

Militant

Solidarity price £1

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth 30p

ISSUE 858 24 July 1987

Come to the Socialist Summer Camp



See page 6

Miners ready to fight back

Frickley miners' leader speaks to Militant



ONCE AGAIN, the Tories' coal industry hatchet men have sparked off industrial warfare in the coalfields.

Last week miners at Frickley colliery walked out to save the jobs of six of their workmates. Their pickets stopped pits throughout South Yorkshire and some in North Yorkshire too.

They got a ready response because British Coal has introduced a "tyrant's charter"—a disciplinary code which allows them a free hand to victimise whoever they want. In North Yorkshire, Ted Scott, Stillingfleet branch secretary, was sacked for telling miners to stick to an agreement management had signed.

Now the Frickley miners have returned to work, while miners nationally vote on whether to take industrial action against the code.

STEVE TULLEY, the NUM branch secretary at Frickley, spoke to *Militant*:

"I believe we've laid the foundations for a good campaign

against the code.

"I believe we've united the coalfields both in Yorkshire and nationally and we can build for a ballot result rejecting the code.

"Our meeting agreed that any repercussions or victimisations arising out of the strike would result in an immediate 24-hour strike, followed by an emergency branch meeting to discuss further action.

"If the issue is right and the time is right, then you have to take action. On this occasion the issue and time was right and the action at Frickley should have been built on."

The Frickley miners are determined not to be split from their fellow miners.

"If pickets were to come down from North Yorkshire calling for action to reinstate Ted Scott, we would stand full square with our colleagues."

(Steve Tulley spoke in a personal capacity.)

What we say

- ★ No to victimisations!
- ★ For a massive 'Yes' vote!
- ★ No to six day working!
- ★ Combat the UDM; for one democratic fighting miners' union!
- ★ Build a democratic rank and file miners' Broad Left!
- ★ Prepare for action to beat British Coal!

Inside...

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South Africa: ANC/liberal talks Page 10



Can Labour win a majority?

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Send us cash!

THERE IS just over a week to the end of the fighting fund quarter on 5 August. An anonymous donation of £5000 takes our total to £40,987! With all out effort from all our readers we can smash all previous records.

Use our new appeal sheet to raise cash. Be bold! Ask everyone who buys *Militant* for a donation of £1, a fiver, a tenner or even more.

Militant

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The way forward for mineworkers

THE STRIKE by Frickley and other South Yorkshire miners is a crushing answer to all those apostles of hesitancy, who claimed the miners were broken.

Militant's analysis has been confirmed totally. Miners may have lost the 1984/5 strike but their capacity for struggle is absolutely intact. As we predicted, since the strike a war of attrition has been under way against management's jack boot methods. In recent weeks miners were saying a new strike was on the agenda.

Because of the leading role miners have played, not least in the 1984/5 strike, everywhere workers will be lifted by last week's events. Tragically these events also reveal the weaknesses among the area leaders, many of whom still claim left credentials.

British Coal is attempting to prepare the coalfields for privatisation, by six-day working, more mass redundancies and new closures. The disciplinary code is intended to make the workforce submit.

Some area leaders publicly have distanced themselves from Arthur Scargill and Peter Heathfield. This has emboldened British Coal. Having no confidence in miners' fighting strength, at the very moment when management is pushing through ruthless attacks, these leaders are urging miners to trust British Coal's good faith.

Five miners are suspended at Frickley. Ted Scott, branch secretary at Stillingfleet, has been sacked for carrying out union duties, action meant to shatter the confidence of all NUM representatives. Often it is correct for a leadership gradually to test the mood by limited action and to build the mood further before engaging its forces totally to battle. But workers cannot be turned off then on like a tap. Yorkshire miners understood the need for action, and they were ready!

While setting in motion the ballot procedures (and over a more condensed time-scale!) the NEC also should have supported the action developing in Yorkshire and made it official. Other areas should have been called upon for financial support.

Delegations of striking Yorkshire miners should then have been organised to address meetings at every pit. The momentum would have been maintained and the morale of miners throughout the industry would have soared. The NEC should then have met a few days later to review the situation and, if necessary, adjust tactics.

The vacuum of leadership was particularly stark at Yorkshire area level. If the Yorkshire EC had given the lead, a completely united strike across the coalfield would have occurred.

Instead they told Yorkshire miners to return to work pending the outcome of the national ballot. Stillingfleet miners were told that strike action could jeopardise Ted Scott's appeal. Confusion reigned. This was entirely the responsibility of the area EC. Their inability to offer real leadership threatened serious splits in the area.

Despite the widespread support they were receiving from other pits, Frickley miners, to their credit, decided not to continue picketing in the interests of unity. In a matter of days Ted Scott's sacking may be confirmed. If so the area EC should call an area-wide strike. If they remain hesitant Stillingfleet miners could still strike. Any leader advising miners to cross picket lines will be trampling over the finest traditions of the NUM.

Nationally miners will now be preparing for the ballot. British Coal and the Tory media will try to influence the outcome by a massive barrage of propaganda. This must be countered by the issue of literature to all miners clearly explaining the issues. Mass meetings must be held in all pits.

Now is the time to turn to those miners still within the company union, the UDM. Their 'leaders' have collaborated with management in the introduction of the disciplinary code, yet it has been used to sack UDM members, provoking other UDM members to strike.

Special literature should be produced aimed at rank and file UDM members. The NUM should organise meetings in Nottingham open to UDM members. On this issue a huge wedge can be driven between those who 'lead' the UDM and ordinary Nottingham miners, preparing the way for united action in the future and to the demise of the UDM.

In every coal field miners should now also address themselves to the urgent task of building an active democratic Broad Left that will fight to give miners at every level the leadership they richly deserve.

Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office.
 Published by Militant.
 Printed by Militant Publications,
 3/13 Hepscoot Road,



BRITISH COAL's new code of conduct and disciplinary procedures, which have been accepted by the UDM and imposed on the NUM, have been the cause of the recent unrest in Yorkshire.

By a Yorkshire miner

The code amounts to a charter for the victimisation of union activists and anyone caught in the act of resisting the employers' attacks on wages, hours and conditions. It puts into writing the arbitrary disciplinary measures the Coal Board practised in the 1984/5 strike.

Militant looks at the new code in detail:

Management claim that the code is based on the ACAS code of practice and disciplinary procedures in employment. In reality it represents a draconian new attack on mineworkers and differs from the ACAS code in many instances.

Dismissal

Acts considered to be gross misconduct by management will lead to summary dismissal, regardless of the individual miner's previous disciplinary record. Three of the eleven acts considered to constitute gross misconduct represent nothing more than an open ended charter for dismissing any miner at any time.

Act 8 is "indecent conduct on British Coal premises or directly related to British Coal personnel or criminal offence outside employment as a result of which the mineworker is considered unsuitable for his work or unacceptable to other employees."

Act 9 is "fighting, intoxication by drink or evidence of drug abuse."

Act 11 is "any other act of misconduct which is deemed to be sufficiently serious to constitute gross misconduct as defined above."

In fact, on page 15 of the code, British Coal actually admit that they will dismiss miners charged with criminal offences, even when they are found not guilty in court. British Coal have clearly decided that they are a higher authority than the

The tyrant's charter

Coal Board's code examined



PAT WALL, MP for Bradford North, is using his newly won position in parliament to call for support for the Frickley miners.

He has put down a motion that applauds their 'prompt action' in striking to stop their workmates being victimised. He notes that the draconian disciplinary code has not been negotiated with the NUM. The strike shows that "the miners' will to fight has not been broken and that they are prepared to struggle in defence of jobs and conditions," the motion says.

Pat demands that British Coal withdraws the letter to the Frickley men, reinstates Ted Scott at Stillingfleet, withdraws the code and negotiates with the NUM.



Yorkshire miners on the march. Pickets at Bentley told Militant reporters: "Many lads are still licking their wounds from the last strike. But we can't let the people in power get away with stamping on the trade unions. The Executive say the only way to fight is through a united front. If that's the case, why not call for action forthwith? I didn't want to see Frickley isolated, it's immoral to let Frickley fight on alone."

law they are continually telling miners they have so much respect for.

Totalitarian

In reality this means that miners can be sacked for alleged offences committed outside of working hours. And where a miner is charged with a criminal offence connected with British Coal's property or interests, disciplinary action, including summary dismissal, may be taken before any court decision is made. Again British Coal is acting above the law. After the experience of the 1984/5 strike, it is obvious that this will be used to justify victimisations.

At disciplinary interviews, the code makes it clear, a miner may no

longer be accompanied by a workmate of his choice. Instead, the individual accompanying the accused must be approved by the manager. This is an obvious attempt to exclude local branch officials from such interviews.

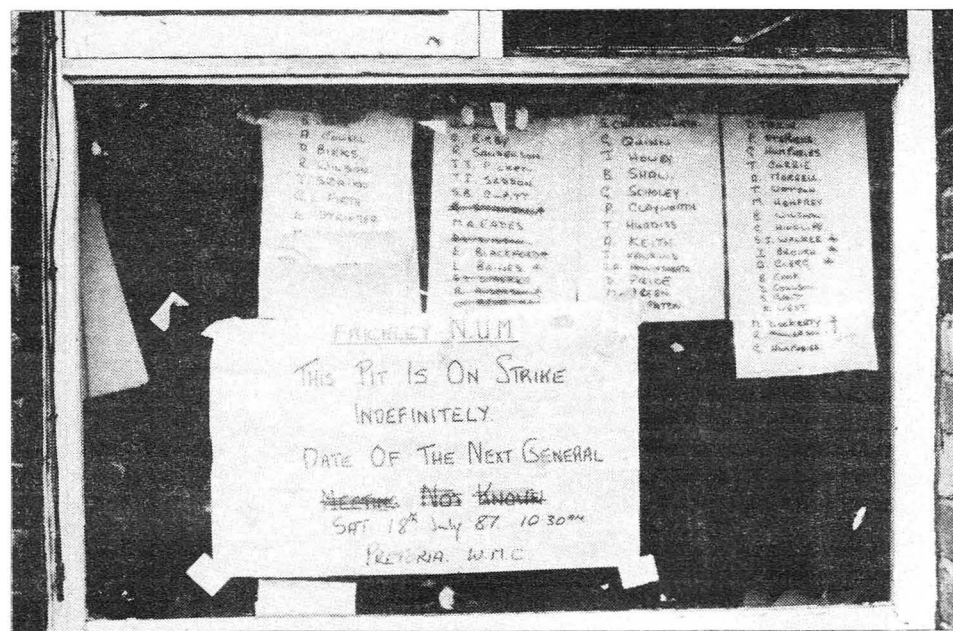
Appeals are allowed, but no independent element is to be tolerated. Instead, the area industrial relations officer will select an area manager to hear the appeal and make the final decision. This smacks of totalitarianism. The management are highly unlikely to overturn each other's decisions!

The code also outlines eight different grades of punishment, ranging from a formal oral warning to dismissal without notice. Each punishment is to be recorded and disregarded

after three years.

Overall, this reactionary document represents a blatant attack upon the conditions of British mineworkers. British Coal have clearly decided to throw down the gauntlet by the implementation of this obnoxious document and the events of the past two weeks clearly demonstrate the miners will pick it up.

However, we must understand that the new code cannot be viewed in isolation. It forms part of a well-prepared strategy by management, whose eventual aim is privatisation. They hope to first divide, then smash the NUM by the introduction of flexible working. The new code will be clearly be to prevent miners from fighting back and weed out the best activists in every coalfield. As such it must be resisted, not only by the NUM, but by the whole labour and trade union movement. If it is successful in the mines, workers in other industries will rapidly face similar measures.



LANCASHIRE MINERS told Militant:

"We have had two wage rises imposed on us and now with no negotiation, despite offers by the union to talk it over, they're imposing this code. If industrial relations is the name of the name of the game, then the Board are not very good players. This dispute is not about Yorkshire, the code affects all miners.

"It's true what Arthur Scargill says the Board has come so far, we must say 'No further, this union stands and fights.'"

Yorkshire miners fight victimisation

Frickley's determined stand

INDUSTRIAL UNREST has swept the Yorkshire coalfield in the last two weeks.

At Frickley colliery in South Yorkshire, heavy handed management on the last shift before the pit's annual two week shutdown led to six men being summoned to disciplinary hearings under the new disciplinary code. They refused to attend and were suspended.

The pit walked out, only returning to work last Monday. By the end of last week, flying Frickley pickets had brought the rest of the South Yorkshire coalfield out in sympathy. The NUM South Yorkshire panel supported the action and later the North Yorkshire panel backed strike action in support.

Stillingfleet

At the same time, management at Stillingfleet colliery in the Selby complex were also applying the new code. A dispute had been developing about coal cutting in overtime.

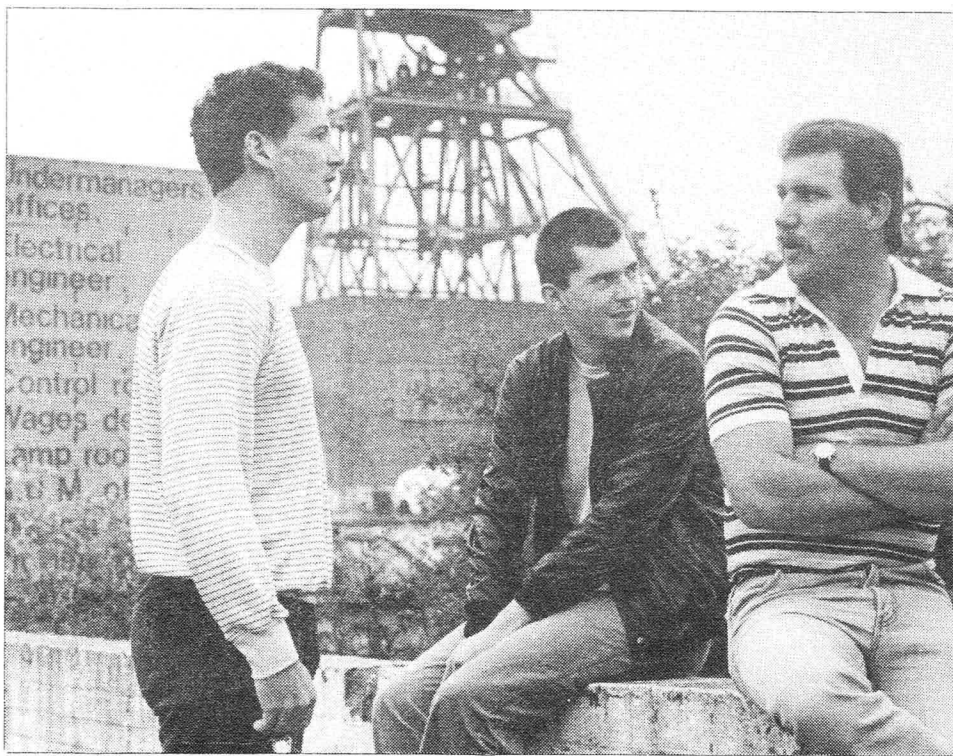
The local NUM adhered to the NUM/management Yorkshire agreement which stops this practice. Management summoned two branch committee men and the branch secretary. All three were suspended on the day Frickley walked out.

On Wednesday the committee members were told no further action would be taken but the branch secretary Ted Scott was sacked. He appealed but the result is not yet known.

On Friday Frickley management upped the stakes by sending letters threatening dismissal to all 900 men with copies to all other striking miners in South Yorkshire. British Coal had thrown down the gauntlet but unfortunately the area leadership failed to pick it up.

A clear strike call in South Yorkshire would have got a massive response. The mood in Barnsley's pubs on Friday night was excited with periodic chants of 'here we go'.

Instead, the Yorkshire executive voted to call a



Frickley miners on the picket line. They told *Militant* reporters: "If the Area executive had backed Frickley's action, then the Board could have been forced to retreat and lift the suspensions on the five men at Frickley and reinstate Ted Scott at Stillingfleet." "It would have been a major climbdown by the Board. It would have given confidence to everyone in the coalfield."

Rank and file determination must be linked to a leadership with a clear strategy for stopping management attacks.

return to work while campaigning for the national ballot over the new code with only Johnny Stones from Frickley against. This ballot will not finish until 21 August.

Picket-lines

Incredibly many branch officials called for picket lines to be crossed. Area leadership argued that a strike would make it more likely that Ted Scott would lose his appeal and that his case was more important than the Frickley suspensions.

Instead of linking the two cases together, they played into management's hands by encouraging divisions between North and South Yorkshire.

The momentum for unity was replaced by rumours, accusations and innuendo, which inevitably led to confusion. Many men who supported Frickley's action did

not want to vote against the executive decision.

So most branches accepted their recommendation though many agreed also not to cross Frickley picket lines.

Early Monday morning, flying pickets from Frickley halted work at 11 other Yorkshire pits. But at a mass meeting on Tuesday morning, Frickley voted to return to work. They were proud of their action but they had been isolated by the area leadership.

But the question of the suspended men remains as does the potential announcement of Ted Scott's dismissal. This could well start strikes in Selby and North Yorkshire.

The rank and file are flexing their muscles and preparing to fight, a magnificent tribute to workers who had a year long strike just two years ago.

Many NUM activists, not just in Yorkshire, feel that

a third term of Thatcher means that they will 'have to have another go'. They were encouraged by NUM conference decisions not to accept the arguments of new realism but to fight over a wide range of issues. All this has helped to create the present volatile situation.

But the strategy of the area leaders and of many branch leaderships must be questioned. Rank and file determination was not enough in 1984-5. It would not be enough in future battles. It must be linked to a determined leadership with a clear strategy for rolling back management attacks.

This can be built from amongst the new layer of activists and needs organising in the national miners' broad left.

The ruling class will build up their attacks on the NUM and on all mining communities. This makes another national miners' strike likely in the next few years. With the leadership the miners deserve, the attacks can be defeated.

By Simon Duerden

Keep Labour Socialist

International witch hunt

Socialist youth camp

THE LABOUR Party Young Socialists (LPYS) have always regarded internationalism as vitally important. So over 100 LPYS members raised the thousands of pounds necessary to participate in the International Union of Socialist Youth (IUSY) festival in Valencia this week from the labour movement and from their own hard-pressed pockets.

Cards marked

IUSY's publicity announced: "A lot of energy on the IUSY level is being put into this mass meeting of young socialists."

On arrival the British LPYS found that IUSY bureaucrats were expending a lot of energy on keeping them out of the festival! They would only allow 50 LPYS members in and gave no explanation of what the rest were supposed to

do. But IUSY's own official delegation list showed that 150 LPYS members would attend. Those who were allowed in had their delegates cards marked with a red triangle!

Other sections were horrified at this treatment. German Young Socialists (Jusos) compared this to how communists were branded in Nazi Germany. Six hours of protest culminated in a march of 400 Young Socialists from all over the world, and addressed by the Jusos' leader. In response to this, the Spanish National Guard were called out, machine guns at the ready!

Frightened of adverse publicity, the IUSY organisers eventually allowed the British delegation in. This episode taught them a lesson that has been learnt at great cost by the right-wing of the British labour movement manoeuvres to stifle Marxist ideas result in an increase in their support.

By Militant reporters

Springburn

THE CAMPAIGN to keep Labour socialist is also a fight to defend socialists facing expulsion from the Party.

The leadership fear that Marxists will spearhead the drive to defend socialist policies and win rank and file support. They therefore turn to expulsions to try to force them out.

GLASGOW SPRINGBURN Labour Party has voted for an inquiry into the activity of *Militant* supporters and other left-wingers during the election.

With a majority of 22,063, Springburn is the safest Labour seat in Scotland, yet rather than use this commanding position to campaign against the Tory government, Michael Martin, the right-wing MP, seems hell-bent on witch-hunting members of his own party.

In his first speech since the election he criticised those "who would associate themselves or their election material with fruit and nut-cases like the *Militant* ten-

dency".

He told how he had taken out writs against "*Militant* tendency members who had 'Vote Martin' stickers in one hand and the *Militant* newspaper in the other". In fact they were selling *Socialist Youth!*

Militant supporters and Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) members conducted themselves impeccably throughout the election and were in fact intimidated and assaulted by right-wingers.

The campaign against the comrades reached a new low when an unemployed LPYS member was interviewed by the DHSS after they had an 'anonymous allegation' that she was working as a '*Militant* seller'.

Resolutions and letters of protest should be sent to the Labour Party Scottish Council, 1 Lyne-doch Place, Glasgow G3 6AB and Mary Beckett, Secretary Springburn CLP, 59 Wallacewell Road, Glasgow G21.

By a Militant reporter

Walk-out in Notts

NUM and UDM Bilsthorpe strike

UDM AND NUM members struck over the disciplinary code at a Nottinghamshire pit last week. Most of the afters shift walked out at Bilsthorpe colliery after a UDM official and two NACODS members were sacked for a disciplinary offence.

There is a strong mood against the code there even among UDM members. Some miners have named it "the Tyrant's Charter".

The UDM have tried to defuse the situation, but further action is possible after the case is reviewed on Tuesday. Miners were also sacked at another Notts pit, Rufford.

The UDM members who went on strike would

have looked aghast at the letter from the UDM's solicitor in *The Independent* last week. He professes astonishment that the NUM are 'so excited' about the new code. Any employer, he says, has "always had the power to

sack any employee for any reason he likes, be it good, bad or indifferent."

UDM members won't be very reassured by the UDM solicitor saying they would take legal proceedings if they thought the code was used 'unfairly'. The management have given an ideal opportunity for NUM activists to win back members from the UDM.

By a Militant reporter

Right wing hit Broadgreen—again!

IN AN incredible manoeuvre top Labour officials have prevented the Liverpool Broadgreen Labour Party from holding its AGM until after the NCC has dealt with Josie Aitman and Elaine Bannister, the past chair and secretary.

Both Josie and Elaine have already been banned from holding office anyway and were subsequently ruled ineligible to stand for the general committee, so why do the leadership want to stop a successful and growing party from meeting?

Keep Labour socialist

NOWHERE IS the fight to keep Labour socialist more crucial than in the Town Halls, where Labour councils now face their gravest crisis. It is not an academic debate about future policy, but an immediate fight to save jobs and services.

Labour councillors will test in practice the theory that watering down policy and 'accepting the realities' of Tory Britain 'broadens' the Party's appeal. Already there is clear proof that it does the opposite.

The signs are that the majority will cut services and jobs. Margaret Hodge, leader of Islington Council, rules out a strategy of defiance. "This has been tried, failed and discredited", she says, and condemns "idle talk of confrontation, rhetoric about illegal budgets". Yet she herself says the only alternative to confrontation is

"acquiescence to cuts".

In London Labour has already paid the price for adopting this alternative. For contrary to what Hodge asserts, a strategy of defiance was merely talked about. Only Lambeth and Liverpool took the strategy forward. And the electoral triumph in Liverpool, contrasted with the defeats in London, proves conclusively how false is the idea that 'limiting the damage' while carrying out spending cuts will appeal to voters.

In London and elsewhere, the backlog of housing repairs, the non-filling of vacancies, the virtual end of house-building, the reduction of services and the imposition of rent and rates rises led to abstentions and even votes for the Tories and the Alliance.

Contrast that with Labour's triumph in Liverpool, where the 47 councillors, who now face the possibility of being declared bankrupt, showed how the Tories could have been defeated if they had been backed up by the national Labour leadership.

It is vital that a massive campaign is mobilised, involving the unions, tenants and all those who use council services, to prevent Labour councils capitulating to the Tory government.

The Liverpool 47 gave a lead. They were fully endorsed by the electorate of Liverpool. Now the movement nationally must rally round to defend them and continue the fight for jobs and services which they began.

Labour councils must fight

Hackney dam about to burst

Labour councillor LYNNE FAULKES, of Hackney Borough Council, describes the horrific problems confronting one of the most deprived communities in the country.

HACKNEY COUNCIL'S 'growth' budget is collapsing round its ears. The renegotiation of special financing deals (made after the collapse of the campaign against rate-capping) has fallen through and the money is no longer available. Even money already spent will probably have to be found from somewhere else such as the housing capital programme, which will cause an even greater crisis.

Homelessness is spiralling out of control, with an estimated 1,000 families in bed and breakfast and a projected budget of £15 million instead of the £7 million allocated. There are an estimated 'hidden' 12,000 potentially homeless sharing with families and friends and no chance of moving anywhere up the ever-increasing waiting list of 23,000. Squatters are multiplying rapidly; 1,000 was the last guess.

Efforts are being made urgently to do up some of the 4,000 empty properties to provide emergency housing, but this is only makeshift. Plans are being made to use tower blocks which are being decanted because they are riddled with faults!

Summoned

The housing capital programme has run out of money. No more schemes will be added and those already on the list face a long wait. We have heard that there will be no capital programme next year. "Comprehensive improvements are out" says housing chair, Brynley Heavan. He is also proposing to sell off empty properties (mainly terrace houses) which he says they cannot afford to renovate.

All this has been decided without any debate. There has not been a Labour group meeting since immediately after the general election, when none of this information was available.

On top of this the 'old' councillors, those who were members during the rate-capping campaign, have been summoned to explain to the District Auditor why they delayed setting a rate. This could lead to surcharging and is obviously timed to put the frighteners on any councillors thinking of standing up to the crisis by refusing to make cuts in jobs and services or jack up rents and other charges.

The workforce have already begun to organise a fightback (see *Militant* 856). Work must now be done amongst tenants to ensure that their inevitable anger is channelled into positive action.

Opting out

Tenants face huge rent increases ('ringfencing' could mean rent increases of 160 per cent!) together with a possible poll tax of over £700 a head, and mounting frustration over long-awaited repairs (11,000 outstanding job tickets was the last estimate).

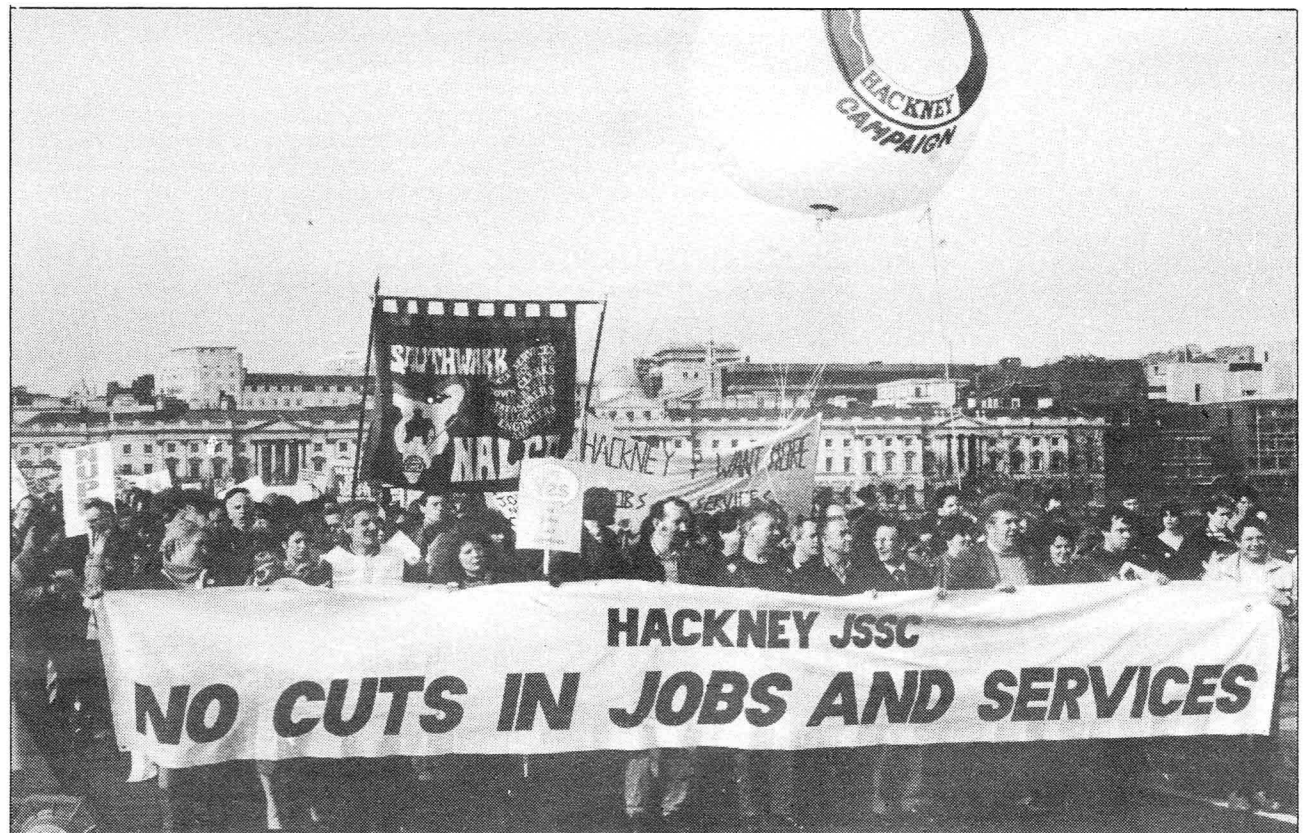
Already rumours are rife of tenants opting for the right to buy, in a desperate attempt to ensure some security or a ticket out of the borough.

Some tenants' associations are talking of 'opting out', wooed by glossy brochures from private agencies and government officials who have been touring some of the estates, telling the tenants what could be done 'if only they were out of the dead hand of the council'.

Of course they do not tell tenants they could also lose security of tenure, have their rents doubled and have to pay through the nose for repairs, with no safeguards against cowboy contractors who go bust in the middle of a job.

Shoreditch, on the edge of the City, suffering from years of neglect, is a prime target, as are estates bordering the River Lea and the Regent's canal, attracting developers with the idea of penthouses, marinas and so on.

The council is trying to plug the cracks in the dam with mud. How long before the whole thing bursts?



Hackney council workers march in defence of their jobs and services in 1985.

Photo: Ben Eastop

Oxford council's crisis

THE ONLY general election gain for Labour in the South was Oxford East. A factor behind Labour's success was the achievements of Oxford City Council. Since winning a majority in 1980, Labour has built 1,000 houses and renovated existing housing. Services have been improved, with a new ice rink and swimming pool and concessionary bus fares for the elderly.

Yet these improvements did not result in large rent and rates rises. Consequently Labour increased its majority from three in 1980 to 15 today (29 Labour, 9 Tories and 5 Alliance).

Like many other authorities, however, Oxford has maintained its spending programme by 'creative accountancy', in anticipation of the election of a Labour government, rather than a battle with the last Tory government.

Labour's defeat has put paid to 'creative accounting'. All the loopholes used are being closed. New legislation called 'ringfencing' will stop councils moving funds from the general account to the housing account.

In Oxford this would immediately lead to a £4 million shortfall in the

housing account. Rents would have to be raised by 70 per cent to plug the gap!

The next body-blow will be the poll tax and the uniform business rate (UBR), which will result in large rates increases for businesses. Yet the money from the UBR will not go into the city coffers but into a national pot. Labour authorities will no longer be able to raise revenue from commercial businesses.

Privatisation

This will mean the level of poll tax being jacked up. It will also mean that Oxford residents like Robert Maxwell will pay the same as a YTS trainee!

Penalties on spending, and rate-capping, together with the enforced privatisation of many council services, will mean the effective end of house-building, cuts in services, job losses and hefty rent rises.

Unfortunately some Labour councillors are prepared to implement Tory cuts. In Oxford, divisions between left and right wing Party members are developing. At a 'consultative' Party meeting, tempers flared as it began to

emerge that right-wingers would take the road of cuts rather than fight.

Already, without prior notice to either Party members or trade unions at the Town Hall, a two-week freeze on recruitment and capital spending was implemented. This will freeze recruitment until September. For the majority of Party members, who fear the undoing of many of the positive achievements of the past seven years, this is the thin end of the wedge.

Militant supporters have argued that Oxford Labour Party should adopt a fighting programme of no cuts, no job losses, no 'competitive tendering', and no rent or rates rises to compensate for Tory cuts.

The party needs to have a campaign of public meetings to convince the council workforce and the workers of Oxford that industrial action is the only possible way to defend jobs and services. Approaches will have to be made to Labour councils up and down the country who are facing a similar dilemma.

By Dave Carr

Keep Labour socialist

Haringey 'left' vote for cuts

AT AN 'extraordinary' meeting of Haringey Borough Council, called to endorse a report from the Policy and Resources Committee recommending a strategy to defend jobs and services, members of the formerly left-wing Labour Co-ordinating Committee (LCC) proposed an amendment calling for a three per cent cut to ensure that the council 'acted within the law'.

This would mean cutting

back on jobs and services to the tune of £50-£60 million. They tried to justify this by claiming that 'socialist cuts' were preferable to Tory cuts!

Rejected

With the Labour Group split, the LCC were confident that with the support of the Tories they would win. But to their dismay the Tories abstained and the amendment was defeated

on the casting vote of the Mayor.

The Labour right then got the meeting adjourned for an hour. When it resumed, with the backing of the Tories, they voted by 35 to 20, with one abstention, to reject the report.

A major blow to the left was that Bernie Grant MP, the former council leader, voted with the right wing and the Tories. After the initial shock, many Labour Party members in the

gallery called on him to resign his council seat.

Bizarre

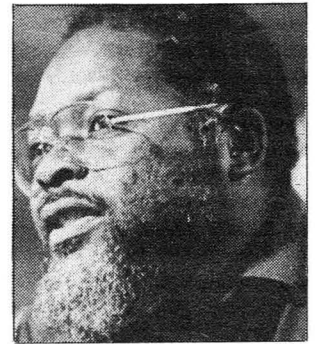
A bizarre twist to the tale was that Peter Murphy, the Tory candidate in Tottenham and a classic example of the 'raving right', broke ranks and voted for the report. "I will never vote the same way as Bernie Grant" he said, as he voted for confrontation with the Tory government and

possible surcharge and disqualification.

Unless there is now a massive campaign, involving the council workers and all those affected by the cuts, to protect jobs and services, they could be cut by an unholy alliance of the LCC and the Tories.

By Liz Gaynor

Tottenham Labour Party executive committee (personal capacity)



Bernie Grant MP voted with Tories.

Support the Liverpool 47

AT A press conference to relaunch the Liverpool 47 Defence Fund, Euro-MP Ken Stewart handed over the £1000 he pledged. His colleague Les Huckfield and Bob Wareing MP have pledged the same, and other Merseyside MPs have been contributing regularly through Eric Heffer.

By a Militant reporter

The fund has been established to raise funds for the 47 former Liverpool city councillors, who were surcharged and disqualified from office by the Tory government after they refused to abandon the policies to protect jobs and services on which they had been elected.

A quarter of a million pounds has already been raised for the cost of the appeal to the House of Lords. But now the District Auditor has presented a bill for £350,000 to cover the surcharge and his costs.

Negotiations are taking place to arrange to pay monthly instalments, like the Lambeth councillors who have had to find £5,000 a month. If agreement cannot be reached, the government could seek to have the councillors made bankrupt.

Tony Mulhearn, one of the 47 councillors, who has just lost his job at Bemrose printers as well as being surcharged, commented: "Already we've covered over £200,000. If the DA presses for the other £350,000 and we are unable to pay, we could all be declared bankrupt."

"That could mean goods could be seized and houses sold to pay the costs. For me that would mean the house, the car and the



New houses built by Liverpool City Council, symbols of success. Top: Tony Mulhearn.

Photos: Dave Sinclair

possessions of me and my wife and five children. I've just lost my job and if I work again, I could face attachment of earnings.

"We need now the final push from the activists, the shop stewards, the local authority workers to continue to appeal to their fellow workers."

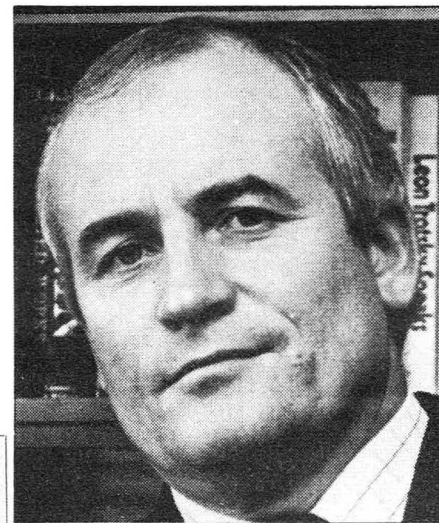
"The new Labour Group on the council have voted to do all they can, recognising the record of the 47, on which they were also elected, and the movement would support that stance."

Another of the 47, Peter Fergu-

son, explained what bankruptcy would mean: "I've got three kids under ten. How can I explain if someone comes to take their bikes and their lego? I'm a skilled worker; if I had an attachment on my earnings, it would mean working just to exist on supplementary benefit level".

Forerunner

Former council leader John Hamilton denied that the 47 would be forgotten: "The District Auditor is now moving into the



Manchester council jobs in jeopardy

COUNCIL JOBS and services face devastation in Manchester. The general election result has shattered council leaders' hopes that they would be thrown a lifeline by a Labour government.

Next year the city council faces rate-capping and a huge budget gap of about £130 million. NALGO estimate that 9,000-16,000 jobs will have to go to balance the books in line with Tory dictates.

'Creative accountancy' is no longer available. They face a stark choice—either build a campaign of resistance to the Tories or carry out Thatcher's dirty work.

There has been talk of mass resignation, but for Labour councillors to resign before a fight has even been attempted would at best be irresponsible.

Unfortunately the response of most councillors and union leaders has been to argue for immediate 'limited' cuts, in the hope of avoiding compulsory redundancies.

These include non-filling of vacancies, encouraging voluntary redundancies and early retirement, 'postponing' capital programme election commitments and imposing a £2 rent rise in September—the second increase this year.

These measures could have disastrous electoral consequences for Labour and undermine opposition to Tory plans to privatise services and introduce a poll tax.

It is argued that there is no support for a fight amongst the workforce. The truth is that there has been no attempt by the Labour councillors and most union leaders to mobilise workers.

Council leader Graham Stringer has said that the council workers can go on all-out strike, but this has been presented in a 'take-it-or-leave-it' fashion rather than as part of a strategy for a joint struggle with the unions.

When Tony Mulhearn, one of the Liverpool 47, spoke at a Militant meeting, of the need for taking on the Tories, he was attacked on TV by Dick Pickering, a local GMB official in the TU Leaders' Forum. He boasted that they had considered that option "for about 20 seconds"!

Nevertheless, shop stewards in the direct works department have voted against cuts. While a NALGO mass meeting voted by two to one against a call for strike action, moved by Militant supporters, there will inevitably be a flood of disputes with the council of cuts are imposed.

Council workers must press for the election of a joint shop stewards committee to co-ordinate action to defend jobs, services and working conditions.

By Martin Cock

By John Hunt

Morning Star v Militant

AT A packed meeting in Rochester, Richard Venton, Merseyside Militant spokesman, and John Blevin, features editor of the Morning Star, debated 'Which way for the left after the election?'

John Blevin, who was also the Liverpool area secretary of the Communist Party until recently, said that unity and involvement in the mass struggle are key for the left. He attacked the struggle in Liverpool as it did not involve a "broad enough democratic alliance". "How much broader do you want?" replied Richard Venton: "the struggle of Liverpool city council

gained a ten per cent increase in the Labour vote in Liverpool". An alliance of trade unionists, Labour Party members, housewives, youth, tenants and community groups had been mobilised in support of their council.

The Liverpool Communist Party on the other hand led a walk-out from the council joint shop stewards committee and refused to even ballot the NUT membership for strike action in 1985.

Blevin made no comment on the Liverpool CP's call for big rates rises, rent rises, 'savings' and joint campaigns with other parties, even

with sections of the Tory party!

After the Morning Star published a 'report' of the debate which ignored the gains of Liverpool council, wallowed in the setbacks and made no attempt to analyse the real forces responsible for these setbacks, Richard Venton challenged them to publish the full debate:

"If the Morning Star features editor has the self-confidence to publish our debate, in the interests of 'left unity', it would be very instructive."



Many tourists have got *Militant* in Speakers' Corner in London recently. One *Militant* seller gets up on a box to put forward our ideas, while the paper is sold outside the park. If you haven't got the nerve for that, seaside resorts or local parks may be fruitful.

But there is no silly season in the class struggle. Make sure every miner gets *Militant* over the next week.

As soon as local sellers heard that Polmaise pit in Stirlingshire was to close, they organised a sale of 30 round an estate in the nearby village of Fallin. Follow their lead.

GOOD NEWS travels far. On a sale outside Clydesdale steel works, a visiting Nigerian worker bought *Militant*. A friend back home had asked him to look out for the paper and send him back a copy.

Summer gives the chance to try new sales.



One of the first *Militant* summer camps in South Wales in 1978.

LEFT and RIGHT

Merger or murder

OH HOW these moderates love one another! When SDP councillors met recently to discuss the murder, sorry merger, with the Liberals, things became heated. One faction openly despised the Liberals, the 'sleepy party of the '70s', who 'do dotty things in local government'.

But Dick Taverne (remember him?) attacked SDPers who spoke of Liberals the way "Rommel might have spoken of his Italian allies in the desert war." Some anti mergerites threatened to keep using the SDP name and logo if they lost the ballot and went their own way. The pro mergers said they would go to the High Court to stop them and suggested that everybody ought to accept the democratic decision of the party.

The antis then hit below the belt by reminding them they never had done when they were in the Labour Party.

One anti had a very good reason for keeping the name SDP. "We have sacrificed our businesses, jobs and social life. Are we going to throw it all away?", she asked. Her white Rolls Royce Corniche had a special SDP 1 number plate. They cost a fortune!

Glaxo each way please

TALKING OF Rolls Royce, the *Daily Express* is going up market from bingo by running a draw where the first prize is £1000 worth of newly privatised RR shares. Later prizes include shares in BP, Glaxo, Nat West and Tesco.

The Excess has rumbled that small scale share buying doesn't mean a deep commitment to capitalism. It's a flutter, like the 3.30 at Newmarket. And it won't be so popular when the horses start going lame.

Strange justice

NALGO CONFERENCE this year called on the union's NEC to look into reports that their head office employed a fascist activist. It may be the end of the road for administrative officer, Paul Kingsley, a leading light in the National Front.

Apart from being an insult to black NALGO members, fascists aim to destroy trade unionism. No fascist should be allowed any role in the movement, let alone work full time for a union. But it took a conference motion to start any action. NALGO members may ask why the union summarily dismissed a left wing journalist employee Jimmy Roberts two years ago for allegedly leaking a document to Liverpool council's then deputy leader Derek Hatton.

There was no concern for individual employees' rights then. NUJ members were angry that he was just sacked. Why does an enemy of the movement like Kingsley get a better deal?

Socialist summer camp

Is Marxism out of date?

In the fourth article in the series on the topics being discussed at the Marxist summer camp, Paul Kershaw looks at the Marxist classics like the *Communist Manifesto*.

By Paul Kershaw

SINCE THE election, a constant clamour of voices has told Labour to abandon all its principles in order to improve its electoral prospects.

'Class politics is out of date,' say the academic theorists as they have done for years. The right wing in the labour movement nod their heads in agreement. They've never liked class struggle anyway. But the right wingers' theory must be tested by recent experience.

Neil Kinnock's candyfloss campaign failed to kick out the Tories. Yet in Liverpool, where the Labour councillors had been surcharged for their 'old fashioned' class strategy in resisting Tory cuts, Labour got its best results.

This is no fluke. Class politics reflect today's reality and with care, the Marxist classics are a better guide to what the labour movement should be doing today than most of the drivel contemporary 'theorists' pour out in the learned journals.

Marxist classic

The Communist Manifesto was written in 1847 on the eve of revolutionary movements throughout Europe. It has become the most widely translated and discussed political document ever. This in itself confirms one of the basic ideas of Marx's 'historical materialism', that ideas which gain currency in society reflect the outlook and interests of a class or caste.

It arose out of discussions Marx and Engels had with workers who were moving towards communist ideas because of their own experiences. It was the founding document, statement of principles and guide to action of the new Communist League.

The first two chapters are the most accessible for today's workers. They show that socialism would not just come about as a result of somebody's good idea. Society changes through class struggle.

After capitalism forced its way into existence, it was continually driven to develop production and expand internationally, just to survive.

When Marx and Engels wrote the *Communist Manifesto*, modern industry was restricted to a few areas of Europe and North America. Britain alone produced a third of the world's manufactured goods.

But here were Marx and Engels predicting that the many thousands of small capitalist producers would be reduced to a handful of monopolies and that the small working class would grow world wide. It must have seemed like science fiction.

Today, modern industry, more and

TWO WEEKS to go to the socialist summer camp. It gives you the chance for a great holiday in a beautiful country area. Recharge your batteries for the big battles ahead.

Speakers include Ted Grant, Clare Doyle, Lynn Walsh and Alan Woods. Marxists from Africa and Australia will also be speaking. Send your deposit now for the Socialist Summer Camp 1987.

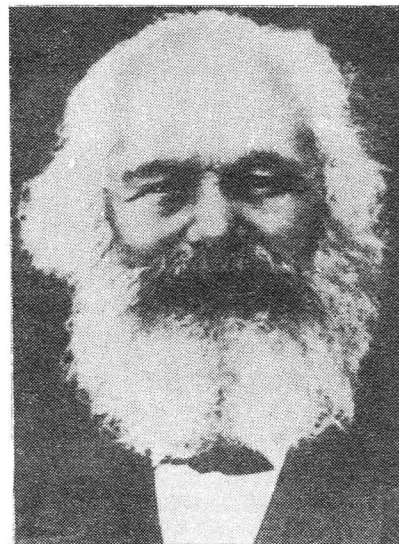
The summer camp will have a first-class professionally run creche during the daytime. Together with a baby-listening patrol in the evenings, it will enable all parents to participate fully in the sessions and other activities.

more controlled by a few multinationals, is found in all parts of the planet.

It has drawn countries like South Korea and South Africa on to the world market and created a huge working class able to challenge the role of big business. The capitalist system has, as Marx and Engels said, created its own gravedigger.

The new theorists object that the working class is finished in the advanced capitalist countries. Not true; the working class has expanded here as well as the expense of "intermediate layers". In 1954, 31 per cent of those in work in the advanced capitalist world were 'self employed' or 'family workers'. This had dropped to 17 per cent by 1973.

Certainly there has been a growth of white collar and technical jobs. But the teachers and civil servants' battles show that they have taken up the



Karl Marx

means of struggle and much of the outlook of industrial workers. Far from being finished, the working class is larger and potentially far stronger than ever before.

Of course, the specific demands in the *Manifesto* are no longer directly relevant to the needs of workers in 1987. Marx and Engels themselves sharpened up many of these ideas as the working class underwent new experiences.

Nonetheless, Trotsky stressed 90 years after its publication, that the *Communist Manifesto* "astounds us even today by its freshness." That is due above all to the correctness of the methods of scientific socialism.

The book contains the germ of all Marxism's ideas. Other sessions at the camp show how Lenin developed the ideas on the state in *The State and Revolution* and on Marxist tactics in *Left wing communism - an infantile disorder*.

If you want to help rid the world of capitalism and Stalinism, you have to understand what they are, how they arose and how they work. Come to the summer camp and get a good grounding in Marxist theory.



140 years after the *Communist Manifesto* was written, multinationals like the German owned Volkswagen encircle the world, exporting throughout Asia (above) and employing workers in the Brazilian rain forest (top right).

Socialist summer camp

8-15 August
Forest of Dean
Gloucestershire

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The sweatshop of the world

THE GOVERNMENT are worried about wages. According to Tory chancellor Lawson, they are going up too fast!

The Tories look at the industrial strength organised workers have been able to retain despite all their attacks. Starting with the youth and women workers, they want to increase our work rate and reduce our expectations on pay and conditions.

They gaze approvingly on sweatshops where unions don't exist or are very weak. Technological advance should be able to give everybody a decent wage on a greatly reduced working week.

If the Lawsons of the world get their way, these Victorian establishments would be the employers of the 1990s and Britain would become one of the sweatshops of the world, like the Chancellor's favourite economy, the dictatorship of South Korea.

The unions must make organising all such workplaces a first priority and fight for a £120 a week minimum wage for a 35 hour week, and for decent conditions and full union rights.



Nigel Lawson



Working in a sweatshop in East London

Photo: Jacob Surtion (REFLEX)

Unions must organise the low paid

SEVERAL OF our friends work in an industrial components factory near Swansea. The owner, who also has several pubs and clubs in the area, only takes on women workers on the shop floor.

These workers are mainly school leavers or young women who have been unemployed for some time. As their only alternatives are likely to be the dole or a YTS scheme, they have so far put up with miserable pay and conditions.

There is no canteen on the site for the 250 to 300 workers. The girls eat their food off their worktops or sitting on a wall outside. There is no nurse and no rest room. If you have an accident you just hope there's a car available to take you to the nearest hospital, 17 miles away.

Workers are allowed half an hour lunch break, with 15 minutes in the morning. There's no break in the afternoon and girls are timed when they go to the toilet!

The work is high pressured and monotonous, but the take home pay for a girl of 23 who has worked there for over four years is £65 for a 40 hour week. School leavers take home considerably less.

Employees are paid off at regular intervals, making it impossible to build up enough contributions for many benefits. Girls have been sacked for being 'on the sick', but when they've shown any interest in joining a union, the owner has threatened closure. This is almost certainly bluff, as this is a very profitable concern.

These women are amongst the 'new type of worker' the union leaders keep talking about attracting to the union banner.

They would certainly be less likely to fall victim of sharp practice if they were organised, particularly if the leaders committed themselves to fighting for a decent minimum wage, a shorter working week and better conditions.

The crisis in the bosses' system has brought back such sweatshops. So the next lesson is—start fighting for socialism!

By Denyse Thomas and Sheila Griffiths

Just another plucking day

I WORK IN a chicken factory for £2 an hour. For this, I have to get up at 6.15 in the morning to get the three children ready for school.

By S Smith

It's a bit unfair, particularly on the youngest who is 8. I give a friend £1 a day to look after them before they go to school. We start at 7.30 and finish at 5.30; there are no tea breaks and we only get half an hour for lunch.

For the first half of the day we are plucking and trussing. The chickens go through a stunner to be killed, then they go down a conveyor belt every eight seconds and three of us do the plucking.

The worst thing, apart from the smell of the blood is that the chickens have messed themselves after being stunned. The stunning doesn't always work so they can still

be kicking when you try to pluck them.

After this, we do trussing, (gut extraction). While we are at work, somebody else is going round with a pitchfork getting rid of all the feathers. It's hard work standing there all day, your shoulders get so sore.

No facilities

I think to myself that every chicken I do means a bit more towards a pair of shoes for the children or something. But it's a disgusting place. There must be other ways of doing this, but the owner can't be bothered getting proper machines.

The owner acts as supervisor and he doesn't like us stopping to go to the loo. We must catch his eye and the others must carry on while you're gone. We have no facilities for lunch, we have to eat in the toilet as it is the only

place where there are no feathers! Somebody bought in chicken sandwiches, it was revolting.

After lunch we have to take the eggs out of the dead chickens by putting our hands up their bums, then we do more plucking. For the last two and a half hours we do cleaning, with a high powered hose. You can let all your anger and frustration out with that hose.

I think to myself that every chicken means a bit more towards a pair of shoes for the children. But it's a disgusting place.

The pay of £2 an hour is crap. We get no perks such as free eggs or chickens though you can fiddle it because we do the weighing up. If you work extra hard, the boss sometimes gives us an extra £1 at the end of the day.

The best thing is if a chicken gets loose, sometimes they don't run for freedom and we have to encourage them; I set one free once but got into trouble.

The Animal Liberation Front came down once, but they were a bit stupid. They thought they were burning down the factory. But it was the holding shed instead so they roasted 3500 chickens; not very liberating. The manager was upset, he said not even the Kentucky Fried people will take them now.

One woman is retiring after 27 years; she isn't even getting a box of chocolates off the boss. "That's what I expected" she said.

We've now been allowed to have a kettle in the toilet. I said to her, what a breakthrough after 27 years.

After all this all I can do when I get home is put my feet up while the kids run me a bath.

Fighting Fund

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 London	5556		9400
2 East Midlands	1518		3250
3 Northern	2177		4600
4 Scotland West	1594		3500
5 Scotland East	1266		2800
6 Yorkshire	2921		8450
7 Wales	1646		4850
8 Eastern	998		3050
9 West Midlands	1536		4850
10 South West	546		1900
11 Merseyside	2010		7500
12 South East	552		2250
13 Southern	619		3100
14 Manchester	781		4050
15 National	12267		6950
Total	35987		70000

Act now to reach 5 August target

MILITANT'S LATEST special pamphlet points out that the election "was full of important lessons for labour movement activists."

Many workers are learning these lessons and supporting Militant's ideas in collections at our recent series of public meetings. £827 was raised at a meeting in Scotland where Peter Taaffe and Derek Hatton spoke.

Other collections of between £39 and £75 have come in from meetings in the Wirral, Chesterfield, Hull, Kent and the Potteries. Workers know the choice is between compromise and a clear alternative to Thatcher and

her capitalist friends.

By the time you read this, there will be just over a week left in this fighting fund quarter and we still have about £35,000 to raise by 5 August. Look at our chart and see how your area is doing. It should be easy to meet your area's target if you act right now.

Follow the lead of three young supporters in Southampton, who took our appeal sheets with them on a street sale last Saturday and raised over £9. Many workers are looking for the way to tackle the problems this system causes. Every penny we get reflects that.

£84.50 was raised at

the TGWU conference and £28.48 from NUM conference. Supporters in Blyth collected £50 from the Beamish Labour Day and a jumble sale in Strathclyde raised £31. A reader in Edinburgh has even raised £23 from hair-dressing! There is an endless variety of (honest) ways to boost our funds and give a boost for socialism. Rush in donations by 5 August. THANKS to Dave Toomer (Withington LPYS) £45; Dave Watts (Hull) £15; Heather Scott (Edinburgh) £10; Maggie Averoll (Blantyre) £5; Jim Stevenson (Strathclyde OAP) £1.40; AEU Letchworth branch No 4 £3.

Can Labour w

LABOUR'S THIRD election defeat running came as a profound disappointment to Party members and trade union activists. They are desperately searching for answers—how can the Party win next time? But the Party leadership in their search for the formula for victory, are rushing headlong towards the complete dissolution of the Party's socialist character.

Labour's natural constituency among the old manual trade unionists has so shrunk, their argument runs, the modern electorate of the nineties will no longer accept tired old socialist slogans. While privately some leading Labour figures even deny the Party's chances of ever winning an overall majority again.

Peter Kellner, Political Editor of the Labour right's *New Statesman*, expresses this defeatism publicly: "The Party would have to abandon all hope of ever governing again...is that not merely an abrupt way of stating what many of us feel in our bones to be true, but are reluctant to admit? Is it not a sad fact that Labour's greatest feasible ambition is to deny the Tories outright victory next time?"

Now, to draw some consolation, a few Labour leaders are peddling the 'theory' that defeat was not unexpected, but part of a ten year strategy—to beat the Alliance first, reassert Labour's primacy as the opposition party, then go for the Tories in 1992. Brian Gould believes: "1987 was an important staging post to victory"! But that is no consolation for the mass of workers condemned to suffer more under Thatcherism, because Labour could not inspire the majority of voters.

Class divide

Anyway the terminal squeezing of the SDP, was not due to Labour's new modern, moderate approach, but the deep polarisation that has set in within British society, as a result of the old fashioned class battles of the miners in particular. The Labour leadership may not want to recognise the class struggle, but it rages nonetheless.

And the Labour Party reached its highest point in the opinion polls between the 1983 and 1987 elections, at the end of the miners' strike. Far from moderation and distancing the Party from struggle being the key to winning the middle ground, during the miners' heroic battle, the sympathies of many of the middle class were aroused. They helped fill the miners' collecting tins.

The *Economist* commenting on Labour's outstanding 1987 local election results in Liverpool was forced to concede: "Most of Liverpool's working class voters have accepted *Militant's* explanation of Liverpool's financial crisis. The continuing collapse of the Tory vote—only 9.5 per cent of Liverpoolians now vote Tory—shows that the government's version has been rejected by Liverpool's middle class too".

As a direct result of struggle, and of the leading role played by Marxism, Liverpool is now the most politicised city in Britain.

Labour's strong following in Scotland on 11 June, is also due to the traditions of struggle of the Scottish labour movement going back over generations, which have drawn in behind the workers, the middle class.

Yet the soft left, new right leaders of the Labour Party are obsessed by the changes amongst the working class. They talk of the enrichment of those in work and the longing to become middle

By Jeremy Birch

class, as justification for fundamentally changing the character of Labour as a socialist party born of trade union struggle.

However the decline in the numbers of the industrial working class, has been almost exactly matched by the rise in unemployment. Employed and unemployed manual workers should be just as naturally Labour voters, if the Party offers them policies worth voting for.

Labour's right wing campaign, however, failed to motivate many of the unemployed and most downtrodden. They saw no point in voting at all. The turnout in many depressed Labour inner-city seats was little over 60 per cent.

But have the changes in the working population fundamentally weakened the appeal of socialism? 31.4 per cent of the working population are now in manufacturing and 5 per cent in construction, but 52.2 per cent could be described as in service industries (7.1 banking, finance and insurance; 18.4 hotels, catering and distribution; 26.7 public administration and other services).

Even in banking, however, trade unionism is now getting a hold, and these white collar workers are beginning to question class realities, when they compare their modest incomes to their record profits of the big banks. And right now BIFU (the bank workers' union) is threatening industrial action.

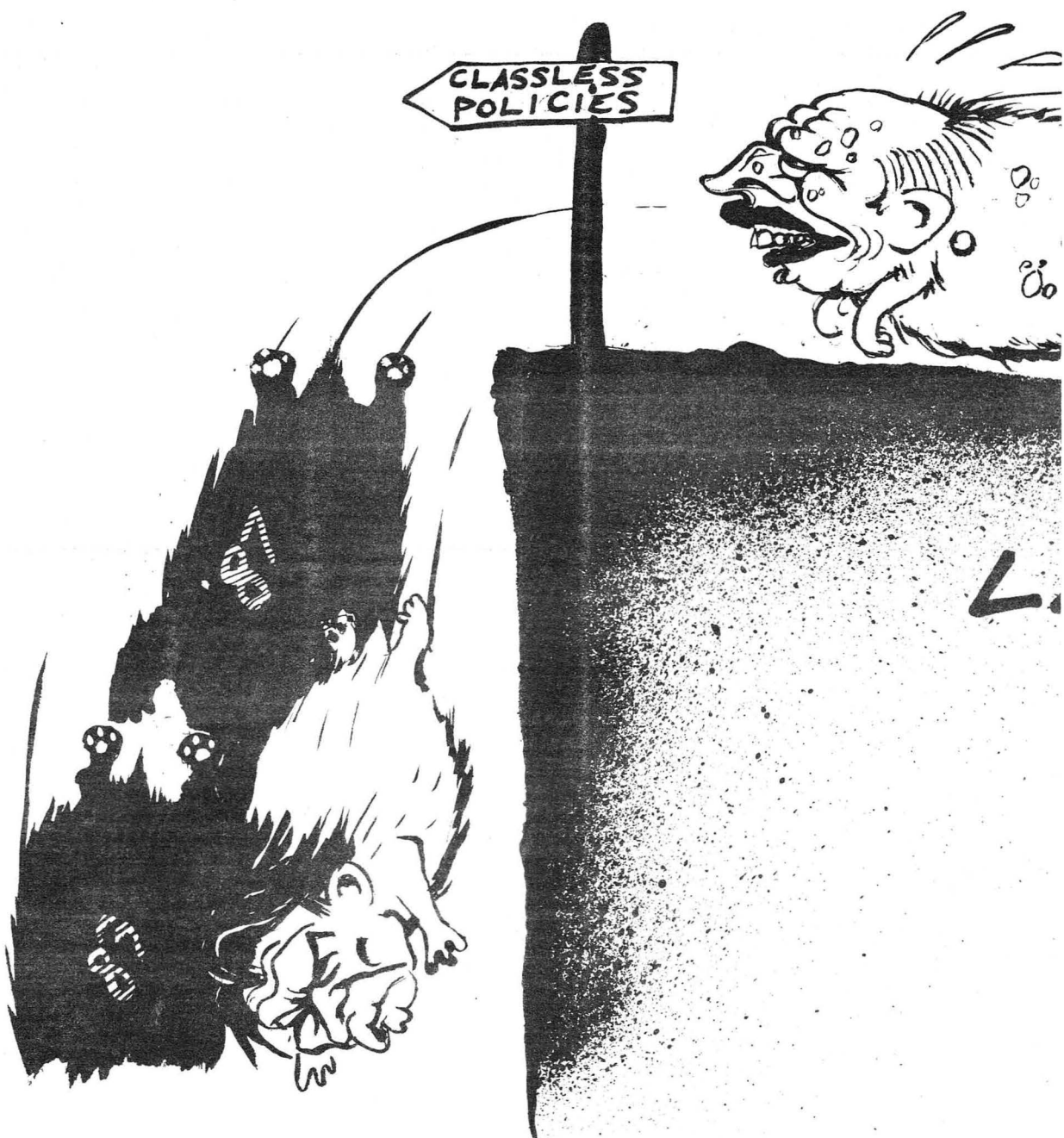
As for the growth in the public sector, it includes not just administrators and office staff, but millions of manual workers in local government, hospitals and public transport. And amongst them are some of the lowest paid, who could have been mobilised behind Labour's call for a minimum wage, if it had been campaigned on energetically.

White collar staff in the public services are increasingly accepting that they are very much white collar workers. Under the impact of Tory attacks on the public sector, old perceptions of being professionals, or middle class are being destroyed. Teachers and civil servants took strike action in the very week of the election.

But for many of them sympathy for Labour was dented somewhat, when Labour education spokesman, Giles Radice, told the teachers to go back to work, and when similar calls were made to the civil servants. When NUT and NALGO workers consider the record of some right wing and soft left Labour local authorities, like ILEA with its compulsory redeployment of teachers, they must wonder what difference a Kinnock/Hattersley government will bring.

These white collar service workers help to make up the 44 per cent of the population still organised in the trade unions, who with their families still comprise the overwhelming majority in society. Yet Neil Kinnock wants the Party to represent 'individuals', not workers as a class.

If service workers could really believe in Labour, that it would



defend their wages and their jobs, stop the public spending cuts, or even take on the non-union, low pay service sector employers like MacDonalds hamburgers, wouldn't they be as committed to backing the Party, as workers in heavy industry?

The task of the labour movement should not be to write off the service sector workers for socialism, but to go out organise them into the trade unions, and explain the burning relevance of socialism to all the exploited.

Kinnock talks of the need for Labour to win the "haven't got enoughs" and the "haves", as well as the "have nots". It is certainly true that to be sure of a majority Labour must convince those in work, the skilled workers, and reach out to the middle class too. But the idea that to do it Labour must steal some of the Tories' clothes is completely false.

Tory minority

Brian Gould believes that "like it or not" the electorate endorsed what Thatcher had done. In fact only a third of those entitled to vote, placed their cross next to a Tory.

It is true that Labour's vote amongst the unemployed and unskilled increased by 6 per cent, but that amongst skilled workers there was a further 2.5 per cent swing to the Tories.

However William Keegan in the *Observer* answers Gould and Kinnock's fixation with better-off workers turning Tory: "To read some of the comments on the election result you would be forgiven for thinking that the whole nation has become so well off that the centre-left are wasting their time. Yet, for all the swing

	Individuals as % total share holders	% of shares owned by individual share holders
Jaguar	90.71	8.69
Britoil	96	5
Amersham	86.06	7.36
British Aerospace	95.26	10.72
Cable and Wireless	93.82	13.40

to so-called 'popular capitalism' by skilled working class 'Sun readers', the majority simply did not endorse Thatcherism".

Before the election Brian Gould in particular proclaimed that to win on 11 June, "Labour must be the party of the yuppies", watering down the class content of its programme accordingly. Now the Party leaders are blaming defeat on the better-off workers who they claim have become yuppies!

But even the Labour leaders are now beginning to accept that it was their own political incompetence on taxation, that really alarmed many skilled workers and other 'haves'. A Labour election post mortem document concludes: "The lack of understanding of our tax policy had been a problem over the last few days and was seen as a major cause of the last minute decline in our vote". Under the barrage of recriminations, Roy Hattersley 'did the decent thing', and asked to be removed from the shadow chancellorship.

It was only *Militant* that at the time of Lawson's giveaway budget warned of the inevitable backlash facing Labour if it went into the election pledged to take back the tax cuts.

But the reason for the tax

disaster, was the Labour leaders' already excessive commitment to moderation. Having confined themselves to operating within the confines of capitalism, they could only see vote winning public spending increases as affordable with vote losing tax increases.

Rather than explaining how a socialist planned economy would be able to boost state expenditure to pay for Labour's promises on health, education, and housing, while cutting the already too heavy tax burden borne by the working class. This would answer the dilemma Michael Meacher sees, that "Labour must also find means to convince the electorate that we can really deliver".

But the answer for the likes of Gould is not to explain socialism more convincingly, but to tailor Labour's principles to what he subjectively considers the 'upwardly mobile' electorate will 'buy'. Gould is like the American politician who is supposed to have said: "I am a man of principle. These are my principles, if you don't like them I will change them".

A whole new language is emerging. The ex-left, new right Shadow Cabinet majority are the Yakkies (young, able and Kinnockite) out to attract the Flop-

in a majority?



Alan Hurler

LABOUR LEADERS MINING

pies (formerly Labour, openly prosperous individuals).

If skilled workers failed to back Labour, it was not so much that they enthusiastically embraced Thatcher's philosophy of 'popular capitalism'. It was because, as the frightening big shake out of labour from industry of the early eighties has (temporarily) slowed down, they voted to cling on to stability and security. Labour the party of high taxation, probably high inflation looked a dangerous gamble.

And Hattersley was incapable of fully explaining the grave threat around the corner for these workers' 'security', with the looming economic recession. To do so would have required the Labour leaders outlining a socialist alternative to capitalism in crisis.

What crisis?

Gould has the solution for this too. Incredibly in a Commons debate on 8 July he proclaimed: "No major crisis is in prospect. I would argue that the prospects for our own economy depend very much on our own efforts rather than on the impact of the development of world economic factors".

Every major international economic institution predicts a coming downturn. The Bank of International Settlements reports: "Unemployment is now becoming a major issue in Japan for the first time since the second world war".

Even the *New Statesman* during the election warned: "The weakness of the US economy is now transparent. It is this weakness which threatens to plunge the world into economic recession".

For Gould, however, capitalist growth is secure so it is merely a matter of Labour supplying "more caring and more competent management". The increasingly comfortable voters in work, will continue to become more prosperous still. So a Party official can demand: "Labour has to appeal to voters who have bought their council home, own a car and have £500 worth of shares in privatised companies".

But Labour is enthusiastically endorsing council house sales, just as it ceases to be an issue. Those living in the best council houses who wanted to buy them, have mostly done so. And the sevenfold increase since 1979 in

house repossessions due to failure to keep up the mortgage payments, has largely been among tenants buying their council house.

The Bank of England reports a steep increase in family mortgage debts, with many households devoting more of their income to interest repayments than for 20 years. The traditional socialist approach, to nationalise the banks and building societies and drastically reduce the debt burden on ordinary families, would be enthusiastically received.

In Coventry South East where Dave Nellist campaigned so successfully on the programme of Marxism, two thirds of the constituency are owner occupiers, many of them the key skilled workers. Terry Fields secured a 12.4 per cent swing to Labour explaining real socialism to Liverpool Broad Green voters, 73 per cent of whom own their own house.

What extra support will Labour gain by back-tracking on its commitment to renationalisation in its quest for the yuppie vote? Tony Benn correctly advised Labour's national executive not to be "too worried that the sale of shares has converted their purchasers to the merits of capitalism, since the whole thing has been seen much more as a flutter or a gamble, and few believe they have actually got a real stake, or real power in the economy".

Even Kinnockite Labour MP, Tony Blair, revealed that within four months of the sale of British Gas, one third of those buying shares had already sold them, cashing in on their winnings. A MORI poll in May actually recorded that less than two out of five supported further privatisation. 50 per cent welcomed more nationalisation, and that without any campaign of explanation by Labour of the benefits of public ownership.

If anything deterred those workers who do own a few shares from voting Labour it was the manifesto's utterly incomprehensible policy on compensation. Labour should make it clear—it is renationalising under workers' control and management the hived off assets, so their use may be planned in the interests of all. There will be no compensation for the big shareholders who now totally dominate these companies, but the ordinary small shareholder, the worker with the 500 shares, will be compensated.

Labour's new right also want the Party to explicitly support the 'market economy', just at a time when the capitalist market is heading for a new downturn, and will prove its complete inability to uphold the interests of those in or out of work.

If nationalised industries and local authority services pay too little attention to the 'individual', it is not the principle of state provision that is flawed. It was the model of the old Labour right of bureaucratic management of nationalised corporations, remote from the consumer and the workforce, that was unpopular. Labour should campaign for democratic workers' control and management of publicly owned assets, for control by tenants of the running of council estates, of democratic control of the health service.

If there is any sympathy amongst council tenants for Thatcher's offer to opt out of (Labour) council control, it is not so much a desire to join a 'property owning democracy', but a vote of censure on Labour councils. In response to Tory cuts, they passed on high rents and rates and inadequate repairs and services.

In fact these councils proved in action that moderation does not win the doubting voters. Their refusal to take a militant stance against Tory cuts resulted in a loss of support, but in Liverpool the council's fighting record was a vote winner.

Bosses' pressure

The Labour leaders with their intent to dispense with a socialist economic programme are reflecting the pressure of the press and of the ruling class itself. The *Daily Express*, sworn enemy of the labour movement, now offers Kinnock 'friendly' advice: "Unless Labour changes its tune it will be doomed to permanent irrelevance and opposition. Britain has undergone significant change over the past two decades and is still changing".

There is nothing modern, however, about the Kinnock/Gould approach. It is the same attempt to turn Labour into a 'safe' party for capitalism, made by right wing leaders over the years.

Now Peter Kellner having reread the 1980 Owen, Williams, Rodgers declaration sets out to prove that "in each respect bar one, Neil Kinnock has worked to

create precisely the kind of party that the Gang of Three wanted". The only outstanding source of disagreement is nuclear disarmament, and Kellner is sure that it could be discussed out. Then a new radical "convergence" between Labour and the Alliance could be constructed.

With or without a new Lib(and SDP) Lab deal, Kinnock, Gould and co. are out to reconstruct the Labour Party in the image of the SDP. Thatcher talks of eradicating socialism. Within the Party the Labour leaders seem prepared to do it themselves.

But they have to explain then, the successes of left, particularly Marxist Labour candidates and the abject failure of some candidates who adopted most readily the classless, modern approach.

When Nick Raynsford won the Fulham by-election last year, the *New Statesman's* advice to the leadership: "Isn't to lay off the tendency. It is to praise Fulham and pass the ammunition." Raynsford was the Labour right's model of the new man, who would consolidate the yuppie vote. But on 11 June he dismally failed to hold the seat.

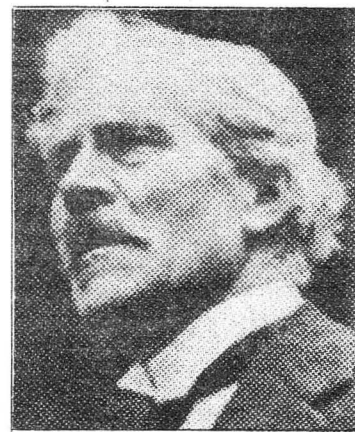
Labour nationally raised its share of the vote by two per cent over 1983. Pat Wall, picked out for personal attack more than any other candidate in the election, increased his vote by 50 per cent.

The Labour right's 'experts' have concluded that the Party lost the election in the soft South and soft Midlands. Yet Dave Nellist, standing on a fighting socialist programme, secured the largest swing to Labour in the whole West Midlands conurbation.

While in Liverpool, the city where Labour was so mercilessly vilified in the Tory press, in the *New Statesman* and by the national Party leadership, the best results in the country were gained for Labour.

Labour's right were responsible for the defeat on 11 June, because their programme did not carry conviction. Now they want to compound their gross errors, by offering even less.

Campaigning on a programme of full socialism, outlining the enormous benefits it could bring to the whole working class, employed and unemployed, white collar and blue collar, owner occupier and council tenant, would give Labour a famous victory at the next election.



"We must consider the worker not as a worker but as a man. Even Toryism has learnt to some extent to... treat people as people. Therefore many workers voted for Toryism"—Ramsay MacDonald, 1925.



"The area and bitterness of social conflict are much reduced". There is "no uniquely delineated ruling class or a clearly defined class struggle"—Anthony Crosland, 1956.



"Experience of being part of a collective is not as strong as it used to be. Our initial approach has got to be from the Party to the individual"—Neil Kinnock, 1987.

ANC-Afrikaner summit

Will talks end white rule in S Africa?

THE RECENT meeting between high ranking members of ANC and a group of 'liberal' Afrikaners in Senegal, and the signing of the so-called 'Dakar declaration', raise a number of questions.

The uprising of 1984-1986, and the big strikes that have taken place in 1987, have confirmed for millions of black workers and youth that even their most basic demands for democracy and a decent life will only be achieved through the overthrow of capitalism. The experience of generations of workers in South African factories and mines has left few doubts as to the real interests of the capitalists.

Now, the gravitation of thousands of workers and youth towards the ANC has forced self-appointed liberal constitution-makers to include the ANC in their schemes.

Like the South African capitalists who first visited the ANC in December 1985, but without their power, the Afrikaner 'liberals' went to Dakar to sound out and restrain the ANC leadership. Leading the group was the ex-leader of the opposition Progressive Federal Party, Slabbert, whose 'liberalism' had not in the past prevented him from offering Botha a lesson in "how to pull the teeth of the ANC".

Back in South Africa, the big capitalists made their position clear. Gavin Relly, head of the giant mining multinational Anglo American, earlier this month opposed one person one vote and supported the State of Emergency. Then he praised the Natal Kwa-Zulu Indaba, an anti-democratic constitutional scheme

sponsored by the counter-revolutionary murderer Gatsha Buthelezi.

For workers and youth, knowing that the power set against them lies not with liberals but with the big bosses, this added more questions about the purpose of the Dakar meeting.

One argument is that such meetings challenge the caricature of the ANC that has been cultivated by the state. Meeting with wider layers of white society, they argue, will open doors for future negotiation.

But what forced the Afrikaner signatories of the Dakar Declaration to "reject the ideology and practice of the apartheid system" (which PW Botha also claims to

Mass support for the ANC has forced 'liberals' to include the ANC in their schemes

have rejected) is the glimpse they have had of the magnificent revolutionary movement of black workers and youth.

This movement has not only widened the gap between black and white, but has also forced back to the surface class divisions previously buried in white politics. The growing hostility of white workers to the big bosses threatens the unity of the white state. Though white workers are at present moving to the right,



experience will teach that it is impossible to achieve security along this road.

Because of their strategically important position in the state, it is to these whites that the black workers' movement needs to address a class appeal. The power of our movement, combined with a clear programme for democracy and socialism, can in time win over white workers and split and paralyse the vicious white-based apartheid state machine.

Reassurance

The visitors to Dakar sought reassurance that the ANC would be able to control the workers and youth in the townships. According to one capitalist newspaper, "several of the whites expressed surprise at the ANC's ideological flexibility, and its willingness to entertain a mixed economy with a big role for the private sector..."

If this were true it would surprise many activists inside the country. It is the interests of the working class that must determine the approach of the ANC leadership. The agenda of our demands is already clearly tabled. Meetings should only take place if they can be used to strengthen the struggle of the workers and youth.

The declaration supported a "negotiated solution". But this is impossible. Rather than accept majority rule, or any of the clauses of the Freedom Charter—particularly nationalisation—even the 'liberal' capitalists will use the full power of the state against the movement.

Slabbert may offer the illusion of a Zimbabwe-type settlement



While 'liberals' support a "negotiated solution", big business supports Botha's attack on the revolutionary movement of the workers and youth.

but the deep class and racial polarisation that has taken place rules this out. The ANC leaders should be actively countering such illusions.

In the same week as the Dakar meeting the first Congress of COSATU took place under banners proclaiming the workers' demands for socialism and COSATU's two biggest affiliates, NUMSA and the NUM, announced 80 to 90 per cent majorities in ballots calling for strike action against the most powerful bosses in the country!

It is here that the real power of our struggle lies. The most urgent task now is to prepare to organise the struggle of the workers and youth for power. By building a mass ANC on a socialist programme we will lay the foundations for the defeat of the state, the elimination of capitalism and apartheid, and the establishment of workers' democracy.

By Sean Kelly

In Cory Aquino's Philippines

Workers consigned to rubbish dump

TONDO IS a huge, sprawling area of Manila with a population of 500,000 people. I visited three of its districts—Smoky Mountain, Magsaysay and a part euphemistically called Happy Land.

From a British trade unionist visiting the Philippines

In Barrio Magsaysay I talked to L.B. and B.B., chairman and secretary of Kasamato (United Movement for Urban Poor in Tondo).

In Barrio Magsaysay there are 180,000 people, and 80 per cent unemployment. L.B. is 'lucky': he works as a fork-lift driver earning 40 pesos per day (£1 = 32 pesos). His rent is 80 pesos per month just for the land: like most people, he has had to build the house himself.

Electricity costs 180 pesos per

month. A kilo of rice costs 8 pesos, cheap fish cost 18 pesos per kilo. Even water costs about 36 pesos per month.

There is only one public hospital for the whole of Tondo. The services of doctors and nurses are free, but patients have to pay for medicine.

No stocks are kept in the wards, which can mean running to and fro from the pharmacy every time a drug is prescribed before the doctor can administer treatment. Patients can die waiting for relatives to bring the necessary medicines.

'Happy Land' is a squatter area of Tondo, ironically named by its impoverished inhabitants. It is built by the sea, with shacks on stilts connected to each other by a system of wooden planks and gangways.

Two thousand people live above the fetid water between the beach and the road. Most are unemployed, or make a living as

street vendors of anything from cigarettes to soft drinks, earning at most 30 or 40 pesos a day.

At Smoky Mountain, the first thing that hits you is the stench and the swarms of flies. This is a community of approximately 30,000 men, women and children living on a municipal garbage dump.

Prostitution

Driven by poverty, some of the most downtrodden people eke out an existence by scavenging through the garbage. Like little Pitong, aged five, already 'working' on the dump to help keep his younger brothers and sisters.

At Smoky, as in other squatter areas, I passed attractive and well-dressed young women who, my guide explained, were "hospitality girls"—forced by sheer poverty into prostitution. It was 10 am,

and they were returning home after their working night.

Later, around 5 or 6 pm, you would see these beautiful young women leaving the shanties to start work at one of the bars. Often they are their families' only breadwinners, earning maybe 60 pesos working from 6 pm to 6 am in one of the bars or massage parlours that abound in the tourist belt.

In the early 1980s the government tried to resettle the inhabitants of Smoky at Bulacan, about 40 kilometres away, but could offer no work or any means of making a living. They only provided land for rent, and toilets. It would be a paradise of toilets, one resident explained, and added:

"We have no problem where to put our waste, it's what to put in our stomachs."

The residents of Smoky have formed a community, a way of managing to live. Despite the

present hopelessness of their conditions, you notice their cheerfulness and friendliness. They invite you into their homes, which are kept spotlessly clean despite the garbage flies outside. A few vegetable patches and even some little gardens thrive amongst the rubbish.

There is no electricity and no piped water. The nearest water is a standpipe two kilometres away. There is one health clinic that functions one morning a week. Most people there suffer respiratory or intestinal problems.

Smoky Mountain is the worst expression of the inequalities, exploitation and oppression inflicted on the Filipino people under capitalism. The enormous potential of natural resources and human talent in the country as a whole can only be harnessed under a socialist plan of production.

Brazil's ruling party split as general strike looms

BRAZILIAN PRESIDENT Jose Sarney suffered a humiliating defeat last weekend when a conference of his PMDB party rejected his claim to a five-year term of office. Seven PMDB ministers voted against the government, raising the possibility of a cabinet split and a turn by Sarney to the right-wing parties for support. Our correspondent in Brazil explains the background to the political turbulence.

SINCE JUNE Brazil's President Sarney has had to take massive security precautions, surrounding himself with thousands of troops wherever he goes, after he was stoned by an angry crowd in Rio.

A 10-hour street battle took place with 3,000 police fighting thousands of bus passengers protesting against a fare increase. For a day it seemed that Rio de Janeiro was Seoul.

The next week saw a campaign launched by the Workers' Party (PT) for the presidential elections. About 50,000 people attended a rally in Sao Paulo where the speakers, who accused Sarney of being a liar, are now being threatened with special arrest under anti-terrorist legislation!

The Brazilian ruling class over the last 13 years has been trying to dismount from the tiger of military rule, even though we could say that the tiger's jaws are still snapping at the spurs of the dismounted rider. Businessmen who made special donations to beef up the torture cells of the police during the dictatorship are now boasting that no blood has been spilt in the transition.

The decision to ease out military rule was taken in 1974 in the wake of the Portuguese revolution, with a new upsurge in the workers' struggles. Formally democratic elections were held in 1982 and 1986, but not for the presidency, which is the key. Six of the ministers are top military officers and the president is virtually unchecked by the elected congress and senate.

The congress is dominated by a liberal capitalist party, the PMDB, which acclaims itself the champion for democracy. Backed by the capitalists, particularly of Sao Paulo, the PMDB is losing confidence in its ability to deceive the masses on a stable basis if it remains linked to Sarney.

'Left' wing

Frightened by the recent events a 'left' wing has developed in the PMDB which wants to oust the unelected president and replace him in presidential elections in 1988. These people, however, have no intention of allowing the campaign to get mixed up with workers' mobilisations.

What are the likely developments in the struggle for presidential elections by popular vote?

On the face of it, the Brazilian transition to democracy has been the least convulsive in the southern cone of Latin America. The last 20 years have not seen the military-led massacres on the same scale as Chile or Argentina, despite hundreds of disappearances and thousands jailed or exiled.

In fact this was avoided only for two related causes. The massive human and natural resources in Brazil, even though wasted and mismanaged, fuelled a really



Workers' Party leader, Lula, addressing a rally in Sao Paulo. The workers' powerful movement since the 1970s has been the main reason for the retreat from military rule and the present disarray in the capitalist class.

spectacular growth of the economy which grew by 600 per cent in the last 30 years. But this in turn gave rise to a fresh and combatant working class, which inspired fear and respect. This has been the main reason for the retreat by the military.

But the transition hasn't been that peaceful. Since 1980, about 2,000 peasants, workers and sharecroppers have been killed in a semi-civil war on the land. Starting in 1979 the Sao Paulo car workers launched a strike movement with about 4 million taking part in that year. This number went down to about half a million in the years of the recession 1981-83, but by 1985 was back up to six million, more coordinated and powerful than ever before with the recently founded CUT trade union organisation, led by PT members, winning the support of about 15 million workers.

In 1986 strikers were up again to about eight million but now the movement was temporarily cut across by the so-called "Cruzado plan" from March to November, which cut inflation long enough for the PMDB to win the elections.

After the demise of the plan, just one week after its concessions had won the elections for the PMDB, 20 million workers took part in a general strike against the tax increases which followed.

This year has seen a series of mass strikes of bank workers and civil servants at state and municipal level. So far the CUT and the PT have not managed to recover the initiative lost due to their ambivalence over the Cruzado plan, and haven't been capable of posing a general strike of these sectors.

But now, along with the campaign for presidential elections they have called for a general

strike in August. What are the perspectives?

Last year's general strike, organised at a week's notice, had about 40 per cent of the workers supporting it. It was called on the crest of a wave of disillusionment and anger at the cynical tax increases just after the government had won the elections on the basis of the six-month price freeze. The government is now trying to repeat this tactic.

In 1986 20 million workers took part in a general strike against tax increases.

Last year's price freeze had screwed down the lid on inflation, but the pressure which built up exploded into a renewed burst of inflation at a 1000 per cent annual rate.

There was a reduction in real wages of about 30-50 per cent over the six month period January-June 1987 in spite of a semi-sliding scale of wages.

The new Cruzado plan again means a wage and price freeze, but according to the government it will work this time because it doesn't screw down the lid as tight as before.

The freeze is full of loop-holes for prices, but not for wages, which are no longer linked to prices. According to the government, this means the pressure won't build up to hyper-inflationary levels. Also, they say, they will turn down the inflationary pressure by reducing the public deficit from seven per cent to four per cent of the GNP.

The whole plan is based on the impossible dream of a 50 per cent increase in private investment and massive increases in exports

over a four year period. It says that falling international interest rates, and an absence of protectionism in the key capitalist countries, will save the skin of Brazilian capitalism.

Not even the bosses are happy about this plan but coming after a six month slide, with simultaneous hyperinflation and recession, they hope that a temporary stimulus from the present plan would revive the euphoria of the Cruzado plan.

The split over support for Sarney is only the surface of a profound foreboding of the capitalists. The "progressives" are afraid to go on with Sarney in the government and the democratic centre are afraid of trying to go on without him.

Class stand

The PT's programme includes the "statisation" of the financial system, but this is rarely explained or even posed. If this is not resolved through a clear, class-based stand, the PT may be jostled into support for the capitalist 'left front' which is likely to emerge in the near future.

The August general strike and the campaign for presidential elections will only develop an enthusiastic support if linked to a clearly socialist programme to avoid hijacking and sabotaging of the campaign by the social democrats around Brizola and the PMDB "progressives".

The PT leaders have outlined that the solution to the workers' problems is not just the presidential election but the building of socialism. This outline has to be urgently developed into a concrete alternative with the aid of Marxist ideas.

Portuguese elections

THE RIGHT-WING Social Democrats' overall majority in the Portuguese elections is a condemnation of the abject failure by the Socialist and Communist leaders to build on the desire for real change among the workers, youth and peasants.

This is the first time since the revolution of 1974-75 that a party on the right has won more than the total of votes on the left.

In 1975 the Socialist and Communist parties won a combined 55 per cent of the vote, demonstrating the enormous revolutionary pressures that existed. They have squandered this support through their subsequent policies, and are now left with only 34 per cent (22 per cent to the Socialists and 12 per cent to the Communist Party).

The number of abstentions has dramatically increased to 30 per cent, mainly among working people, showing a lack of confidence in the government as well as the opposition leaders. In the Constituent Assembly elections of 1975 there was a 95 per cent turnout.

The Social Democrats are pledged to a programme of denationalisation and changes in the constitution which will limit workers' rights. But far from stabilising society, as they hope, this will lay the basis for even greater movements than that of 1974-75.

By Soraya Lawrence

Ivin Malaza memorial fund

THIS WEEK'S donations include £200 from socialists in Sweden, £40 from Germany, £56 from labour movement

activists in Birmingham, and £18 from street collections in Guildford and Cambridge.

More funds are needed to assist the family of this worker's leader, murdered by an agent in the pay of the reaction-

ary Gatsha Buthelezi, and to continue his work. Please send donations and collections to:

Cllr Lynn Faulkes, 143B Amhurst Road, London E8 2AW.

Classified ads

20p per word, minimum 10 words. Semi-display £3 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.

□ **Summer bargains from World Socialist Books:** Trotsky *Revolution Betrayed* now £4.50 (usually £5.75). Dobbs *Teamster Rebellion* now £4 (usually £4.95). Gripping story of the Minneapolis strike struggle in 1934, by a leading participant. Please add 50p postage for each title. From WSB, 3/13 Hepscoth Rd, London E9 5HB.

□ **Wanted** co-op and green shield stamps. Loose, part or full books. All proceeds to the fighting fund. Send c/o Militant circulation, 3/13 Hepscoth Rd, London E9 5HB.

□ **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.

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□ **Holiday exchange.** London 2 bedroom flat preferably weeks 15-30 August, for similar in holiday or interesting area with access to public transport. Tel 01 533 3311.

□ **Happy 85th birthday** to Fred Giles—Skipton's oldest Militant reader. Fraternal greetings from the 'Mag-gots'.

□ **Cassette tape debate.** Richard Venton (Merseyside Militant spokesman) and John Blevin (features editor *Morning Star*). 'Way forward after the election' (10 July). £1.75 (inc. p&p) from M Cock, 319 High St, Rochester, Kent, ME1 1VU.

Militant meetings

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

○ **Southampton** Marxist discussion group. Wednesdays 12.30pm. 7 Goodwin Close, Millbrook, Southampton. Creche provided. Thursdays 7.30pm. Tel 786879 for details.

○ **Cricklewood.** Wednesday 29 July. Anson Primary School, Anson Rd, NW2, 7.30pm. Child care facilities available.

Yuppies

Dear Comrades,
The local *Evening Chronicle* carried a letter recently. It was a conversation overheard in a Jarrow pub, "A yuppie in Jarrow is someone who has had a job for six months".
Yours fraternally
Ed Waugh
Wallsend Labour Party

Glasgow radio phone-in AIDS testing welcomes militant ideas

Dear Comrades,
"We need the *Militant* here in Easterhouse" said one of the callers to Sunday's Radio Clyde phone-in in Glasgow. He made it clear he was a member of no political party, but thought that "*Militant* sticks to its guns and stands firm behind the working class".

Derek Hatton was invited on to the programme to answer questions about the *Militant* for an hour. There were eleven phone calls. Out of that eleven there were eight Glaswegians who expressed their full

support and solidarity with Derek as an individual and what he stood for as a Liverpool militant.

Representing a cross-section of Glasgow, this programme left the producers in no doubt that *Militant* ideas were very much at large in the huge sprawling housing schemes of Glasgow. "We need a fighting leadership like Liverpool council here in Glasgow" was the constant theme.

Yours fraternally
A Radio Clyde listener

Dear Comrades,

The decision by the British Medical Association (BMA) at their national conference to allow doctors to test patients for the AIDS virus (HIV) without first seeking their permission has very wide and worrying implications.

Such actions conflict with civil liberties and the whole question is likely to end up in the courts. The doctors' decision, however regrettable, stems from very real fears. About 50 per cent of surgical gloves break during the course of operations and accidental cuts are common. However, how testing for the HIV virus is going to improve this situation is unclear, surely what should be fought for is better working practices and more durable surgical gloves.

What is more worrying is the Tories' attempts to pressure the Health Service into privatising the provision of sterile equipment which includes surgical gloves.

Unrestricted testing as agreed by the BMA could be the first step on the road to compulsory testing which would be disastrous.

Now that screening has cut across the spread of HIV through blood and organ donations, what should be continually argued for is the use of safer sex and for drug misusers to refrain from sharing needles which remain, in Western Europe, the main means of transmission.

Yours fraternally
Mat Southwell
Brighton

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

Working all hours

Dear Comrades,
A report in our local paper was of a 64 year old couple who decided to "seek their fortune when holidaying in Ipswich".

The husband and wife (he had been made redundant seven years ago) "pored through page after page of job advertisements in a local evening paper, but they were rapidly brought down to earth by the news that the availability of council houses in East Anglia was so poor that they would have to wait several years for a home".

Instead the wife who presently gets £11 per week pension, is to take up a job as a live-in home help, while her husband, a diabetic, stays in Wakefield on the dole.

She says "We are at a time in our lives when we should be settling down, but we have never had any money to speak of, or anything to call our own...I want to really make a go of creating a new life in Ipswich. Hopefully, if we can bear the separation for a little while, we will eventually be able to live a little more comfortably".

So this is the government of family life? In reality, people who have worked all their lives are forced to 'get on their bikes' and live apart in order to make life "a little more comfortable".

Yours fraternally
Margaret O'Malley
Wakefield

Dear Comrades,

A friend of mine recently called into the job centre. Amidst reams of vacancies for chambermaids, waiters, waitresses etc he spotted one for an attendant at a local garage. He applied and arranged an interview, it was only then that he found out it paid around £1.25 an hour. Needless to say he didn't attend the interview!

Of more concern because it involves a major employer, is council workers employed on a seasonal basis to work in council offices, theatres etc. Their hourly

rate is £1.04. In order to earn a semblance of a decent wage, they have to work 12 hour shifts and often work weekends.

Seasonal workers must be a priority for unions, more so as ever greater numbers of people are having to take seasonal jobs. A minimum wage of £120 a week and a 35 hour week would have enormous support amongst these workers and millions of others.

Yours fraternally
Dave Pollock
Scarborough



Fast food chains employ thousands of school leavers on poverty wages.

Photo: Dave Sinclair

Dear Comrades,
On 7 July an article appeared in our local paper. Five young boys aged between 16 and 18 worked up to 75 hours a week in order to complete a rush job at a South Wales factory. One 16 year old started work at 8am one morning until 1am the following morning. He started again at 8am the same

day and worked until 11.40pm. The next morning he started at 8am and worked until midnight. In three days he had worked 44 hours!

The article went on to say that it was only the inexperience and naivety of the company's directors that led to this situation shown by the fact that they had installed a clock machine to take

note of the hours that the workers were putting in!

This is just one instance where we see Thatcher's victorian values being put into practice.

Yours fraternally
Dianne Mitchell
Cardiff South and Penarth
Labour Party

Press cash in on child abuse

Dear Comrades,
Margaret Creear's article on child abuse (*Militant* 856) correctly put the current events in Cleveland into context and attacked the Tories for their failure to provide resources to deal with the problem.

Her point about the gutter press sensationalising the issue is absolutely correct as we have seen to great effect in Cleveland.

The local Tory rag, the *Evening Gazette*, has on many occasions used the question of child abuse (both sexual and physical) to sell papers and portray offenders as 'ghouls' 'beasts' etc, without offering any explanation of how to solve the problems facing families.

Indeed, over the current controversy when it first came to light that increasing numbers of children had been taken into care the *Evening Gazette* raged over the sick society that we now live in. However, they have now changed tack completely and are attacking the doctors and social services.

Disgracefully, as Margaret points out, they have been aided in their attacks by the MP for Middlesbrough Stuart Bell who has accused the social services of 'empire building' and of deliberately creating the crisis to get more money from the government.

Bell's remarks are a disgrace coming from a Labour MP who should be arguing for more

resources from the government. In fact, the county council has already agreed an increase in resources which will be spent over the next year but the figures being mentioned (about £340,000) are still less than one per cent of the total social services bill for Cleveland.

The whole labour movement must demand more resources from central government to deal with the crisis facing the social services system and fight for those resources by linking up all local authorities in the firing line.

Yours fraternally
Andy Walker
Middlesbrough

Walter Greaves

In remembrance of my father, Walter Greaves who died aged 80 on 30 June.

At the age of 14 he lost his left arm in a road accident. He was a long-time member of the Communist Party. My father was a worker and a fighter for peace and socialism, fighting evictions of unemployed workers as secretary of the Bradford National Unemployed Workers Movement.

He bought the *Militant* every week for the last few years and he attended some readers meetings in Keighley and Skipton, the contents of which gave him hope. At these meetings he would lend his cap for the collection, to which, as a pensioner, he would add something himself.

My father would stick his neck out to defend someone too weak or not in a position to defend themselves.

Peter and Brian Greaves

Labour Party redundancies

Dear Comrades,
It cannot have escaped the notice of workers in Liverpool the hypocrisy of Labour's latest plans. Not only do they plan to close down newspapers, but issue redundancy notices to 40 staff.

Any attempts to close down the Young Socialists' paper will be met with uproar from youth north and south.

Yours fraternally
Mike King
Southampton

Lessons of CPSA ballot

Militant talks to John Macreadie

In view of the result of the all-out strike ballot do you think it was still correct to go for the all out strike at the time that you did?

It was absolutely correct. The whole experience was that although the regional and selective action had received unprecedented support from the membership of the union, it wasn't sufficient to put the necessary pressure on the Tory government to either meet our claim or to warn them against going down the road of regional performance and flexible pay.

Those tactics could not have continued. Any attempt at another round of selective and regional action would have collapsed, leading to a weakening of the union's organisation and bitter divisions.

Although a majority of members voted against taking the all out strike, it will become even clearer in the period ahead that members recognised it will take the use of the whole bargaining power of the union and unions to solve the problems in the civil service. The all-out ballot was necessary and inevitable.

Out of the debate within the membership the union will emerge strengthened by both the pay campaign and the ballot. Members, however, were taken aback by the withdrawal of the SCPS and with a newly elected Tory government. Neither were they impressed by the lack of consistent leadership shown in the past.

What happened to the membership levels during the campaign?

The latest figure is that the union has put on something like 4,000 members during the regional action. That is on top of a previous increase over the past 12 months.

The general trend is that the unions membership has increased over the last 12 months and has increased over the pay campaign. Even though some members will have resigned, for a number of reasons, the perspective is that most of them will come back into the union, giving a substantial net increase.

Many people who previously haven't joined a union, some of

them because they didn't know it existed, or it wasn't doing anything, saw the union moving into activity and the experience is when unions fight, workers are prepared to join.

The ballot was lost. Does that mean a complete end to the campaign on pay and conditions for 1987?

No. The industrial action may be over but the pay campaign for 1987 continues, because we haven't settled. Although the Tories have imposed the unagreed meagre offer of £5.75, there is no settlement.

The campaign moves back to the negotiating arena on the one hand, but on the other we will be identifying the organisational problems and issues that have arisen over the last few months to strengthen the union and in the process build the members' confidence. Industrial action will be necessary in the future to solve the pay and the problems facing the members.

How does the union intend to deal with the question of merit pay and regional pay which the Tories seem insistent on imposing upon civil servants?

A. Despite the lies of the right wing in the union and the press, the Broad Left majority on the NEC do prefer to try and solve the problems of the members by talks and negotiations.

But unlike the right wing utopians in the union, our bitter experience is that the Tory government have cynically attacked our members' living standards and conditions regardless.

That's why our members have been driven to take industrial action and even contemplate the unprecedented step of a national all-out strike.

In the light of the no vote we will once again say to the government that we prefer to solve our problems by talks. And we have our conference mandate to try and produce for our members a settled long term pay system.

So talks will be resuming with the Treasury. We will take into those talks the policies of our conference, the demands and problems of the rank and file that we want a decent living

wage, to protect our jobs and to be able to give a better service to the public.

If there can be a long term settled pay system which meets these demands and solves the problems of our members, then we'll recommend it. But there can be no settled long term pay system in the civil service which doesn't abolish poverty and which includes any form of regional or performance pay.

Will the NEC be calling any form of conference to discuss the question of merit pay and anything the government intend to impose?

We are immediately issuing material to the members about the lessons of the campaign to date, more detailed explanations of what regional and performance pay would mean, and why the union must oppose it. We will keep the members fully informed.

The negotiating 'team' before the the Broad Left executive was elected was just the General Secretary on his own. That team is now the six senior officers of the union, honorary and full time.

There will be no secret talks and the executive will report back to members at every stage of what's happening. Anything that comes out of the negotiations will be put to the members for discussion and for a decision via the union's pay conference which is being held on Thursday 3 December. Control is in the hands of the rank and file.

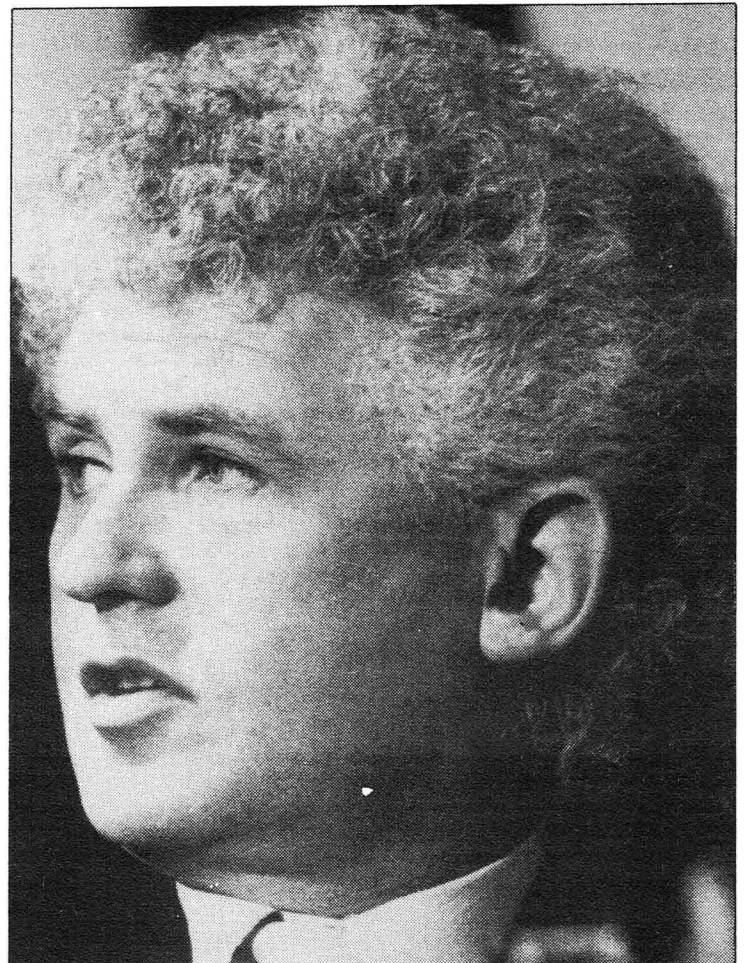
What lies ahead for the low paid civil servants CPSA organises?

Our members want a decent, ordinary life. They want a decent living wage, they want secure jobs. They want to work in decent working conditions.

They want to be able to give the service our class, particularly claimants, deserve. We have no alternative but to fight to defend the interests of our members and the workers who we serve.

Do you have any comment on the differences of opinion amongst the leadership of CPSA, particularly at NEC level, which have marred this campaign?

The CPSA is still very much



John Macreadie, CPSA Deputy general secretary.

in transition from a staff association to a trade union intervening to defend its fight for its members.

We still have that legacy and we still have a prominent right wing element who historically have shown that they offer no way forward for the members.

During this pay campaign they have shown their opportunist streak on the one hand and their absolute defeatism on the other.

That is best illustrated by a member of the NEC, a bloke called Arthur Newall from the Metropolitan Police Civil Staff branch who is a leading Tory trade unionist. At every step of this pay campaign he has continually said that there is nothing we can do, we cannot win, we've got to throw ourselves at the feet of Mrs Thatcher.

Increasingly our members will come to reject that surrender and the defeatism of the right wing, who at the conference argued for an all out strike, and when it came to the crunch actually supported the demand to give in and suspend all industrial action. That hypocrisy will be seen by the members.

On the other hand we have the emerging new right wing of the union, the 'moderate' BL84 group, who have spent their time organising more against the Broad Left than against the employer. But they have also shown that they have got no solutions for the problems of our members.

Together with these groups you have got the bureaucracy of the union. Unfortunately they are living in the past. They aren't prepared to understand the period in which we are now living and working and the need to offer a fighting leadership to the union.

That has led them to either fail to give the leadership necessary, or in some cases, to work with these other groupings and their friends in the Tory press to sabotage and undermine the work of the national executive and the policies of our conference.

As a result of the General Election some in the Labour movement are re-embracing 'New Realism' with a vengeance. All this is the same old defeatism dressed up in new clothes. We cannot 'accommodate' to the Tories and the bosses who refuse still to reinstate miners sacked during their year-long struggle or to

employers like Murdoch who sack thousands of workers in the interests of profit. These attacks can only be met with counter-attack. To accommodate to these people only invites further attack. We have no other alternative.

The 'no' vote was a disappointment but it would be foolish for the Tories and anyone else to misinterpret that result. It was a snapshot of the mood of the members at one moment.

The Broad Left in particular has got a pivotal role to play in drawing out the lessons. It has been immeasurably strengthened by the work done before and during the campaign and by the leadership given in this dispute. It has grown in size and influence and that work must be continued.

At key points during the campaign differences with the SCPS occurred. Do you think that in the course of the next year that they can be overcome.

The Broad Left took the leading role in establishing a joint claim and campaign with the SCPS back in December 1986. During that campaign we established tremendous unity in the common struggle.

Unfortunately the Society leadership were not prepared to implement the decision we had always taken, that if the regional selective action did not work quickly then we would jointly move to an all-out strike ballot.

It is regrettable that the Society leadership refused to do so and called off the action without any consultation with their membership.

But at the workplaces there is still tremendous unity. When CPSA carried on with the regional and selective strategy in various regions, thousands of Society members refused to cross our picket lines and stayed out in solidarity. Even today many Society activists are still working with CPSA activists on pay committees up and down the country. The general conclusion I draw from that chapter is the need for more unity rather than less. We have to build upon what we have created. But it has to be unity in action.

I therefore welcome the building of the Broad Left in the SCPS, which together with the work we are doing in CPSA will bring about a single union under the control of the rank and file.



John Macreadie and Terry Fields on CPSA picket lines.

Industrial Reports

Civil service pay split

On 23 June the national executive committee of the Society of Civil and Public Servants 'suspended' industrial action in this year's civil service pay dispute to enter 'urgent' negotiations with the Treasury.

Their stated reason was that the CPSA had split the united approach of the two unions by insisting on balloting its membership on all-out strike action. In reality they were more interested in sectarian attacks on the newly-elected Broad Left leadership of the CPSA.

The SCPS secret left (composed of *Morning Star* Communists and their Labour Party fellow-travellers) have seized on the CPSA decision to go for all out strike as a convenient way of easing themselves out of the campaign.

No strategy

They were unconvinced from the very start that the members would support a campaign of industrial action. When the first phase showed massive support they were taken completely by surprise at the depth of feeling.

They had no strategy other than to repeat the initial programme of selective action. Instead of using such action as a method of raising confidence in preparation for all-action, they saw it as an end in itself which could be maintained indefinitely—perhaps for a period of years!

It was the agreed position between the two unions that at some stage it would be necessary to dis-

By Bill Boyle

cuss the possibility of all-out strike action if a satisfactory settlement was not forthcoming.

It is quite clear now that the SCPS executive adopted a thoroughly dishonest position from the start and never had any intention of offering the members this option.

Instead, without consultation of any kind they allowed members to read about the end of their union's involvement in the campaign in the following day's newspapers.

And for what? After two weeks of discussions with the employer they have achieved...nothing!

A letter from the Treasury has been circulated to members which is extremely vague, offers even more discussions, and makes it quite obvious that the Treasury intend to press home the advantage handed to them by the SCPS leaders by extracting major concessions 'in technology and work practices.' It is all very commendable to take radical policy decisions on South Africa and Nicaragua, but as soon as the crunch arrives on the domestic front it seems there is little to choose between the 'lefts' of the SCPS and the right wing of the movement.

What's worse is the



Society members on the march.

danger that behind the scenes there will now be moves to make a deal on new technology—just weeks after conference approves a document which stated that "the society should at no stage seek a pay increase in lieu of those negotiating objectives" (defence of job levels and working conditions, sharing the benefits of public and members through improved services and a reduction in hours).

In the same document (and at the previous year's conference) the NEC correctly attacked the then right wing leadership of the CPSA for agreeing a "buy out in the form of increased pay, and for new technology to be introduced on the government's terms".

Conclusions

Even if the proposed negotiations produce any money, the Thatcher gov-

ernment is not going to give something for nothing. There will inevitably be strings attached which will be to the benefit of the employer not civil servants.

The executive's decision has caused enormous anger amongst SCPS members. All branches should keep up the pressure and flood the executive with motions opposing any acceptance of regional or merit pay and condemning the sabotage

of the united stand with CPSA.

The current national executive majority has demonstrated in the starkest possible fashion that it is incapable and unworthy of the leadership of the union.

There has never been a better time to build the SCPS Broad Left and create a united civil service trade union front against Tory attacks on jobs, conditions and living standards.

Leeds Nupe democracy

Just when council workers are looking for a lead from their unions in the struggle against privatisation a local authority activist in Nupe is being investigated for "bringing the union into disrepute" by campaigning against privatisation.

On Friday 31 July Leeds Nupe shop steward Lionel Wright faces a disciplinary hearing before the Yorkshire and Humberside division of the union after distributing Nupe Broad Left literature to fellow members.

Nupe conference in May advised its members of the need for local and national industrial action to defeat the Tory tendering bill, and called on Labour councils to refuse to implement the legislation.

In Leeds, however, the Labour council started preparing in-house tenders last year, involving job losses and capital investment in the so-called target services.

Management have tested the water by demanding 200 voluntary redundancies of refuse workers in the autumn. By then Nupe area officer Malcolm Reid had already conceded the principle of restructuring through a voluntary retirement scheme, without putting the issue to any union meeting.

Together with other right wing officials, he overcame resistance in the depots by various means, then manipulated the cleansing proposals through the district committee.

Two weeks later Nupe officials issued a press release, along with GMBATU officials and council leaders announcing that restructuring would take place in a whole series of departments. No report back took

By a Militant correspondent

place first, either to the district committee or the workplaces affected.

In a similar way shop stewards were chosen by full time officials to leave their jobs and help management find ways of "improving services" in the council's notorious capital policy unit. Unions which insisted on these stewards being accountable to their members have been denied representation.

Painful

The right wing of Nupe have boasted that their retreat is "the painless way of fighting privatisation", but the experience of ordinary Nupe members has been different.

School dinner ladies were invited by management in March to "consultation meetings" which supposedly gave a final say to the workforce, only to find key decisions on cuts had already been made with the support of union leaders.

In June the bin-men were incensed when area officer Reid and a GMBATU official wrote to them asking for a two-shift experiment on six-wheeled refuse vehicles and dangling the offer of a guaranteed permanent job for all "volunteers". In the face of a revolt by the depots the letter had to

be withdrawn.

Supporters of the Nupe Broad Left have leafleted workers in both departments, arguing for a national campaign by Nupe to resist the legislation, and warning against a purely localised approach which leads workers in each district to face the 'Hobson's choice' of self imposed cuts through an in-house tender as the only way to "keep the service in public hands."

Also, the sweeping powers to extend privatisation by order which the Bill gives central government means that Leeds workers who are redeployed to other departments and any new appointments made after early retirement from the "target areas" can expect no job security unless the unions launch a fight against the legislation, preferably in conjunction with Labour councils.

It is the actions of the Nupe right wing which are "bringing the union into disrepute" not a leading local union activist like Lionel Wright who has fought to defend jobs and services on what is now Nupe policy nationally.

Nupe members are urged to protest to the Yorkshire and Humberside Divisional Secretary at Blackgate House, Radford Road, Kingley near Wakefield WF3 1FD. Tel. 0532 537 654. Letters of support and copies of resolutions should be sent to Nupe Broad Left Defence Campaign, 18 Landford, Leeds 2. Tel. Andy Ford on 0532 455936.

Price not right for Bootle booze

THE EDEN Vale pub in Netherton, Bootle, has become the centre of local attention in the last week following a dispute between the locals and the brewery.

After a decision of the brewery to raise the price of beer by 2p in the bar and 4p in the lounge the locals decided to mount a picket and boycott the pub.

The brewery, Bass, claim that the increase was to pay for the decoration of the pub and promptly decided to raise the prices again.

The success of the picket has been incredible. Despite the fact that the whole estate is

devoid of facilities and three pubs service nearly 20,000 people, the normal 2-300 customers who use it each night has been reduced to just six over the whole weekend.

Local people are said to be 'made up' with this success, and despite threats from the brewery to raise prices even further if there are any more pickets the locals are determined to continue their protest. Instead of drowning their sorrows they are venting them on the bosses.

By Tony McNulty
(Bootle LPYS)

Support Conference

A SUPPORT conference has been called by sacked workers and supporters. Manchester Town Hall, 25 July at 12 noon. Called by: Ancoats Casualty Sit-in, Ardrbride Supporters, Senior Colman Strike Committee, Gateshead HFW Workers Support Group, Ardrbride Sacked workers, Trader Sacked Workers.

Industrial Reports

Knowsley builders' mass picket success but no Labour support

THE SUCCESS of the mass picket at the Ogden site in Cantril, Knowsley, reported in last week's paper, continued for the rest of the week, with the scabs making no effort to go in and all work on the site stopped.

The TGWU won a ruling from an industrial tribunal on Friday 17 July that Mike Heard, the sacked T&G shop steward, should be reinstated immediately and paid in full for the time lost and that the other workers on strike should also be reinstated immediately on full pay.

This was reported to the mass picket on Monday 20 July and picketing is being called off on the understanding that the company will comply with these rulings.

As well as holding mass pickets last week the workers lobbied meetings of the Knowsley Labour Group and of Knowsley council. Although TGWU official Frank Dooley had been allowed, after intense pressure from the lobbying trade unionists, to address the Labour Group, the majority of Labour councillors voted not to allow time at the

council meeting for an emergency resolution on the issue.

This caused great anger amongst the council workers and residents of Cantril Farm who packed the public benches. With shouts of "Scabs" many walked out in disgust. 18 Labour councillors voted to debate the resolution but 27 voted with the Tories and the Liberals to throw it out.

Council Leader Jim Keight later tried to explain their position by saying they had written to Ogdens and if the reply was not satisfactory they would be getting legal advice about terminating the contract. This did nothing to reassure strikers that the council was on their side.

The role of Labour councillors is coming under scrutiny by both the employees of Knowsley council and by the residents of Cantril Farm. The Ogden dispute is driving home to many the need to join the Labour Party to ensure its representatives act in the interests of the working class rather than big business.

By our Knowsley correspondent



5,000 attended the annual Tolpuddle rally despite pouring rain. 80 Militants were sold.

Photo: Jez Coulson (FEL)

Crewe hospital

LEIGHTON hospital workers in Crewe are being threatened with the sack for refusing to perform tests in conditions which they feel are unsafe for patients.

The Electro Cardio Graph technicians at the hospital test heart function. Three years ago a patient died after an aortic aneurism (weakened arterial wall) burst during an exercise test.

The crash trolley was called and arrived too late to save the patient. Since then the technician in charge of the department has refused to perform the tests unless a doctor and defibrillation equipment are available throughout.

The two technicians under her were told by the consultants to continue doing the tests. Now they have consulted their union, Astms, and have refused to do them as well.

The deputy hospital manager, Mr David Young, told them "The consultants consider the test safe and if you continue to refuse to perform these tests the next step is your suspension."

The refusal to do exercise tests has been the final straw for the ECG technicians who have seen their workload double over the last ten years and who face an increasingly unsympathetic style of management.

When they complained that they were often missing lunch and tea breaks because of the workload they were told: "tea breaks are purely discretionary on the part of management; we don't have to let you have them."

Dr FM Emery, the hospital manager, said: "I often work through lunch, not just when I'm playing at being manager, but also when I'm playing at being a doctor."

Dr Emery has at least three sources of income: his NHS consultant's salary, private patients and his General Manager's salary.

The ECG technicians would probably be happy working through their breaks for just one of Dr Emery's incomes.

By Dave Highland
(Astms representative,
Leighton hospital, personal
capacity)

Setback for Liverpool GMB witch hunt

IN A victory for democracy and socialism the suspension of Mick Hogan from meetings of the Liverpool city council's GMBATU education branch number 80 has been lifted and Mick has been elected shop steward for his workplace.

This followed amazing developments in the branch. First, Peter Lennard, ex-convenor, resigned, saying it was for personal reasons. He was followed by the branch committee, who claimed that regional officials were not acting against so-called "Militant extremists", who they accuse of intimidation.

The ex-branch committee was demanding the expulsion of Mick Hogan, for opposing their break with the council Joint Shop Stewards Committee, and also the expulsion of leading members of branch 5.

In the same letter to branch members the executive claimed that the full-time official in charge of the branch was pulling the strings of the G&M on behalf of *Militant*. The ex-branch committee, who formerly supported the Broad Left, have now moved to the right of even the full-time officials.

Undemocratic

These officials, many of whom would probably like to attack *Militant* in the G&M, understand they would be taking on not just a few individuals but united, strong branches.

The branch committee of branch 80 was notorious for its witch-hunting activities and the lack of democracy in the branch. Most shop stewards were not elected but appointed by the branch committee.

And for a branch of 4,600 members there were only about 30 shop stewards. Few members were able to contact stewards or the convenor about problems.

This lack of democracy was shown in major decisions taken without reference to the membership



Mick Hogan speaking at Liverpool council demo.

Photo: Militant

The first was the break from the JSSC, which as well as breaking the unity of the council workforce meant a major split with other GMBATU members.

The second was the decision not to support the one-day strike call to support Labour councillors in March '86 after the High Court decision to remove them from office and surcharge them.

The last decision lost Peter Lennard support in Liverpool Polytechnic, where GMBATU members realised that but for the last Labour council the Polytechnic would have been closed.

Now, even worse is happening. Members of the ex-branch committee are recruiting for Nupe in a deliberate attempt to wreck the branch. They have spread rumours that the subs are going up to £1.20 a week and that the branch will be amalgamated with branch 5.

GMBATU members should not be hoodwinked into joining Nupe. The ex-branch committee will carry its undemocratic methods into an already undemocratic local Nupe set-up.

Socialists in the GMB who have been under attack now for two years have remained in the union, fighting for democracy and social-

ist policies. Not one socialist has left the GMBATU or tried to organise against it. This proves who is really loyal to the union and who really believes in unity.

Elections

There is now no branch committee and the full-time official has appointed temporary shop stewards. Socialists in the branch will have to fight in order to establish basic trade unionism from the wreckage caused by the ex-branch leadership.

They must demand that the branch be reorganised immediately, that all shop stewards are elected, on site, and a strong shop stewards committee is established representing all sections. A branch committee and a lay branch secretary should be elected immediately.

The branch must remain united. Ideas of splitting the branch have been expressed. They must be opposed in order to establish maximum strength and unity in a period of impending cuts.

By a member of Liverpool
GMBATU

Polmaise pit closure

LAST WEDNESDAY British Coal announced the closure of Polmaise colliery, the last remaining pit in the Central region of Scotland. With the vote of NACODS by 8 votes to 3 not to oppose the closure, the loss of 112 jobs seems certain.

British Coal cited geological difficulties for the closure. But in 1984, the NCB tried to close the pit on similar grounds, yet within three weeks of the end of the strike, coal had been cut through and production resumed to get at the 15 years of reserves left at Polmaise.

Devastating

The loss of the pit will be a heavy blow to the village of Fallin, where most of the miners live. Youth unemployment runs at 50 per cent. At one time 15 apprentices were taken on regularly every year.

The men have been promised transfer to other pits but for some this is the second or third pit in a few years. Also travelling from Fallin to, say, Castlebridge colliery, will add about another three hours on to the working day, rising earlier and returning later.

The announcement, came just before the holiday break. There was no recommendation to fight from George Bolton, Scottish Area President. But the mass meetings voted by 40 votes to 27 to fight closure.

With a proper lead to the whole Scottish coalfield, pits like Polmaise would not be isolated and picked off one by one.

Hugh Kerr, member of Fallin Labour Party spoke to Jim O'Hare, victimised miner at Polmaise.

Militant

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MPs' pay rise vote

For Labour MPs on workers' wages

IN ALMOST their first decision since the election, MPs have just voted themselves a 21.9 per cent pay increase.

With an increase of £80, they will now be on £450 per week. Only 22 Labour MPs voted against. And of those, 17 were new MPs and only five had sat in the last Parliament.

As Dave Nellist, one of those who voted against, pointed out: "Some eight and a half million people earn less than the Council of Europe 'decency threshold' of £125 per week, not least the civil servants whose average take home pay at £83, is only £3 more than is proposed as an increase for MPs. Low paid workers won't take kindly the arguments that MPs work long, difficult hours—so do many of them".

Resentment

The Tories are not bothered about the anger of low paid workers. They happily pocket the extra money, safe in the knowledge that as the overwhelming majority of Labour MPs voted for their own pay rise, any resentment will be aimed widely at all politicians and all parties.

But the ruling class have deeper motives. For generations they have perfected methods to try to draw Labour MPs away from the life style, the daily pressures and the outlook and ideas of the class they are elected to represent. They are out to absorb workers' MPs into the exclusive club atmosphere of Parliament, and give them enough money to enjoy it.

By a Militant reporter.

Then the Tory Fleet Street hypocrites write an 'exclusive' on the 'high' standard of living of some Labour MPs in an attempt to undermine the Party's support amongst workers. The *Daily Express*, for example, recently ran a story about Brian Gould and his "£200,000 Oxfordshire country retreat with pool," and "town house" in London.

No-one would question the legitimate expenses Labour MPs incur, providing they are open to scrutiny by the local Party. Justifiably MPs already receive £8,000 for accommodation in London and unlimited travel to and from their constituency as well as a £20,000 secretarial allowance. But all that is on top of the £22,550 basic salary, they will now get.

Expecting the increase to be carried, Dave Nellist wrote to Labour General Secretary, Larry Whitty, recommending "all Labour MPs to increase their contributions to Walworth Road to at least five per cent of gross salary—which if the salary rises to £22,500 would mean a minimum contribution of £1,125 a year. Across the board that should raise a quarter of a million pounds a year for the Party, severely reducing the pressure of the annual deficit and hopefully eliminating the need for any redundancies amongst the staff".



Labour Party staff lobby the NEC against redundancies. Just 5 per cent of all Labour MPs' salaries could save these jobs. Photo: Dave Sinclair

When Dave repeated these points in the Commons debate, shadow Cabinet member, Frank Dobson, replied that individual Labour MPs could practice self denial, but they could not impose it on other members.

Dave Nellist like one or two others has been elected (twice) on

the campaigning slogan of a "workers' MP on a worker's wage". Dave lives on the average wage of a skilled worker in his Coventry seat, and donates the rest back to the labour movement.

The Labour leaders should consider, in their debates on the

election defeat, the enormous attraction to ordinary voters of Labour MPs who demonstrate in action that they are not in it for themselves, who live among them and understand their problems, and who clearly fight for their class.

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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.