

# Militant

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ISSUE 905 15 July 1988

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## Oil rig disaster

# The price of profit



"SAFETY IS the first priority for the government and of the operators. We apply the highest safety standards to all phases of development, design, construction and operation."—Cecil Parkinson, energy secretary.

The death of 166 oil workers when an explosion ripped apart the *Piper Alpha* oil platform, will forever answer the despicable hypocrisy of the Tories.

The lust for profit is the first, second and last consideration of the multinational oil companies. Trade unions are discouraged. Workers are threatened with the sack for raising fears about the lack of safety.

Now in the aftermath of the disaster oilmen have been inundating the Scottish press with examples of negligent safety on the

By Philip Stott,  
Dundee Labour Party

rigs.

The North Sea oil industry is the most dangerous. It is notorious for accidents and the lack of proper health and safety checks. The number of serious accidents jumped from 44 in 1984 to 85 in 1985 and 72 in 1986. In the last week alone three explosions occurred, the third being on *Piper Alpha*.

On *Piper Alpha* accommodation units were situated at the most dangerous area of the rig, right above the production units where the first explosions occurred. It was like lying on top of an inert volcano, just waiting for the eruption.

In 1984 after an explosion on the same platform, suggestions were put forward to improve safety. They were turned down by the owners, Occidental. It would have meant shutting off production for six weeks, costing millions in lost profits.

But the government refused to publish the report. The trade union representatives on the safety committee on the platform resigned in protest.

Jack Donaldson, Occidental's safety manager till 1985, has admitted safety is a secondary issue in the oil industry and that the accommodation units on *Piper Alpha* in no way met safety standards. Yet the design was never rejected

by the government's safety inspectors. They last checked the rig just eight days before the explosion.

The same Department of Energy responsible for maximising profits, production and government revenue out of the North Sea, is also responsible for checking safety.

On land every factory is liable to inspection by the independent Health and Safety Executive. The bosses are obliged to establish management/union health committees and to allow union safety reps to make their own inspections.

Not in the North Sea, however. The oil com-

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"I WORKED on the *Piper Alpha* platform last 18 months ago. When I left it was in a dilapidated state. Men always said if a big accident was to take place it would be on the *Piper*. It was an ancient and run-down platform, constructed in 1975. The living quarters are like a ship, very basic and cramped. They are made of wood and fibreglass. The more modern rigs are usually constructed of steel.

This industry is a two-tier industry. Sub-contractors are often paid less and their safety training is less. On *Piper Alpha* most of the workers were working for sub-contractors.

Once an entire crew were replaced for complaining about safety and replaced by sub-contractors who would not complain. It is not uncommon for individuals who raise questions of safety to be replaced.

I know of some who will not go back to work off-shore again. The AEU official in Aberdeen has been inundated with calls from members asking for redundancy. But for others there is no choice. Mortgages and families have to be paid for some how, and if you don't work on the rigs where do you work?"

By a Scottish oil worker

# Militant

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## Danger—capitalism at work

166 North Sea oil workers paid the ultimate price for Thatcher's 'boom'. Her whole economic illusion has been based on her good fortune in striking oil. The wholesale destruction of 20 per cent of Britain's manufacturing industry was masked (except for those who used to work in it) by increasing production in the North Sea.

Britain became for the first time an oil exporter. And oil helped cover the trade deficit in manufacturing. The government's oil revenues—even last year still at £4.8 billion—helped finance Lawson's obscene tax cuts for the rich.

Who spared a thought for the safety of those in peril on the North Sea rigs? Certainly not the giant oil multi-nationals. Every oil worker is aware of the threat of dismissal for questioning the lack of safety.

Most of the rigs were built in the seventies. Since then the oil companies have had a licence to print money. But they certainly have not used those super-profits to improve or replace the rigs and definitely not to make the lives of their workers safer and more comfortable.

On *Piper Alpha*, Occidental housed them in the most dangerous part of the rig, directly above the gas compression unit where the first terrible explosion occurred and most of the workers perished.

Special accommodation rigs could be constructed near the production platforms but away from the inevitable dangers associated with oil and gas. In fact with the oil companies' super-profits workers could be accommodated on luxury liners!

There is even technology now in use on a rig in BP's Forties field where production is by remote control. No men are on during the night, and just 6-12 maintenance workers during the day. If the oil barons ploughed back just a little of what they have sucked out of the North Sea, no workers would have to put their lives at risk for profit.

But investment in any of these changes would cut the oil barons' profit. With the price of oil falling to \$15 per barrel, far from spending more, they are trying to cut back expenditure.

Shell, the largest North Sea operator, has already warned that should they be legally compelled to build separate accommodation rigs, it might be unprofitable to continue operation: "We have to operate within a budget, otherwise it is not worth us operating."

That is the price these multi-nationals put on the safety of ordinary workers. And the Tory government has done nothing to challenge their callous approach.

Not even the independent Health and Safety Executive, which many land-based workers would say is not sufficient, checks the oil rigs. Eight inspectors from the Department of Energy's Petroleum Engineering Directorate are responsible for the 123 oil installations. But the same department is responsible for ensuring that production keeps going to feed the trade gap and pay for tax cuts.

For all the messages of condolence and hurried visits to the bedsides of the injured, it is the Thatcher government's policy of profit at any cost, privatisation and public spending cuts that shares the blame for the hideous disasters of the last 15 months.

Rail and sea transport are similarly under the 'watchful' eye of government safety bodies. How scrupulously did the Department of Transport's Marine Inspectorate check the policy of the Channel ferry operators for quick turnarounds, larger ships and bigger profits? The families of the 193 who went down with the *Herald of Free Enterprise* have the right to know.

Did the Railways Inspectorate question the cuts in staffing, cleaning and maintenance carried out by London Underground in line with Thatcher's instruction to slash the subsidy and make ready for private ownership? 31 lost their lives in that horrible fire at Kings Cross as a result.

It is capitalism, private ownership and a Tory government committed to creating a country fit for profit to thrive in, that have cast aside safety provisions for ordinary people.

What more powerful argument could there be for nationalisation and workers' control? Who else is fit to run industry other than the representatives of working people? They alone will be accountable to workers with their need for healthy, safe working environments, and not to a cash register.

Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office.  
Published by Militant.  
Printed by Militant Publications,  
3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB.

# Oil workers strike for safety

AFTER THE disaster on *Piper Alpha*, 140 men resigned and walked off the gas rigs *Bravo*, *Alpha* and *Charlie* which lie 40 miles off the Humberside coast.

By Ian McEwan

Their main concern has been the unsafe conditions that they are forced to work in, especially in the light of what took place on *Piper Alpha*. The same could happen on any of the North Sea rigs.

The *Bravo* has no life support gear on the rig itself. But unlike the *Piper Alpha* its accommodation is on a separate barge connected to the gas platform by a bridge, which does have life support gear. So when the men are working they don't have life support

gear, and when they are not working they do.

The men on the *Bravo* have been fighting for proper safety conditions even before the *Piper Alpha* disaster took place. This brought home to a lot of rig workers the unsafe conditions of the British oil sector.

At a mass meeting of over 100 on 12 July they endorsed the call of their shop stewards to fight for

reinstatement on the basis of full trade union recognition and 100 per cent health and safety representation, run by the trade unions on the rigs, and an immediate updating of the safety procedures, which are adhered to in the Norwegian sector.

Even if there had been escape chutes on the British rigs, or if there had been back-up craft, many lives could have been saved on the *Piper Alpha*.

Their employer, the

contractors Press Off-shore, have agreed to the demands. This is the biggest breakthrough in union rights and safety controls in the North Sea's British sector.

Trade unionists on the rigs must urgently link up together, try to organise a national joint shop stewards committee and launch a campaign for full trade unionisation. Joint action can extend Humber-side's victory throughout the industry.



## MP quizzes Thatcher

IN THE Commons on 7 July Pat Wall MP asked Thatcher: "Will the Prime Minister explain why her government abolished independent provision for safety in the North Sea in 1980? Does not the transfer of that function to the Department of Energy leave the government open to accusations that huge profits are more important than safety and human lives?"

"Will she further explain why provision for independent safety representatives has been opposed for nine years by the government? Does not this tragedy show the need for working people in the North Sea to have the statutory provision to bring safety aspects to the notice of authorities on all occasions?"

OCCIDENTAL, OWNERS of *Piper Alpha*, had sales last year of £9 billion and profits of £136 million. Chairman, Armand Hammer, is one of the richest men in the world, with his own private jet—OXY 1.

## Oilmen demand-no cover-up

THE LAW states that no-one should be offshore unless they have the RIGHT certificate. All workers are supposed to have the certificate which means they have gone on a week's safety training course. The course costs £240. Some companies will pay for it but most won't. So it has to be paid by employees themselves.

Having been through this quite thorough course, the safety provisions on the rigs are very disappointing. The safety officers on the rigs are paid by the multinational oil companies. And the bosses don't care as long as they are producing.

If any of the lads out here complain about safety they risk victimisation—being put on night shift instead of day shift where they cannot cause so much bother. The bosses would threaten to sack anyone who tried to stop the job for finding anything they thought unsafe.

There is no way they will stop production even while things are getting repaired. It just goes on and on producing 24 hours a day.

Since the *Piper Alpha* a couple of safety officers up here have been sacked and men have walked off in support of them. They are the *Staedrill* and *Transworld* rigs. On one of these it was a question of the men being expected to work with asbestos.

Recently on our rig we stopped welding when we found there were no dry fire extinguishers.

The bosses are running scared now on safety because it is going to cost them a fortune. There are things they have overlooked for years. And they don't like it. The boys are determined to protect themselves.

Most of the boys are not in a union. The wages are quite low now. It is unemployment that is forcing people on to the rigs.

And it is not only 12 hours on, but with overtime being worked it can be 15 or 18 hours on at a stretch. How can anybody be alert after that?

The oil companies rely heavily on contract labour. Then all the responsibility for training lies with the contractor. When you are working with subcontractors some of the lads are asking: "have these men got RIGHT certificates?"

I lost four friends on the *Piper* platform. It was a rust bucket. Men up here have been complaining for years about it. In 1984 there was a major fire on it and the government held an inquiry. But the findings are secret.

If there is any idea of a cover-up this time the boys are going to take action.

By a Britoil worker

## The price of profit

Continued from front  
panies have exerted every pressure to keep safety checks in the 'reliable' hands of the Tory government.

They cannot be allowed free rein any longer. A trade union inquiry must be

held into the tragedy of *Piper Alpha*. There must be an immediate trade union safety inspection of every rig, and those found wanting closed while alterations are carried out. Full trade union rights and union rights to check health and safe-

ty on the rigs must be assured.

But the oil barons have been given their chance to run this industry. They have recorded super-profits, but they have made them out of the blood of some of their workers.

It was Labour's programme in the seventies to nationalise North Sea oil. This industry must be taken into public ownership and run in the interests of those employed within it and of the working class as a whole.

# Strathclyde against the poll tax

A CONFERENCE in Glasgow of 350 delegates representing thousands of workers in 105 anti-poll-tax groups, mostly from community councils and tenants' associations, agreed to set up a Strathclyde anti-poll-tax federation.

The conference called unanimously for a mass campaign of non-payment, for Labour councils to refuse to pursue non-payers and for the Scottish TUC to step up their campaign and call a 24-hour general strike.

In addition to the delegates there were about 250 visitors, and 50 kids in the creche.

The presence of only ten trade union delegations (caused partly by the lack of support from the STUC) was recognised as a weakness, as trade unionists have a key role in stopping

the poll tax, through industrial action if necessary.

It was agreed that they need to be involved in the community anti-poll-tax organisations and to build such organisations in their workplaces.

In a final speech, Tommy Sheridan from the Pollok anti-poll-tax union, elected unopposed as secretary of the federation, promised a vigorous leadership from the newly elected committee.

Kenny McLachlan, past president of the EIS (Scottish teachers' union) who chaired the conference summed it up as "an excellent conference... a marvellous basis on which to build a campaign of mass action by the working class to defeat the poll tax."

By Alan McCombes



Delegates voting to set up the federation.

## Pollok shows its anger!

IN POLLOK, over 250 tenants defied torrential rain to display their outrage at the poll tax. Led by two local majorette groups, the tenants chanted 'Here we go!' 'Maggie out!' and 'No poll tax in Pollok!' as they moved off past houses plastered with 'No poll tax here' posters.

Many had made banners from sheets to drape from their windows, some of which had eight posters in a line. Tenants not on the march came to applaud and cheer. Many bought copies of *Militant*.

"The message from this marvellous rally, the public meetings and the poster display" said Tommy Sheridan, secretary of the anti-poll-tax union, "is absolutely clear. Pollok will not pay the poll tax."

Tony Mulhearn, surcharged and removed as a councillor in Liverpool for refusing to implement Tory cuts, told how the Liverpool council was faced with either breaking the poor or breaking Tory law.

"Our mandate from the people of Liverpool was to fight the Tories, not bend the knee to their dictate. We stuck to our promises and built new homes, created new jobs and maintained and improved services.

"For that we were found guilty of lawbreaking. But there wouldn't be a Labour Party today or trade unions, if workers before us hadn't broken bad law. Strathclyde council should refuse to collect the poll tax."

### Contempt

He was greeted with rapturous applause from a working-class audience sick of broken promises and flowery words from politicians.

One speaker however, attempted the impossible—to dampen the mood. Unfortunately this was Pollok's MP James Dunnachie, who said: "The poll tax is now legislation. There is nothing we can do."

He was treated with contempt and jeered by a crowd seething

with anger at an elected Labour official waving the white flag before even fighting. "You will all be fined" he told them. "We don't care. We will even go to jail" was the response. He eventually left the stage to boos and chants.

The mood was revived by the local tenants' association chairman, Alex Bill, a boilermaker on the Clyde from 1942 to 1980.

### Defy the law

He reminded Jimmy Dunnachie of Glasgow's history, particularly John McLean and the Glasgow tenants in 1915 who said 'no' to rent rises: "They defied the law in that rent strike, but they won. They were right and the law was wrong. So it had to be broken. It is the same with the poll tax."

The message was clear. The working class are angry, they want to fight the poll tax and they want their elected representatives to lead them into that fight.

Anger, however, is not enough. The fight needs to be organised and co-ordinated through the Strathclyde federation. It is backing the STUC's week of action on 10-17 September, though demanding that the 10-15 minute stoppage which has been called for 14 September be extended to a full 24-hour strike.

At a recent poll tax meeting in Royston, Glasgow, Tony Martin, an AEU steward at Howden's, one of the largest factories in Glasgow, said that his fellow-members laughed at the idea of the 10-15 minute stoppage:

"The STUC has to show they are serious. Calling a 24-hour stoppage would show they are really serious about defeating this tax and it would receive mass support from workers throughout Scotland."

By George McNeilage,  
vice chair Pollok  
Anti-poll-tax Union

## Broadgreen witch-hunt will fail

AFTER THE expulsion of five members of Liverpool Broadgreen Labour Party and the suspension of the constituency party (CLP) for 15 months, socialists in Broadgreen hoped that the national executive committee (NEC) would now leave them to get on with fighting the Tory poll tax, NHS cuts and the Housing Bill.

Some hope! On 20 July the NEC will consider a report by the party's full-time organiser in Liverpool, Peter Kilfoyle, on 'Militant activity' in Broadgreen.

It includes letters from right-wingers naming members they have seen selling *Militant*. Several are clearly typed on the same typewriter, laid out the same and use identical words—"On the following dates, I have seen the people named selling *Militant* at the places named."

A Radio Merseyside journalist commented that when he was on holiday in Jersey, in German second world war bunkers he saw letters to the Nazis from people informing on their neighbours.

"It's the same as that," he said.

The report also encloses photocopies of pages of *Militant*, revealing the names of readers who have donated to the Fighting Fund, advertised badges or written articles and letters. One photograph has even been blown up to reveal that two people are carrying copies of *Militant*!

### Right-wing smear

Part of the evidence concerns the so-called 'Hatton Fund', established to fight a libel action against *World in Action*. The right wing try to smear this as 'secret'. Yet minutes from 1986 prove that it was agreed to by party members.

No mention is made on the other hand of the ex-secretary of Kensington branch who 'forgot' 42 application forms at three consecutive meetings of the general management committee (GMC).

Neither is there any mention of the February GMC meeting when Terry Fields MP was howled down and abused by four right wingers, nor that one of them

appeared on the local news the next day, as the 'voice of moderation', calling for the MP's resignation.

This witch-hunt is divisive and damaging, but like all the previous ones it will fail. This is because the Marxists have turned the movement out into the workplaces, the ward and union branches and council estates to win support for the party and socialism.

The right-wing on the NEC cannot accept the implications of the marvellous victories in Broadgreen in the 1983 and 1987 general elections. They proved that those they are now trying to get rid of are Labour's best fighters.

Even if they do expel more party members, they will never extinguish the red flame of socialism in the constituency. For every supporter they expel, we will win ten to the banner of Marxism.

By Broadgreen Militant supporters

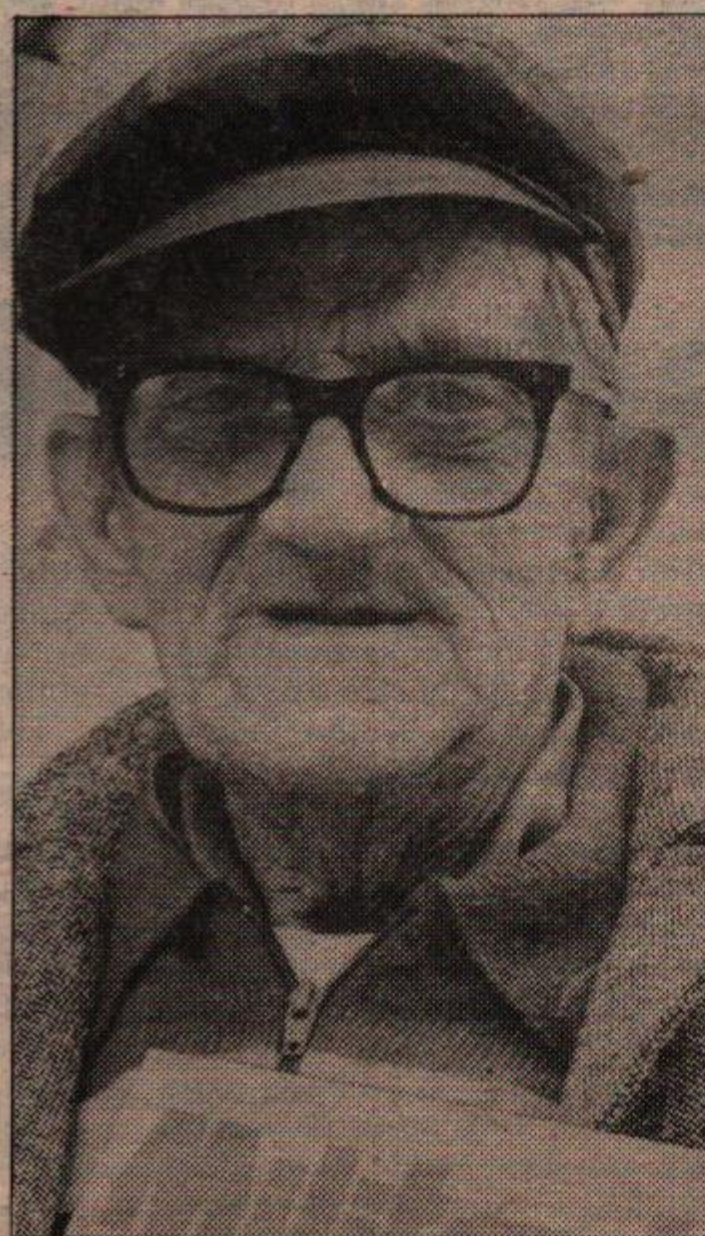
## Dudley Edwards

BRIGHTON MILITANT supporters send condolences to the family of Dudley Edwards who died on Friday 8 July aged 81. Dudley will be much missed by all comrades who knew him — his many friends.

On the day he died, a plaque commemorating his fight on behalf of the unemployed was to be unveiled at Brighton Unemployed Workers' Centre.

It carries a quote from his speech at the first general meeting of the Centre in 1981: "It is not our task to make life more tolerable for the unemployed or to reconcile them to their fate, but to rouse them to fight the capitalist system which creates unemployment in the midst of plenty." A fitting tribute to a fine class fighter.

There will be a fuller tribute to Dudley Edwards in next week's *Militant*.



## Militant International Review

"THERE IS excellent potential for sales of the MIR," writes Andy Ford from Liverpool: "Maybe comrades just underestimate who would like to buy a copy. One bloke who is a builder and roofer and doesn't do a lot of reading, specifically asked me for the MIR 'because it's got more in it'."

"I also sold one to a bloke I work with, an NHS ancillary. He also said that there was more to the MIR and that he 'liked a good read'."

The article on the poll tax has made the current edition easy to sell. 17 members of the Bow and Poplar Labour Party general committee have bought one including the MP.

Get your copy, 90p, from your local *Militant* seller or for £1.10 (post-paid) from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

# How the ruling class subvert democracy



## A Very British Coup

IN SHARP contrast to the daily barrage of escapist soap operas, *A Very British Coup*, based on the book by Chris Mullin, the Labour MP for Sunderland South, is a play with a serious warning for the labour movement.

A radical Labour government is elected after a decade of Tory rule. Harry Perkins, the new prime minister, is an honest and clever working-class socialist, determined to implement the policies on which he was elected, including unilateral nuclear disarmament.

In sharp contrast to the present leadership, he is willing to stand up to the ruling class. In a discussion with the head of MI5, he asks: "Do I frighten you all that much? Me, Harry Perkins, a steelworker from Sheffield?"

"Yes you do", replied the head of intelligence: "You're a bad dream. I could always comfort myself that socialism would never work, because it has always been in the hands of bungling incompetents, trimmers and compromisers—but you, Mr Perkins, could destroy everything that I and my past generations have ever believed in".

MARX DESCRIBED the state as an executive committee for running the affairs of the ruling class. In the play we see how its different arms link together to undermine the elected Labour government.

Perkins comes under pressure from the military, British and American, to abandon unilateral nuclear disarmament. He is constantly monitored by MI5 and MI6, his phone calls and private discussions are recorded, his mail is opened and files are kept on anyone he has contact with.

'His' staff of senior civil servants, whom he inherited from the Tory administration, have links with the security forces. As



Harry Perkins in discussion with his cabinet.

one character commented: "There are no secrets between old Etonians".

The 'impartial' BBC shows its bias towards the ruling class, while the newspapers reach even lower depths. They print lies, invent opinion polls, stir up scandals, promote Perkins' opponents and work for his downfall.

The lack of a Labour press to answer these lies and distortions brought home graphically the need for a daily *Militant* when the next Labour government comes to power.

When the capitalists find they cannot manipulate Perkins, they implement a 'strike of capital' by withdrawing investment from British industry. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) will not bail out the government unless it reverses its radical policies.

This will strike a chord amongst socialists. The last Labour government of 1974-79 was elected on the most radical manifesto since 1945. By 1976 it had 'run out of money'. Prime Minister James Callaghan sent Denis Healey cap-in-hand to the IMF. He returned with a loan, but at a price of £8 billion of cuts in public spending.

Peter Wright's Spycatcher reveals that behind the

scenes in 1976 Callaghan's senior civil servants at the Treasury were advising the IMF where cuts could be made.

It is at such points that the question of power is posed. A Labour government either breaks with the capitalist system and nationalises the means of production or it capitulates and carries out the cuts, like Callaghan and Socialist governments in France, Spain and Greece.

In the TV play, however, Perkins comes up with a deal whereby his government manoeuvres to secure a loan from the Narodny Bank in Russia—'Moscow gold'. This is a huge flaw in the play and gives the sceptics a stick to beat the play's central theme.

Roy Hattersley, who cynically condemned the programme as nothing more than "a rattling good adventure story" and "about as damaging to the interests of the establishment as the Muppet Show," says in *The Listener*: "The idea of the pound's health being restored by Soviet gold is absurd. With a Russian loan to back it, the pound would be worth about ten cents."

The Russian bureaucracy are wracked with economic problems of their own and

anyway would never move to support genuine democratic socialism in the West. Since the 1930s, they have had a conscious policy of derailing movements towards socialism to maintain the status quo with Western imperialism.

AFTER PERKINS has been in power for a year, his cabinet is openly split. He is determined to carry out his election pledge to abolish Britain's nuclear weapons. But before he even takes on the American and British military establishment, he is confronted by right-wing elements with CIA links in his own cabinet.

As he comes under pressure from all sides, he quips that the last time he stood in the middle of the road he got knocked over by traffic coming both ways.

The press invent opinion polls which show Perkins to be unpopular, while his right-wing opponent is promoted favourably. The scientific adviser on how to disarm unilaterally is killed under mysterious circumstances.

The last 'democratic' card is to frame Perkins and blackmail him to resign. MI5 dig up dirt on his private life and forge a Swiss bank statement which

shows that the Narodny bank paid him £300,000 after the loan deal.

He agrees to resign, but in the TV studio he turns the tables and exposes the lies of the establishment, calls for a public inquiry into the civil service and sets the date for a general election.

The final scene ends with the sinister silhouette of a helicopter over a polling station and the rumbling of a tank in the background. The BBC World Service is broadcasting about the political crisis in Britain and an earthquake in Chile.

The reference to Chile is significant, because in 1973 a democratically elected socialist government was bloodily overthrown by the armed forces with the aid of American imperialism and the support of the British ruling class.

30,000 workers were murdered by the Pinochet regime, a stark reminder of how far the capitalist class are prepared to go to defend their rule.

IN CONTRAST to their reaction to the Zircon film, *Tumbledown* and the Nelson Mandela concert, there has been no Tory outcry about *A Very British Coup*. Perhaps that is because the

ruling class know that Neil Kinnock is no Harry Perkins and do not think people will believe that the events in the play could really happen.

Yet Peter Wright in *Spycatcher* relates how in the early 1970s, senior MI5 officers and British military tops talked of staging a coup in the event of a left-wing government under Harold Wilson coming to power!

For Marxists the programme highlighted the hypocrisy of the ruling class over 'democracy', of which Sir Ian Gilmour wrote: "it is a means to an end and not an end in itself... and if it is leading to an end that is undesirable or inconsistent with itself, then there is a theoretical case for ending it."

The play graphically also shows that no matter how honest and well-intentioned your leaders (the *New Statesman* proclaimed Perkins to be "the best leader the Labour Party never had"), socialism cannot be achieved by parliamentary means alone. There must be active involvement of working people in the workplaces and estates.

The most frustrating thing about the play was the lack of any such involvement. While Perkins talked about 'the people', workers were never called upon to defend their government.

The strike of capital should have been the signal to bring nine million trade unionists on to the scene, with mass rallies to explain the issues, workplace occupations and strikes to defend the government.

Likewise, when power workers, led by a right-wing leader in the pay of the CIA, were called on strike in order to destabilise Perkins' government, appeals should have been made to win the rank and file over the heads of the corrupt leadership and to expose their role.

Nevertheless, *A Very British Coup* was an excellent play, and a real warning to the labour and trade union movement.

By Ed Waugh

## Non-party politics in Kensington

EVEN THE Labour Party's general secretary, Larry Whitty, expressed disbelief when Tony Benn showed him one of the leaflets being distributed in the Kensington by-election. "Surely we didn't produce that?" he exclaimed at a national executive sub-committee.

But his colleague Joyce Gould confirmed that they did. It quoted the candidate, Ann Holmes: "The poll tax isn't a question of party politics" and devoted a whole section to quotes from Tories and local businessmen.

Only when you get to the back page is there any evidence that this is a Labour Party leaflet for

Ann Holmes ('Right up your street').

Another incredible leaflet highlights Neil Kinnock's attack on Arthur Scargill at the miners' conference, quoting favourable reaction from... *The Guardian*, BBC News and *The Independent*: "Mr Kinnock came out fighting... taking on the NUM leader direct in terms which at moments recalled the celebrated assault on the Militants three years ago."

What a way to mobilise party members, trade unionists and angry anti-Tory youth behind the campaign! As predicted, the attack on *Militant* was a prelude to attacks on all socialists in the

party. Now, in an election leaflet, Kinnock attacks the recently re-elected leader of a trade union affiliated to the Labour Party.

The party leader, who attacks "those who would keep Labour in the 'Disneyland' of opposition rather than unite to work for government" should study the election campaigns of Terry Fields, Eric Heffer, Pat Wall and Dave Nellist.

They proved that uncompromising socialist campaigns win victories.

By Steve Poole,  
Kensington Labour Party



## Ann Holmes

### Right up your street

## Attempted MURDER!

# Fight attacks on LPYS!

LABOUR'S RIGHT wing leadership are out to stifle the voice of working class youth. For the first time since it was set up in the early '60s, the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) is threatened with no longer being Labour's national youth section.

This is no mere administrative re-organisation, it is an attempt to murder Labour's most campaigning section.

But the right don't feel strong enough to shut down the LPYS as their predecessors closed the League of Youth in the 1950s. They are trying deceit. The Organisation sub-committee will recommend the national executive to dissolve the LPYS into an unrepresentative amalgam with Labour's students (Nols) and trade unionists appointed by bureaucrats.

The changes are even worse than those made at 1987 Labour Party conference. The right wing then claimed their changes would assist the party's youth work.

Then they told us the age limit was being cut to ensure a younger "teenage based" LPYS conference. So why, within one month, did they cancel the LPYS's 1988 conference?

They said LPYS regional conferences and committees were to go to make way for new regional youth campaign committees (RYCCs). So why has not one RYCC been set up?

Those proposals were designed to hinder the LPYS's activity. The new, even worse, proposals were drawn up with no consultation; the LPYS weren't even given time to put an alternative paper.

The NEC representative will no longer be elected by LPYS conference-but instead by an 'electoral college'.

The right wing didn't know how delegates to conference would be chosen let alone how the electoral college would share out the votes between the LPYS, Nols and the unions.

Joyce Gould told the meeting: "We can't put all that in the rules. If it doesn't work the first time we'd have to go to party conference again." What she really means is: "If Militant supporters aren't outvoted first time round, we will have to change it again behind closed doors!"

The conference itself will be a jamboree of "sporting, cultural and political events". There would be workshops and exhibitions but no resolutions to discuss.

Great! Just when young people are being hit by all the Tory bills going through parliament, we will have no

chance to democratically discuss Labour's answer to the attacks.

And what of those regional youth campaigns committees the right wing bragged of last year? Regional Labour Party organisers have the choice whether or not to set them up. And bureaucrats think that if Militant supporters might take them over, they'd be better off not campaigning at all.

In the LPYS the quorum for a branch goes up from five to six (for those with under 25 members) and eight (or 15 per cent, whichever is highest) for the rest. Complicated rules and hard to reach targets. Some branches would need a quorum of 30.

If you want to set up a branch you need ten instead of five. All this is supposed to make it easier to attract young people to Labour?

The changes also make the LPYS just a 'participant' in the National Youth Campaigns Committee (NYCC). They even abolish the rule allowing the LPYS national committee to "organise summer schools, rallies and other political activities!" Not a lot left really, is there?

The proposals entrust the NYCC to "ensure a high level of attractive campaigning". This body did not meet for three months before the general election. It produced nothing. Despite enormous obstacles, the LPYS produced a leaflet, poster, sticker, pledge and recruitment card. For seven months the NYCC resisted LPYS pressure to discuss the Social Security and YTS conscription bills. By the time they did, the bills were law. They then decided to produce literature (yet to emerge) letting young people know what the bills will mean to them.

In 1987 out of its £5,000 budget it spent nothing because it produced nothing! It is set to repeat this trick in 1988.

These manoeuvres will make LPYS members very angry. Unlike the cosy bureaucrats at head office, LPYS members are living in the conditions the Tories impose on us, fighting for day to day survival while building Labour's youth.

Letters of protest must pour into Neil Usher's office at Walworth Road. But the real answer is for every LPYS member to use the summer months to build your own branch!

**The right will regret taking on the LPYS. We have the future leaders of the party. When we have our say, the party will concentrate on fighting for a socialist society which will give our class and our generation a future.**

## Save Labour's youth!

**ONE PROPOSAL tried to stop the LPYS collecting money, except on official LPYS activities, without the permission of Neil Usher. And all money had to be sent through to Walworth Road. This even applied to collections for strikers!**

**This was too much even for some right wingers. The proposals were sent back but they may be presented in modified form again—for all Labour Party sections!**

## Socialist FE candidate

CAROLINE AUSTIN, President of Erith College Students Union is seeking nomination for a vacancy on the Further Education National Committee (FENC) of NUS.

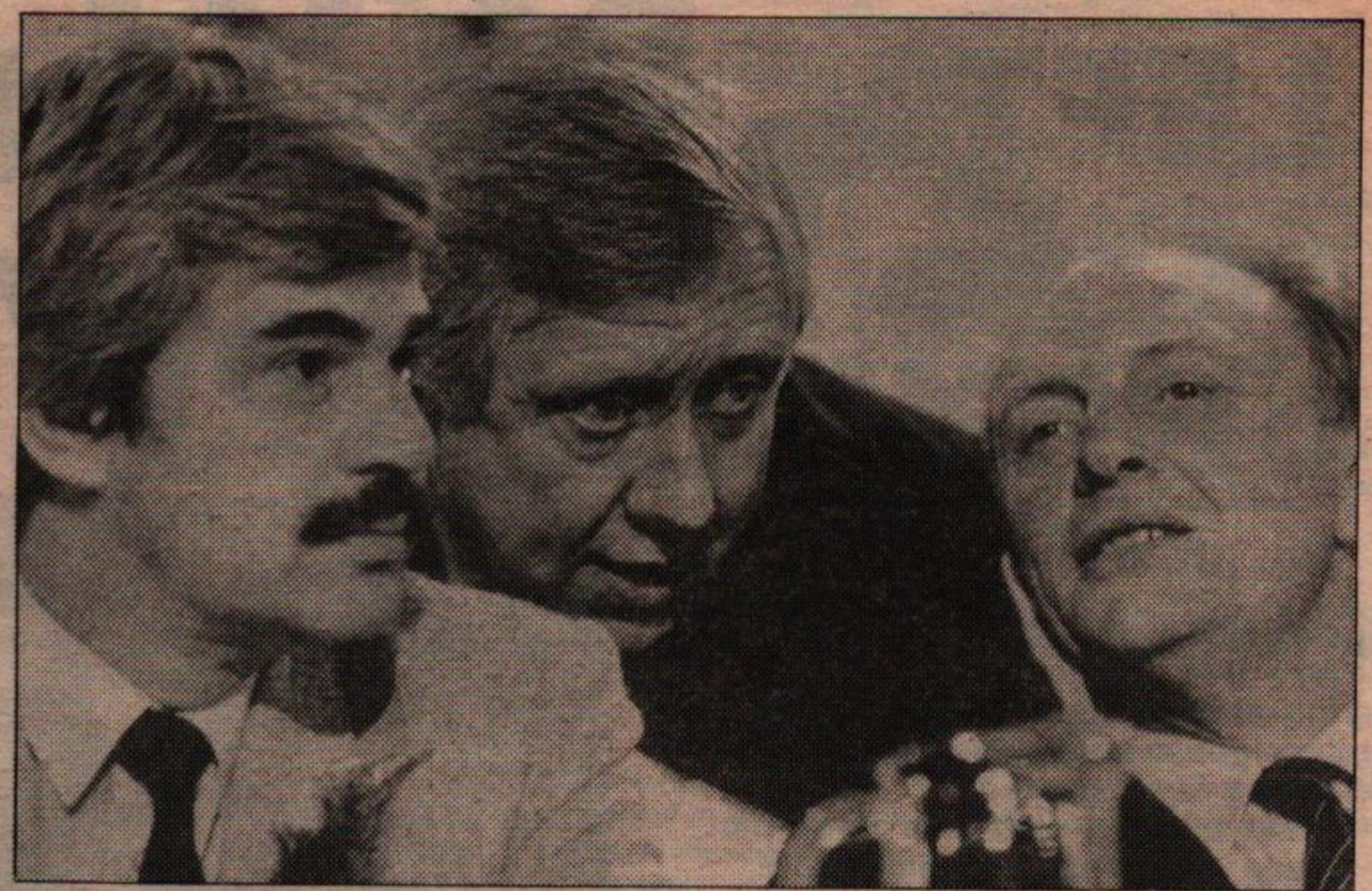
Caroline has campaigned on the ideas of the Further Education Labour Students (Fels). She has an outstanding record on campaigning for student rights. FENC will co-opt someone to fill the vacancy within the next few weeks.

Caroline set up the student union in her college.

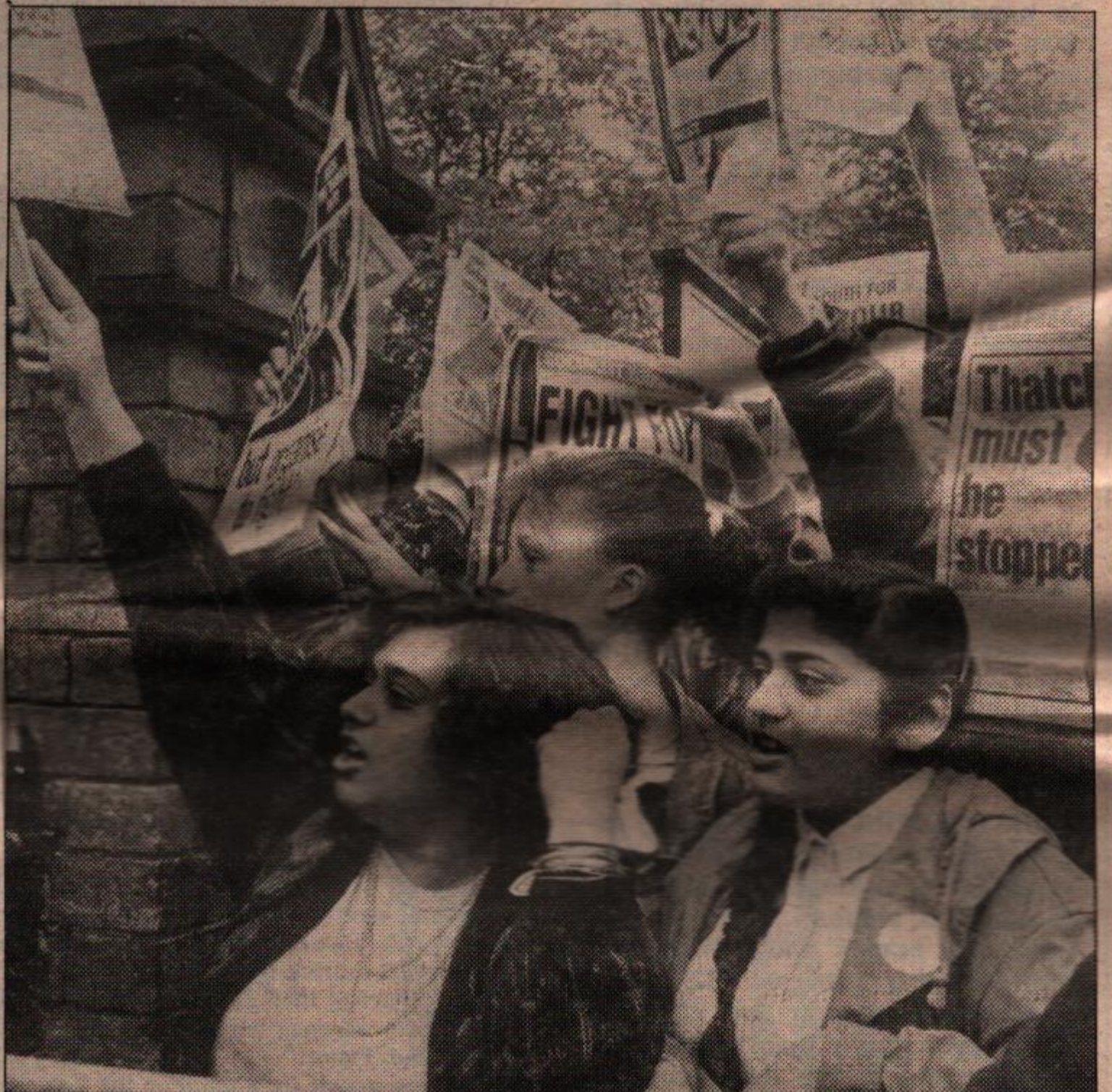
Despite opposition from the college authorities she won the fight to affiliate to the National Union of Students, with meetings of up to 200 students. Good links have now been established with the college unions, who are at present discussing joint action with the students' union.

Caroline also initiated a rally during an NUS week of action involving four local colleges. She believes that the only way to beat the Tories' Education Bill and their plans to introduce student loans is through a united campaign with the labour movement.

If Caroline is chosen as the candidate to fill this position it will mean that



# ATTEMPTED



# MURDER!

Pictures: (Top) Kinnoch with Roy Hattersley and Larry Whitty—out to stop the LPYS? (Bottom) LPYS members demonstrate in Leicester. Photos: Militant.

## FIGHT FOR A FUTURE



there will be majority support for Fels's programme on the five member committee.

All students who support Fels's ideas should ensure that they send in letters of support for Caroline's candidature to NUS Headquarters.

**By Cheryl Varley  
FENC personal capacity**

## Youth against Botha

**JOIN THE LPYS contingent on the march against Botha's apartheid regime on 17 July. Bring placards, red flags and banners. In London there are a number of meetings and other activities in the weeks after**

### the demonstration.

**Surbiton LPYS.**  
Tuesday 19 July 7.30pm.  
Surbiton Labour Party room, Elerton Hall, Elerton Road.  
Speaker Linda Douglas  
**Bermondsey Yturg.**  
Wednesday 20 July 7.30pm. Rockingham Community Centre, Rockingham St, SE1  
**Lambeth LPYS**  
Wednesday 20 July 7.30pm. St Matthews Meeting place/Brixton village opposite Lambeth Town Hall, SW2  
**Lewisham LPYS**  
Monday 25 July 7.30pm. Riverdale Hall, Lewisham centre, Lewisham High St SE13  
**ALSO Rock the Botha disco.**  
Friday 29 July 730 pm. Lewisham Labour club, Limes Grove SE13

### Beckenham LPYS

Wednesday 20 July 730pm. St Hugh's centre, Ridsdale Road, Penge SE20  
**Acton LPYS**  
Saturday 30 July 8 till late. Rally /gig. Live music / stalls/ speaker /disco. Ruskin Hall, Church Road, Acton W3  
**ALL LONDON LPYS party**  
Friday 15 July 8pm to 2am. Holland Hall, Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, E2. Near Bethnal Green tube.

**On Sunday 17 July, Lambeth LPYS will be meeting at 10.00am at Brixton tube. Beckenham LPYS will meet under their banner at Charing Cross railway station.**



## No proof?

AMERICAN VETERANS of the Vietnam war, harmed by exposure to the herbicide Agent Orange, may now get some compensation after a long legal battle.

But multinationals like Dow who made the poison say the settlement is no admission of their fault. They say there is "no proof" linking the active ingredient Dioxin to human illness.

Agent Orange defoliated massive areas of Vietnam and Kampuchea to expose National Liberation Front fighters (and local peasants) to napalm and other bombing. It was hardly a health product. The victims of the bombings are getting no compensation for the medical and ecological problems it left behind.

## Another re-con

DURING WORLD war two, an American actor appeared in a Pentagon training film called *Recognition of the Japanese Zero*. To put the dangers of mis-identifying aircraft in dramatic form, he shoots up a fellow US pilot in a P-40 in mistake for an enemy plane.

That actor was, of course, Ronald Reagan. In those days though he didn't have a tame Congress, a timid press and Thatcher to tell him he'd done the right thing.

## New Salesman

"OUR READERS have a strong interest in financial services and investment opportunities....28% own stocks and shares....81% own their own homes and 26% own their property outright....32% have two holidays a year and 20% travel even more regularly".

Just some of the interesting information given about the readership-of what? It's the radical *New Statesman and Society*. Designer socialists? You could design a better socialist with your eyes closed.

## Unsafe Tories

SIX MONTHS after Tory minister Norman Fowler announced plans for more factory inspectors, the number has fallen from 558 to 542. There were 741 in 1979. There has been a big increase in accidents at work as the bosses boost productivity by speed-ups.

## Union-busters' charity

P&O CONTAINERS, part of the P&O group, has given £7,000 since 1985 to a 'charity' called the Industrial Trust, which in turn gives money to Common Cause. The charity helps capitalists with problems. Common Cause offers a monitoring service for the bosses to witch-hunt trade unionists.

P&O's union-busting boss Sir Jeffrey Sterling needs little help in getting his views acted on. He's on cabinet committees dealing with privatisation and broadcasting, a friend of Thatcher's and in the same clubs as the chancellor of the exchequer, high court judges and other top people.

The Dover seafarers and the relatives of the victims of Zeebrugge have seen little charity coming their way from Sterling.

# Fascists back bigots' march



Orange Order members in a London procession.

Fascists jump on sectarian bandwagon.

FASCISTS PLAN to march alongside the Orange Order in Exeter this September. They are 'celebrating' the tercentenary of William of Orange's landing at Brixham and his march through Exeter.

By an Exeter LPYS member

Exeter city council, under minority Labour control, is spending £60,000 on things like flower shows and music festivals to attract tourists for this anniversary. The main tourists they are picking up are the sectarian Orange Order and the fascist National Front.

As the article in *Militant* on the "glorious revolution" (1 July) showed, William of Orange is no symbol of 'democracy' in Ireland. He is the patron saint of unionist bigotry after his armies' brutal subjection of the Catholic population.

The Orange Order is a sectarian organisation with a history of suppressing Catholics. They are holding a world conference in Brixham in September and a

march in Exeter on 17 September.

The labour movement must oppose these bigots who divide the Irish working class on sectarian lines. Exeter LPYS is campaigning against the threat posed not only by the sectarians but their fascist allies.

John Taylor, the Unionist MP sits in the same group as fascist Jean Marie Le Pen in the European parliament. Several fascist groups have seized on the slogan "Keep Ulster British". The National Front (NF) have no organisation in Exeter but racist posters and leaflets have appeared in the city.

In May the NF's 'Flag' faction, which has links with loyalist paramilitaries, held a training camp in Newton Abbot, Devon. In November 1986, Orange lodges and the NF marched together in Bridgwater, Somerset. Counter-demonstrators and passers-by were violently attacked and the local Labour Party rooms threatened.

The NF are capitalising on the council's activities; they have recently threatened the LPYS and other anti-fascists. But the

Labour leader on the council dismisses protesters against the events as the "National Association of head-bangers".

The fascists pose a danger to the labour movement and ethnic minorities in Britain. Exeter LPYS is organising public meetings and other activities to counter the fascists' arguments. The NF have focussed their propaganda on young people.

We will show how the roots of racism lie in unemployment and bad housing and how the bosses use their lies to divide the working class.

Only the labour and trade union movement can defeat the fascists. The police have refused to ban the Orange Order march and they were totally ineffectual in protecting the community in Bridgwater.

We are calling for a labour movement counter-demonstration in Exeter on 17 September and we have written to unions and other labour movement bodies to organise support.

# Life in Grisly Risley

THEY CALL it "grisly Risley". Risley remand centre houses remand prisoners from all over north west England. A recent report condemns conditions inside as ranging from "terrible to appalling" with a "lack of dignity for inmates".

Opened in 1965, the report finds that it was designed without "basic and essential facilities" like adequate internal sanitation. 947 people were held in cells built to house just over 600.

A former inmate told *Militant*:

MY FIRST memory of Risley was a hot bath when I first arrived. That was nice. But it was all down hill after that.

After the bath, new arrivals coming back from court are locked up in the cage for up to eight hours, waiting for an officer to take them to the cell.

In my medical examination, the doctor took one look at me and said: 'He's OK-next'. It all happens so quickly that asthmatics or epileptics who should be in the hospital wing are locked up in a cell.

One inmate was rushed to the wing with an asthma attack after his cell mate had

been banging on the door for half an hour.

We were entitled to one hour's exercise a day but if it rained, it just didn't happen. We were also allowed two hours' association every other day when we could use the single table tennis table or watch a video. *Midnight Express* went down quite well!

## Culture shock

Apart from that, the only time out of our cell was to slop out or go for meals which we ate in our cells.

We should have had one shower and change of clothes a week but unless you argued for this, you would be missed out and go two or three weeks. The meals were dire: porridge, a sausage or bacon for breakfast and variations on left-over stew for dinner.

Furniture, bedding, even knives and forks were all in short supply. On arrival, your cell could be bare except for a bunk. You'd wait for someone to move out to get their chairs or tables.

The media mentioned the cockroaches.

My cell was quite clear of them but if you got up early to go to court you could see rats roaming the corridors.

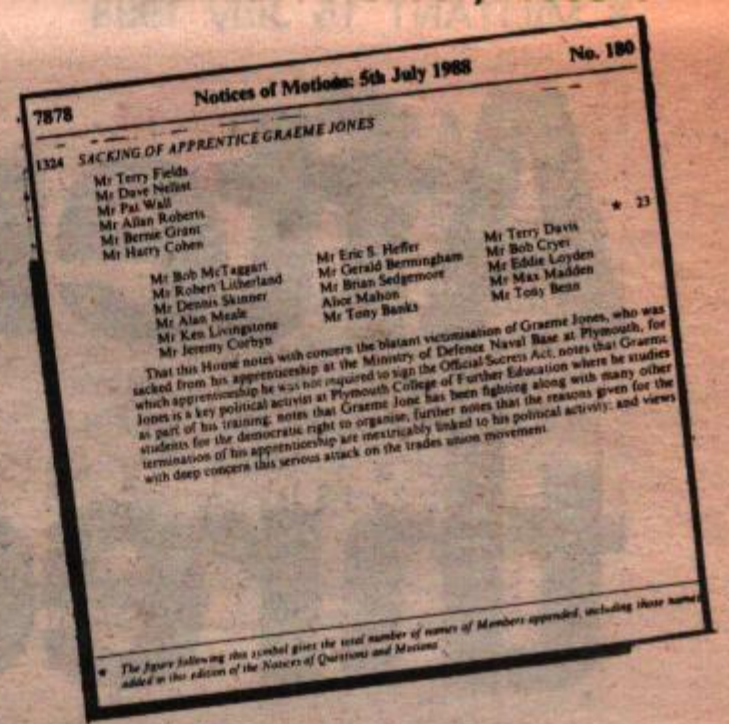
There were six suicides in the last year in Risley, and it's easy to see why, especially in the youth wing. Arriving here is a culture shock, young people walk round in a daze. The experienced inmates try to rip off the newcomers, usually for tobacco.

As you were locked up at least 21 hours a day, boredom was rife. The media criticised the prison officers, but they aren't responsible for staff shortages, the rats and cockroaches, the food or the physical conditions. Most of them agree it is the worst prison in Britain.

Without co-operation between inmates and officers, there would be chaos. Inmates supported the officers' overtime ban even though it meant a loss of association.

The short term solution is to have more staff and resources but that is only treating the symptoms. In the long term it is conditions on the outside which force people into prisons. We need a society which offers hope and a future for all.

# Tolpuddle 1834: Devonport 1988



IN THE week when the labour movement honours the anniversary of the Tolpuddle Martyrs who struggled for trade union and political rights, Graeme Jones, a Devonport dockyard apprentice faces similar victimisation. A storm of protest has begun over the his sacking by the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

The Tolpuddle Martyrs were sent to Australia in a ball and chain. Graeme was given a ticket back to South Wales to face a future on a political blacklist in Thatcher's Britain.

A 'Defend Graeme Jones' campaign has been launched by the local Labour Party Young Socialists. This has already gained unanimous support at the Plymouth Trades Council.

## Labour MPs

Graeme's fight has been front-page headlines locally. Twenty-six Labour MPs have signed the Early Day Motion in the Commons protesting against his dismissal. Even Dr David Owen has come out in

Graeme's support.

Management and the MoD establishment have been rocked by the response. A local radio interviewer put it in a live interview with Graeme: "How has a young lad like you mobilised such an impressive array of support?"

Within 24 hours they have been shaken from their complacent "no comment on individual cases" position to leaking so-called 'sinister smears' on Graeme's case to the press. The latest is that, although he wasn't considered a spy,

he was convicted of using a CB radio without a license.

## Security

As one worker said: "If a young apprentice can throw together a box of old wires as a hobby that poses a threat to national security, why are we wasting millions on sophisticated defence technology?"

Now the real issue involved must be taken up by all labour and trade union activists and everyone who values basic trade union

and political rights.

This is not just the case of one individual. If Graeme Jones can be victimised, anyone else in the industry can be next.

It comes at a time when mass redundancies are being forced through at Devonport dockyard. Obviously, activists who may try to organise opposition are not welcome.

This is the message that will be taken to Devonport dockyard workers and to the local estates by Plymouth LPYS. They have organised a public

meeting to defend Graeme, with Terry Fields MP speaking.

Graeme has sought an injunction in the High Court this week to declare MoD's dismissal of him null and void.

Send protest resolutions to: Mr CV Glew, Head Office, Ministry of Defence, Sentinel House, Southampton Row, London WC1 4AX.

Send copies to *Militant* 3-13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

SOCIALIST

SUMMER

6-13 August

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Rallies at the camp

Clare Doyle: France '68

Lynn Walsh: Gorbachev's perestroika

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CAMP '88

## Debate with anti-apartheid

ONE OF the main rallies at this year's Summer Camp will be on 'Fighting for a socialist South Africa'. Phil Frampton, former national chair of the Labour Party Young Socialists, will be debating with a speaker from the Anti-Apartheid Movement. This will be one of several rallies taking up international issues.

The camp will be the best place to meet socialists from every part of the globe. They will be recounting the struggles of youth and workers in their own countries: from the 60,000 strong school students' strike in New South Wales to the movement of dock workers in Chile.

Deposits for the camp should be

sent in as soon as possible. A double-decker bus has been booked to get people to the camp from London. Mini-buses are coming from Southampton and Hertfordshire.

Use union and Labour Party meetings to try and raise funds to help low paid workers and youth go to the camp.

MANCHESTER are preparing to retain the trophy which they won at the 1987 Summer Camp. They have organised a 'Sam Kydd Best of Brains' competition to raise money to assist low income families and unemployed to attend this year's camp. Teams from Young Socialist, Labour Party and trade union branches will be taking part in the competition. Nurses and other groups of workers will battle it out to be champion contenders.

If any other group of workers would like to take up the challenge, they can enter a team for a mere £5.00. The winner will get a cash prize of £50, as well as other prizes for runners-up.

The quiz is on Saturday 23 July, at the Gullivers pub, Oldham Street, Manchester.

What is your area doing to raise money to help people get to the camp?

## SELL Militant

THE FIGHT against the poll tax in Scotland has helped our sellers achieve some quite spectacular sales over the past few weeks.

Over 100 papers were sold at the West of Scotland conference of anti-poll tax unions. And the issue has really helped on the streets as well. 48 were sold at the Easterhouse shopping centre on Saturday morning. And our paper is starting to appear in new places as well—Saturday saw the first street sale of the *Militant* in Kilmarnock.

It is not only in Scotland however that the poll tax is an issue that can help sales. In every area if just one evening a week is put aside to go door to door with the paper you will be surprised how quickly the sales can mount up. Sellers in Camden sold 16 going door to door. 15 were sold on the streets of North Shields.

Finally workers and youth from all over the country will be marching in London to protest at the continued imprisonment of Nelson Mandela. If you are travelling down make sure that the transport from your area is well covered with the paper.

## WHAT WE STAND FOR

- The immediate introduction of a 35 hour week without loss of pay as a step towards the elimination of unemployment.
- A minimum wage of £135 a week, tied to the cost of living, for everyone including sick and disabled people.
- Reversal of Tory cuts and a massive programme of public workers on housing, education, and the health service etc.
- Opposition to the Tories' anti-trade union laws and reversal of attacks on trade unions.
- Fight racism! Oppose all forms of racial discrimination. Labour movement action against racist and fascist attacks. End police harassment. Oppose all immigration controls. Unite black and white workers.
- 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 nuclear holocaust.
- Workers' management of 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.
- 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.
- A socialist plan of production democratically drawn up and implemented by committees involving 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.

## WHERE TO FIND US

### EAST SCOTLAND

For details of meetings contact: Andrea Charles—031 659 6187.

### STRATHCLYDE

041 221 1443.

### NORTHERN

Bill Hopwood—091 276 1736.

### MERSEYSIDE

Richard Venton—051 260 3111.

### Liverpool:

Marxist discussion group  
17 July and fortnightly  
2, Lower Breck Rd.  
7.0 pm

### YORKSHIRE/ HUMBERSIDE

Henry Gregory—0709 371250  
**Bradford**  
18 July  
Labour's future—what policies can win  
Speaker: John Pickard  
Star, Westgate,  
7.30pm

### SOUTH WEST

0272 631471  
**MANCHESTER/  
LANCS**  
Mike Johnson—061 273 8648.

### EAST MIDLANDS

Andy Jackson—0602 623112.

### WEST MIDLANDS

Bill Mullins—021 552 7624.

### WALES

0222 736682

### EASTERN

Teresa MacKay  
0473 713179  
**SOUTH EAST**  
01 533 3311

### LONDON

01 739 9123.  
**Manor Park:**  
21 July  
Fight the poll tax  
Little Ilford School,  
Church Road E12,  
7.30pm  
**Hackney:**  
21 July  
Chats Palace,  
Brooksby's Walk,  
7.30pm

BECOME A  
Militant  
SUPPORTER

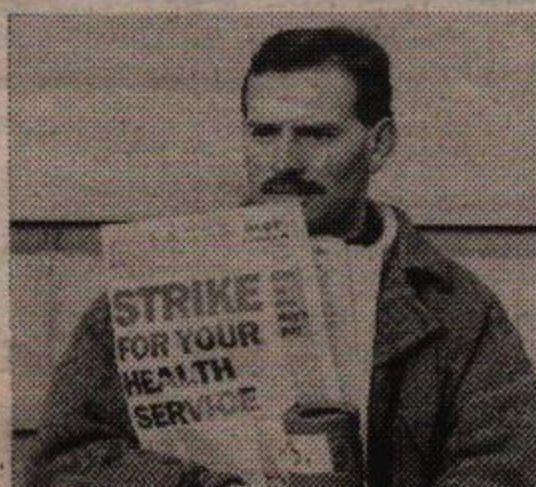
YOUR NEXT STEP...  
OUR FIGHT IS YOUR FIGHT...JOIN IT  
I wish to become a Militant supporter:

Name .....

Address .....

.....Tel.....

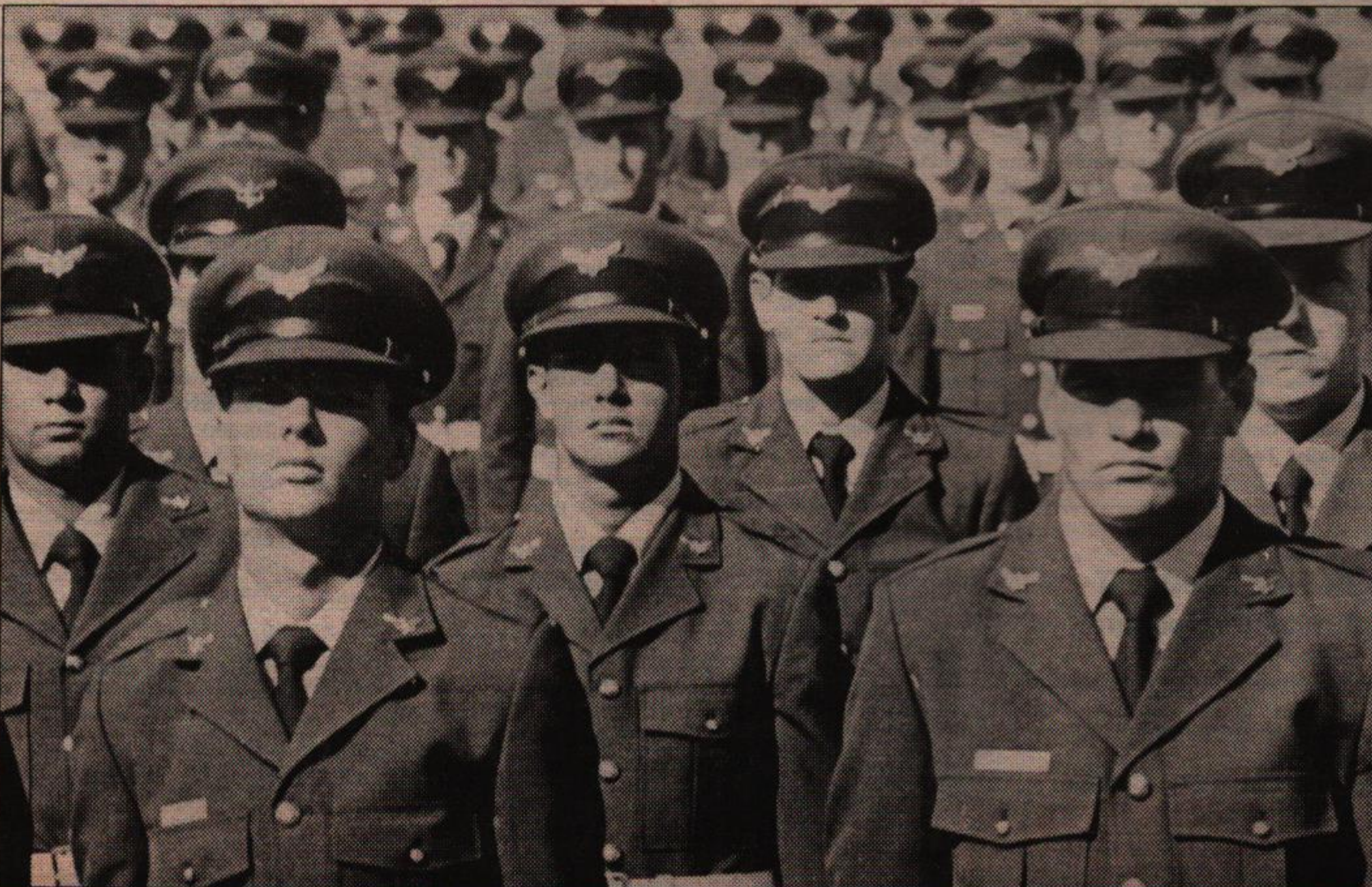
or telephone 01 533 3311 now!



# After the three day general strike – the way forward



(Above) Johannesburg workers demonstrating against the Labour Relations Amendment Bill in March.  
(Below) The armed might of the S African state.



**T**HE MAGNIFICENT three-day general strike of three million workers and two million youth on 6-8 June was the biggest and longest general strike in South Africa's history. It decisively reversed the relative ebb of the last period and heralds a renewed upsurge of the revolution.

It was the black working class's response to the reactionary Labour Relations Amendment Bill introduced in Parliament this year and to the crackdown by Botha's apartheid government on the Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu), the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the SA Youth Congress (Sayco), which all adhere to the Freedom Charter of the banned African National Congress (ANC).

**A** PARTHEID RULE defends capitalism and SA capitalism depends on apartheid—white minority rule, national oppression and division of the 29-million black majority—to enforce the cheap labour that is the basis of its profits.

Five per cent of S Africans own 88 per cent of the country's personal wealth, while the majority live with poverty wages, joblessness, homelessness and malnutrition.

But SA capitalism's development has created a huge black working class, now an overwhelming majority in the population, which is beginning to sense its power to win freedom and transform society.

The ruling class, relying on support from five million privileged whites, must defend its wealth and rule against these workers.

But despite the firepower of their vicious state machine, this rising workers' movement is a nightmare for them. Repression no longer suffices to hold it down, nor can they implement reforms that can appease or halt the masses.

So the regime zigzags increasingly desperately between repression and 'reform'.

The three-day strike took place under the severest State of Emergency ever. Since 1986, 30,000 black youth and trade unionists have been detained without trial, most of them tortured.

The Sharpeville Six and many other activists face execution for political opposition. Leaders of Congress organisations are on trial for treason, while others have been assassinated abroad.

Botha's February crackdown aimed to stop bodies like the UDF and Sayco from functioning legally and restrict Cosatu to the narrowest shopfloor issues. But all this has failed to crush or drive back the mass movement.

At the core of the resistance is the workers' organisation in the factories, rebuilt since 1973 by initiatives from below. Now Cosatu is nearly a million strong.

In 1979, prompted by the bosses, the regime legally recognised these unions, in the hope of controlling and taming them by agreements and industrial courts. Ins-

tead they have been faced with a flood of unionisation and a working class striving in every sphere of work and life to take control of society.

Some factory agreements even concede that workers can participate in general strikes...but not more than once every two months!

Now the 'liberal' bosses have openly united with the government to promote the counter-reforms of the Labour Bill.

This makes it impossible to declare a legal strike if a government inspector wants to delay it, prohibits solidarity strikes, makes victimisation of trade unionists easier and permits the bosses to recognise minority splinter unions like the scab organisation Uwuasa. It echoes Thatcher's anti-union laws.

But the black workers are determined not to give up any gain they have won. "People remember what used to happen to us and is no longer happening," said a shop steward in March. "We have a resolution which says that we will stop at nothing to protect our union—well, we will also stop at nothing to protect ourselves, including non-members of our union."

This is the message of the three-day strike.

The law of the workers in action is far stronger than the law of the rulers. Botha's 'crackdown' was in reality an empty gesture to disguise the regime's increasing crisis. The three-day strike revealed that he was trying to exercise a power he did not have.

Botha has promised to 'reform' the 'old-style apartheid' of the National Party into a constitution which 'shares power' between black and white. For the African his proposals involve an elaborate and wholly undemocratic structure of 'tiers', with foundations in the Bantustans and township councils, topped by a toothless 'National Council'.

Like the 'tri-cameral' parliament of whites, coloureds and Indians, this is an apartheid divide-and-rule scheme which offers no power to black people except the 'power' of Bantustan ministers and township councillors to preside over misery, repress protest and enrich themselves.

Under the pressure of the mass movement, this programme has collapsed. Fearing mass anger even servile black puppets, like the chief minister of the tinies OwaQwa Bantustan, now reject Botha's plans.

In the Bantustans there are coups and attempted coups, as in Bophutswana in February. In the townships, black municipal police strike and even mutiny. Revolution is spreading to the furthest reaches of society.

The regime's crisis is highlighted by its predicament in Natal where Gatscha Buthelezi, chief minister of the KwaZulu Bantustan, has ruled the six million Zulus through the gangster Inkatha organisation, which appeals to backward tribal prejudice.

He has been the ruling class's best hope for a credible participant in 'reform' schemes.

At the same time, they have encouraged Inkatha as a violent divisive black vigilante force to supplement direct military-police repression.

Since 1984 such death squads in Natal/Kwazulu and elsewhere have murdered hundreds of trade union and Youth Congress activists. But these provocations are having an opposite effect. A magnificent fightback led by the Natal youth has decisively turned the political tide against Buthelezi's Inkatha mafia.



His credibility as a nationalist leader and his repressive grip over the Zulu masses is being undermined.

**B**OTHA'S REGIME faces crisis not only at home, but abroad. In Angola, MPLA forces, reinforced by Cuban troops and Russian aid, are gaining the upper hand against the SA invasion (and its promotion of Savimbi's counter-revolutionary Unita). The prestige of the SA regime is now at stake.

Botha must choose between escalating his involvement, at additional financial and political cost, or negotiating a settlement, which would mean 'losing Namibia' to Swapo, exposing his humiliating weakness to both black and white at home.

Internationally the apartheid regime is increasingly isolated. While imperialism still gives underhand support to SA capitalism and the apartheid state that defends it, there is enormous revulsion against apartheid among hundreds of millions around the world.

**A**T THE root of SA capitalism's problems lies not merely the rising power of the black working class, but the bankruptcy of SA capitalism itself. It is uncompetitive in a capitalist world in increasing crisis. Its home market is limited by poverty wages and its export market strangled by worldwide monopoly competition.

With diminishing avenues for making profit, fixed investment, the key to growth in any modern economy, is in severe decline. The growth rate has slowed to two-three per cent or less a year. Black unemployment has risen to an estimated six million. On a capitalist basis, conditions for the masses will worsen.

The black majority wants power to achieve the democratic transformation of their conditions of life; nothing less than one-person-one-vote in a united SA is acceptable. But SA capitalism cannot afford to concede this.

The February crack-down shows that the regime cannot live with any genuine democratic organisation of the black majority, but relies on the repressive power of its state machine.

This irreconcilable conflict between the classes is a guarantee for huge revolutionary explosions. The regime has no option but to zig-zag between worse repression and massacres and more far-reaching attempts at 'reform', even negotiation with leaders of the mass organisations, which will constantly break down.

Democracy cannot be secured while the SADF, the SAP, the vigilantes—armed core of the state machine—remain in existence. The ruling class will not voluntarily surrender this power. To achieve national liberation and democracy, they will have to be overthrown by working-class revolution.

Only then too can the big monopolies which plunder and exploit the masses be nationalised under workers' control and management and the economy be

planned to serve the needs of the people as outlined in the Freedom Charter, the programme of Cosatu, the UDF, Sayco and the ANC.

**T**HE JUNE three-day strike is a new step forward by the black working class on the road of revolution. In 1984-6 the black youth in the townships, hurling themselves unarmed against the might of SA's armed forces, reached the limits of the insurrectionary challenge that could be mounted at that time on that basis. A relative, but highly volatile, ebb set in.

In 1987 the factory workers took over the baton, mounting the country's biggest ever industrial strike wave and joining with youth in a two-day general strike in protest at repression and the 'whites-only' general election.

Now, with the three-day strike, the tide is rising strongly again. All the ingredients are piling up for a revolutionary explosion probably greater than 1984-6, though it is impossible to anticipate precisely when and how.

The undefeated power of the workers in Cosatu and the elan of the youth are a magnet drawing millions more into struggle. Black farmworkers, women garment workers and workers and youth in small towns and rural areas are rising from their knees, staging strikes and joining Cosatu.

The youth are recovering from bearing the brunt of the detentions and torture under the State of Emergency. In several areas school boycotts are simmering again.

The entry of the Zulu masses into the Congress organisations will provide another colossal reinforcement of the movement.

The immediate task for the Congress organisations is to carry this momentum forward in nationwide campaigns to unite the workers and the youth and draw

workers and youth are looking to provide a lead. "When we joined Cosatu", said a woman cleaner recently, "it was to fight the government."

But despite the success of the three-day strike, it is openly recognised in the movement that there are serious problems in the Cosatu leadership.

The decision for a strike, taken at a special Congress in May (three months after the crack-down), was a response to enormous pressure from below.

"Our members sensed a lack of clarity in the leadership, a lack of direction", said a Cosatu organiser, "and began to assert their own feelings—of a need to go forward, to resist state action—and it came through at the congress." (*Work in Progress*, June-July 1988)

It was noticeable that in the three-day strike (and on 16 June), apart from the Kimberley diamond mines and two Natal coal mines, there was small participation by mineworkers, one of the most oppressed and militant sections of the black working class.

In May 18,000 gold mineworkers had participated in spontaneous strikes against the Bill. Yet Cyril Ramaphosa, General Secretary of the NUM, Cosatu's largest union, under pressure of a bosses' injunction, advised his members that it would be illegal to participate in the 6-8 June strike.

The problem goes wider. In their report to the special Congress the Cosatu leadership conceded there had been "paralysis", and "serious weakness in our campaigns"... "We have seen endless decisions remaining just on paper—from our resolution on the new pass laws to the Labour Relations Amendment Act."

They blamed this paralysis on bickering between and within affiliates. In reality, the source is political. It lies in a refusal to recognise that the only way forward to democracy and socialism

can be separated from the struggle against capitalism, that the 'liberal' bosses can be weaned away from the apartheid government that defends them and that, if not now, then 'in the future' the apartheid regime will be forced to negotiate a democratic settlement.

Internationally, the same influences within the exiled ANC, instead of mobilising for workers' sanctions, urge capitalist governments to enforce sanctions on the SA regime. They obstruct the building of international direct links with SA workers.

Such misguided policies are being encouraged in Britain by the TUC leaders and in the Stalinist world by Gorbachev and the Moscow bureaucracy.

Gorbachev's over-riding concern is 'peaceful coexistence' with US imperialism, for which he wants to avoid confrontations with imperialism in the 'Third World'. The privileged bureaucracy is terrified of workers' revolution anywhere.

Recently the vice-president of the Soviet Afro-Asia Solidarity Committee openly admitted to a visiting Afrikaner writer: "SA has a capitalist system and a sound economy entrenched in its mining operations, etc. We cannot change that, nor do we want to." (Our emphasis; *Leadership*, March 1988)

Basing themselves on these wrong policies, leaders of Cosatu, UDF and Sayco oppose any talk of workers' revolution or socialism by the rank-and-file of the Congress organisations and engage in witch-hunts against those who resist them.

The huge impending struggles require the Congress leadership to base itself firmly on a perspective for workers' revolution. In the strikes, factory occupations and mass uprisings in the townships, the question of *armed self-defence* against the ruthlessness of the state will come to the fore.

Again and again in the last period, youth and workers have been left without access to arms needed for self-defence of mass struggles.

Yet the ANC leadership, instead of showing the way to the mass arming of the class for victory in the revolution, encourages futile bombings in cafes, shops, flowerpots, dustbins, and now outside rugby grounds, by MK, its military wing.

These IRA-style bombings are no part of a strategy for power. If conceived of as an instrument of 'pressure' on the regime or the bosses, they are in reality counter-productive.

Rather than weakening the state or strengthening the movement, pointless deaths of ordinary blacks and whites play into the hands of the state and the ultra-right reaction.

In these first stages of the revolution, the predominant drift of whites is to the ultra-right demagogues of the Conservative Party and the fascist AWB, in the forlorn hope that the 'golden days' of security and prosperity can return.

Ruling-class attacks on white living standards provide further fuel for this. The insoluble dilemmas which the regime now faces could prepare the way for some form of even more right-wing government.

But no such government could escape reckoning with the power, determination and confidence of

the black proletarian majority.

A class that has risen up from slavery, is beginning to break its shackles and has scented the reality of freedom will not concede an inch without the hugest fight. Rather, the whip of counter-revolution would ultimately spur on the revolution.

The only real alternatives are a victorious workers' revolution to achieve democracy and end capitalism or a descent into a barbaric racial civil war.

The defeat of the apartheid state depends on uniting and arming the full forces of the working class (and, around it, all the oppressed) with a clear understanding of the tasks.

Victory depends also on breaking away decisive sections of the white working class from their support for capitalism and the state.

Only the full power of the black working-class movement, with confidence in a democratic and socialist future, will prove able to achieve this.

But, even now, a bold approach by Congress organisations to the white workers, along class lines, can begin to undermine potential for reaction.

Small groups of white railway workers, for example, not the most 'liberal' of whites, have recently asked to join Sarhwa and Cosatu, impressed with the power of the black workers and seeing that their white union is a 'stinking corpse'.

The three-day strike shows our movement is rising to new heights. It signals that the working class is moving from 'demonstration' actions to serious tests of power with the regime and the bosses.

The Congress leadership must seize the moment and, with clear perspectives for workers' revolution, unite and guide the struggle to mount the biggest challenge to the regime and the bosses.

Among growing layers of workers and youth it is becoming clear that to strengthen and unite the forces of the Congress organisations, they must lay the underground foundations of a mass ANC in every workplace, school and street.

To play their part in all this, and urge it on the leadership, is the task of every activist. For this, the perspectives, programme and method of Marxism will prove indispensable.

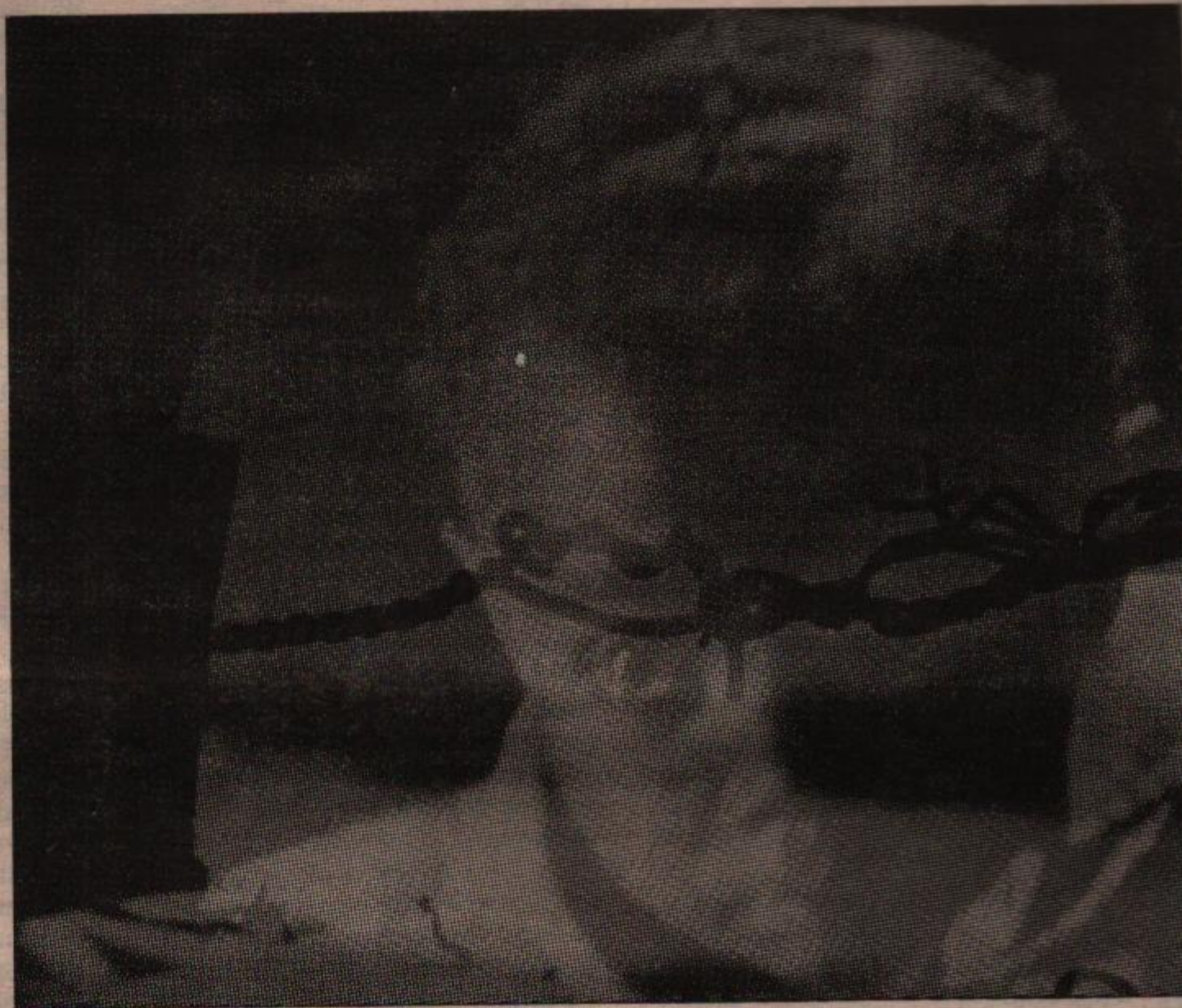
Over the last period, supporters of *Inqaba ya Basebenzi* in the Congress organisations have played their part in the front ranks of struggle, in support of strikes, in the fightback against Inkatha and in defence of the Sharpeville Six.

In different parts of the country, our comrades distributed thousands of leaflets to mobilise for the three-day strike. And they have suffered their measure of repression.

We invite all active strugglers, in SA and internationally, to join in the task of building a mass ANC on a socialist programme, to guarantee the triumph of democracy and socialism.

**By Richard Monroe,**  
Editorial Board Member,  
*Inqaba ya Basebenzi*, Journal  
of the Marxist Workers'  
Tendency of the ANC

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even larger forces into the struggle.

The key issues now are a continued fightback from factory-level outwards to prevent implementation of the Labour Bill, and a massive boycott—in every workplace, school, and street—of the 26 October local elections, through which Botha aims to re-establish some credibility for his township councils.

It is above all to Cosatu, the strongest organisation of the working class, that millions of

is through a *revolution* led by the working class.

This misunderstanding of the tasks is upheld and reinforced in Cosatu, the UDF and Sayco on the one hand by reformists who look to European Social-Democracy and on the other by supporters of the SA Communist Party which dominates the leadership of the ANC-in-exile.

Against all the evidence of the masses' experience these currents encourage fatal illusions that the struggle for national liberation

# Labour flexes muscles

AMONG THE many international working-class struggles blacked out of the capitalist press was the huge strike wave which rocked Thailand during June, in the midst of the charade of parliamentary elections.

By Martin Riley

Railway workers went on all-out strike for six days, mounting mass pickets at the stations and blockading the tracks. Bangkok port workers paralysed the docks. These were joined by electricity workers, telephone operators, building workers, tobacco workers...

Bangkok bus workers gave passengers free rides, rather than risk alienating public sympathy by striking. Similarly, water workers cut water supplies to strategic targets, like the house of the Prime Minister!

More than 140 unions gave the government a one-day deadline before calling a full-scale general strike.

Significantly, the workers were enraged by the government's policy of wholesale privatisation of state assets. This movement rapidly became a generalised labour uprising against the ruthless exploitation of the working class.

Demands included no privatisation; an end to casual labour; strict implementation of existing labour laws; proper social security rights; and the reinstatement of workers laid off at two notorious factories.

These two cases had become 'causes celebres' throughout the labour movement. GS Steel had closed down, laying off 600 workers in an attempt to smash their union. Winners Textiles sacked over 400 workers after they walked out in protest at management's failure for two years to repair the factory's broken-down air-conditioning. The GS and Winners workers had been demonstrating in defence of their jobs for three months.



(Left) Street scene in the capital, Bangkok. (Right) Workers slicing pineapples by hand, to be canned for export.



This sudden explosion of militancy is a result of the recent boom. As recently as 1985, Thailand was primarily a backward agricultural economy, crippled by a soaring national debt. But in the last two years the economy has grown by 15 per cent.

## Booming

Production, both in the traditional agro-industries and the rapidly growing light industrial sector, is booming. Devaluation of the Thai *bah* against the Yen and European currencies has led to a massive surge in exports, foreign investment and tourism.

Exports grew at the rate of 40 per cent a year in 1986 and 1987.

These included software and computer parts, building materials, furniture, polished gems, textiles, garments, and processed foods as well as raw commodities.

Thailand now has a payments surplus of \$1bn. Growth this year is expected to reach 9 per cent. There is talk of Thailand joining the select club of 'Newly Industrialised Countries' (NICs)—Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, and Singapore.

The massive injection of foreign investment comes mainly from the capitalists of Japan and these very NICs, now exceeding that from the USA. Having prospered out of exploiting the cheap labour in their own countries, they are now faced with a labour movement at home growing rapidly in size, concentration and confidence.

They have been attracted to Thailand principally by its extra-cheap and traditionally docile workforce with an average wage of \$3 per day—one third of the rate in Hong Kong and South Korea.

More than 250 Japanese firms have set up automobile, consumer appliance and electronics component factories, while Taiwanese and South Korean capitalists are producing garments, shoes, toys and wood products for third-world markets.

The boom has swollen the size of the working class to at least five million out of a population of 55 million.

Now the historic upsurge of the Thai working class shows that the capitalists' search for cheap labour has begun to backfire on them in Thailand too.

With tens of thousands of workers still out, on 29 June—the day fixed for the general strike—the four labour federations abruptly dropped their campaign and left the movement floundering. The only concession from the government was a vague promise of 'flexibility'.

The union leaders' feeble pretext was to avoid striking a 'discordant note' during the impending royal celebrations on 2-5 July!

Although formally Thailand has a constitutional monarchy,

enormous use is made by the ruling class of the person of the King to subdue opposition. At the beginning of the strike wave, one opposition leader who had dared to make a mild joke, wishing he had been born into the royal family, was actually jailed for four years for 'lese-majeste' (disrespect for the King)!

Thailand's political regime is in reality still a military government, though with a semi-parliamentary facade.

## 1973

In 1973 a revolutionary movement of millions overthrew the military dictator Kittikachon. But, in the absence of clear leadership, counter-revolution followed in 1976, with the restoration of a brutal military regime. Despite partial reforms in 1980, all key state officials from the prime minister General Prem downwards are still military appointees.

The regime's latest promises proved treacherous. Once the strike was over, it announced the most provocative decisions—including the continued sell-off of state enterprises—without even waiting for the election of a new government.

The workers have, however, felt for the first time their power. Although Thailand's development into an 'NIC' is likely to be cut across by the impending world slump, the genie is out of the bottle. The workers have emerged as an independent force. Thailand will never be the same.

The experience of the strike wave during the elections—in which 19 capitalist parties are competing for office—has crystallised the aspirations of the most active trade unionists for an independent party of labour.

The only left party that existed previously, the Communist Party of Thailand, was effectively destroyed when its guerrilla forces were crushed some years ago. Like the Communist Party of the Philippines today, the CPT mistakenly relied exclusively on a guerrilla war rather than upon the movement of the masses.

Just as the CPP stood aside from the mass uprising against the dictator Marcos, so too the CPT

found itself unprepared for the events of 1973. The CPT depended on support from the Chinese bureaucracy and never recovered when this was cynically withdrawn after Mao's death.

Another factor was the proximity of the liberation struggle in Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea on Thailand's eastern borders. This prompted the ruling class to bribe former guerrillas with offers of land and even introduce a limited land reform, thus releasing reserves of labour for industry.

Neither the prospects today for expansion of world trade, nor the scale of breakdown of the old feudal structures in Thailand, however, could give scope for industrial development comparable to that of South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan.

In these countries, at the outset of the world economic upswing, sweeping land reform was introduced at the dictates of American imperialism as an indirect consequence of the revolutions in China, North Korea and Indochina.

One significant factor in the recent events is the very positive role played by the most conscious section of the students. Activists of the Student Federation of Thailand threw themselves into the struggle for solidarity with the GS Steel and Winner Textiles workers, at one point providing a human barricade to protect workers from police attacks when they held a sit-down outside the Interior Ministry.

It was the students who provided the spark to the revolution of 1973. They played a similar role to the students of South Korea in overthrowing Syngman Rhee in 1960 and Chun last year. The very first act of the new military dictatorship in 1976 was an invasion of the Thammasart University campus and a massacre of the revolutionary students.

As in Japan, South Korea and the industrialising countries of South-East Asia, the students' unrest will prove a harbinger of even greater storms to come from the heavy battalions of the working class.

## 'Dictatorship' in Malaysia

"MALAYSIA HEADS towards a dictatorship." With these words Tunku Abdul Rahman, first prime minister of independent Malaysia, condemned the arrest of 120 people under the draconian Internal Security Act last October.

They included trade unionists, opponents in the government and church workers. The present prime minister, Dr Mahatir, claimed they were dragging the country towards anarchy.

The ruling elite is deeply divided. Mahatir is seen more and more as a corrupt dictator.

For example, the king is believed to have murdered his golf caddy, presumably for passing him the wrong club. Shielded by Mahatir, he has remained on his throne.

In February the ruling party, the United Malay National Organisation (Umno), was deregistered by the High Court due to irregularities in leadership elections. This represented an attempt to curb Mahatir by judicial means.

But, in April, the High Court

allowed Mahatir to transfer the assets of Umno to a new party under his own control, despite opposition from other leaders.

This crisis reflects the rundown of the economic expansion of the 1970s, which led to a big growth of the working class. With the collapse in commodity prices and economic recession after 1980, the workers' combativity rose. Strikes took place in all major cities, tin mines, and rubber and palm oil plantations.

The government is trying to prevent an independent mass movement from developing, in which the workers would play a leading part. They are trying to exploit the divisions nurtured by British imperialism before independence between the Malay (50 per cent of the population) and Chinese (35 per cent) communities, and imprisoning workers' leaders.

But they will not prevent growing outbursts of workers' struggle in the years ahead.

By a correspondent

## Exclusive report from Australia

# Youth step up the pace

WITH A mixture of arrogance and contempt Nick Greiner, Liberal prime minister of New South Wales, listened to the delegate of the 'coalition' (a grouping of students and parents from Sydney's wealthy northern suburbs) presenting reasoned arguments why his government's cuts in education funding should be reversed.

Greiner was chewing gum and yawning all the time.

Then Alex Malatestas, president of the School Students' Union and a member of Young Labor, spoke. She had a simple message: if you won't listen to us, we'll call another strike.

This left Nick in a huff. He nearly choked on his chewing gum. When the meeting ended he stormed out and snapped at the waiting reporters: "Grow up!"

The 'coalition' spokesperson was depressed: "We tried to convince the premier but he just wouldn't listen."

This contrasted with the mood of the SSU representatives. Alex Malatestas said:

From Bruce McKenzie in Sydney

"We received nothing from the government. He treated us like we were a minority group, not the youth who are demanding a future. Therefore we are proposing a further strike for 27 July."

But in spite of his bluster, the fact that Greiner sat down with the representatives of the school students shows the pressure his government is under from the movement led by the SSU. As reported in previous issues of *Militant*, up to 60,000 youth took part in the strike on 1 July against cuts and harsh new disciplinary policies.

Ten thousand school youth demonstrated in



Thousands of Australian workers lobbying the Arbitration Commission on 10 March to protest against a \$10 across the board increase. Their slogan was "\$20—no more, no less."

Sydney. Already the government has withdrawn the plan for compulsory maths and science for A Level students, and education minister Metherell has been stripped of his powers.

An evening tabloid in Sydney showed a cartoon of Metherell receiving a caning from students, with the caption: "Now we run the system!"

Greiner's attempt to dig

his heels in makes it inevitable that the movement will continue. On 27 July the Marxist leadership of the SSU estimate that 50,000 youth could be mobilised to show Greiner that they are determined to win.

## Teachers

Already the SSU has begun to broaden the struggle. The students received a

tremendous response from the Teachers' Federation, who are also threatened with cuts by the Liberal government involving the loss of casual and auxiliary staff.

Two SSU supporters were invited to speak at a meeting of the teachers' union and received a standing ovation. Over \$1,000 was raised for the students' campaign.

Support for the SSU is

growing, even in country areas. In Coff's Harbour, a town of 30,000, 500 students joined the union.

The Sydney Morning Herald in an editorial summed up what is happening:

"Never has a youth movement of this size been seen since the Vietnam moratorium days and of such a working class nature."

# Hawke's pro-capitalist policies

THE POLICIES being advocated by Kinnock and the British Labour leadership point to them travelling the same road as Bob Hawke's right-wing Labor government in Australia. In the first part of a two-part article, TONY SAUNOIS discusses the lessons of Australia's unprecedented three consecutive Labor administrations.

"COME TO the land of wonder. The land down under", has been Paul Hogan's invite flashed across television screens.

For most British workers the surfing, beaches and barbecues will remain just pictures on the screen. But the struggles now taking place against the 'new realism' of Bob Hawke's federal Labor administration, as well as the right-wing Liberal state government of New South Wales, may not.

Hawke was first elected in 1983, enjoying tremendous support as workers looked for a radical transformation after years of rightwing government. Six months ago he went to a rugby match and was booed out of the ground!

The first two administrations began to unleash a programme of attacks on workers' rights and conditions which Australian capitalism demanded. Youth unemployment rose while benefits to 16 and 17 year olds were abolished. A wages policy was imposed, with the result that since 1983 real wages have fallen by a staggering 17 per cent.

Anti-union laws were introduced and the militant building workers' union, the BLF, was deregistered and effectively broken.

Such measures were only the beginning. The employers needed to slash living standards still fur-

ther in the effort to restore their profits.

But the powerful Australian labour movement formed a mighty barrier in their path. 59 per cent of the workforce are organised, and in manufacturing industry it is close to 100 per cent. The capitalist class, forming a mere two per cent of the population, have always been extremely weak. This is reflected in the long history of splits and divisions of their political parties.

## Tycoons

That is one reason why, in the 1987 election, the bosses and tycoons decided to throw their support behind the Labor leadership as the most effective means to carry through the attacks they were demanding.

Furthermore, these anti-working class policies would certainly have provoked a massive reaction much sooner if they had been attempted by the bosses' parties themselves, as the experiences of the Liberal administration in New South Wales (see report on this page) are showing.

Hawke personally had demonstrated years earlier that he was 'safe' and reliable from the bosses' point of view. In 1975, when the radical Labor government of Gough Whitlam was overthrown by the Queen's

representative in collaboration with the British secret services, it was widely recognised that the American CIA had also been involved.

US imperialism feared that the Whitlam government would carry out its threat to remove US satellite receiving stations from Australia. According to Australian journalist John Pilger, Hawke was suspected of being the CIA's man 'on the inside'.

His friendship with tycoon Alan Bond, who has invested in Chile and ingratiated himself with the blood-stained Pinochet regime, certainly poses the question of where Hawke's loyalties really lie.

In May the Labor government introduced its worst ever anti-working class budget. Its aim is to attract more investment by reducing taxation and making Australia more competitive in capitalist terms.

This meant slashing public expenditure by \$982m, cutting government expenditure from 30 per cent of Gross Domestic Product to 26 per cent—a figure lower than any other advanced capitalist economy. Gross spending was cut by \$1,350m.

At the same time, corporate tax was cut from 49 per cent to 39 per cent, reducing the companies' overall tax contribution by \$900m during 1989-90.

The press comments which greeted the budget say everything as to the employers' attitude towards this Labor government:

"It is a package for business and industry... The package is a further step in the transformation of the ALP. It is a marriage of a

policy mix based upon the alliance between encouraging capital and restraining labour...

"The ALP has brought down a genuinely pro-business package and is another step forward in the right direction..."

"The ALP Government accepts the capitalist system." (All from *The Australian*, 26 May)

Most blatant was the way the Business Council of Australia referred to the ALP's economic team: "they should not be regarded as Labor men, they are the same as us."

## Hatred

But these same policies have led to revulsion and even hatred amongst workers towards the ALP parliamentary caucus and its leadership, who live in a different world from workers and their families. Many workers today would echo the words of the old Australian IWW song (the Industrial Workers of the World was a militant general union organising workers in many countries around the turn of the century—*Editor*):

"Come listen all kind friends of mine  
I want to move a motion  
To make an Eldorado here  
I've got a bonzer notion  
Bump me into parliament  
Bounce me far away...ay  
Bump me into parliament  
On next election day.  
Some wealthy friends I know  
Declare I am most clever  
While some may talk for an hour or so  
Why I can talk forever."

Inevitably, Hawke's openly pro-capitalist policies have cost Labor many workers' votes, as was reflected in the coming to power of Nick Greiner's right-wing Liberals in the former Labor bastion of New South Wales. Encouraged by Labor's attacks at Federal level, they have sought to implement an even more ruthless programme at state level.

Cuts in education have resulted in up to 2,000 teachers being sacked, money for state schools being slashed and resources for the private sector increased. Moreover, these attacks have been accompanied by Dickensian forms of discipline being imposed, including the compulsory singing of the national anthem.

Incredibly, students caught swearing are liable to up to three years' imprisonment!

Along with these measures the State government has introduced legislation giving itself blanket powers to ban strikes, impose a contracting-in system for the unions' political levy, and expel union members on unofficial strike from the union!

These measures have provoked a massive backlash in New South Wales, coinciding with a national movement on the industrial front. For lack of any alternative to Labor, workers have grudgingly been submitting to the attacks of the Hawke Government. Until now!

The second part of the article will deal with the recent wave of strikes in Australia, ignored by the British media, and the shift to the left in the trade unions.

# Congratulations

Dear *Militant*,

Congratulations for last week's paper (903). When I first saw that four pages were devoted to Stalinism, I thought "Ey, ey! This is going to be a bit heavy. Why take up so much room with what's going on in the USSR?"

After sitting down and actually reading the ar-

ticles, I saw why. It was like a breath of fresh air. The comments that struck home were those made by the young workers: "I don't believe a bureaucrat can ever become a democrat. He cherishes power too much". Who can argue with that?

A regular reader

# Disneyland

Dear Comrades,

Neil Kinnock recently commented that those in the Labour Party who do not agree with the road that he and the leadership are taking the party down are "living in an ultra-left Disneyland"!

Well I am a member of the Labour Party, awaiting the decision as to whether I will be expelled or not. All that I can say is that I want:

★ a future for my kids and all youth and workers and a good education and health

service for all the people of the world;

★ an end to starvation throughout the world and a halt to the waste of human resources, a nuclear-free world and an end to wars worldwide.

And so all I can say to Mr Kinnock is that if this is living in Disneyland, then I would be very happy to take the people of the world there today—and I am sure they would be more than happy to follow.

Tom Seddon,  
Chester-le Street

# Three cheers for Sandra

Dear Comrades,

Three cheers for Sandra Thompson and her article, "A life of satisfaction?" in *Militant* 903. It made me laugh and my goodness *Militant* can do with much more material like that.

I am separated and a part-time single parent, as I have my kids usually three out of five weekends. That experience has been worth a ton of theory and has made me conscious of the difficulties that all working-class women face, especially my wife who looks after my kids most of the time.

I was howling with laugh-

ter when I got to the bit: "Back home I hang out the washing, wash dishes, Hoover up, the excitement is almost too much". I thought of that again today when I was hanging out my washing up as I mentally rejoiced: "Yes there are eight complete pairs of socks on the line!"

But the article also made me think. Trotsky once wrote that "Life is no easy matter" and explained why we need a great idea before us to struggle for. Sandra Thompson said the same. Give us more.

Bob Wylie, Glasgow

# 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.

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Available from Fighting Fund Dept., 3-13 Hepscoct Road, London E9 5HB. For all orders add 25% P&P. Cheques & Postal Orders payable to *Militant*.

# Fortress

□ **Have you read** this Marxist bestseller yet? *Liverpool - A City That Dared to Fight*. £6.95 plus 90p postage 5 copies for £25 post free.

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□ **Marion Gaima** Anti-deportation Campaign. Public meeting, Tuesday 19 July 7.30. Durning Hall, corner of Woodgrange Road and Earlam Grove, Forest Gate, London E7. Speakers: Pat Wall MP, Monica Dixon, MGAD Campaign Co-ordinator.

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If you missed the rally, or want to hear the main speeches again, then order your tapes now:

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Children enjoying themselves at the *Militant* rally creche.

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

# The Red Flag Club

Dear *Militant*,

On Saturday mornings when the adults go to their boring paper sales, us kids go in a creche. Jane James, Clare and Sarah's mum, thought it would be a good idea for the kids to make a club.

So on our first week we thought a good name for our club was THE RED FLAG CLUB. Now it is our second week and we are doing some cooking.

At the Red Flag Club we have lots of fun and we do sticking and painting and

play in the garden. We have also got a climbing frame and we have lots of fun on it. We play on the swings.

We have wrote this letter in the hope that other kids in the region can form a club too. We are all coming

to the summer camp and we are all doing a sponsored swim to raise money to get there.

Clare James (7), Sarah James (5) and Beverly Walsh (9), Stevenage.

PS Fight for kids' rights

# Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

# Stifling bureaucracy

Dear Comrades,

At the Labour Party Women's Conference, the party bureaucracy tried to prevent people collecting money for the Liverpool 47 surcharged councillors.

After some argument, some of us were allowed to collect during the lunch break. However after about 20 minutes an official told us we had to stop as we had only been allowed 'one' collection, which meant we could ask delegates on their way out but not on their way back in!

Despite this, we were permitted to continue and during the hour we collected £90.

Then at the end of the conference a number of comrades wished to display a banner from the balcony declaring support for Benn and Heffer for the leadership contest.

Three stewards rushed over and said they couldn't display it. When they attempted to lift the banner the stewards ripped it and tried to pull it away from the comrades.

These attempts to stifle expressions of solidarity highlight the shift away from socialist policies that must be actively resisted by those who want to fight for a change in society.

Sharon Fryer,  
Liverpool Broadgreen Women's Section

# Rochester is no leafy suburb

Dear Comrades,

I would like to take issue with Tony Cross's article on the poll tax in *Militant* 903. The day that I read that Rochester was a 'leafy suburb', the local *Evening Post* had a front-page article headlined: "Filth in concrete jungle—the flats of shame", about "violence, prostitution, glue sniffing and filth at Chatham's Melville Court flats".

While areas of Kent may be archetypal 'leafy suburbs', it is entirely wrong to lump in areas like the Medway towns, Kent's industrial heartland.

The closure of Chatham

dockyard in 1982, with the loss of 11,000 jobs, and the Isle of Grain oil refinery (1,700 jobs) led the TGWU to produce a report entitled 'Medway disaster'. Unemployment is up to one in four in areas of Rochester, Chatham and Gillingham.

Although Rochester may be paying one of the lowest poll taxes in Britain, the sole reason is the appalling level of services provided by the Tory council, as the tenants of Melville Hall and other large council estates will tell you. If only they did live in 'leafy suburbs'!

Martin Cock, Medway

# NHS crisis

Dear *Militant*,

I am spending the 40th anniversary of the NHS as a hospital patient. Like all patients I have tremendous gratitude for all the hard work and kindness shown by all the staff, who never seem to stop and deserve every penny they get in wages and a lot more beside.

I didn't come in as an emergency, but nonetheless I had to wait in the corridor for one patient to be discharged so that I could have her bed. My ward has 32 beds and none has been empty for longer than half an hour.

Yet despite this, Leeds Western Health Authority is planning to close Chapel Allerton, another Leeds hospital, because of a cash crisis.

I am very glad that I was able to get my operation and treatment when I needed them. When I leave here I'll be fully involved in the campaign to save Chapel Allerton and to make sure that the next 40 years sees a properly funded NHS.

Jane Ingham, Leeds

# Football Hooliganism

Dear Comrades,

As much as I would agree with some of what Bill Brewster wrote in issue 902, I would point out that football hooliganism is not a product of Tory Britain. Nor is it entirely in contrast to "Thatcher's load-samoney philosophy".

It started in the late '60s and in my experience many of those who were leading members of football firms had jobs that paid enough for them to go to football matches week-in week-out and, as certain cases have shown, many have been

well-paid City boys.

But the majority of lads that are, or were, involved are just ordinary working-class youth with no real axe to grind. Their political level is, however, low and is open to fascist indoctrination.

The Tory 'five point plan' to combat football hooliganism is nothing short of an attack on civil liberties, more evidence of the Thatcher police state.

No, what we need is the nationalisation of all clubs with a third say for the supporters on a club

management council and not a minimum wage but a maximum wage to bring the artificially high gate prices down.

Taking capitalism out of football will take a lot of pressure off the players and managers. This will go towards improving the game and a greater involvement of the supporters will also mean there is no place on the terraces for the fascist elements of the NF or their shadows.

An ex-football hooligan

# 'We want guarantees now'

TRADE UNIONISTS at Girobank are shaping up for a battle to defend their jobs and conditions from privatisation. Victory or defeat will determine the future of millions of working class people who use Girobank and the Post Office.

By Richard Venton

The Tories have dropped all pretence of a democratic procedure. Given their obsession with imposing ballots on trade unionists, why don't they ballot the Girobank workforce on whether they want privatisation?

The Tories want to rush through this auction of jobs and services behind the backs of society. They are trying to avoid even debating it in Parliament. As Allan Roberts, Bootle's Labour MP, has reported,

**Most Girobank workers believe the Tories have stitched up a buyer already and are merely conducting a charade.**

they are hoping to finalise the private buyer during the summer recess.

Industry Minister Kenneth Clarke has so far refused to even meet Allan Roberts. In fact, most Girobank workers believe the Tories have stitched up a buyer already and are merely conducting a charade of seeking offers from banks and finance monopolies.

The local joint committee of Girobank trade unions has discussed putting demands on jobs, wages, conditions, pensions, trade union rights, maintenance of the Bootle site and protection of post office branches.

These should now be put to a mass meeting of the workforce and then

presented to government representatives on 21 July when they meet the unions. As many local NCU leaders have argued, unless these minimum demands are guaranteed in advance by government and prospective buyers, the unions should recommend united industrial action to a further mass meeting.

Girobank *Militant* supporters warned in *Bulletin no.5*: "It is inevitable that privatisation would mean asset stripping, job losses and worsened conditions, but we also feel confident that privatisation can still be defeated before the October deadline."

"It would be disastrously mistaken to postpone industrial action until after the October sale. This would be read as weakness inviting aggression."

Developments last week reinforced the correctness of these arguments.

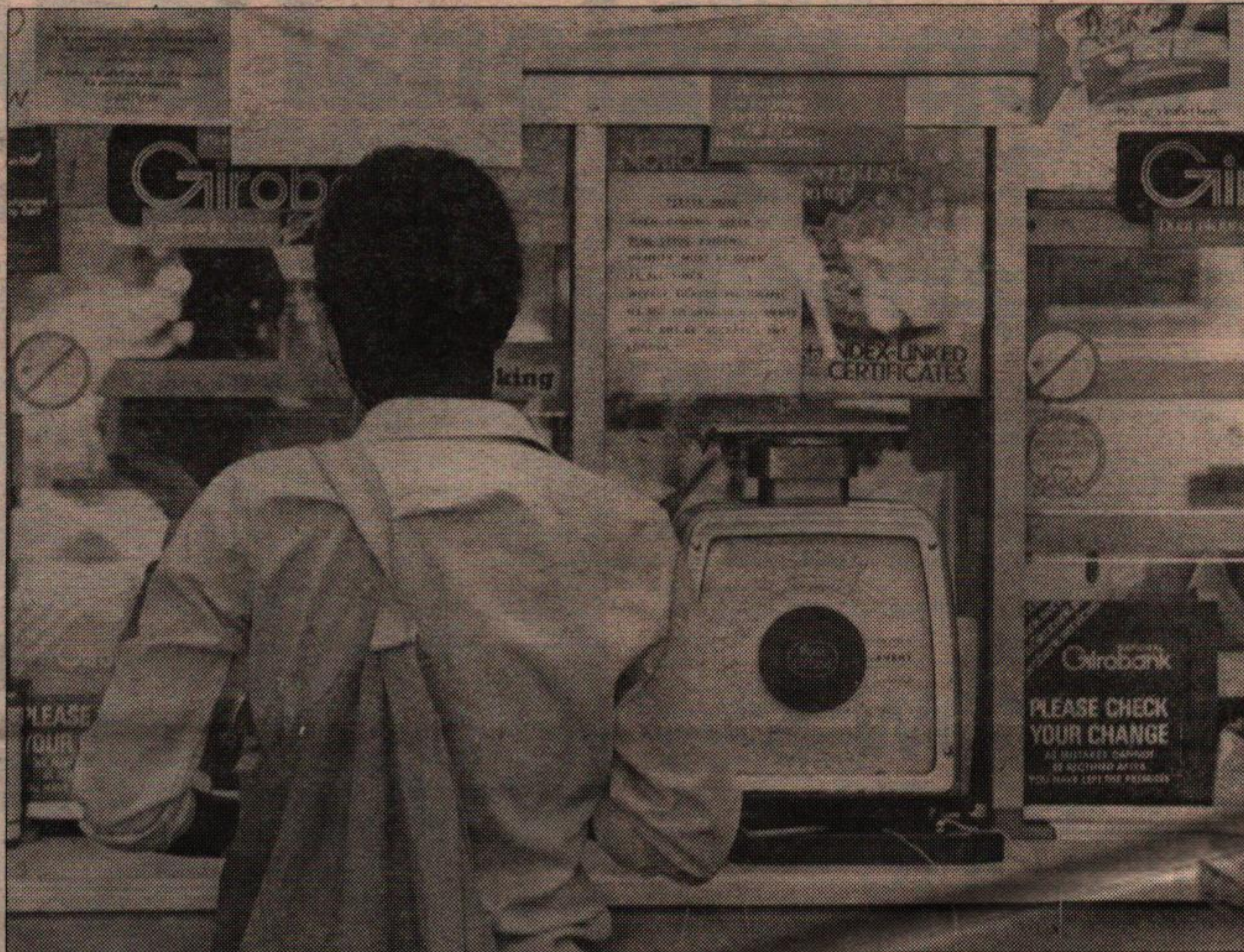
Allan Roberts has revealed that a government precondition for prospective buyers is that they hold no talks with the unions until the sale is sealed and delivered.

Furthermore, a Post Office leak revealed that those firms put on the shortlist of buyers will only be sent the conditions of sale once they have signed a statement of secrecy. If a private buyer was prepared to protect all jobs, wages and the Bootle site, they would trumpet this to the workforce and customers.

The obvious conclusion is that they are under threat.

Girobank bosses are trying to bamboozle workers with promises of expansion in the North West, announcing plans to build a 'contingency centre' in Wigan. They claim this would create up to 600 jobs. Far from being a reassurance, this should be a further cause for concern.

The Wigan site is not guaranteed—it depends on getting the government to provide Select Regional Assistance Grants. A contingency site in the North West has been in the pipeline for several years



How many Post Office branches will close if privatisation goes through?

Photo: Militant

and by Girobank directors' own admission won't be built for at least "a few years"—if at all.

**Girobank workers must be directly represented in the union delegation to the Department of Trade and Industry.**

If the Tories succeed in privatising Giro, the new owner may already have their own 'contingency sites', so why build in Wigan? At best privatisation threatens these 600 jobs, which publicly owned Girobank have planned to create for some years. At worst, it could be laying the basis for a much reduced future workforce decim-

ating the Bootle site.

What is certain is that privatisation is a threat which must be defeated. The first bidder to publicly declare an interest is the Trustee Savings Bank (TSB). Yet in their recent annual report they admit to "the loss of several million pounds" in last October's stock exchange crisis.

With renewed stock crashes inevitable, Girobank staff would face cuts and job losses. It is hardly reassuring that TSB's newly appointed chairman, Sir Nicholas Goodison, is also chairman of the stock exchange!

Girobank workers must

be directly represented in the union delegation to the Department of Trade and Industry on 21 July. Notice must be given to the government that industrial action throughout the Post Office will follow unless cast iron guarantees are given on job protection, conditions and the future of post office branches.

## Democratic

The unions should demand public ownership with democratic workers' control and management.

Elected boards of management, living on the average Girobank and Post

Office workers' wage should be advocated. A system of one third of the board elected by the workforce unions, one third elected by the TUC to represent all workers and customers, and one third from a socialist Labour government to represent a democratic, socialist plan for society as a whole, would end the anxiety facing Girobank workers and customers alike.

As part of a unified state bank, with nationalisation and workers' control of all the banks and financial institutions, Girobank could then truly claim to be "the people's bank".

## • LPYS STOP THE SELL-OFF RALLY •

Sat 16 July, 1pm. St. James Centre, Marsh Lane, Bootle

Speakers: Terry Fields, Girobank worker, LPYS member.

# LPYS fight 'Can't pay-won't play'

SUPPORT SO far for the Bootle Labour Party Young Socialists Girobank Defence Campaign has been tremendous.

Even before privatisation was announced, Bootle LPYS had held a successful public meeting against the Tory sell-off, but since its announcement dozens of people have become involved in the campaign.

An LPYS rally on 16 July will include Terry Fields MP, an LPYS speaker and Terry Farley, branch secretary of the Girobank NCU. This will be used as the launch to build mass support in the community for a rally with Tony Benn on 30 July and a march and rally on 13 August.

Management's view of the effects of privatisation is very different from ours, of course. The announcement

of the new site at Wigan has been explained as necessary "in the event of a plane crashing into the Bootle site".

It is a shame they have never previously expressed concern for workers' lives in the event of a plane crash in Bootle!

Bootle LPYS now throw down an open challenge to managing director Malcolm Williamson or any other member of management at Giro to a public debate on the advantages of privatisation. And just in case of a plane crash we will provide an air raid shelter!

By Tony McNulty, secretary, Bootle LPYS Girobank Defence Campaign

COUNCIL SPORTS facilities are the latest addition to the Tories' rampant privatisation plans.

It will start with cleaning, maintenance, swimming pool supervisors, ticket collecting and catering. But this is the thin end of the wedge for privatising whole sports centres, swimming pools and athletics tracks.

Thousands of council workers could be made redundant while private firms which take over try to maximise profits by employing less staff. They will end up working longer hours for less pay. But even before this becomes law, council bosses want to do away with the regular working week so that unsocial hours can be worked without having to pay over-

time rates.

Privatisation will mean worse services and higher charges. The average swimming pool loses about £200,000 a year. This couldn't be turned into profits without massive increases in admission charges, ending off-peak passes and reduced admission for unemployed and pensioners. Access for schools and colleges could also be threatened.

## Amateur sports

New facilities would be built only in affluent areas while old ones in inner city areas would be closed.

The effects on amateur sports would be catastrophic. At present council sports facilities often re-

main open outside public hours for sports clubs to use. This unprofitable practice would be stopped and many clubs would close. Working class people and youth would be stopped from developing their talents.

The Tories hypocritically say that privatisation would mean better standards. But buildings are deteriorating and changing rooms are left uncleaned because of cuts in local authority spending.

Proper training for staff and maintaining safety standards would suffer. How many more swimming pool drownings would occur for the sake of profits?

Sports facilities should be run as a service so that everyone can participate,

regardless of the size of their bank balance. Under Marxist leadership, Liverpool City Council built three new sports centres during its historic campaign against the Tories.

## Expansion

Many Labour councils are now making cuts in sports and leisure services. They should be standing shoulder to shoulder with their workforces to defeat the government's plans.

A Labour government should implement a massive programme of public works which would include the vast expansion of sports facilities.

By Bill Wynn

# Industrial reports

## Post Office workers

# Keep regional pay out

THE POST Office (PO) plan to implement, without union agreement, regional pay differentials in the form of a pay supplement based on merit.

By Mick Holt,  
Manchester Amal UCW,  
personal capacity

This is a clear attempt to divide the workforce and must be opposed. This year's Union of Communications Workers (UCW) conference opposed such plans and in line with that decision the national executive have now called a ballot for industrial action.

The PO argue that the scheme

will be a solution to the problem of recruitment, particularly in areas of 'high employment' like London and the Thames Valley.

In the latter, the combined UCW membership is around 8,000, yet only a few hundred new employees in some of the offices in that area could receive the supplement.

The decision of who gets it is down to higher area management. It is a charter for blue-eyed boys and bosses' men. Even those chosen to receive the supplement could have it stopped at any time.

The PO have quoted a ceiling of

six per cent unemployment as a guide as to areas where the supplement could be introduced. It is a clear condemnation of pay and conditions in the PO. What they are saying is: "You'll only stay at the PO if there's no work outside".

### Improve pay for all

There must be a vigorous campaign amongst all the membership, with areas where the pay supplement is to be introduced first prioritised. The executive has to call meetings in Inner London and the Thames Valley to counter any

possible divisions.

Our leaders must not repeat the type of softly, softly approach shown in the shorter working week negotiations. Nothing less than the complete withdrawal of the PO's pay proposals will be acceptable.

The UCW membership have in the past locally and nationally shown their willingness to fight the PO and BT. We ask only the same from our leaders.

★ Support the national union in the ballot.

★ Improve pay for all UCW members, not for a selected few, nor on a merit basis.

## UCW to sponsor Gould

WITH THE continuing attacks on postal workers and the Tories looking to privatise the Post Office, union members will be concerned at the role of their national officials.

At a time when the union is facing industrial action on the issue of divisive payments to postal workers in 'high employment' areas and legal action by management to prevent the union carrying out its conference policy to abandon 'team talks', the national UCW has offered £12,000 a year sponsorship to Bryan Gould MP.

Tony Clarke, union national assistant secretary explained that "We are not a demanding union and you would not see us making great demands on your time". Gould explains that he needs this money as he has two researchers to pay and "simply cannot afford to find this out of my own meagre salary".

Gould's researchers have only managed to regurgitate old ideas of 'new realism'-ideas on share ownership which the delegates to UCW annual conference overwhelmingly rejected.

Soon after the announcement, Gould argued that the trade union block vote should be ended. Talk about biting the hand that feeds you!

This money would be better spent on a campaign to keep the Post Office public.

By Yvonne Harrison

### Communications Workers Broad Left London meeting.

Speakers:  
Hughie Lenaghan, Harrow Amal, George Durak, NW MLO, both in personal capacity.  
Thurs 21 July, 7pm.  
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square

# Harrow's historic victory

THE RECENT nine day strike by postal workers in the Harrow Amalgamated branch of the UCW, backed up by a massive walk out of 5,000 workers in the surrounding Outer and Inner London areas, has led to an unprecedented victory over the PO.

The dispute centred around the issue of meal and tea breaks. The PO offer consisted of a thirty minute meal break, no grace reliefs on the night shift, no tea break on the evening shift and no travelling or queuing time on the day shift.

The Harrow workforce stood firm and only voted

to return after management had climbed down, offering increases on all meal breaks, a 30 minutes tea break on the night shift and other extensions.

### Breakthrough

Branch secretary, Hughie Lenaghan told *Militant*: "This agreement is a breakthrough for postal workers under the RRP (Revised Revision Procedure) agreement. Harrow owes a debt to all those branches who came out in support. Without their solidarity our victory would have been much harder to achieve. This commitment



The Harrow postal workers' picket line.

of solidarity needs to be built on for future disputes."

A member of the public, Tony Parker, when asked his view of the strike said: "I fully support them. It is disgraceful that postmen still get less than an hour for lunch and had to strike for a tea break!"

The Harrow victory is a breakthrough against PO attacks. However, the decision by national and regional union officials to allow Harrow to return to work should not have been

made before ensuring there would be no victimisation against UCW members who had supported the dispute.

### Disciplinary

It is understood that the chairman of the W1 Amalgamated branch is now on a disciplinary charge over this issue. Also the return to work agreement settling the strike, and signed by a national official included the words: "All parties agree that this agreement

relates only to the exceptional circumstances at Harrow".

This will be seen as a mistake as other branches now in RRP will be looking to the union to secure for them the same improvements.

Broad Left supporters are demanding that we follow the example of Harrow and fight back.

By John Johnson,  
WDO C&CS branch,  
personal capacity.

# Channel Tunnel strikes again

STRIKE ACTION on the Channel Tunnel ended with 350 Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) members returning after six days.

Joe Stewart,

UGO42 branch, London region Ucat

The strike, at the Isle of Grain casting yard, the largest pre-cast concrete works in Europe, affected two factories manufacturing concrete segments for the tunnel and stopped building work at two others still being built.

The casting yard was hit by two strikes in August and September last year (see *Militant* 9 October). This led Trans Manche Link (TML), the tunnel contractor, to draw up a set of working rules and procedures regarding employment and bonuses in order to avoid future disputes.

TML management services director David Staines was even quoted as saying: "More and more, building

trade unions are showing a desire to work in closer unity with management... there is now a much closer relationship between employers and employees. We have got rid of the 'us and them' attitude and are now pulling together." (*Building* 4 December 1987.)

Conditions breed consciousness and conditions on the Isle of Grain are atrocious. "Many of the lads who work here have been tempted with promises of £500 in their pay packets each week. We actually get £270 for working a 60 hour week and £80 of that goes on our lodgings," said shop steward, Brian Williams.

"Weekend work is supposed to be voluntary but we have been threatened with dismissal if we refuse to work it. This place is more like a prison than a place of work. Men don't stay here long because of the pay and conditions."

The strike happened when the men walked out over the sacking of Lee Nor-

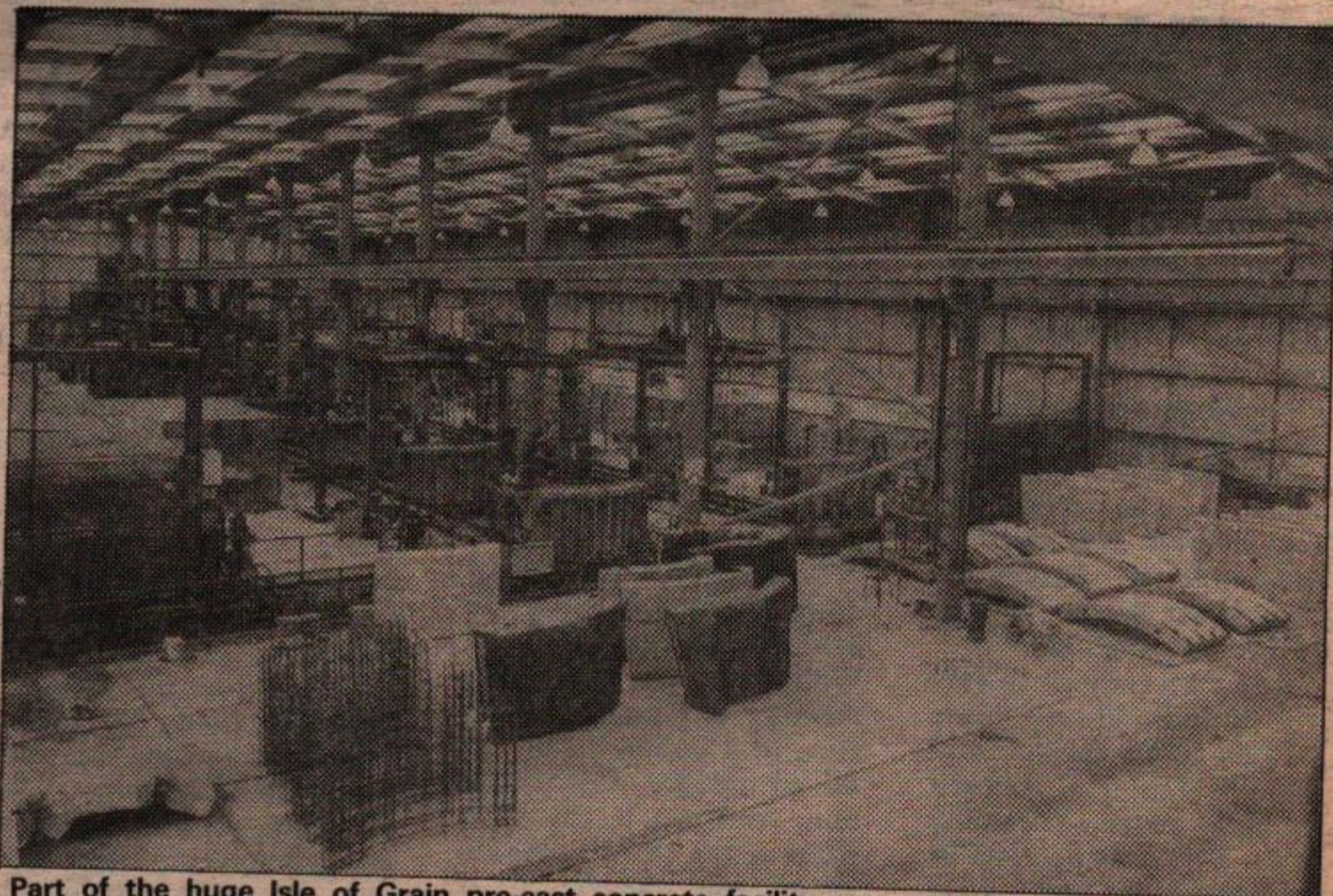
man after a fight with a foreman. Witnesses claimed that he had been provoked and acted in self defence.

Stewards tried all the following day to get a meeting with management. After three requests to discuss the matter they hadn't even got a reply. The shop stewards on the day shift then decided on the basis of this to take action. Throughout the six days a 300 strong picket blocked the gates and stopped any traffic coming in.

The Isle of Grain strike is the second dispute to break out on the tunnel in barely a month. Recently the Cheriton site was brought to a halt when TGWU members walked out over bonus payments for the men involved in earthmoving.

Apparently no-one at TML had informed the strikers that "We pay a fair day's pay for a fair day's work". (*Sunday Times* 22 May.)

The firms who make up TML, Balfour Beatty, Cos-



Part of the huge Isle of Grain pre-cast concrete facility.

tain, Tarmac, Taylor Woodrow and Wimpey stand to make enormous profits from the tunnel...if they finish it on time.

The tunnel is rumoured to be five months behind in

its six year schedule. If it overruns its contract time then the TML consortium will be hit with penalty clauses of £354,000 to £500,000 per day by the developer, Eurotunnel.

If the pressure is put on, wages and conditions can be achieved at the tunnel which can be used as both an example and a yardstick for the building industry.

# Dover NUS office occupied

AS THE P&O dispute enters its sixth month over 200 pickets gather at Dover's Eastern docks every morning. Last Friday the line swelled to over 300 to hear the news that the National Union of Seamen (NUS) offices, earlier sequestered, had been occupied by strikers. They have enough food to last over a month.

By Eric Segal

The resolve and determination of the strikers remains undeterred. First, George Higgins, then Johnnie Woods, both Port Committee members, called on the NUS to organise a national strike to support the Dover members.

The picket line, now 400 strong, marched on the union offices to support the occupation.

Jubilant swept the demonstration. Police in their vans were totally unprepared and were caught up with the marchers, who then wound their way up to 'Panic Palace', P&O headquarters, past the



Part of a strikers' mass picket in May.

Photo: Militant

Freemasons' Hall, where it's rumoured that many dirty deeds have been planned by P&O management.

That night Johnnie Woods was arrested and beaten up by the police for attempting to pass through to those strikers in occupation. That was their revenge for the demo.

The determination of strikers to beat P&O is an example to all workers. It is

not matched by the union leadership. Rumours, fuelled by reports in the press, seem to indicate that the NUS national executive are now trying to make the mass picket unofficial.

The six on the picket line are now to be union officials. Tony Santamara, Henry Bygate, Kiwi McGregor, Colin Bennett and others will replace the Dover strikers. They have said that they will not join

the mass picket.

"They may want us to go away but we won't", said one striker. "We will fight P&O management and if we have to, we will fight our union leadership. If necessary, we will replace them."

A mass demonstration, marking six months of the strike, will take place on Saturday 6 August. Arthur Scargill is expected to speak.

What's happening in your workplace? Phone in your reports to the Industrial Editor on 01 533 3311 before 5pm on Monday.



## Strikers' 'hearts go out to Aberdeen'

DEAR MILITANT,

As a striking P&O seaman I can honestly say on behalf of all the Dover seafarers that our hearts go out to all the people of Aberdeen, to the survivors and to the bereaved.

With the Dover community having lived through the *Herald* disaster, we know a little of what they must have gone through.

Having said that, I really hope that in a couple of years from now they will not be put through the same pain as we are now suffering with a management so hell-bent on profit that safety standards are lowered and untrained workers are recruited.

On 7 July we heard the Prime Minister and other cabinet ministers say that

there would be a far-reaching public enquiry. Remember that the same overtures were made after the *Herald* disaster.

### Safety

After the enquiry, P&O management were given slapped wrists and told not to be naughty boys instead of action being taken against them. Now they are being backed by the government to smash the NUS so that Maggie's little Pall Mall poodle can make huge profits.

Once again our hearts are with you. Please do not give up hope because as the Dover community and the surrounding areas know, the whole of this country feels for you.

Mr C.W., Deal, Kent.

## Fight 13,000 DHSS staff cuts

TWO MAJOR DHSS unions, CPSA and NUCPS, hold technology conferences this week. Before members is the stark choice of whether or not to accept the government and DHSS management imposed job cuts of over 13,000.

This is what management are looking for from a five year computerisation programme, in addition to 8,000 losses already announced this year.

After three months of intensive negotiation, the unions came away with nothing more than a no-compulsory-redundancy promise. Union demands were brushed aside. Management's attitude is that every penny of the £1,000 million to be spent on the new computerisation programme has to be got back. This is their justification for job cuts.

The unions argued that jobs released by computers should be ploughed back to relieve pressure in DHSS local offices. They point to a recent report of the National Audit Office which showed 70 minutes average waiting times in local offices and error rates of up to 25.4 per cent.

Computerisation should be used to improve this lousy service, caused by starving DHSS of money and staff.

The unions also demanded improved conditions in return for co-operation with changing technology:

- ★ A shorter working week;
- ★ Better flexible working hours arrangements;
- ★ Improved opportunities for women;
- ★ Full health and safety protection.

These demands have been ignored by the management. New desks and chairs needed to work with the computers will cost money. This, they say, is a staff benefit!

The conferences of the two unions must come out unequivocally in sup-

port of defending job levels and improved conditions. Attempts by the BL84 and right wing (Charter Group), the majority on the CPSA executive, to abandon defence of jobs in favour of better terms for those selling them, must be opposed.

The Charter Group majority were elected in May on a 'no strike—we can negotiate a good deal for you' platform. This easy road has been cruelly exposed by the technology negotiations. These very same people have been forced to recommend a programme of strike action.

### Now for action

Their programme is based on regional rolling strikes which were so unpopular in the 1987 pay campaign. These, it is argued, can be repeated until management crumble. Their acceptance of the need for action of some sort is significant.

Broad Left supporters in the two unions will argue that to reverse management's attitude, substantial strike activity will be required. Preliminary action, when management test their system in October of this year, has a role.

If this fails to move the management, a ballot on all-out strike action will be necessary.

Concessions from DHSS management will not be easily gained. Scope for negotiated improvements has been, and remains, limited. A massive campaign and action will now be necessary in the DHSS.

By Simon Dennison, secretary, London Central DHSS CPSA, personal capacity

## Department of Employment disputes

### W Midlands

CIVIL SERVANTS in Department of Employment (DE) offices in the West Midlands are now entering their tenth week on strike.

Initially they came out in protest at the placement of a YTS trainee into Wolverhampton area office. Since then, despite having voted to return to work, management have refused to concede an acceptable return to work agreement.

The action is undoubtedly biting with offices being forced to reduce opening hours. Management are considering recruiting casual labour to act as a strikebreaking force.

There are now about 100 CPSA members out in eight offices. It will be necessary to continue to build the action locally to force management to re-open talks.

However this action must also be linked to solidarity action in the Reading and Livingston computer centres.

Although members have supported calls to seek the backing of work from strike-bound UBOs, the DE section executive committee has done nothing to date to achieve this.

Morale is good. A rally and march has been organised for 20 July. The rally, starting at 1pm, will be addressed by John Macreadie.

Messages of support to: CPSA strikers, c/o National Union of Locksmiths and Metal Workers, Bellamy House, Wilkes St, Willenhall, West Midlands. Phone: 0902 368035.

By Pat Lavery, CPSA DE West Midlands convenor, personal capacity.

### Easterhouse

EASTERHOUSE DE strikers are now calling for escalation of their dispute. The strike committee is appealing for a one day all-Glasgow strike of Employment Service

offices on 19 July. CPSA and NUCPS members are now being balloted.

Management are not moving on our demand for better staffing levels. They know that Easterhouse is a test case. If we win, the other integration offices will benefit from our victory. Other offices are already being granted concessions at the moment on the basis of our action.

After six weeks, the strike remains solid. Three strikers' bulletins and a claimants' bulletin have been produced.

The stakes are high because plans have now been announced to put the Employment Service out to agencies from this October. This is the first step to privatisation.

Messages of support and donations to CPSA/NUCPS strike centre, c/o TGWU, 290 Bath St, Glasgow.

By Ian Nisbett and Gerry Croall, Easterhouse strikers.

## Brum catering workers' anger

THE CONTROLLING Labour group on Birmingham council have attempted to solve their budget crisis by attacking the pay of their own workforce in the Catering department.

They propose that staff at the Polytechnic site take a wage cut of £11.90 per week while the rest of the department's employees, 11,550 in all, ac-

cept a wage freeze until 1990!

Union members in Catering have responded magnificently to their Nupe leaders' call for industrial action to defend their pay, exposing a mood amongst council workers that is simmering just below the surface.

Only by taking the 'Liver-

pool road' will the council be able to fully fund the budget and provide proper jobs and services in Birmingham.

By Ian Leech, vice chair, Birmingham Nalگو, personal capacity

# Militant

**Inside**

**South Africa**

**After the three-day general strike—what way forward?**

—pages 8-9

# 'We will release Mandela'

**THOUSANDS OF** working people, old and young, black and white, have joined the Mandela Freedom March as it passed through various cities. This is a brilliant show of solidarity with the South African freedom struggle.

The demonstration on 17 July will be no less successful. It will boost the confidence of workers and youth in South Africa in the fight against the horrors of apartheid and capitalism.

Nelson Mandela has always stood as a symbol of the black people's unbreakable will to achieve freedom.

The Botha regime has insisted that he should reject 'violence' and 'communism' as a condition for release. His rejection of many 'offers' on these terms has inspired millions.

As Mandela stated in a message read by his daughter:

"I cannot and will not give any undertaking at a time when I and you the people are not free. Your freedom and mine cannot be separated. I will return."

To denounce 'violence' would mean turning the other cheek to state brutality—giving up the very idea of the revolution that millions of workers and youth are fighting for.

**By Nimrod Sejake**  
(exiled South African trade union leader and a defendant with Mandela in the Treason Trial of the 1950s)

To denounce 'communism' would mean giving up the fundamental clause in the Freedom Charter, programme of the African National Congress, that "the mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole."

On this idea the workers and youth in Congress will never compromise.

Time and again Botha has been forced to consider releasing Mandela. But on every occasion he has stepped back for fear of the flood-tide of struggle it would unleash.

Instead he has restricted the Congress of SA Trade Unions and other organisations, making it almost impossible to campaign legally for the release of political

prisoners.

The organised working class in South Africa, supported by its class brothers and sisters internationally, is the only force capable of smashing open the prison doors. "We will release Mandela" is sung by workers at many rallies.

If the strength of the TUC and Labour Party were thrown behind a campaign for workers' sanctions against the apartheid regime, the workers' movement in South Africa would be tremendously strengthened. Establishing more direct links, and deepening existing links between British and South African workers in trade unions, must be seen as a priority.

The supporters of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC firmly support the campaign for the release of Mandela and all political prisoners. By mobilising new layers of workers and youth it can bring us a step closer to smashing the bosses' rule in South Africa, and liberating our comrades from the enemy's dungeons.

Phambili nomzabalazo phambili!  
Viva ANC viva!



Black youth in Cape Town arrested but still defiant.

## Nelson Mandela Freedom March

**Assemble in Finsbury Park 11-12, Sunday 17 July**

Militant sellers: meet at Finsbury Park tube station, 10am. Youth are invited to join the Labour Party Young Socialists contingent and fall in behind the LPYS banner in the park



Theresa Ramashamona.



'Oupa' Diniso.



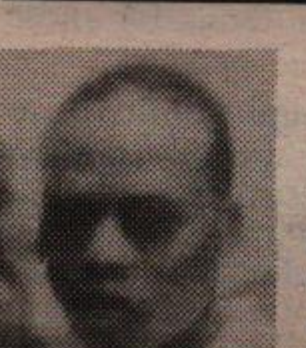
Reid Mokoena.



Duma Khumalo.



Mojalefa Sefatsa



Francis Mokhesi.

## Save the Sharpeville Six

THE SHARPEVILLE Six, condemned by the apartheid regime for a 'murder' they didn't commit, remain on death row despite the latest reprieve. Workers and youth must continue their protest and insist that the trade union and Labour leadership call for national action.

## Sell

I would like to sell.....papers per week (minimum 5) on a sale or return basis.

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Return to the Circulation Department, Militant, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB. Make cheques payable to Militant.

## Raise cash on the march

**MASSIVE OPPOSITION** to the poll tax in Scotland has been reflected in the success of our days of action. Hundreds of pounds have been raised for the fighting fund using our anti-poll tax stickers: £103 from Edinburgh and £99 from Clydebank. This success can be repeated throughout the country.

Organise a day of action against the poll tax. Draw up your own petition and placards and order stickers from us. Remember to ask for the solidarity price with each paper sale.

This Sunday sees the Anti-Apartheid demo in London. What a marvellous opportunity to make fresh sales of our paper and raise fighting fund.

If you are coming by coach then make sure you sell the paper. Our sticker *For a Socialist South Africa* was snapped up at

the last AA march. That success can be repeated this weekend.

We aim to make the last week of July a national fundraising week for Militant, with a target to raise over £10,000 that week alone.

Organise a fundraising social like a barbecue or video night. Take a collection from your workmates. Sell Militant on your estate and collect donations for the fighting fund. Send us details of what you're organising. We'll mention them in the next column.

Nigel and Carol Phillips from Dorset were unable to attend our Rally but have sent us a donation of £100. If you missed this historic event can you match their donation?

At a meeting in Carmarthen, £202 was raised. £319 was raised at the recent Cohse con-

Target £50,000 by 3 Sept This week £3,570

## Fighting Fund

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 London	1120		7090
2 South West	140		1270
3 East Scotland	164		2150
4 Southern	142		2020
5 West Midlands	233		3960
6 South East	85		1570
7 Yorkshire	317		5950
8 East Midlands	104		2530
9 Manchester/Lancs	129		2900
10 Merseyside	180		5000
11 Northern	125		3270
12 Eastern	66		2260
13 West Scotland	78		2520
14 Wales	60		3510
15 National	637		4000
<b>Total</b>	<b>3570</b>		<b>50,000</b>

ference, helping us reach £3570 this week.

Thanks to: F. Laurie, Coatbridge and Anita Swami, Bermondsey who gave £20 each; J. Jordan for £4; supporters in

Stratford who raised £34 at a 'Geordie Night'; supporters in Oxford who collected £24 selling food at the Rally; and Southall supporters who made £40 selling Chartism pamphlets.