	1.69
'83/84	1.82
'84/85	1.43 strike
'85/86	1.92
'86/87	1.96

(1st 30wks)
(source British Coal)

A family recalls the strike

MILITANT INTERVIEWED the Ibbitson family from Wombwell, just outside Barnsley, whose experiences in the strike were typical of most mining families.

Muriel and Geoff have four children, Mark, Tina, Jane and Paul. Geoff has worked at Darfield Main colliery for the last 30 years.

How did the strike affect the family and the neighbourhood?

Muriel: They were the happiest days of our life. It was very hard, a struggle—I was earning £37 a week—but we didn't bother. If you don't struggle, then you get nowhere with this government.

What was it like going picketing?

Geoff: I was running through Kinnerton Park and had two bobbies on either side of me and my mate. One drew his truncheon and hit my mate full on his head. He was flat out. He was surrounded by four bobbies with dogs and I heard them saying "Get up you bastard so we can knock you down again".

I used to come back from picketing and watch it on the telly. I couldn't believe it. They showed us charging the police, but they'd been charging us!

The police weren't above the law themselves. When we went to Sel-

by, we were picking peas, spuds and cabbages in the fields, and bobbies came with us. One inspector said he'd never had as many vegetables as during the strike.

What were relations like with the police?

Muriel: They used to ride up and down our village in their vans and put two fingers up at us and jeer at us. Wombwell was one of the main stations; it was known as the Colditz locally.

Jane: Aye, once you get in, you can't get out.

Geoff: At Oregreave they used to beat their shields like drums. Old people would ask us into their houses when we were running from them and there would be as many as 30 hid behind settees, and under beds. Bobbies got used to it and would knock old folk up in the night and search their houses for us.

Jane: Nobody's got faith in the police now, especially the kids; they hate them. Even now it flares up. They arrested a lad down Hemmingfield and there was rioting.

What about those miners who went back?

There used to be a waiting place to pick up the scabs for work. They would hide behind hedges and in bus shelters, and then run with their heads covered when the van came. We didn't talk to scabs and

we still don't.

What support did you get in the strike?

Geoff: We got help from the rest of the trade union movement; some rail workers in Nottingham lost their jobs for refusing to move coal.

We got a lot of support from abroad—Australia, France, America, Italy, Spain, Russia. People that couldn't afford it sent us money. In Chile they donated to our fund. Kids were going abroad for their holidays through our trade union movement—our Mark went to Venice for just £2!

What lessons have been learned from the strike?

Geoff: We've learned what it's like to lose. Management have got the knife in and they're twisting it. We're humiliated, but we'll come back again. Miners shouldn't have their heads down; they should hold them high.

There'll be another strike; there's got to be; that's what it's heading for. They're trying to frighten us one by one, but there's only hardliners left now. They don't want a strike, but it'll come.

Muriel: We learned how to go without and make do, but for all I've learned, I'd still go through it again.



Photo: John Harris (IFL)

Cortonwood miners march back at the end of the strike, only to be met by Kent pickets.



Even management have been forced to recognise this trend. In a display of outright hypocrisy they have launched a National Safety Campaign. In fact, it is the constant management pressure and their closure threats which have caused the rise in accidents. It is true British coal have invested heavily in the Yorkshire coalfield, although it has been done at the expense of the so-called peripheral coalfields. But even in Yorkshire the investment has been selective, with super pits receiving virtually all the money whilst other collieries, Kilnhurst being a case in point, have been starved of investment.

The North Yorkshire Area has received the lion's share of investment on a national basis. Much of this has been invested to create three huge pit complexes. As a consequence the North Yorkshire Area now

holds all six national output records. Kellingley colliery is the largest in Western Europe. However, the other consequence is capital charges of £2m per week. By the end of the year, North Yorkshire will possess 22 heavy duty faces and 83 per cent of all faces will be retreat. Despite this they are threatening to save £47 million this financial year by further mergers and closures. South Kirby colliery has been placed in the extended review procedure. The South Yorkshire Area made a profit of £10.8 million last year after capital charges. Only 14 of South Yorkshire's 41 faces are heavy duty but they account for 50 per cent of the area's output and a further seven are planned this year.

Plans are also afoot to introduce longer faces up to 300 metres. But here again the Manvers Complex and Treton are under threat. It

is possible to glimpse, behind all the statistical rhetoric, management's desperation at the miners' ability to fight for their rights. Don't believe all the 'new realism' garbage that the miners are smashed. As *Militant* has pointed out previously, 28 per cent of all strikes in Britain in the first ten months of 1986 were in mining. Two thirds of those miners' strikes were in Yorkshire. South Yorkshire Area Director Ted Horton said in May's *Coal News*: "Losses due to industrial action will have to be reduced".

Way forward

One of the causes of these disputes is bitterness over the sacked miners. Despite the recent partial amnesty, 352 men remain outside the gates nationally, 70 being Yorkshiremen. But in general these disputes reflect anger at

management's tactics, of which the sacked are a product.

Management have also been trying to introduce a new incentive scheme, a dangerously divisive one at that. Termed the Doncaster Option, it is a cynical attempt to divide the workforce. Basically, it involves the introduction of two parallel bonus systems. The face and development workers' bonus would be based on the task achieved whilst everyone else would be on pit tonnage scales. The aim is to stop the pooling of payments. Each unit is instead to be paid what it 'earns'. This dangerous scheme is meeting increased resistance so management are attempting to introduce it piecemeal.

Some pits have been coned into acceptance; others, such as Armthorpe and Denby Grange have successfully fought its introduction

Alongside the hatred of management, many activists in the union are questioning where the industry and their union is going. The national leadership continues to fight, but unfortunately Yorkshire too has been affected by the 'New Realism' of many of the Area leaderships of the NUM. Whilst not as rampant as in the South Wales or Scotland the general line from the Yorkshire leadership since the end of the strike has been "keep your heads down and pray for a Labour government". Fortunately, however, many activists, particularly amongst the youth, are determined to continue to follow the militant traditions on which their union was built.

These activists must organise in and around the clear and fighting strategy mapped out by the miners Broad Left.

A victory for the women's movement

MILITANT SPOKE to three women who were active in the miners' wives movement during the strike, one of whom is still active in the Barnsley Miners' Wives Group.

All three supported the strike from day one, although one admitted to worrying about how they would survive financially. Elaine followed her mother into becoming involved, Mary after hearing about her local group in a pub.

They believe that the womens' group strengthened them and prevented them from feeling isolated. But, more importantly it allowed them to support the strike actively. Marsha was inspired to go on to the picket lines after her husband was arrested for nothing in Nottinghamshire.

All have bitter experiences from the picket lines. At Silver Hill colliery in Nottinghamshire, two

women were arrested for nothing and manhandled into the waiting Transit. One wet herself in custody after not being allowed to use the toilet and both were strip-searched. They were eventually charged with obstruction.

They all spoke at meetings outside the Yorkshire coalfield to raise funds for the kitchens. None felt they could have done it beforehand. Marsha went on a number of trips to raise funds abroad.

Sacked miners

Women Against Pit Closures is obviously not so big today, but two groups still operate in Barnsley. The sacked miners are the number one priority: "We organise concerts, sell badges, etc. to raise funds for them. We are going to carry on. We are ready for the next strike".

As a Darfield Main collier said: "If it hadn't been

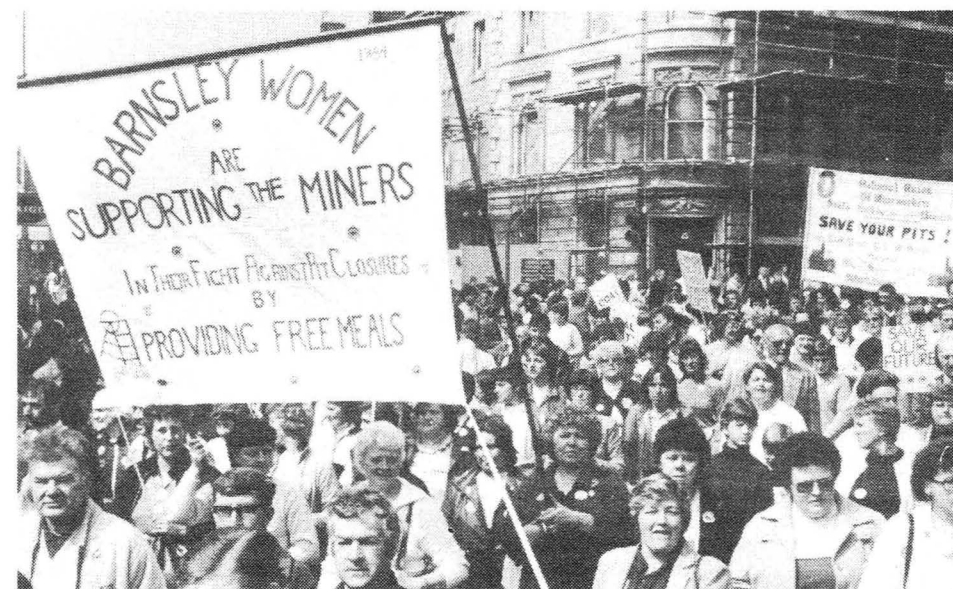


Photo: John Smith.

for the women, the strike would have ended much sooner. A lot of women had a lot more strength than their men".

All three agreed that the strike had made them much more aware of the outside world and expressed a deep hatred for the police. Elaine said it had made her respect money more, after surviving for a year on £10 a week:

"A lot of people didn't understand what it was about. They can't understand how we could go a year without wages. People say it was all in vain, but for us it was one big mighty experience. I don't regret

it; it taught me a lot. It fetched a lot of women out of their shells and made them stand up for their rights. It wasn't just a man's fight."

World struggle

Marsha explained how she had been content in her own little world, but that she now realises that there's a big world outside with big problems. At her first foreign meeting in Italy, she couldn't understand why the audience were bothered about the British mining communities. She will always remember the answer, that

"working-class struggle is the same all over the world".

None of them agreed that the strike was a waste of time. "I think that the strike was a victory" said Marsha: "not the victory that we wanted, but it led the way for other unions such as the printers to fight."

"The miners' wives inspired working-class women all over the world—that was a victory for the womens' movement."

The last words belong to Elaine: "The strike made you realise that whatever you want in life, you'll have to struggle for it".

Some wounds will never heal

IN BARNSELY, the pubs are the centre of the community. They became the centres for a lot of the strike's fund-raising and support activities. *Militant* spoke to Mary, landlady of the White Bear, and Ron of the Victoria, and to customers passing through.

"Customers still come in and talk about the strike" said Mary: "It was like a shadow cast over the whole area. 90 per cent in this area were miners. I felt so helpless; the beer was there but we couldn't give it away. We would provide cups of tea and coffee and help out as best we could."

At the Victoria, regulars would buy commemorative plates for the strike fund: "One lass bought 16 plates even though she was unemployed. Her son was a miner". But "it was a bad period" we were told: men had nowt in their pockets and would spend a hour over a pint that had been bought for them."

The miners' wives took the initiative in organising fund-raising. "They were marvellous" Mary remembers: "they organised raffles, galas, you name it, they did it. They were able to send kids on exchange holidays to Holland and Germany. They fetched the whole community together".

Rallied round

Regulars rallied round at the 'Vic', especially the ex-miners, in helping out their striking comrades. Although takings were down, more came into the pub during the strike; they got support, friendship and usually one or two free pints.

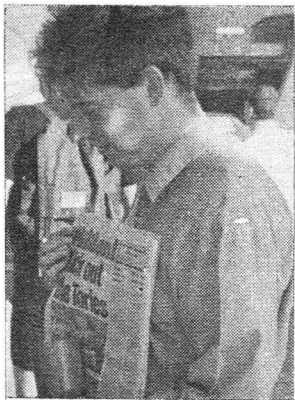
The strike "fetched miners together; people went short, but we all helped each other out. Everyone was in the same boat, struggling together" Mary recalls.

Attitudes were hardened by the actions of the police, but the town's anger is especially reserved for those that returned to work. In the 'Vic' if there's a scab with the visiting darts team, the home team won't throw.

At the White Bear, a regular remembers the annual pigeon fly when one scab walked into the pub. "Everyone walked straight out". Mary had to ask him to leave because she'd lost all her custom.

There are several pubs in Barnsley that won't let scabs through the door there has even been one taken to court for refusing to serve a scab in Dods-worth. Some wounds will never heal.

The experiences of the strike have politicised the entire population. "She's going to privatise the dole next year" shouted one customer in the White Bear. Little wonder that they weigh the Labour votes here.

Sell**Militant**

THE TORIES are fond of talking about the boom we are supposed to be enjoying but the election saw a real boom — in sales of Militant. Even in the frenzy of the run up to polling day we saw tremendous sales. The two different issues really helped the sales. In Bradford over 400 copies were sold on the streets and door to door. Even the Tory candidate bought a copy.

Liverpool were able to beat Bradford however selling 600 copies. But even though the election is over the potential is still enormous. Many workers are now looking for a way to fight back — this was shown on the march to the Scottish miners' gala where 60 papers were sold.

One seller from East London underestimated the potential which existed. When he went for a drink on Friday night he only took two papers with him. Five people came up to ask for a copy of the paper. In the end he was forced to auction the two copies he had — make sure you don't make the same mistake!

Feeding off the unemployed

Cathy leaves home (part two)

IT WAS ten months after my last attempt at independence had failed and the house was even more crowded. I now shared a bedroom with not only my two sisters, but also my six month old baby.

I thought it was time for a second attempt to leave home, but this time I'd go to a different area; there'd got to be better places to live.

My boyfriend found a guest house that took DHSS and children so we went to see it. At first it seemed really nice. We had a bedroom to ourselves and we shared a kitchen, lounge, bathroom and shower room with the other occupants of the house.

When we moved in, we soon found out that it wasn't as good as it seemed. We had a single room for me, my boyfriend and my baby. We did have single beds, but one was taken out because there wasn't enough room for a cot.

Ripped off

The bedroom smelt of gas, so we had to leave the window open, which meant the baby risked catching a cold (it was the middle of winter).

For this room we paid £35 each and £10 for the baby—£80 for a room that wasn't big enough to swing a cat. The kitchen would have been ideal, with gas cooker, fridge, microwave, automatic washing machine and tumble dryer, all of which we were told we could use at any time, the last two for a small charge of £1.

We soon found out that any time meant any time we gave the landlord money in advance, when he would take the locks off them. This means you've got to get up early to catch him, as this is usually the only time he comes to the house. If you miss him the washing builds up with a baby.

The reason he bothers coming in in the morning is not to let us do our washing or see if we are alright. He comes to take the lock off the letter box. He has a lock



(well into locks is our landlord, real trusting!) so that he can catch our Giros before we do.

Then he cashes them, takes his cut and gives us our change. One boy didn't want the landlord to see a letter he knew was coming, so he broke the lock and took his letter.

The worst thing about the place is the landlord himself. Although we pay £80 a week for the room, he is forever telling us that they are his rooms and that he can enter them when he wants. If you lock the door he just uses his key.

The landlord got us together and said that if he found out who did it, he would get his mate to

break their legs. His mate is an experienced boxer and handy with his fists (but nothing a plank of wood wouldn't sort out as one of the girls put it).

The worst thing about the place is the landlord himself. Although we pay £80 a week for the room, he is forever telling us that they are his rooms and that he can enter them when he wants. If you lock the door he just uses his key.

He has walked in on girls changing and just stood there waiting for them to get dressed. On one occasion my boyfriend and I were sitting in our room, when he just walked in and said: "Oh I thought you were out" and left. I can't think what the hell he could have been coming in there for.

These are the real DHSS scroungers, who feed off the unemployed and the lack of housing. But these people are Maggie's heroes, because it's free enterprise.

By Cathy from Gwent.

Tory Britain

NOT SURPRISINGLY there was no section in the Tory election manifesto on poverty. If you cannot afford to buy your own house, purchase shares or pay for private health care, you do not count in Thatcher's Britain.

But the poor know only too well that under the Tories the rich got richer, while they were pushed down still further. And the latest report from the Child Poverty Action Group supplies the evidence.

Since 1979 poor families with children suffered a drop of between 15 and 27 per cent in their income. The number of children forced to apply for free school meals rose from 12 to 18 per cent, and the number of people on supplementary benefit doubled from four to eight million.

But it is not just the unemployed who are being ground into poverty, it is full time employed workers too, being paid poverty wages. And the report explodes the Tory myth about workers pricing themselves out of jobs. For unemployment has shot up the fastest in the regions with the worst wages.

In the Northern region the proportion of men on low wages has doubled since 1979, and male earnings have fallen by nine per cent relative to the South East. But joblessness in the North has continued to climb up and up. Conditions in Scotland are no better.

According to a report commissioned by Edinburgh District Council, one in three of all people in Edinburgh are living in poverty.

- ★ One in two of all pensioners in Edinburgh exist on or below the poverty line.
- ★ The real level of unemployment is currently at 35,000 (16.3 per cent).
- ★ 140,076 people exist on incomes on or below the supplementary benefit level.
- ★ A further 44,000 people receive standard housing benefit.
- ★ 23 per cent of all male workers and 56 per cent of all female workers have pay levels which fall into the classification of low pay.
- ★ 70 per cent of single parents with dependent children rely on supplementary benefit.

This is the true nature of Edinburgh hidden from the tourists' cameras and far away from the city centre financial institutions whose profits continue to soar. The colossal profits made in the so-called service sector such as tourism and banking never find their way to the real people of Edinburgh. And this is not just the case there.

There is a very good reason why the Tories do not mention poverty. They believe in a low wage, high profit economy, as their way to rescue declining British capitalism.

LEFT and RIGHT

Hanging parliament?

JOHN LAING one of Britain's largest construction companies gave £5,000 to the Tories' election appeal. Not surprising of course. But there may be hidden reasons for their generosity. Workers at a South London firm were horrified recently to find they were making two sets of gallows, one double and one single, for the arch reactionary Sheikh Zayed of Abu Dhabi. The order had been contracted out by John Laing.

Were Laings' bosses hoping that a third Tory victory would bring back the rope in Britain too? Or were they just hoping for a hung parliament?

Economising royals

OUR ROYAL correspondent writes: The consumer boom hasn't gone to Princess Diana's head. She has hundreds of outfits in her wardrobe, from shops and catalogues, designers even come to her home.

But the economy conscious Princess gets a special rate for shoes and clothes she orders at home. An off the peg ball gown which would cost you or me over £1,000, Diana gets for a mere £300. She is a real example to other young people living on the state, that you can make ends meet if you try hard enough.

Fat profits

EDWINA CURRIE may pretend to be concerned about workers' diets, but are the rest of the Tory Party? Half of all Tory MPs have links with the food industry, as farmers, or directors or consultants to the big food companies.

So it is hardly surprising that the Government, having commissioned a report from the National Advisory Committee on Nutrition Education, disowned its findings which had already been delayed for two years. In the interests of healthy living, the report called for a drastic reduction in the consumption of sugar and fats, and for big

changes in food industry products.

On other advisory committees to the Government on food, 313 of the 427 places are filled by people with direct involvement with the food industry. Are they advising the Government that for the health of the food monopolies, profits must continue to be fat?

Taxing problems

SPARE A THOUGHT for the ninth Duke of Buccleuch. It is difficult preserving one's hereditary estate from those predatory taxmen.

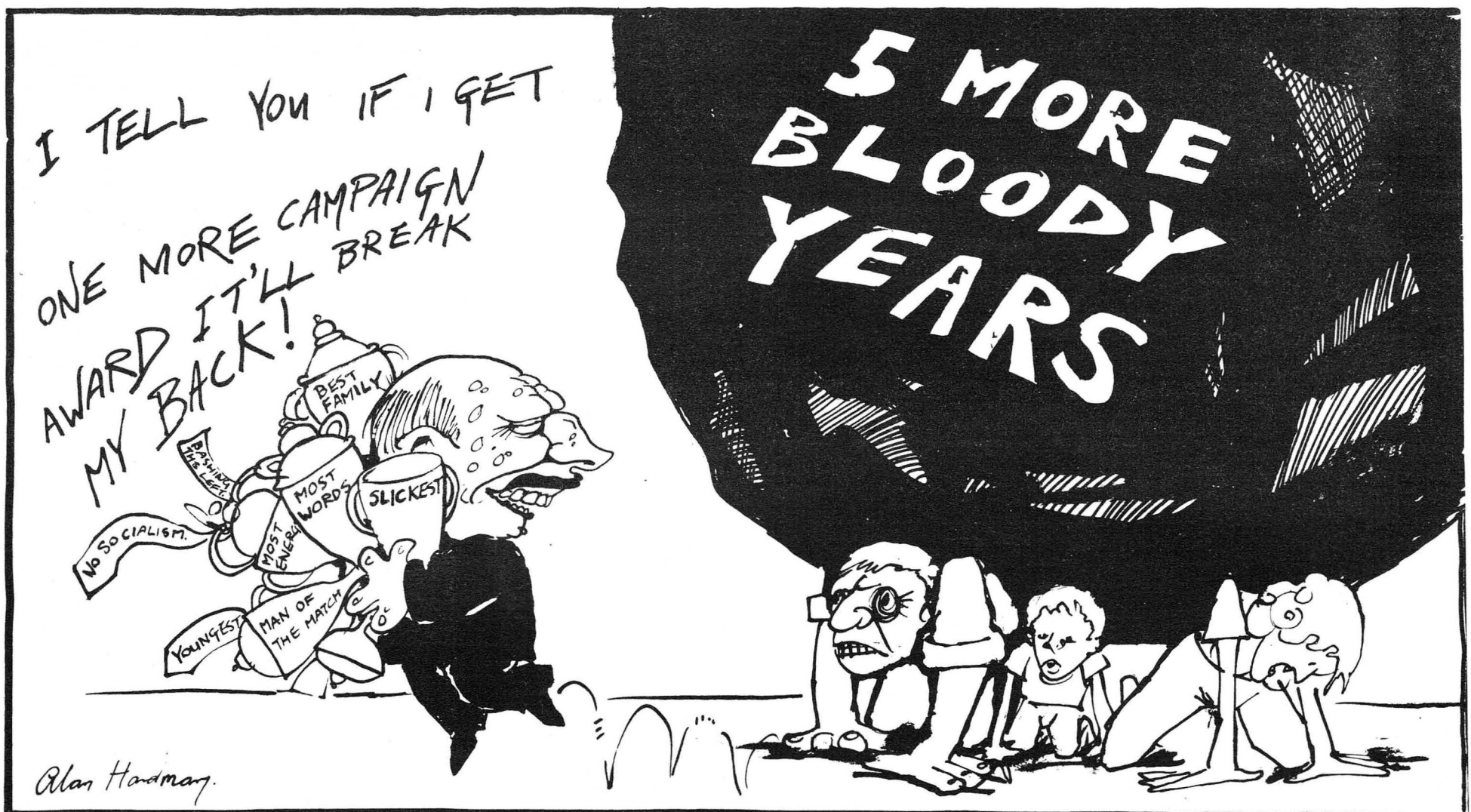
The noble Duke owns 250,000 acres in Scotland, including the stately homes of Bowhill, Dalkeith Palace and Drumlanrig Castle, as well as a further 11,000 acres around Boughton House in Northamptonshire.

Sad to say when the seventh Duke died in 1935 he had not made the necessary arrangements, to avoid the full estate duty. The family had to fork out £250,000 of their £1 million (£23 million that today).

But they learnt their lesson. The family assets were passed on to the current Duke twenty years before the eighth Duke died, saving them £8 million.

Labour's campaign

No socialism no victory



AS THE general election results flashed up on TV screens on 11 and 12 June, a pall of gloom descended on the working class areas and the labour movement of Britain.

By Peter Taaffe

This was somewhat relieved by the massive anti-Tory majorities in Scotland, Wales, the North and the inner cities of the South together with the victories of many on the left.

Outstanding amongst these were the victories in Liverpool Broadgreen, Coventry and Bradford. John Bryan's splendid campaign in Bermondsey also gave a glimpse of what Labour could have achieved on the basis of a mass campaign fought on socialist policies. Liberal luminary Simon Hughes, despite using every device from the Liberals' dirty tricks department, saw his majority halved.

Nevertheless the nightmare of a third term for Thatcher has materialised. Given the 4 million unemployed, the one third of the

population in poverty and the desolate industrial landscape of Britain, how could Thatcher's junta once more ride to power?

It is true that Thatcher had 42.3% of the total vote, and almost 14 million votes. But this is an even lower percentage than Labour's vote in 1970 when it was defeated. Moreover, the elections have revealed the colossal class gulf which is the real lasting legacy of Thatcherism.

Capitalist commentators and, echoing them, the leadership of the Labour Party, mask this by emphasising the so-called 'North-South divide'. But an analysis of the election results show that the division is more between the working class areas, including the inner city areas of the South, and the rural/suburban areas. The Tories do not now have a single MP in Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Bradford and Leicester. There are only two each in Edinburgh and Leeds.

The Tories do not have enough MPs in Scotland now to fill two taxis! Labour has a crushing majority there of 50 seats out of

72. The government may have difficulty in filling all the places in the Scottish office and on the special Scottish committees at Westminster from its meagre band of Scottish Tories.

The labour movement can also take great delight in the crushing of the Social Democratic Party in this election. The 'Gang of Four' has now been reduced to a gang of one, Owen. The SDP's founding father, the traitor Roy Jenkins, compared the launching of his party to a plane taking off. But, having barely got airborne, it has now crash-landed and with it Jenkins, Shirley Williams and Rogers! It is the class polarisation in British society which has shattered the SDP.

Campaign

But the election is a big setback for Labour. Already the right wing Labour leadership are rushing to blame the working class. The day after the election, Neil Kinnock declared, "Many people for reasons best known to themselves have voted for maintaining divisions." The architects

of Labour's defeat also had the audacity to blame the 'loony left.'

The stewardship of the labour movement has been in right-wing hands for four years. They have exercised a virtual monopoly over the shadow cabinet and over the election campaign committee. Apart from Kinnock himself, only one non-Solidarity member, John Prescott, sits in the shadow cabinet. And he was kept on a very tight rein in the election. No figure on the left was given any prominence in the campaign; on the contrary, Walworth Road went to extraordinary lengths to muffle the voice of the left.

Arthur Scargill commented that he was excluded from all platforms apart from Bradford and Broadgreen. The same went for Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner and any other outstanding leader of the left. The truth is that the right, and Neil Kinnock is now in the camp of the right, have squandered the colossal political capital which accrued to Labour in the wake of the miners' strike. All opinion polls, the semi-official 'social trends', and above all the results of the

political ballots in the trade unions, recorded an enormous swing to the left of the working class under the blows of the Thatcher government.

This was despite the Labour leadership and not because of them. The razzmatazz campaign, which the media praised to the skies, was all form and what little content there was was absolutely ruinous for Labour. It is true that the Tories abandoned Thatcher's rigid monetarist policies and basked in a pre-election 'boom' which benefitted particularly those who had jobs. They undoubtedly fiddled the figures on the economy to create the impression that 'glory days' were ahead. The government-linked National Economic Development Council even fiddled its own report to give the impression of economic well-being.

But Labour's campaign made no attempt to explain the nature of the crisis of world and of British capitalism, as the Marxists have done. Tory grandee, Gilmour forecast the inevitable crash facing the next government

Continued on page 8

The gloss



The Kinnocks return to Walworth Rd after the election.

Photo: Nigel Clapp.

The campaign

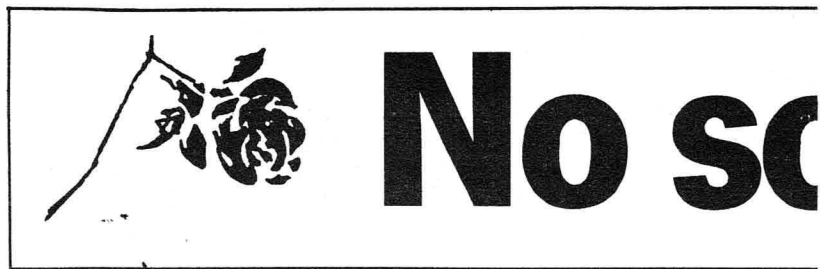


Campaigning on the streets—Pat Wall in Bradford North.

The bitterness



Graffiti in Bermondsey—for millions the misery of Thatcherism continues.



Continued from page 7

when he said: "There is therefore a great deal of consolation for the opposition and the Alliance in the fact that they are going to lose the next election. There will be a nasty crisis in the next Parliament and the opposition parties can count themselves lucky that not they but my right honourable friends will be dealing with it".

But Labour spokesmen failed to exploit this! Many fine agitational speeches were made by the Labour leadership, particularly Kinnock, to show the catastrophic collapse of the economy under Tory rule. But the question of workers on the doorstep and in the factories, "How would Labour do better?" was never convincingly answered.

Class solidarity

Workers know better than the political commentators, and Labour right wingers who are cosseted by their income and living standards, about the brutal realities of Thatcherism. But Labour in the course of the campaign did not map out a viable alternative. Labour leaders struck a high moral tone, believing that an appeal to the so-called 'Have-a-lots' on behalf of the 'Have-nots' would do the trick.

It is by evoking the spirit of class solidarity and not middle class altruism that the splendid victories in Broadgreen, Bradford and Coventry were achieved. It was showing those workers who have a job that they and their families would be dragged down into the abyss if the Tories and their system were to remain which won over thousands of workers.

Capitalist commentators, with the right wing echoing them, maintain that the secret of Thatcher's success lay in her naked appeal to homeowners, shareholders and so-called 'property-owning democracy'. How then to explain Terry Fields' victory in Broadgreen, where nearly 73% of the constituents own their own houses?

Terry Fields increased his majority by 60% with an almost 13% swing from the Tories to Labour.

The Labour leadership's campaign, designed to win the middle strata, had precisely the opposite effect. An ITN exit poll even showed Tory support among skilled workers rising from 38% in 1983 to 42%. Hattersley and Kinnock's inane proposal to take back Lawson's March tax concessions must have alienated many of them and created fertile soil for Tory propaganda that Labour would massively increase taxes.

The Labour leaders' blunder allowed the Tories to cover up the massive £19 billion extra taxes which the working class has paid since 1979 and their plans for enormous tax increases after the election through the poll tax and big increases in VAT. All the reforms of Labour and more could have been paid for only on the basis of a Socialist planned economy. By remaining within the framework of capitalism, the Labour leadership were trapped into giving the impression of 'vote for me and I'll increase your taxes'.

The contrast between the

national campaign of Labour and those of the left, particularly the Marxists, could not have been more striking. The capitalist press, at least the tabloids, the media and the Labour leadership have once more carried through an enormous cover-up of the real lessons of the left's victory in this election.

They were hoping that the Marxist left would be totally rejected by the electors of Broadgreen, Coventry and Bermondsey. Indeed, according to the 'Guardian' correspondent present in Walworth Road as the results came through, a 'Labour Party manager' responded to the victories of the left with the comment "It's been a good night for the nutters".

The right are now busy creating the impression that it was the 'loony left' who lost vital seats in London. When the sad figure of Raynsford, the 'moderate' victor of the Fulham by-election who was defeated in this election, is invoked, this is put down to the so-called 'yuppy factor'. The defeat of Alf Dubs in Battersea is ascribed to the same cause!

But even the most zealous Tory estate agent could not have wrought such demographic changes to guarantee the victory of the Tories in these two seats. Undoubtedly the vicious campaign of the capitalist media against the 'loony left' had some effect. Militant disagreed with some of the actions of the left councils in London. But the bullets that were fired against these councils were, more often than not, supplied by the right wing leadership of the labour and trade union movement itself who invented the very term 'loony left' and abused Liverpool City Council 'as termites, maggots, and aliens'.

Liverpool victory

Moreover, the defeats in Walthamstow, Fulham and the drop in the Labour vote in Ealing had nothing to do with left policies, but everything to do with massive rate rises of 60 per cent, 50 per cent and 65 per cent by councils faced with the cuts imposed by the Tory government. Indeed, did not Neil Kinnock, Jack Straw and Jack Cunningham recommend a 60% increase in rates for the Liverpool City Council in 1985? If the much-reviled 'Militants' of Liverpool had heeded this advice, then Labour MPs in the city could have faced the same fate as Eric Deakins in Walthamstow, and Nick Raynsford in Fulham.

Fortunately, they remained true to the promises on which they were elected and as a consequence Labour has reaped huge dividends on Merseyside. In Liverpool, Labour's share of the vote increased by a colossal ten points in comparison with 1983. 57% of electors showed their bitter hostility to Thatcher by supporting Labour on June 11th.

The Tories, second in 1983, were reduced to third behind the Alliance. As the Financial Times commented, "Their share of the city wide poll dropped by a massive 12 points to only 17 per cent". The Alliance, who were eagerly looking to profit from the Tory collapse, only increased their share of the poll by 3 points to 26 per cent. Massive swings towards Labour were recorded in all Liverpool seats. Alton, the

Socialism, no victory



Liberal Chief Whip, saw his Mossley Hill majority slashed.

Only defecting conservatives managed to save his skin. In the 17 Merseyside constituencies, Labour increased its vote by 72,479 (an increase of 22 per cent) while the Alliance dropped 4,500 votes and the Tories lost 43,015, a 15 per cent fall! The capitalists and the right wing will attempt to cover up the lessons of this marvellous victory, especially the swing to Terry Fields. No other Labour candidate, with the exception of Pat Wall, faced the kind of vilification and attacks which Terry Fields suffered before and during this election.

There has been an enormous cover-up of the real lessons of the Marxists' victories in this election.



The Independent and the Guardian had declared that Terry Fields was "virtually certain" to be defeated in the general election. Now The Guardian very reluctantly admits "Playing Militant card fails" (12/6/87). In a spectacular mass campaign, the Marxists took the arguments to the workers on the doorstep, in the factories, on the estates, and to mass meetings, which all workers were invited to attend.

Arthur Scargill, moved by his reception in Liverpool and Bradford, commented that if the swings to Labour recorded in these seats had taken place on a national scale we would have had a Labour government with a massive majority. The Liverpool Echo, after calling in effect for a 'tactical vote' against Terry Fields and an implicit call for defeat of Labour in the city, came up with ingenious arguments to explain the shattering of their dream!

On the one hand, the defeat of Keva Coombes in Hyndburn and Sylvia Renilson in Pendle, was due to their alleged association with the Militant and 'the Militant factor'. On the other, the victory in Liverpool had nothing to do with Militant but was a 'cry of despair' from the city. Yet Sylvia Reynoldson, a well-known and

embittered opponent of Militant, and Keva Coombes went to great lengths in the course of the campaign not only to dissociate themselves from Militant but to adopt an anti-Militant stance.

Could not their defeat be ascribed more to watered down and moderate policies, than any excess of militancy on their part?

In the light of her 106 majority, Thatcher thinks that she now has an unassailable position from which she can continue her crusade against Socialism and Marxism and finally extinguish 'the enemy within'. But, important as the election is as a barometer of the mood of the working class, it is for Marxism just 'a moment in history'. Reality always has two sides, as Karl Marx pointed out.

The parliamentary arithmetic, with the Tories' massive majority, means that the advice of the Labour and trade union right wing to 'wait for a Labour government' will cut no ice now with the mass of the working class. There is a law that, if checked on the parliamentary field, the British workers turn to the industrial field. The more far-sighted spokesmen of capitalism, such as Biffen in this election, recognise this. They hoped for a 'not too big' Tory majority for fear that an unrestrained Thatcher would unleash an 'extra-parliamentary' mass movement which would put the very system in danger.

However, the right-wing leaders of the labour and trade union movement, as in 1983, have already drawn entirely false conclusions from the election results. Norman Willis, General Secretary of the TUC, has plaintively urged Thatcher to 'build bridges'. The leadership of the NUT have proposed the calling off of industrial action for fear that they would be excluded from 'talks' on Thatcher's education reorganisation.

This parliamentary cretinism completely ignores the terrible reality of the crisis of the British economy and the looming crash which even serious capitalist commentators expect within the next 12 to 18 months. In the election the Tories managed to cover up the reality of British capitalism's catastrophic decline. It is even possible that Britain's 'boom', fuelled by the expansion of the American economy and a colossal credit boom, could continue for the next 12 to 18 months.

But even then the employed workers will demand a bigger share. Already, Ford workers have put in for a £30 per week increase and retirement after 25 years in the industry. The capitalists, on the other hand, will be using Thatcher's election victory to put the boot in to the working class. Those wage increases, which were greater than the rate of inflation, which they tolerated before the election, they will now attempt to snatch back.

Therefore, perhaps after an initial period when the working class are stunned, there will be a ferocious outbreak of class struggle. The tenacity of the civil servants, particularly the low-paid grades, even up to and after the general election, indicates the way that the working class and labour movement will develop.

Even this government has become terrified of the colossal

rage that has accumulated in the inner cities. Taking note of Marxism's tremendous position in Liverpool and the fact that Tories are an endangered species in many such areas, they intend to snatch some powers in housing and education from local councils.

Their proposals to allow schools to 'opt out' will massively reinforce class divisions in education by concentrating resources in the richer areas. They will provoke bitter opposition both in the North and the South.

So will the Tories' proposals to sell off council estates to rich speculators, in order to break up what they regard as 'Labour ghettos' and extend property-owning democracy'. This means evicting tenants, depriving those in slums of the chance to get decent accommodation and allowing speculators to drive up rents.

Thatcher has issued soothing promises to regenerate the inner cities so as to woo them away from Labour. But Heseltine's ill-fated excursion to Liverpool in 1981 does not hold out much encouragement. Toxteeth was turned into a 'dog's delight' with plenty of trees—but not many jobs! The exercise will either be purely cosmetic, or, in the unlikely event of jobs being created, will enhance the cohesion of the working class in these areas by drawing the unemployed into industry.

The realities of the crisis of British and world capitalism will be borne on all classes and all parties of British society

It is extremely unlikely that the Tories can realise their plans, given the economic catastrophe that looms. Merely to repair council housing and bring it up to minimum standards would require an extra £21 billion investment. For the total housing stock the figure is at least £31 billion.

Such sums are way beyond the greedy get-rich-quick merchants who infest the building industry. The lifting of rent restrictions will also massively reinforce the bitterness and anger of the workers, particularly of young working class couples who are unable to find anywhere to live. The so-called Enterprise Zones in London, Liverpool and other areas have either proved to be a failure or, as in the case of Docklands have stoked up enormous class hostility towards the yuppies, who have poured in to benefit from the candy floss industry flourishing under Thatcher, from workers trapped in derelict and crumbling council property.

The right, and some of the left unfortunately, within the labour movement, have already begun to draw all the wrong conclusions from the election. They echo the analysis of capitalist commentators that the main features of Britain's political landscape in the next five years

will be triumphant Thatcherism, a prostrate and humbled labour movement and a 'continuing retreat of Socialism'.

The right wing of the British labour movement will draw the conclusion that it is necessary to move to the right in order to defeat Thatcherism. Some are whispering, to Observer reporters, that an electoral pact with the Liberals, shorn of its SDP tail, will now be necessary in order to defeat Thatcher.

Revising socialism

Neil Kinnock has already let it be known that he will attempt to shift the labour movement to the right by watering down mandatory reselection with the so-called one person one vote proposal which he intends to rush through the Labour Party Conference in the Autumn.

Noises have been made about watering down the constitution with a new statement of the 'principles of democratic socialism' which will allegedly make the Labour Party "less hospitable to the revolutionary fringe". This is code for an attempt to revise the Socialist principles upon which the Labour Party is founded and which is enshrined in Clause 4 Part IV of the Labour Party Constitution.

Any attempt to move in this direction by the right wing cabal which dominate the National Executive Committee and the shadow cabinet, will meet with the same kind of ferocious resistance as greeted Gaitskill's attempt to abandon Clause 4 in the post-1959 situation.

The Labour leadership, completely impervious to the real processes at work in society and particularly amongst the working class, cannot foresee the enormous social upheavals which will shake the labour and trade union movement from top to bottom.

They forget that Thatcher won the election in 1983 only to be confronted nine months later by the beginnings of the miners' strike which convulsed British society. In France, the Chirac government had not been in power more than eight months when a movement of the students and workers involving millions coming out onto the streets routed the government.

If Chirac had not beaten a humiliating retreat, a general strike would undoubtedly have been unleashed. Moreover, his government was split from top to bottom, with the so-called Liberal wing, the CDS, threatening to pull out. The seething cauldron of class bitterness and discontent in France threatens to make this or next year a repeat of 1968.

A similar process will take place in Britain. The splits in the Tory Party have been temporarily papered over. But they will re-emerge with even greater ferocity in the next period. The position of the Tory Party in Scotland, reduced to a rump, and threatening to become a sect, will become the pattern for the whole of Britain.

The SDP will now disintegrate, merging with the Liberal Party. Owen himself, after a decent period as an 'independent', like Prentice, Marsh and other deserters from the Labour Party, will join the Tory Party.

It is the realities of the crisis of British and world capitalism

which will be borne in on all classes and all parties of British society.

The right wing of the Labour Party may decide to launch further attacks on the left, and particularly on Militant supporters. The right have already drawn up plans to limit and hope to destroy the Labour Party Young Socialists. Even during the election campaign letters to those to be expelled through the 'legal' device of the National Constitution Council were sent out.

Thus the right intend to repeat the crass policy of 'bashing the left' in order to gain electoral popularity.

One factor in the defeat of Labour in this election, in some senses the decisive factor, was the colossal squandering of the time and resources of the labour movement in hunting the left. More time was spent in attacking the Liverpool Militants than in preparing a Socialist campaign to defeat the Tories in the election.

Yet the greatest exponents of the witch-hunt, such as Weetch in Ipswich, where Militant supporters were expelled from the party, were defeated in this election.

Denis Healey, after Kinnock's infamous speech at the October 1985 Conference denouncing Militant, declared that Kinnock had just won the next general election! This attack was even repeated in Kinnock's presidential broadcast! And yet, despite the evidence to the contrary, the right seem as though they will continue to dish up the same broth as between 1983 and 1987.

Marxism gains

But the movements of the working class will shake the grip of the right wing both on the labour and the trade union movement. An attack on the left, particularly on the Labour Party Young Socialists, will result in a colossal reaction of the rank and file. No amount of organisational repression will halt the advance of Marxism in Britain.

Despite all the attempts to vilify and to 'marginalise' Militant, the proponents of Marxism have registered the most outstanding results in the general election. Moreover, the advance of Marxist ideas and support within the unions is rooted in the collapse of capitalism and the repercussions within the labour movement.

If Thatcher had retired after two terms, she may have been able to bask in the illusion of her 'success'. Now, like Wellington, she will learn that 'nothing except a battle lost can be half so melancholy as a battle won'. With the economic, political and social scenario which will open up in Britain, it is extremely unlikely that she will finish this term.

Long before then the Tory Party will be riven with splits and divisions which will make the Westland Affair look like a little local difficulty. She will be forced to go to Dulwich long before 1992.

The labour movement will be transformed from top to bottom. And it will be the Socialist ideas, particularly of Militant, that will become the weapons whereby the British working class will not only defeat this government but the system upon which it rests.

The Liverpool effect

Victory for socialism in Broadgreen

SCEPTICS AND right-wingers, with no confidence in the working class, believe that elections are won or lost by the media image promoted by the Party, especially on TV. The active work of a rank and file come a poor second to 'presentation' and 'photo opportunities'.

They should have been in Liverpool Broadgreen on 11 June. At dawn, when hundreds of Party members were quietly creeping around the constituency giving out the final leaflets, or on the last-minute knock-up at a quarter to ten, or at any time during the day — when it was impossible to walk a few hundred yards without seeing groups of people wearing Labour stickers — it was clear that the victory was made by a mass campaign in the streets and on the doorsteps.

Broadgreen was a living refutation of the ideas of the right and a vindication of the ideas of the *Militant*. Victory was based overwhelmingly on the activity, enthusiasm and energy of the Labour Party rank and file, motivated to turn out in their hundreds in a lively and well-organised socialist campaign.

Every day dozens were out leafletting, their numbers swelling to well over a hundred for the evening canvass. Weekends increased the turn-out to around 400-500.

City council

What lay behind the campaign was the politicisation of the working class and the recognition of the magnificent stand of the City council over the last few years. Terry Fields himself later acknowledged, that what had been achieved was a continuation of the struggle for houses, jobs and services waged by the Labour councillors, now debarred from office.

The political consciousness of the working class in Liverpool cannot be underestimated. Typical of the comments made was the reply an older woman gave to a *Telegraph* reporter who asked her if she was still voting for Terry, even if he was a 'Militant'. "He's just a good socialist", she snapped back, "like we used to have in the old days!"

What further inspired the confidence of workers was the knowledge that the Labour candidate stood on the principle of a workers' MP on a worker's wage. This was their cast-iron guarantee against Terry getting out of touch with the problems and pressures of working class life, and that fact has gone down deep into the consciousness of workers.

This political foundation was the basis for a model election organisation. Because of the scale of the campaign, it was possible for all areas to be canvassed, the Tory and Liberal areas included. Nowhere was left untouched.

Nor were the canvassers content with a quick-fire doorstep survey of voting intentions. With so many Party members out and about, there was the time to talk to people properly, to explain Labour's policy, overcome any doubts or win voters away from the other parties. Dozens were signed up to join the Labour Party and many were persuaded to join in the election campaign.

Thousands of supporters also took posters to put up in their windows, distributed by special poster squads. So great was the



Arthur Scargill and Terry Fields MP during the election campaign.

Labour's share of the vote in Liverpool as a whole went up by a massive 10 points since 1983 (see chart)—a tribute to the militant campaign of the city council and the labour movement. Broadgreen had the biggest swing to Labour (from the Tories) of 12.4 per cent. In Garston it was 10.5 per cent from the Tories, in Mossley Hill 4.6 per cent from the Alliance, in Riverside 7.1 per cent from the Tories and W Derby 9.6 per cent from the Tories. The national swing to Labour was only 2.5 per cent

General Election	Liverpool Electorate	Lab	Tory	Lib	Other	Total
1974 (Feb)	414590	140901 48.3%	96784 33.1%	52196 17.9%	1803 6%	291634 70.3%
1974 (Oct)	418950	149780 54.5%	89388 32.5%	34374 12.5%	921 3%	274463 65.5%
1979	399380	137202 49.0%	100290 35.8%	40504 14.4%	1553 5%	279549 69.0%
1983	389199	128467 47.3%	79627 29.3%	62410 22.9%	1050 3%	271554 69.7%
1987	371933	159083 57.3%	47568 17.1%	69814 25.1%	699 2%	277160 74.5%

demand, even in so-called Liberal or Tory areas, that new posters had to be ordered at least twice.

The campaign involved at least six special leaflets, on youth, women, health, education, the Tories' Poll Tax, and other issues, every one of which went round the constituency.

What lay behind the campaign was the politicisation of the working class and the recognition of the magnificent stand of the City council over the last few years.

The whole Labour movement was involved as far as possible. Terry Fields addressed dozens of workplace meetings, trade union branches and meetings of trade union activists. Among the most successful (to name only a few) were those at Fords Halewood (attended by 250), Green Lane bins depot (70), Plessey (80), GMBATU Branch 5 (50), FBU Bank Hall (50), Edge Lane bus depot (50). Altogether more than 1000 workers were addressed by Terry in this way over the campaign.

This brought the campaign right up against the problems faced by many workers precariously hanging on to their jobs. At Robinson Willey, now part of Hanson Trust, one worker commented, "We're just part of a game of Monopoly. We have a new owner every few years. But it's our jobs and livelihoods they're playing with." At Plessey, where the Liberal candidate is a person manager, a woman showed Terry her redundancy notice, adding bitterly, "So much for our high-tech future."

Canvass teams

As a result of these meetings many groups of workers responded by organising special canvass teams of their workplace or union: like the CPSA team, the fire-fighters, the local authority team, the teachers and the health workers. There was even a team of pensioners working for Terry.

There were also many public meetings on the estates, in the street and by invitation to various bodies and organisations. Whatever the character of the organising group, Terry never avoided an opportunity to cross swords with the other candidates in public and some excellent debates were organised, particularly in local tech colleges.

Public meetings included the magnificent 400-strong meeting with Tony Benn, another, 1000-

strong, addressed by Arthur Scargill, and an all-Liverpool rally twice as big again. The various public meetings — in every one of the wards — were attended by anything from 40 to 120 people.

The pessimists in the movement have always been afraid of putting socialist ideas honestly to workers, and so they go out of their way to sanitise Labour's traditions and policies.

The whole Labour movement was involved as far as possible. Terry Fields addressed dozens of work-place meetings, trade union branches and meetings of trade union activists.

But no matter how much the right wing try to hide the socialist content of the movement, the press will always dig it out and use it in a red scare campaign. That was the case in Broadgreen more than most places, with the Liberals devoting their propaganda to little else than an accusation that Terry Fields was an extremist.

But their efforts failed miserably, because Terry faced it head on. "Who are the real extremists?" was a regular theme of Labour's campaign, showing that the Tory government are driving all workers into so-called 'extremism' for having the temerity to demand jobs and houses. Not for a moment did Terry Fields deny his socialist ideas or the roots of Marxism in the Labour Party, always opting to explain patiently and painstakingly the relevance of real socialist ideas to Britain today.

Lord Young slanders city council

LORD YOUNG, Thatcher's minister for the inner cities, has announced that he will not just "pour money" in. With Thatcher's spending curbs, that would not be allowed anyway.

But to cover himself he launched a slanderous attack on Liverpool Council's record. "Liverpool has had more spent on it than any other city in this country and not very much seems to have happened to that enormous investment."

Young is as economical with the truth as he is with government expenditure. Under Thatcher, £500 million has been stolen from Liverpool. Yet due to the militant fight put up by the now surcharged Liverpool councillors, more houses were built than by any other local authority, jobs and services were defended against Tory cuts.

Red scare

In the end, the Liberals' red scare campaign made no impact. According to a Granada poll, only 2 per cent of those asked thought *Militant* was an issue. The Liberals' campaign became so unhinged that it lost them votes.

The Liberals' final masterpiece was a leaflet showing a photograph of Terry Fields with Derek Hatton, over the comment 'What you see is what you get', and absolutely no other political comment. One voter, previously Liberal, who was met on the morning of polling day, changed his mind and decided to vote Labour on the strength of it. "It's pathetic", he commented, "If that's all they can talk about, I'm not going to vote for them."

Because of the political character of campaigns like the one in Broadgreen, hundreds of working class activists can be inspired and mobilised. As a result, there is a buzz of excitement in the whole area.

The Labour Party is not seen as something remote but a living part of the community, part of the working class itself, seen and heard all around. Workers meet people like themselves, with the same worries and problems, prepared to talk about politics in the language they understand and prepared to struggle in their interests. That's why they vote Labour, not because of the glitz on TV. Broadgreen proved that the best guarantee of a Labour victory is a mass-based, enthusiastic and socialist campaign.

Spanish elections

Socialist government is punished

THE 10 June municipal, regional and European elections in Spain will have important repercussions.

Most significantly, the Socialist Party (PSOE) vote fell from 8,901,718 votes in the 1986 general elections to 7,568,752 — a loss of 1.3 million in just one year.

Yet none of the other three main parties were able to claim a victory. Alianza Popular (the conservative party) which recently tried to overcome its problems by changing the whole leadership, found that its vote in the municipal elections had gone down by 800,000 to just 3.9 million. This confirms that with or without its former leader, Fraga, the party is no alternative to PSOE.

As for the right, far from

From correspondents in Spain

being strengthened it became even more divided with the emergence of regional right-wing parties. This reveals the weakness of the capitalists in Spain — perhaps the only country in Europe without a strong bourgeois party.

The only party to emerge apparently strengthened from the elections was the Centro Democrático Social, the so-called centre party formed by former prime minister Suarez, which increased its vote due to the lack of opponents in the centre.

On the left, the Izquierda Unida — a coalition of the CP, Radicals, Greens etc — was incapable of picking up the votes lost by PSOE. Instead these went to increase the number of abstentions.

This confirms that workers who have been 'burnt out' by the Socialist Party's policies see no alternative in this coalition.

The results of this election were a vote of punishment for the policies carried out by the PSOE. After waiting in vain for the PSOE to solve their problems, millions of workers have been seeking a way out through industrial action.

The spark for this movement came from the students' strike in December—



The movement of three million school youth, under Marxist leadership, achieved through determined struggle.

January which showed how, with correct ideas and methods of struggle, it is possible to win.

The underlying factor to provoke both the students and the workers has been the attacks on them carried out by this government to the benefit of the bosses.

Radical change

The election results are a warning to the right wing of the PSOE. The only way to avoid a crisis within the party is a radical change in their policies in favour of the 10 million workers who voted them into government in the general election of 1982.

This is precisely what the marxists in the party, sup-

porting the paper *Nuevo Claridad*, are demanding.

The way forward was explained at a meeting on 12 June in Puerto Real, in Cadiz, where shipyard workers are fighting to defend their jobs against the government's cuts.

Six hundred workers attended, including representatives of the militant steelworkers of Reinosa, who are fighting a similar struggle, and the Marxist leader of the Spanish School Students' Union, Juan Ignacio Ramos.

There was anger amongst the workers at the meeting as the shipyards' factory council had signed an agreement with the bosses, accepting promises that within three months the shipyards would be working at

50 per cent of capacity. With the industry paralysed for the last 18 months and no sign of orders, workers have no confidence in promises on paper.

Marxists from *Nuevo Claridad*, supported by the convenor of the Cenemesa plant in Reinosa, called for general strike action and uniting the struggle of industries in crisis throughout Spain.

If this proposal is received with as much enthusiasm in the rest of the industries in crisis as it was in this meeting, then it would be an important step forward in pressuring this government to implement a programme in favour of the workers instead of against them.

East German demonstrations

Youth oppose Stalinism

LAST WEEK'S clashes between East Berlin youth and police underlined the huge tensions locked beneath the surface of the Stalinist dictatorships of Eastern Europe.

By George Collins

Thousands of youth gathered at the Berlin Wall on Sunday night, 7 June, to listen to the music of Eurythmics performing on the other side.

But, as police tried to break the crowd up, it rapidly turned into a political demonstration. The youth chanted: "The wall must go" and: "Long live freedom and democracy".

At least 20 youth were arrested, sparking off furious resistance. These scenes were repeated night after night.

But to the amazement of western journalists, there was no hint of support for the capitalist "democracy" of the west. Instead they sang a song commemorating the battles fought by West Berlin youth against West Berlin police in the Kreuzberg district of the city last May.

Chants of "Gorbachev", while showing illusions in the reforms of the planned economy promised by the Soviet leader, made it clear that a return to capitalism is furthest from their minds.

Gorbachev's policies are aimed only at streamlining the rule of the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy, while leaving their power intact. Any temporary improvements will inevitably become bogged down in the same bureaucratic swamp.

But this has not yet become apparent to the youth of East Germany. Their revolutionary mood was shown by repeated singing of the Internationale and by



East German border guards parading in Unter den Linden, where last week's demonstrations exploded.

chants of "Rosa Luxemburg"—the greatest fighter for workers' democracy, against capitalism and nationalism, in the German workers' movement.

The youth of West Berlin have responded with nights of violent protest against the presence of Ronald Reagan at the city's 750th anniversary celebrations, giving a ham performance in support of 'freedom' at the Wall.

In Poland, rallies of millions gathered for the Pope's visit were transformed into well-prepared demonstrations in support of the banned trade union movement, Solidarity.

Before the rally at Gdansk the authorities threatened to crush

further demonstrations. But even with an incredible 200,000 police and troops deployed, even with the Pope attempting to silence the chants of "solidarity", the sheer size of the demonstration left them powerless.

Thousands of youth marched with Solidarity banners in the presence of the police.

Gorbachev's very attempts at reform confirm that the epoch of political revolution has begun. The scenes in Berlin, Cracow and Gdansk are only a foretaste of the historic struggles on the agenda throughout Eastern Europe, linked to the struggles in the West, for the workers' common goals of democracy and socialism.

New upheavals rock South Korea

"NOT A bad place, if you ignore the smell of the tear gas".

So ran the headline in the *Independent* (5 June) on a report about South Korea's capital, Seoul, venue of the 1988 Olympic Games.

The tear gas had been used liberally by riot police against opponents of Chun doo Hwan's military-police dictatorship in the latest round of upheavals against the regime.

The government has been rocked by one scandal after another: large-scale tax evasion and illegal diversion of funds abroad by the debt-ridden Pan Ocean Shipping Company, whose chairman jumped from his 10th-floor office window; a young girl tortured by the police; and a student activist tortured to death by the police.

Top cabinet ministers have been sacked as the regime looks round for scapegoats to offload the growing pressures on it.

Riots and demonstrations have continued since last month's anniversary of the 1980 Kwangju uprising (see *Militant* 28 June), demanding democracy.

In the latest demonstrations protesters took over Seoul's Roman Catholic cathedral. Although only 250 students occupied it, the government was terrified by the public support they got.

This followed the demonstrations on 10 June—the largest since Chun seized power. The prime minister accused the organisers of endangering the very basis of the state, and government ministers declared openly for martial law.

As Chun grooms his successor, Roh Tae Woo, to take over the reins of state, these continuing upheavals show that Chun may have very little to hand over when the time comes.

By Tim White

Ivin Malaza fund



Comrade Nimrod.

AN OUTSTANDING contribution last week came from Nimrod Sejake, exiled metal workers' leader from South Africa and veteran campaigner for a socialist African National Congress. He has given £750 of back pension.

Lynn Faulkes collected nearly £15 at a meeting of the Labour Group on Hackney Council. Please keep the money coming in to assist the family of Ivin Malaza, murdered worker activist in South Africa, and continue his work.

Donations to: Cllr L. Faulkes, 143B Amhurst Road, London E8 2AW.

After the election

What now for Labour

Gloucester June 24. Golden Heart Inn. The High St. Tredworth, Gloucester. 8pm.

Sunderland June 25. Sunderland Poly.

Exeter June 22.

Plymouth June 23. Coburg St school refectory. 7.30pm.

Southampton June 24.

Swindon June 22. Prince of Wales, Unicorn St, 7.30pm.

Bristol June 23. Shepherd's Hall, Old Market, Bristol. 7.30pm.

Birmingham June 25. Carrs Lane church centre, Carrs Lane, Birmingham city centre. Speaker Ted Grant. 7.30pm.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne 7.30pm, Thursday 25 June. Lonsdale Public House next to West Jesmond metro. Speaker: John Pickard.

North Tyneside 7.30pm Thursday 25 June. Richardson Dee's school. High St East, Wallsend.

Blythe details to follow.

Gateshead 7.30pm Wednesday 24 June. Trinity Centre, High St, Gateshead.

Middlesbrough 7.30pm Wednesday 24 June. St Mary's Centre, Corporation Rd.

Peterborough Tuesday 23 June. The Great Northern Hotel, opp railway station. 8pm.

Second rate service

Dear Comrades,

"I want to be able to go to the hospital, on the day, at the time, and with the doctor I choose" declared Margaret Thatcher in defence of her use of private medicine. Working class NHS patients count themselves lucky to get to hospital in the year they choose! The majority cannot afford private medicine.

Even in the private sector there is a rich and poor divide. Only the very rich can afford private rooms and a la carte menus.

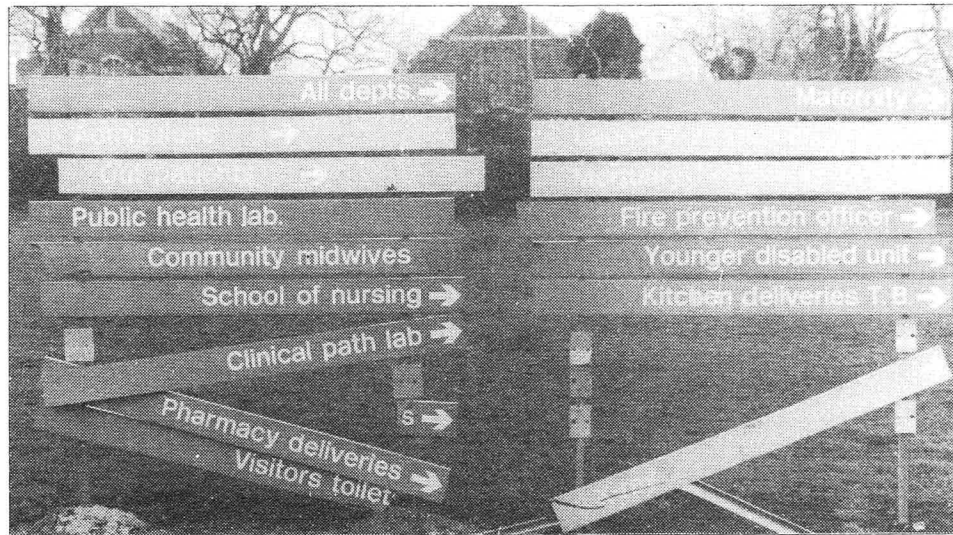
I have just had the 'privilege' of experiencing at first hand the wonders of private medicine. Because of a serious lack of resources in my own area and a five week wait for an appointment to see a

consultant, I was forced into the private sector to end my unwanted pregnancy. I had to borrow £144 from the bank for this 'luxury'. Was the treatment better than the NHS? No.

I had to visit a sleazy, dirty, run-down office in Birmingham. I was examined by a doctor who was rude and unsympathetic.

The following week I stayed in a private hospital to have my abortion. We even had to provide our own sanitary towels, free sterilised ones are provided in NHS hospitals.

The nursing care was minimal; temperature, blood pressure and pulse taken before the operation. There was no post-operative check on these vital aspects. The



operation lasted about ten minutes.

There were 18 overnight patients and I don't know how many day patients. We had all paid £144 to a

supposedly non profit-making organisation. Clearly someone was making a good living out of it.

If the NHS had the resources, the trained and

well paid staff, most private medicine would go out of business.

Yours fraternally
Heather Rawling
Leicester

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

Liberal converted

Dear Comrades,

Whilst canvassing for Terry Fields in Broadgreen, a comrade and I rang the bell of an SDP supporter. Just as the woman answered the door to us an SDP leaflet thrust past us to the woman saying "It's a Trot that'll be the ruin of Broadgreen if Terry Fields gets in, don't listen to them" etc.

The four of us stood arguing for about five minutes until the SDP'er stormed off with the woman shouting after him! Needless to say, she pledged wholehearted support for Terry Fields and Labour.

Yours fraternally
Kenny Cairns

God works in mysterious ways

Dear Comrades,

Militant 849 carried a letter concerning a reader's experience of trying to sell the paper to a 'Christian' and it reminded me of a similar experience.

I asked a passer-by to buy a copy of *Militant* and she replied: "No thank you dearie, I'm not interested in politics. I've found a better answer."

Thinking someone had invented some marvellous panacea I asked if she would enlighten us.

I was disappointed therefore when she said "Jesus, he solves all these problems, dearie. These problems are God's way of

ridding the world of evil, sinful people. It's all in the bible, repent" etc.

It seemed to have escaped her notice that 'God' isn't killing off the 'wicked, sinful people' ie. the rich and powerful, but the poor, innocent and powerless.

It turned out she belongs to a group of evangelical churches whose slogan is "There is hope". Needless to say, they mean only if you're rich, 'cos if you're poor God's gonna bump you off pretty damn quick.

Yours fraternally
Billy Walker
North Edinburgh

Why 'socialist' countries are at war

Dear Comrades,

Comrade Richardson's letter (*Militant* 852) reflects the propaganda of the bosses' media that the countries he mentions are supposedly 'socialist'. 'Socialism' means that society, the economy, is controlled by ordinary working people, who can democratically run their workplaces and society for the benefit of the whole population, not just for the rich few who currently 'own' factories or land.

All the countries Richardson mentions are run by bureaucratic dictatorships. They may have a nationalised, planned economy, but they are certainly not run and controlled by the workers.

The conflicts which he refers to between these countries show the result of Stalin's policy of 'socialism in one country'. This meant defending the interests of the privileged bureaucracy, which Stalin represented, at the expense of the international working class.

Democratic workers' control and management of society has nothing in common with these ideas of 'Stalinism', of dictatorship and nationalism. The bureaucratic elite of these countries are merely concerned with preserving their own national interests and, if necessary quash minority rights in their own countries. As a result antagonisms and wars continue.

National interests will be abolished when workers throughout the world understand they have more in common with each other than with their own ruling class or caste. Then the threat of war will be abolished and we will see "a peaceful socialist world".

Yours fraternally
Anne Lewin
Newham NE Labour Party Young Socialists

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.

○ **Out now**, no.15 of L'Avance Socialiste, French Marxist paper. Articles on May 1968, the Chirac government's arms programme, the French nuclear industry, need for Socialist-Communist unity, Spain, South Africa. Subscription rates: £5 for 5 issues (inc. postage), £10 for 12 issues. Cheques to: L'Avance Socialiste, BP no. 705, 75531 Paris, Cedex 11.

○ **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.

Workers Education Group. Socialist Summer Camp '87. Saturday 8 August to Saturday 15 August. Bracelands campsite, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire. Courses on Marxist Economics, Youth and the struggle for socialism, the Russian revolution, USA, the third world. Plus rallies, debates, discos, sports, creche. Cost £40 (£75 for family booking). Brochure available now. Write to Workers Education Group, PO Box 332, London E15 33Y.

○ **Offensive camp in Sweden.** Monday 6-Saturday 11 July 1987. For information write to Offensive Brahegatan 2, S415 01 Goteburg, Sweden. Tel 031 844 162.

○ **TRAVEL X.** We cater for ALL types of holiday and flights at competitive rates. Tel 01 942 1234 or 01 942 7156. 7a Coombe Rd, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 4PX. 24 hour answer phone service available.

○ **House on the outskirts** of Paris available August. Phone Liz: 01 471 2098

○ **Edinburgh** *Militant* supporters jumble sale. Saturday 20 June, 10.30am. St Martins Church Hall, Dalry Road.

Militant meetings

□ **Chorlton** every Thursday, The Southern Hotel, Mauldeth Road West, Chorlton. 8.30pm.

□ **Blackburn** every Wednesday. The Trades Club, 8.30pm.

□ **Portsmouth** 'Lessons of the General Election' Tuesday 23 June 7.30pm. Menuhin Room, Central library, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth.

□ **Southampton** marxist discussion group. Wednesdays 12.30pm. 7, Goodwin Close, Millbrook, Southampton. Creche provided.

□ **Bolton** Wed 24 June. The Clarence Hotel, Bradshawgate. 7.30pm.

□ **Salford** Thurs 25 June, The Black Horse, Crescent, Salford. 7.30pm.

Not-so-soft South

Dear Comrades,

I bet you're sick of hearing about the 'Soft South' by now, in Andover we certainly are! Pre-election propaganda peddled the message that unemployment in Hampshire was down by 800, it now stands officially at 57,700.

How was this magnificent reduction achieved? After taking only 11 days off sick in 38 years my father was made redundant. When his dole money ran out after a year he was told that because my mother works he was not entitled to supplementary benefit. With a wave of a statistician's wand unemployment is reduced by one and another skilled worker

hits the scrapheap.

Tasker's Trailers, for generations the town's largest employer, has been razed to the ground. On its site are being built some modest houses, but don't bother coming to look round the show house, unless you have £119,000 handy!

The houses built by the Tory council have nearly all been for the private sector, with mortgage repayments over £350 a month, most rented accommodation goes for £300 a month!

Yours fraternally
Stuart Knox
Hampshire

Higher debt and repossessions

Dear Comrades,

While watching an advert on television for Giro Bank, it occurred to me that there was a further message that should be made clear to borrowers.

In the advert the lion is seen talking to a borrower called Dennis who is in the process of buying a sports car. Dennis is querying whether he can afford it. "Of course you can" says the lion, and off drives

Dennis into the distance.

The impression is that it is safe to borrow, the more the better. However, if the dialogue continued it would have gone something like this: Dennis "What if I can't pay back the loan?". Lion "Then we'll re-possess the car, Dennis. If that doesn't cover what you owe, we'll evict you and you'll end up in seedy bed and breakfast accommodation".

With total household debt in excess of £150 billion it is scandalous that banks, credit card companies and most department stores continue to push easy credit. The latest Bank of England survey points out that the number of houses re-possessed in 1985 was seven times the number in 1979.

Yours fraternally
Dave Pollock
Scarborough

EMERGENCY

Health service in danger

MERSEYSIDE HAS suffered the highest percentage of bed cuts in the country. Since the Tories came to power 16 per cent of its hospital beds, 3,518, have been axed.

Liverpool Health Authority alone will have lost 1,584 beds by 1989 and the planned bed losses for 1991 will total 3,772.

The full-time equivalent of 34,000 NHS ancillary jobs have been axed since 1983 — many swept away in the tide of competitive tendering that has fallen most heavily upon the domestic workforce.

Government figures, angled to present the most optimistic view, claim total 'savings' so far from the tendering exercise of only £73 million from an NHS budget of £18 billion.

Private patients took the NHS for more than £600,000 last year alone, according to the government's own reckoning. During 1986, England's 14 regional health authorities and eight special health authorities wrote off £641,000 in 'bad debts' owed by private patients. Merseyside wrote off £11,216 of debts alone.

Profiteers

Local authority care services which are determined by need, have been continually eroded by rate support grant cuts and rate capping. But supplementary benefit totalling at least £600 million a year has been channelled into a virtually open-ended subsidy for private sector homes which is not based on any tests of needs.

Unemployment is bad for your health. In Merseyside, where over 20 per cent of the workforce are out of work, deaths from 'social' diseases are way above the national average e.g. the cervical cancer death rate is 61 per cent, tuberculosis 83 per cent and hypertension 89.9 per cent above average.

In Merseyside over 30,000 people are on the waiting list and over 1,500 of those need urgent treatment.



The ambulance service in action in Liverpool. Photo: Tommy Carroll

Most general managers brought in to 'sort out' the health service have no experience in health care. They are there to make the NHS more 'cost effective' by cutting beds and putting services into the hands of profiteers.

They earn up to £20,000 a

year and can earn an extra 15 per cent in incentive bonuses based on the number of cuts made, therefore the greater the destruction of the NHS the more money managers make.

By Liz Stavely

Militant says

- ★ For a programme of public works, employing unemployed building workers to build hospital and health facilities alongside homes and schools
- ★ Workers' democratic control and management of the NHS
- ★ Nationalisation under democratic workers' control and management of the pharmaceutical and equipment supply industries
- ★ Abolition of all profiteering through private health care
- ★ A massive injection of funds to the NHS to restore the cuts and allow for progressive planning to take place
- ★ A statutory minimum wage of £125 per week for the lowest paid health worker linked to a 35 hour week

Anger of an Ambulance driver

We've got to fight like Liverpool fought

MORE PEOPLE are being vetted today to see whether they need an ambulance. At one time the doctor would book an ambulance but these days they often ask patients: "Can't you make your own way?"

But you still find huge queues of people waiting to be taken home late at night in hospitals. In some cases they have been hanging around for a long time without even seeing a doctor.

Merseyside has lost thousands of beds but unemployment and poverty have made people need health care more than ever. The Women's hospital has been run down; two wards have gone. I think it's disgraceful.

We all feel under a lot of pressure. We work twelve hour shifts but only get two 20 minute breaks to cook and eat our meals. The first break you usually get all right but the second usually gets disturbed. You get a 'spoiled meal allowance' at present but they want to do away with this and put microwaves in every station, so you can put your food in there time and again.

Both physically and mentally you need a half hour break for a hot meal and a bit of a rest. The job is very stressful. Your heart rate goes very high when you get an emergency call and many of us have ulcers.

You never know when you will get an emergency. The other night when I'd been on since seven o'clock the evening before, we got a call at 6.30 in the morning. A man had hung himself.

You can't be detached when you have to explain to relatives that a loved one has died or felt desperate enough to take their

own life. You are often the first 'professional' person on the scene and you have to act as doctor, social worker and ambulance worker rolled into one.

One of the most traumatic cases was the woman who needed a hip replacement. Her son, who wasn't rich, took out a £4500 bank loan to get it done privately. The doctor who did it was the one who told her she would have to wait five years in pain under the NHS.

Another was the call to a house in Toxteth where a woman of about 30 was lying dead from a heroin overdose. She had not been able to come off the drug because of the conditions she was living under.

But things can be made better. We got a call to a house in Great Homer Street, a tenement flat with rats in and everything. They were moving to a new house and we were helping because the man was wheelchair bound.

I'll never forget the sheer delight on their faces when they saw their brand new house with a garden back and front. They cried with sheer relief at not having to live in the dump of a tenement.

That decent house was only made possible by the Labour council in Liverpool. I wrote a letter about this to the *Liverpool Echo* but for some strange reason it wasn't published!

We'll only get any improvements or even keep what we have got with a fight like the council put up.

An ambulance worker in Liverpool spoke to Agnes Mc Laughlin and Tommy Carroll.

Fighting Fund

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 Scotland East	815		2800
2 Northern	1311		4600
3 Scotland West	928		3500
4 East Midlands	832		3250
5 Wales	1223		4850
6 West Midlands	1133		4850
7 London	2098		9400
8 Yorkshire	1863		8450
9 Merseyside	1370		7500
10 Eastern	460		3050
11 Southern	351		3100
12 South West	208		1900
13 Manchester	396		4050
14 South East	169		2250
15 National	9562		6950
Total	22716		70000

We must build our resources

THATCHER'S VICTORY won't stop the march of socialism. Rank and file trade unionists are still fighting. Over £1500 was raised for Militant's fighting fund at the NALGO conference, £1386 at NCU conference and £124 from EETPU members.

We have had a marvelous start to the quarter but time is our biggest enemy. There are just seven weeks left to the end of the quarter and we still need over £45,000. Supporters in Sussex and West London sent in £30 and £21 respectively. P Stamp and J Leech are just two of our many supporters who have given tenners.

Activists in the movement must have the facts and arguments to convince the mass of workers of the continued fight for socialism. We have to build our resources and we should miss no opportunity for raising cash. Are there rallies, youth events and Labour Party meetings in your area where you could hold a collection or sell "Kick out the Tories" stickers?

Collections

If a collection was held at every workplace where Militant has supporters, we would raise thousands of pounds.

If every new reader gave just a £5 or £10 donation, we would reach the target by that means alone. DON'T be afraid to ask! This paper was built on workers' donations and we need even more of them now to ensure a successful fight back.

Donations

Thanks to: A Healy £4.10. G Littlejohns (Leicester) £2.20 S Asher (Leicester) £2. Henry Kirby (Tuebrook) £1. £10 was raised at a Red Wedge concert in London and £5.55 selling stickers at a Neil Kinnock rally in the East Midlands.

Industrial Reports

Nalgo swings left

Held during the general election week, Nalgo's annual conference followed the pattern set this year by the NCU and the CPSA and moved to the left.

As well as voting to ballot the membership to set up a political fund the conference rejected the idea of taking government funds for trade union ballots, pledged opposition to the Tories' proposals for trade union reform.

In this latter debate an amendment from the north west and north Wales district proposed by the NEC, pledging the union to continue to operate the rules against strike-breakers, ir-

respective of the Tories' plans to guarantee impunity to scabs, was carried.

Other decisions included backing the campaign to reinstate sacked miners and total rejection of the extension of slave labour working conditions to the job training schemes.

The mood of delegates was overwhelmingly anti-Tory, so obvious disappointment greeted the re-election of the Tory government on the last day of conference.

Unfortunately, rather than harness the fighting mood which had been demonstrated all week in a clear statement of action to fight the Tory attacks, the

NEC, supported by the Communist Party members put forward a bland statement of opposition with no commitment to action. The debate was clearly rigged and over in a few minutes with only two speakers (one being the general secretary).

It is now up to the Broad Left in the union to organise support for genuine fighting policies, to ensure that the Tory government are under no illusions that they can easily get away with attacks on Nalgo members.

By Roger Bannister
(Knowley Nalgo, personal capacity)

Northern Ireland Public Services

THE 1987 Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance conference started and ended with the right wing executive being defeated on pay motions.

Motion 2 was carried, calling on the Northern Trade union leadership to convene a democratic rank and file conference of the trade union branches and trades councils to which community organisations should be invited, to discuss developing the trade union alternative economic and social programmes within the communities and to deal with the issues of sectarianism and intimidation.

The Alliance Council opposed the prospect of allowing delegates from the various unions' rank and file to come together on such political issues, but the conference delegates led by the left expressed the views of NIPSA members, who last year led the fight against intimidation of workers and are currently demanding that the movement's leaders conduct a real campaign on these life and death issues.

Another key issue on whether NIPSA should affiliate to British TUC could have potentially provoked a sectarian split within the

union. Right wing sectarian elements within NIPSA have long yearned for disaffiliation from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. The attitude of the right wing executive was to bureaucratically kill any debate on the issue.

However a motion moved by a *Militant* supporter explaining the need to democratise both the ICTU and the TUC stands for the "maximum solidarity of trade unionists in these unions" and reaffirms its support for and involvement in the ICTU as the "embodiment of the unity of the working class in this island."

The motion supported TUC affiliation, but not if this meant disaffiliation from the ICTU.

Another crucial motion was carried calling for the expansion of the public sector: "demands a programme of nationalisation of the key sectors of manufacturing industry in Britain and Northern Ireland"... "these industries to be run on the basis of one third of the management board coming from the industry and one third from the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions".

Unions."

The conference ended with a motion calling for the minutes of the Alliance Council, including individual voting records to be circulated to branches. The motion was carried on a card vote after a motion of no confidence was moved against the right wing president's blatant mishandling of the show of hands.

The right wing managed to retain control of the Alliance Council, but the left's candidates were knocking at the door. For example the left candidate for vice president lost by a mere 270 votes. The top four votes for the women's committee went to Broad Left candidates (three of whom are *Militant* supporters).

The gap between the right wing executive and the conference floor was enormous. Many left motions were carried by massive majorities. The Broad Left recruited dozens of new members and the *Militant* meeting of 80 was extremely optimistic.

By Mickey Duffy
NIPSA POG executive committee



Caterpillar demonstration

Caterpillar workers fight on

20,000 COPIES of the Caterpillar election special were distributed in Scotland to make sure that the fight for our jobs was kept on the agenda during the election campaign. Every constituency in Scotland was circulated, with copies going to all the major candidates.

The bulk of the news sheets were given out on the streets of the six Tory marginals in central Scotland and on the streets of Glasgow. The distribution was done by Caterpillar workers, glad to be back in the campaign once again.

The major rallies were all covered, pledges of support were many and welcome. Only a few Tory neanderthals made any adverse comments. The support is definitely still there.

The report back on the

working party from Inbucan (industrial consultants) highlighted key areas of possible future employment. Firstly, there was a gap in the smaller machine markets that could be exploited. Secondly, there was an increasing demand for refurbishing tractor-type equipment. And thirdly, there was of course, the spare-parts business.

Monopoly

Each of these alternatives comes into conflict with Caterpillar's declared intention of not assisting any enterprise which could be classified as a competitor. As ever, in the world of laissez faire capitalism, monopoly is the real name of the game.

It is the opinion of the

committee that Caterpillar will be challenged on this if it looks like damaging our future job prospects. It's bad enough being kicked in the teeth by the closure, but to be told what you can and cannot do, even after they have left, just won't be tolerated.

To date, only 43 hourly workers have left. These include men near to retirement. People who have found other employment etc. The company's enhanced redundancy payments proved to be as parsimonious as the shop stewards always predicted.

By John Gillan (shop stewards committee Caterpillar, AUEW, personal capacity)

Bus deregulation hits Sheffield

SHEFFIELD CITY council has been counting the cost so far of the Transport Act and bus deregulation.

Researchers in the council's Transportation and Campaign Units have pulled together and analysed all the information available so far on the effects of the Act and ratecapping on routes, services and passengers.

The Transport Act made it illegal for local authorities to subsidise their local bus networks as they might wish. Loss making routes can still be given some financial support, and there are concessionary fares for children, the elderly and people with disabilities. However, general rate subsidy for buses has ended.

On top of all this, all the Transport Authorities which took over from the former Metropolitan Counties are being ratecapped for their first three years, which means spending is controll-

By Alan Barrow
(Sheffield District Labour Party, personal capacity)

ed by the Department of Transport.

It left the Board £22 million short of what it needed to run services at their previous level when the Transport Act came into force. Since April 1986 effects so far have been:

- ★ A 10 per cent cut in the Sheffield bus network—from 21 million to 19 million miles.
- ★ Worse peak hour services on 41 per cent of Sheffield's 59 main bus routes.
- ★ Worse services on 17 per cent of first buses and 25 per cent of last buses on these routes.
- ★ The loss of 947 Sheffield jobs (1,500 countywide).
- ★ A 250 per cent fare in-

crease in 1986.

- ★ A 6 per cent increase in March 1987.
- ★ A 23 per cent drop in passengers.
- ★ The end of the concessionary Savercards as a countywide ticket for use on all local bus and rail services.
- ★ The end of bus conductors on all local services.
- ★ The end of free travel for pensioners.
- ★ Higher fares for children and people with disabilities.
- ★ A complicated system (Monday-Friday) of six different time zones and four different types of ordinary fare, plus concessions and a different fare structure at weekends.
- ★ Regular timetable changes and poorer timetable information.

Although the impact of private operators has been minimal so far the statement made by Nicholas Ridley in 1985 that 'Competition will

bring opportunity for lower fares, new passengers and services' is far from the truth if some of the quotes by bus users are anything to go by:

"My four children have to walk to school and back as I can't afford the fares. If it rains they get soaked."

"We have difficulty going to hospital with my baby. It's either paying £3 in bus fares or walking it."

"I have to journey into the city for two hours at £1.60 an hour five times a week. It's not worth working, so I'm leaving."

"I used to go to town to buy cheaper food. Now I shop locally but it costs more" are just a few examples of the effect it is having on low paid, unemployed and other vulnerable groups.

The Joint Board will be ratecapped at least until 1988/9. Figures from the Department of Transport have already made it clear that South Yorkshire's spending will be steadily cut back

BUS



until it reaches just 38 per cent of its pre-Transport Act level, which will inevitably mean higher bus fares.

The Labour Party must make clear that this Act will be overturned when they are in power, all grants returned and Boards allowed the

freedom of general rate subsidies in order to operate a cheap and efficient service that runs for need and not profit.

Copies of the bus booklet can be obtained by ringing Patricia Stubbs, Sheffield (0742) 734023.

Two bitter Manchester struggles

Ancoats occupation

The occupation of Manchester Ancoats hospital casualty ward in protest against closure plans has entered its 19th week.

Whilst various problems have reduced the number of local residents taking part and now not having support from the hospital staff there still remains a hard core of around 30 people determined to see the fight through to its conclusion.

The struggle has not been without its successes. It has forced the head of the local health authority from a plan of all out closure to producing a consultative document inviting opinions from the community on three options. They are: reintroducing full emergency services; reduced services; closure.

Jean Gray, despite the problems of being a single parent of four children (who are also involved in the occupation) spends most of her time there. She told me: I used to keep my house immaculate, even washing the paintwork, now it just gets left, the kids are having to wash their own socks for the first time ever.

"I was never really interested in politics before. I didn't always bother to vote, now I've joined the Labour Party as I realise that its not just one casualty ward but my kids' future."

Pat Mason has also been involved from the outset: "Someone called in from the Tory party saying if we voted her (Thatcher) in she'd build us a new hospital. We said it was a lie. Anyways, we said,

By Margaret Manning

what's wrong with the existing ones except for you closing them down.

He offered to get some T-shirts done for us—we told him what to do with his offer. In a Thatcher—run country ambulancemen going to the scene of the accident would not be feeling the pulses, they'd be going through their pockets to see who could afford treatment.

Everyone affected by NHS cuts should be a Labour voter. We're all Labour here but I can't understand why Kinnock went to Manchester airport and didn't come to see us, his real supporters. It's disgusting that he doesn't acknowledge us."

Ray McGrath is 18 and has also joined the Labour Party during the occupation. He stays in the ward almost 24—hours a day with backing from his family. Because he suffers from fits they are well aware of the necessity of accessible emergency services.

"Kids old enough to work should have the right to vote. If that was the case Thatcher wouldn't even exist. We will be staying here until this place re—opens or there's no more hope. But whatever happens, when it finishes I will be looking for another struggle to take part in, anything that opposes Thatcher's policies."



Ancoats demonstration in Manchester

Senior Coleman

The five month long strike at Senior Colman in Manchester continues despite management's latest futile attempt to break it.

With ACAS involvement, the strike committee reaffirmed their position of reinstatement for all and reimbursement for loss of earnings incurred during the strike.

Management refused to believe ACAS when they informed them of the strikers' position. They have

since written to all strikers intimating they might increase the financial offer, earlier refused by strikers.

Management have unwittingly acknowledged their desperation to see an end to the dispute for several reasons: one, the industrial tribunals are shortly to be heard; two, the loss of profit due to lost contracts incurred during the dispute through blacking and poor manufacture on previous works; three, the most significant pro-

blem management have recently come across is from the senior salesman at the company.

They wrote to the managing director of the group at Watford, stating their lack of confidence in the management of Senior Coleman.

The outcome was the senior group director Mr Denniston has been sent to oversee the operation of the company in Manchester, pushing aside Mr Brown, who himself was mainly responsible for the strike in the first place.

On Saturday 4 July 10.30am a demonstration is

to be held in Manchester in support of the strikers. The main speakers are Tony Benn, Terry Fields, John Tocher and Mike Hicks (ex—Wapping jailed printer).

The march will assemble at 10.30 at the G-Mex centre in Manchester and will march to Mandela buildings, the Manchester Polytechnic Students Union, where the rally will be addressed inside. Donations to Senior Coleman strike fund.

By Tony Lowe
Secretary of strike committee

North Shields buses

FRANK CAMPBELL, a bus driver from North Shields, talked to Terry McPartlan about the results of bus deregulation.

ONE THING they told us was that we would work less Sundays. We do, but now we work 10 1/2 hour shifts on a Sunday instead. We've been forced to speed up, turn round times on some routes have been cut from 15 minutes to three or four minutes. It gets impossible in the rush hour.

We get 35 minutes off on a 9 1/2 hour shift. Imagine driving to London, having a cuppa and then straight home again. It's made worse because a lot of regulations concerning rest breaks don't apply within 25 miles of the depot.

The company advertises the "friendly driver with a smile". Wish we had time to smile! Not only have running times been cut but our pay has been cut by £30 per week and the hours lengthened from 45 to 40. There are now three rates of pay for drivers so new starters end up being used as cheap labour.

We were told that privatisation would benefit the ratepayers but what about the duplication. Some firms try to squeeze the new small operators by painting their buses the same colour

and turning up a few minutes earlier at the stop. So now there are two firms claiming two lots of subsidy where there used to be one.

More buses means more traffic delays and makes the roads more dangerous. The fares have gone up by an average of 17 per cent despite the wage cuts. So there are more irate customers as well.

The company spent a fortune on a new depot and equipment just before deregulation. It's obvious the plans have been in the pipeline for years. There is really very little thought for the ratepayers.

Things are likely to get much worse. Asda have opened a new superstore near Newcastle. They've put on a free bus but that depends on paying the driver £2 an hour. Some of the lads have accepted it.

Our union is the biggest in the country. We need a national campaign to reverse the cuts. We've suffered in wages and conditions. A 35-hour week with no loss of pay would be a major step forward. And the Labour Party should be campaigning for the nationalisation of public transport under democratic control to guarantee resources are put where they are needed and not where the fast profits are.

Scargill stands firm in South Wales

Miners president Arthur Scargill received loud applause from the South Wales miners and their families when he condemned the Board's proposal for six—day production at Margam.

He told his audience at the South Wales Miners' Gala in Swansea that he was elected to fight for a shorter working week not a longer working week - "We should be fighting for a four day week" he said to loud cheers.

The enthusiasm from the crowd was in complete contrast to the almost statue like response of the area leadership on the platform. However, Des Duffield, South Wales NUM area presi-



dent recognising the Board's real intention in wanting to split the national NUM, repeated his statement that South Wales would abide by a national conference decision on six day working.

Reflecting on the Tory victory, Scargill re-emphasised the need to organise from now, a fight back with party unity and socialist policies being a pre—requisite to success. He condemned those in the Labour Party who exerted pressure

from behind the scenes to prevent them from speaking at election rallies.

Those parts of the country which had carried out a socialist programme such as Liverpool, got the best results he said. Repeating the point on television he said that where he had spoken in Liverpool and Bradford, if their victories had been repeated on a national scale we would have a Labour government in power today.

In Brief

FOUR PICKETS were injured and taken to hospital in ambulances a week last Wednesday at the HFW Plastics dispute in Gateshead following violent clashes between mass pickets and about a hundred police.

The violence occurred when police waded into demonstrators who were attempting to stop the scab bus entering the gates. Anger erupted when police began punching and throwing people to the ground.

One man was found collapsed on the road. Witnesses claim he had been kicked by police whilst unconscious. Three girls were injured. One was in a state of shock and in tears after having her head bashed against the ground. Another has a suspected fractured wrist.

By Bob Harker

Members of bank workers union BIFU in Lloyds, Barclays and National Westminster started industrial action last week.

They are imposing an overtime ban which has had an effect on a range of services and has resulted in a thousand new membership applications.

The banks are experiencing problems in operating their extended evening opening hours, opening on time, supplying foreign currency, processing customer transactions and serving customers during lunch time.

Militant

Spanish elections: set-back for Socialists—page 11
Italian elections: Communists' decline—page 2

Civil servants' strike

All out action needed

RECENT NEGOTIATIONS with the Treasury, acting on behalf of the newly elected Tory government, have failed to produce a fresh offer, to settle the dispute with the civil servants of the CPSA and SCPS. Against the unions' modest claim for a £20 or 15 per cent wage increase, the Tories are still offering £5.75 or just 4.25 per cent.

These negotiations, conducted in conditions of great secrecy by the general secretaries of the two unions involved, show conclusively that more and greater pressure is needed to win the dispute. With a renewed parliamentary majority behind them, the Tories feel they can dig their heels in. But determined national action can force them to think again.

The employers' position in the recent negotiations was:

1. no extra pay on 1 April 1987.
2. the possibility of some extra money in September for those who they considered had extra responsibility and or work

A Militant reporter

pressures. Even then they are not talking about large sums of money.

3. acceptance by the unions of a new pay system which would give the employer greater wage flexibility and which could be used to introduce regional and/or performance pay.

This is rightly seen by the unions as providing no basis for a settlement. There is now a need to step up the action. The Broad Left controlled NEC of CPSA recognise this. They have declared their intention to go ahead with the currently arranged programme of regional strikes, which was decided at the annual conferences of the unions, but not to repeat it. They have

made clear their view that the unions need to move to an all-out strike ballot as the only way of winning a decent wage level for members.

They have called for a joint meeting with the SCPS where they will seek agreement on the way forward based on all-out strike action.

Members of the two unions will work hard to make the programme of regional strikes successful. But this support will be there only if, in the absence of a much improved offer from the employer, it leads directly to a total and indefinite strike.



John Macreadie

DHSS workers on benefit

Sally Parke, on strike at Vicar Lane DHSS in Bradford, is a single parent with a 13 month old baby. For a 37 and a half hour week as a Clerical Assistant she takes home £76 a week. Out of that she has to pay a child minder £35 a week and share the rent of the two bedroom flat she lives in with her mother. Her pay is so bad she is going part time, working 25 hours, so she can claim supplementary benefit and be slightly better off. She said that at her office there is now a special section of the DHSS dealing with claims from civil servants.



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What we stand for

- The immediate introduction of a 35-hour week without loss in pay as a step towards the elimination of unemployment.
- Reversal of all Tory cuts and a massive programme of public works on housing, education, the health service, etc.
- A minimum wage of £120 a week 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.