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See page 7

## Mortgages up Estates sold off Rents rocket

# Fight for your homes

**MILLIONS OF workers struggling to buy a home are the latest victims of Tory policies. Young first time buyers will be hit hard by the two per cent rise in mortgage rates to 11.5 per cent.**

By Roger Shriver

A £30,000 mortgage, which is about average, will cost £246 a month, £31 more than before. Unless you're very rich, the rises will wipe out Lawson's tax cuts! These twists and turns of Tory policy, giving with one hand and taking back with the other, show the underlying crisis of the economy.

For years Thatcher's government has been trying to force everyone on to the private housing market. The basic right of shelter was to be at the mercy of private landlords and property companies out to line their pockets.

To make the private sector more attractive, the Tories cut their grants to local authorities. They are now making subsidies from the rates illegal.

In Manchester alone, the housing money stolen by the government since 1979 would have built 23,000 new houses or refurbished 46,000 older properties. As it was, council rents grew and repairs were left undone.

The Housing Bill abolishes rent controls, letting private landlords push rents sky high. And as a bonus, private firms could buy up council estates for their own profit.

It all made 'home ownership', in reality, enslavement by a building society or bank, look a very good option. But house prices have soared. Many small flats in London suburbs have gone up £10,000 since the budget. The rich have money to spend and are making it a sellers' market, particularly in London where one house in four

costs over £100,000.

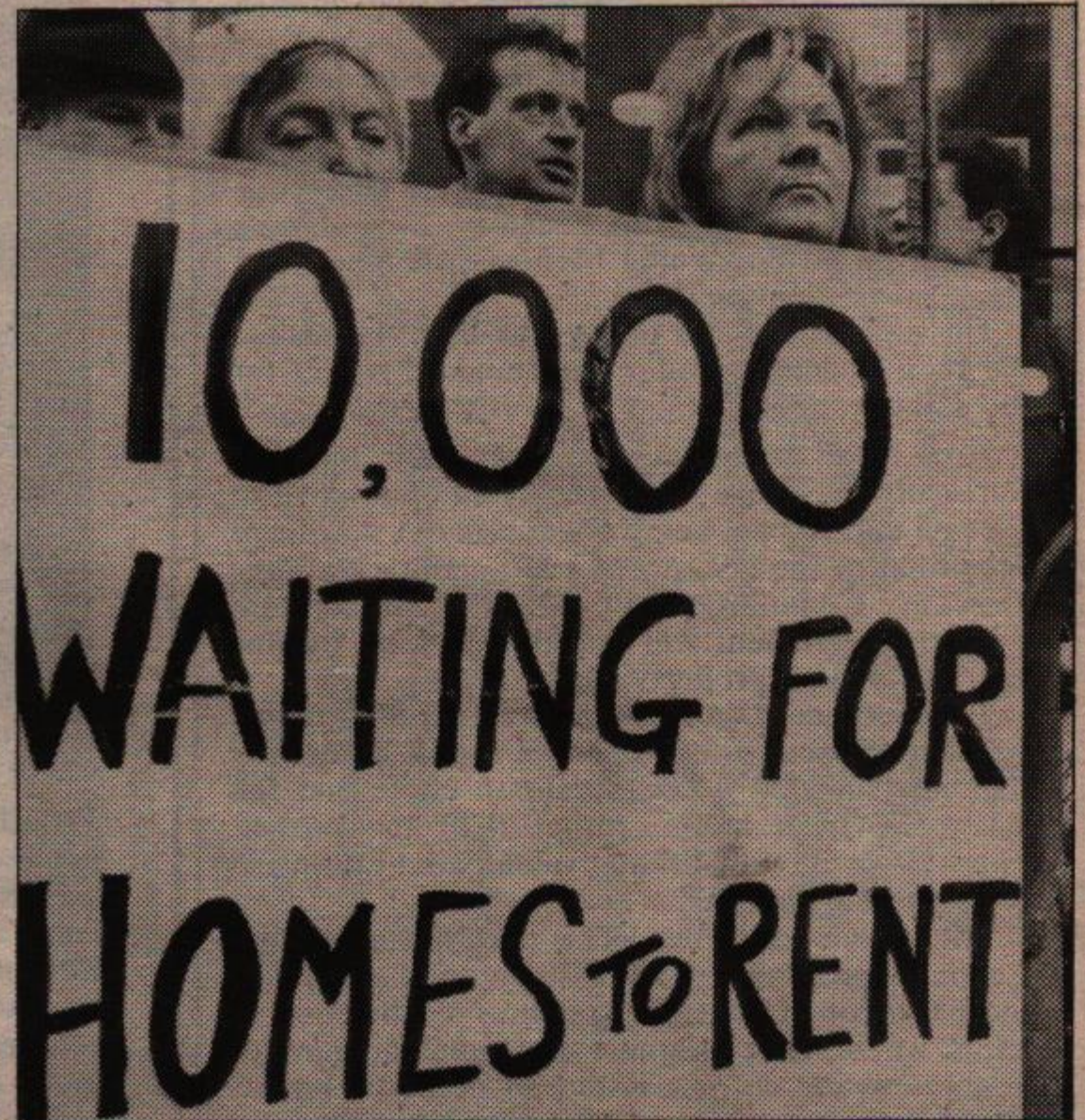
This hits the lower end of the market too. The biggest rises have been in lower-cost terraced houses.

### Repossessions

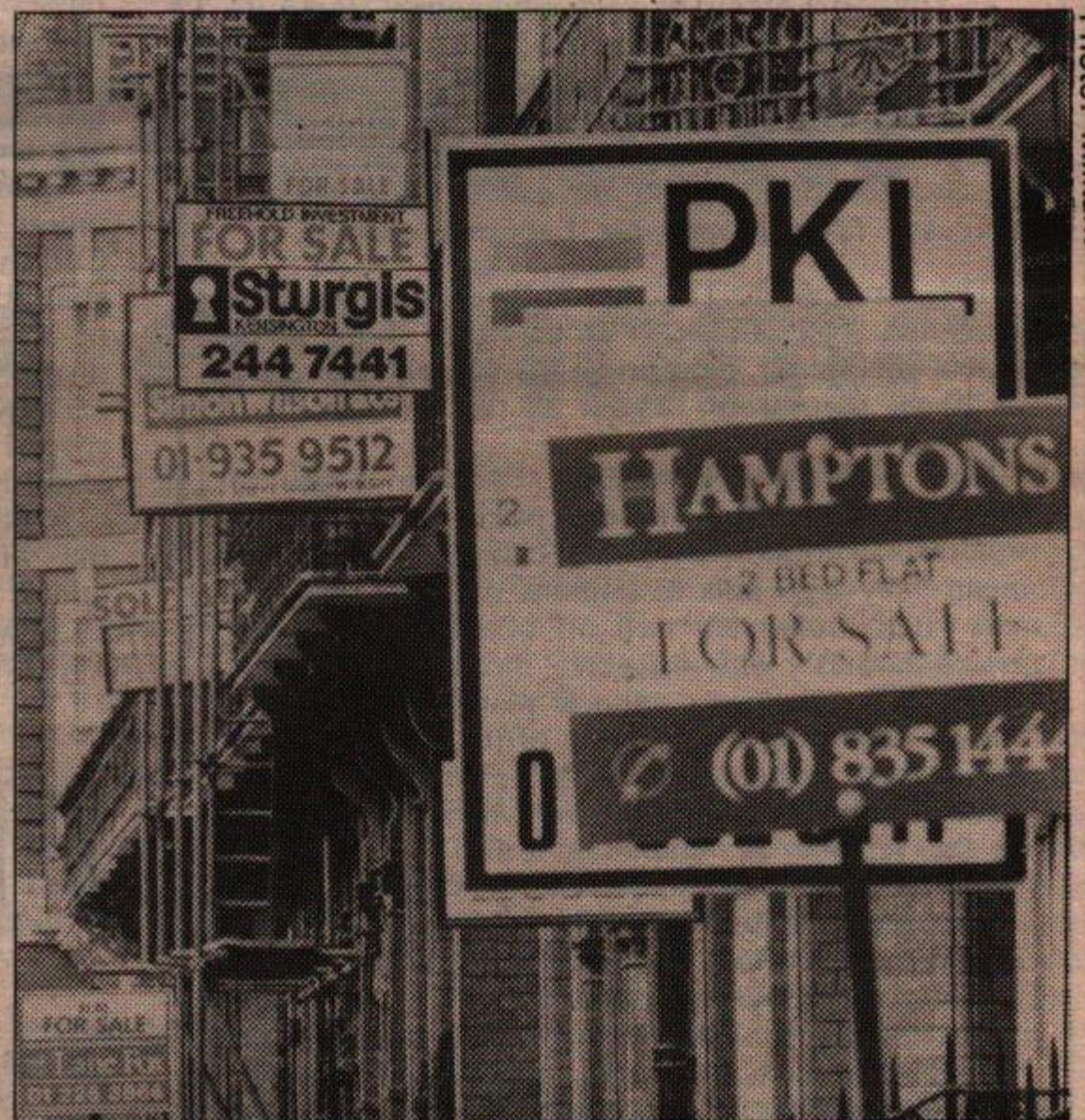
Workers are being forced into buying places they can't afford by the lack of public sector housing. 21,000 families had their homes repossessed in 1986. What will be left of Thatcher's boast of "a property-owning democracy"?

Thatcher says mortgage rises are part of the fight against inflation! She thinks we are spending too much. Backward British industry cannot produce enough goods for people to spend their tax cuts on. They are buying foreign goods instead, pushing up the balance of payments deficit.

So Thatcher favours letting interest rates soar up. Tight credit makes it harder for people to spend money, even if such policies



Westminster tenants' picket earlier this year against council estate sales. Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report).



A sellers' market in London - but nowhere for workers to live.

### The battle against the Poll Tax

See centre pages and page 2.

### Inside



### ARRESTED

Sue Haines, a Dover NUS member who spoke at Militant's rally, was arrested last week along with other strikers.

See page 3

# Militant

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## Labour's two taxes for one

"HISTORY REPEATS itself; first as tragedy then as farce."

In the 1987 general election the Labour leaders tragically gave the impression that a Labour government would mean massive increases in taxes for working people: "Vote for me and I'll raise your taxes." This was a major factor in Labour's defeat, as it was for Walter Mondale when he stood for US President in 1984.

The architect of this policy was Roy Hattersley, the present deputy leader and standard bearer for the Labour right.

Now they are about to repeat their blunder. Farcically they have suggested as an alternative to the poll tax not one, but two new taxes! A document presented to the last meeting of Labour's National Executive Committee (NEC) suggests that a future Labour government will introduce a local income tax and a new property tax.

The authors claim: "A reformed property tax would be based on a property's capital value and regularly updated." This means in effect that the sale price of a house, rather than the present "mystifying" notional rental value, would form the basis of the new tax.

The authors do state: "This does not mean that Labour is proposing to increase the total amount of local taxation. Under our system a combination of taxes would raise at most the same amount of revenue as the current system of domestic rates." But in politics it is not just what is said, but who says it, why they say it and how they say it, which is of decisive importance.

In 1987, if Labour had unambiguously stated its intention to tax the rich, like the 30,000 millionaires, through a wealth tax, this would have been grasped by the mass of the population. But the impression was given that working people, already crushed by massive taxation, would be called upon to pay increased taxes to pay for Labour's reforms.

This was a gift to Thatcher in the general election campaign. Now Labour's front bench is about to repeat this fiasco. The press has eagerly seized on the issue to present Labour as the party of high taxation.

The *Daily Mail* comments: "Labour hopes to make a killing out of property prices with a double wealth tax on home-owners". It says the plans will mean "sky high bills to millions of home-owners" and catch "relatively well off people in modestly priced homes" with an extra income tax.

The *Sun* declared: "Shock plans to tax home owners according to the value of their houses were revealed by Labour last night." Even the mouth-piece of Labour's right, the *Daily Mirror*, condemned the scheme as "Labour's loser".

It is true, as the document's authors argue that the current rating system is mystifying to many people. The 'notional' values are out of date, giving rise to all sorts of unfair anomalies.

But the rating system is less mystifying to most people than Labour's new harebrained scheme, which is not only incomprehensible, but a valuable weapon for the Tories in their campaign to justify the poll tax. There is a case for the labour movement to conduct an enquiry to find a more equitable system than the present rating system. But the basis of such an enquiry should be to shift resources from the rich to the poor, "an irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of working people."

Such an alternative has not yet been worked out. It is therefore the duty of the labour movement to demand quite simply the restoration of the rate support grant stolen from local authorities since the Tories came to power.

In 1979 the rate support grant was 61 per cent of local government expenditure and today it is 46 per cent.

A massive £29 billion has been stolen from local authorities by the Tory government. Labour should conduct a mass campaign to oppose the poll tax in the manner suggested in our centre page feature. It should demand the complete restoration of the rate support grant to its 1979 level, which would allow improved services and lower local charges as well.

The NEC's document and its proposal for two taxes should be defeated at the forthcoming Labour Party conference. It should be replaced by a class-based mass campaign to defeat the poll tax.

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## Labour's NEC

# Assault on democracy



The 'modern' Labour leaders are repeating all the mistakes that lost the last election - promising to increase taxes and witch-hunting.  
 Photo: Militant.

THE LAST meeting of Labour's National Executive (NEC) started late because the leadership were in Parliament to celebrate the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688. But the right-wing soon got down to their inglorious counter-revolution in the party with more attacks on party democracy.

The right wing rushed through their latest vicious attacks on the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS). They passed the proposals for changes to the youth section's rules (explained in *Militant* 905), without taking any notice of LPYS rep Linda Douglas's arguments against them.

Colum O'Kane, from the health union Cohse, moved that the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) be denied a stall at this year's conference because of its role in the health workers' dispute. Everyone supported this - except Neil Kinnock, who made a special show of voting, even though as chair he is not expected to.

A particularly pathetic report from the Merseyside professional witch-hunter Peter Kilfoyle on Broadgreen CLP was discussed.

TGWU representative Eddie

Haigh, who is usually on the right, moved that it be discussed with the CLP's officers before the investigation go ahead. Director of Organisation Joyce Gould had agreed to this before the meeting, but then said that this would be the first stage of the investigation. A move to drop the investigation was lost.

### Women

A consultation on the women's organisation reported to the NEC. Apart from two uncontroversial rule changes, all the wishes of the Labour women's conference and the majority of replies to the consultation were discarded. Now top women union officials are to be consulted on the same subjects to ensure the NEC gets the replies it wants.

Worst of all, another consultation was launched on the organisation's local structures. Unless this is stopped, the women's organisation will be subject to the same attacks as the LPYS.

The leadership are launching a further assault on the democratic running

of the party's conference. This year it will be completely structured to suit the leadership's policy review, with seven sessions based on the review's reports. There will be yet another consultation over a document suggesting bureaucratic manoeuvres including abolishing amendments.

One of its proposals is likely to be adopted right away - the introduction of cards to indicate you want to speak. Neil Kinnock is to discuss this with the people who will chair the conference. Even right-winger Sam McCluskie protested that the conference is too stage-managed and voted against the proposal.

Finally, the Tories' Employment Training scheme was discussed. TGWU representative Eddie Haigh moved that the party boycott it but this was lost 11-8. The NEC left it to councils to decide their own position. They are unlikely to take the same attitude to councils boycotting the poll tax.

By a Militant reporter

# Fight the poll tax ...or Militant?

SCOTTISH WORKERS are becoming more determined to fight the poll tax. But their leaders are attacking the people who are organising the fight.

The biggest union in Scotland, the TGWU, has swung over to supporting non-payment of the tax. It is submitting a resolution along these lines to a special party conference in Glasgow in September. Thirty two resolutions to the conference advocate non-payment, twice as many as put the leadership's stay-within-the-law line.

The response of Labour's National Executive was to agree to 'investigate' Tommy Sheridan, the 24 year old secretary of the Strathclyde anti-poll tax federation and Pollok anti-poll tax union, simply because his MP demanded it.

### STUC

Now Cathcart MP James Maxton is rooting for a witch-hunt in his constituency too because of "an anti-poll tax union established in the Mount Florida area by *Militant*."

Meanwhile, the Scottish

TUC have changed their call for a 15 minute stoppage against the tax to an appeal to "take 11 minutes of your time and join in at eleventh hour." They want church bells to ring and car horns to sound from 11 o'clock to eleven minutes past.

The campaign to pressurise the STUC to make 13 September a 24-hour stoppage must be stepped up.

By Dougie Blackstock  
 Chair, West Glasgow  
 Stop It campaign

# How to become popular?

NEIL KINNOCK'S standing in the opinion polls has slumped further. But the general management committee of his local Labour party, Islwyn, has the answer - expel another left winger.

They have referred John Fletcher to Labour's kangaroo court - the National Constitutional Committee.

The right wing have spent two years trying to expel him and ignoring the real issues in Islwyn.

The town's Labour council has signed a deal to redevelop Blackwood town centre, with the company ARC, which is owned by Consolidated Goldfields. A shopkeeper who refused to sell his property to this apartheid-based firm because of his political principles, had a compulsory purchase order slapped on him by the council.

It is local left-wingers like John who have opposed this deal. Perhaps Neil Kinnock, back from his visit to Southern Africa, will now express solidarity with those being oppressed within his own constituency?

# Six of the best for Kilfoyle

DESPITE CONSTANT policing of the Liverpool Labour Party for the last two years, supporters of the 47 surcharged councillors have been elected delegates to party conference from every constituency in the city.

Liverpool witch-finder Peter Kilfoyle has

desperately tried to wipe out the legacy of the 47 and has claimed that *Militant* has been reduced to the sidelines.

He could not be more wrong. Even his own constituency, Mossley Hill, elected a supporter of the 47. The West Derby delegate was elected by 30

votes to five.

The *Liverpool Echo* recently commented that *Militant* is "a fungus that has to be continually rooted out". Kilfoyle will need more than Kilpest to get rid of our ideas!

By our Liverpool correspondent

# State assault on seafarers

THE JUDGEMENT against the National Union of Seamen (NUS) last Monday by Judge Michael Davies has serious and far reaching implications for the whole of the labour and trade union movement. It must not go unchallenged.

By Militant reporters

The feeling among strikers is that the union leaders, with the full support of the TUC, should mobilise for a mass demonstration and picket each Saturday and to build for a national seafarers' strike.

Ruling that the mass demonstration in support of sacked and striking seafarers at Dover is an illegal picket, the judge said it is 'the law of the land' until overturned by future appeals or legislation.

Any future demonstrations or pickets in support of workers in any struggle will be judged by the law to be illegal. The Tories' vicious anti-trade union laws are being stretched to any lengths that suit the state. These unelected, reactionary Tory judges are making up the law as they go along.

The judge admonished Superintendent Mountford, of the Kent police force, for the interview he gave to *Newsnight*. Mountford stated what had previously been accepted - even outside the barbed wire at Wapping - that the police drew a distinction between demonstrations and a mass picket.

Judge Davies decided that Mountford's views were "potentially contempt of court". He went on "it remains the duty of the police to honour the decisions of the court and to carry them out." He made it clear that the job of the police is to break the picket at Dover.

## Strike goes on

"THE STRIKE goes on!" was the reaction of Dover strikers after the judgement against the NUS last Monday. As one striker said, "the mass picket continues. We ain't going nowhere but back to the picket line."

Judge Michael Davies had just fined the union £25,000, the remainder of the unions' disposable assets. The courts have taken almost £1 million in fines and court costs, all that remains are the filing cabinets and the buildings.

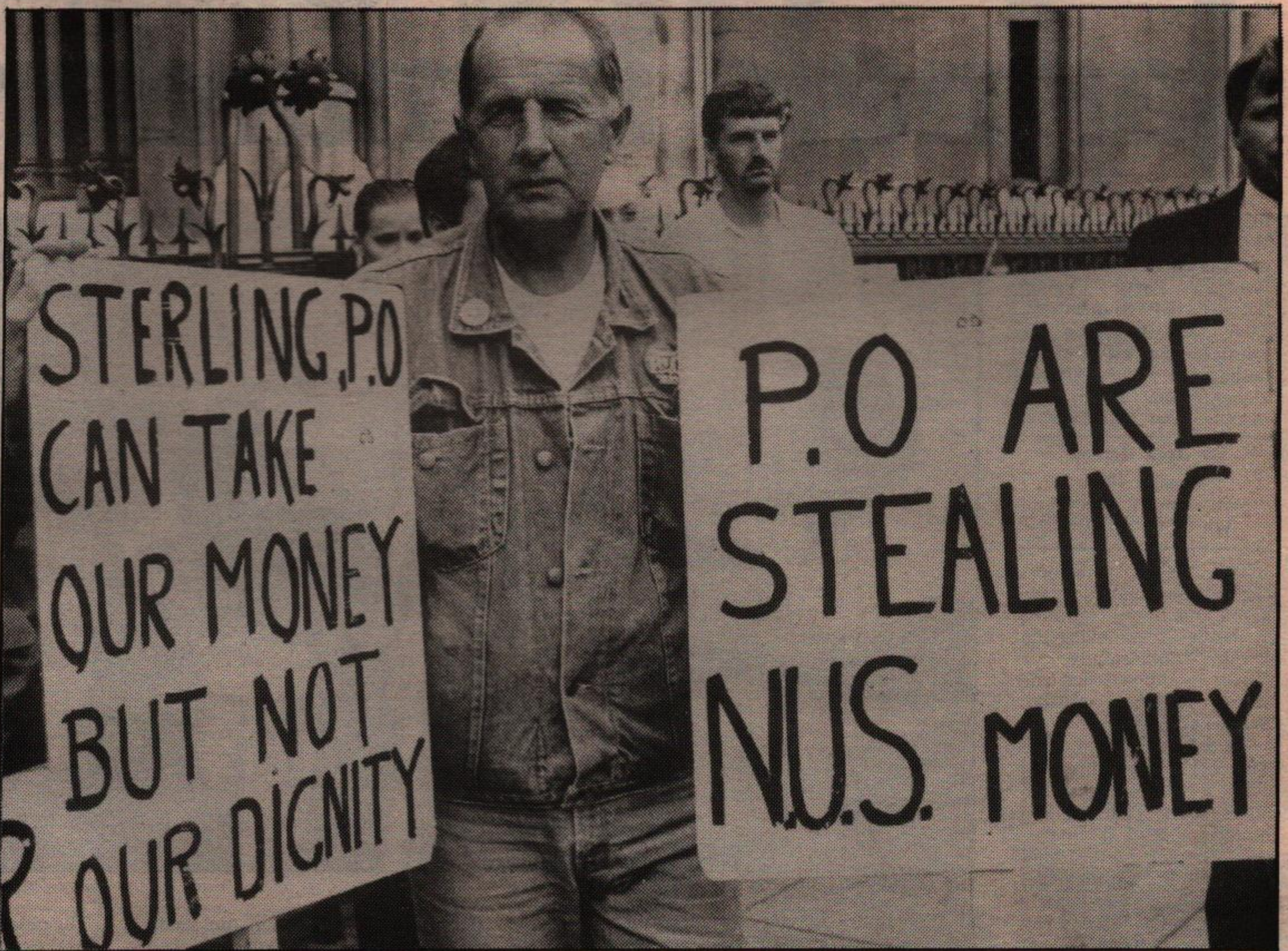
Despite the NUS leadership putting their faith in the law courts the rank and file workers have no such illusions in the Tory laws, as one striker said: "We'll have to sell the filing cabinets and the buildings to pay the fines and the costs, so we'll have nowt left anyway. We've said all along that we can't win this strike in these courts, we can only win by national action."

Union general secretary Sam McCluskie's role in this strike has been one of ducking and diving, to be all things to all people. But the demands of the striking P&O workers cannot be met by fulfilling the demands of the bosses and the Tory laws.

The seeds of confusion that McCluskie and the NEC have sown amongst workers by their prevarication has clearly assisted the Tory courts. Judge Davies praised McCluskie for doing everything that the court has asked of him and said that McCluskie has had to "tip-toe through the tulips". No doubt he was referring to the leader's job in getting the NEC to withdraw official backing from the mass picket.

At a time when the police are coming under massive pressure to step up their activity to smash the mass picket, the union leadership are distancing themselves from the strikers and the struggle. The judge has given the union leaders 21 days "on probation" to regain control of the unions assets-in effect 21 days to end the strike.

The Dover strikers have demanded that the NUS's national executive maintains full support for the mass picket. They want a campaign around the country to build support with a national one day strike on 5 August as the first stage towards all out strike action and victory.



P&O strikers lobby the High Court on Monday 25 July.

Photo: Dave Sinclair

# Activists arrested in dawn raids on homes

IN A new and serious turn to the strike, police arrested nine activists in dawn raids last Saturday. Two were kept in custody and four were released on bail, but with the most stringent conditions since the miners' strike.

Two others were released on police bail awaiting further investigations and another was released without charges.

This was no 'cosy relationship' between the police and pickets referred to by High Court judge Michael Davies. George Pratt was arrested just after his father died, but he wasn't allowed out to attend to him. Police went through the bedrooms of one

man, arrested at 4am, while his four children were in bed.

The arrests were supposedly in connection with an incident at a local pub the previous week. So why were the strikers pulled from their beds in the middle of the night days afterwards? It is clear that the aim was to intimidate activists and weaken the strike. *Militant* has warned throughout the dispute that weakness invites aggression. Police seized their chance to move against activists only days after the national union withdrew support for mass pickets and demonstrations.

## House ransacked

Some of those arrested were active in the Deal support group, one of the most militant in the strike. Sue Haines, who is charged with assault, and Andre Bradford were due to be married the day after their arrest. Their wedding plans were in pieces and they lost money already paid out. Sue was asked if she was a member of *Militant* and police ransacked her home confiscating political leaflets, booklets, diaries, photos and even posters.

Sue Haines was released on bail and Andre Bradford is awaiting further investigations, while, as many strikers believe, the police try to encourage scabs to come up with some 'evidence'. Sue's sister-in-law, a wedding guest, was released unconditionally.

Horrendous bail conditions have been imposed to match these South African-style raids. Those released on bail must obey a 9am to 9pm curfew and they are not allowed within half a mile of the pickets on the Eastern and Western docks. They are not allowed to communicate with any witnesses or with any P&O workers. These conditions must apply at least until 17 August.

Terry French, a victimised miner who has supported the strikers, has been held in custody until 17 August and Paul Sherville was also held in custody for a week. Andy Cosier and Chris Weston have been released on bail, and Brian Bowman is on police bail pending further investigation.

Urgent messages of support should be sent to Deal Support Group, Magnus House, Mill Hill, Deal, Kent.

## Support the P&O Strikers

**MARCH ON 6 AUGUST 1988**  
**ASSEMBLE SEAFRONT 11.30am**  
**STARTS AT 12 NOON**  
**RALLY-ELMSVALE RECREATION GROUND.**  
**SPEAKERS: ARTHUR SCARGILL, SAM MCCLUSKIE, JOHN PRESCOTT AND DENNIS SKINNER**

# Newcastle's grotesque chaos

LABOUR'S LOONY right in Newcastle council has issued redundancy notices to two thousand manual workers.

By Ed Waugh

In 1985 Neil Kinnock attacking Liverpool council for issuing redundancy notices, calling it "grotesque chaos". But this was a legal tactic in the council's battle with the government to preserve the massive house building programme and the extra jobs the council had created.

But Newcastle's grotesque chaos is real. The redundancy

notices, which council leader Jeremy Beecham says are just a technicality, are part of a £21 million programme of cuts over the next three years. Manual workers are being forced to accept a new system of pay to save the council £150,000. Fortnightly cash payments are to give way to monthly payments into the bank.

Many of these low paid workers have a genuine fear of banks and cheque cards, and the change over will mean a devastating two week 'lying-on' period.

The council has effectively

issued an ultimatum - accept the new system or be sacked.

After a poor response to a circular seeking agreement for the scheme a letter went out to every employee which stated: "Given that you have not agreed to receive your pay by the new system, the council intends to introduce the change by termination of your present contract of employment, offering you a revised contract whereby it will be a condition of your employment that you will receive your pay by direct transfer to a bank or building society."

This is the right wing's new realism in action and is sure to lose support for Labour.

One trade union representative said: "There is real anger towards the bully-boy tactics of Beecham. Industrial action is threatened unless the redundancy notices are withdrawn. Our advice to the members is: don't sign anything. We intend to get letters to all our members."

There is also enormous anger on the estates over the implementation of the poll tax and the lack of any fight-back organised by the council.

# LPYS challenge Botha's partners in murder

**POSH LEAFY** St John's Wood was recently disturbed by a noisy delegation of Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) members. They were besieging the plush London office of Inkatha, the South African vigilante gangs led by ban-tustan leader Buthelezi.

By April Ashley  
Socialist links  
with South African  
youth campaign

The LPYS members chanted slogans like "Inkatha and Botha: partners in murder!", annoying the Inkatha representative.

Her mood matched the stormy weather outside. She went wild with anger on being exposed enjoying Thatcher's hospitality.

She expressed great admiration for Thatcher and hatred for us "Labour Party people who are nothing." LPYS members accused Inkatha of being a tribal mafia that had slaughtered hundreds of workers and youth in Natal.

As we argued, the police were called. St John's Wood has never seen



The LPYS lobby Inkatha headquarters.

Photos: Militant.

anything like this!

We told the Inkatha rep that black youth and workers would crush her organisation.

She made some wild gestures and ripped apart one

of our placards.

Then she tried to drown us out by hoovering the hallway! "Hoovering isn't going to save Inkatha," one comrade commented.

We promised to be back

and to keep up our campaign till Inkatha is kicked out of Britain. The labour movement must take up this campaign to expose this reactionary gangster organisation.

The unions should cut off all services to this office which is attempting to gain diplomatic cover to justify the killings of youth and workers in South Africa.

LABOUR MPs Dave Nelist, Terry Fields, Jeremy Corbyn, Bob Clay, Alice Mahon and Pat Wall put down a motion in parliament on 12 July that "this gangster organisation Inkatha, which claims to be a liberation movement, is nothing more than a shield for the apartheid state". It "hopes that the trade union movement will cut off all services to this office."

## Death squads

The motion notes that many black workers, youth and Congress activists had been murdered by Inkatha and other vigilante death squads, including "trade union leaders at the BTR plant at Howick, at Hlobane colliery, at Zincor mines at Jabula Foods and eight Transport and General Workers Union bus drivers in Pietermaritzburg".

Another motion from the MPs supports the LPYS lobby and calls for "workers' sanctions to defend Cosatu and to demand the release of Nelson Mandela, Moses Mayekiso and all political prisoners in South Africa's jails."

# Stop these deportations

## Marion Gaima

MARION GAIMA'S appeal against deportation was turned down in the High Court on 22 July.

Her fight to stay in Britain has been supported by her fellow workers, who are dismayed by the Tories' callousness. Marion has been in the country since arriving as a student in 1973. Since then she has worked as a medical secretary and, for the last three years for Hackney council.

"One morning in 1984," she told *Militant*, "three plain-clothes male immigration officials knocked at my door. I had to spend two and a half months in Holloway prison.

"I have never been a 'burden on the state'. I've worked all the time and never claimed benefits. I am being deported after spending a good part of my adult life here. I have paid a lot of taxes here and paid for a pension which I will lose if I am deported.

"Although I come from Sierra

Leone I consider this more of a home. I have got a job and like it here.

"I want people to put themselves in my position and ask themselves what they would do if they were me, to be asked to leave the country and told they are unwanted. How would they feel one day being told they have to go back and start life afresh?

"Because of the political situation there, going back to Sierra Leone could be very tricky. I don't see why I have to take such an unnecessary risk.

## Great support

"It is unfortunate that the British government refers to people facing deportation as 'aliens'. They are mostly people from former British colonies. If I came from Russia or any of the 'Iron Curtain' countries, probably I would have no problem.



Marion Gaima.

"And when you consider how much these former colonial countries have contributed to making Britain become 'Great' Britain, to treat us like this is very unfair.

"We have been going out with petitions, asking people to sign and I have got a lot of support

within the community, from people who believe that the deportation is wrong."

The first step after the High Court decision will be to raise the profile of the campaign both in Hackney where Marion works and Newham where she lives.

As part of that campaign individual letters should be sent to the Home Office asking for Marion to be allowed to stay on compassionate grounds.

MEMBERS OF the civil service union CPSA have come to the defence of victims of racism and deportation threats.

Ron Springer was arrested and subjected to physical and verbal abuse after the police broke up a christening party at his girlfriend's flat in Newham. (See *Militant* 24 June).

CPSA members from DHSS offices in Hackney and Tower Hamlets heard Ron speak at a meeting last week.

"Some of those arrested were single, unemployed black people and the police knew they could get away with it", Ron said. "When

they found out I was a civil servant, they backed off and tried to tell me I didn't need to get arrested".

DHSS workers at the meeting pledged full support for Ron's campaign. Graham Corbett, the national secretary of CPSA's anti-racism committee promised to take up the case in the union nationally.

## Pressure

Marion Gaima (see left) was also at the meeting, appealing for active support in her fight to stay in Britain. Now Marion has lost her case in the High Court, a more widespread movement involving civil servants as well as council workers will be needed.

Everyone at the meeting was determined to use the pressure of organised labour to defend Ron and Marion and drive back this onslaught on civil rights.

By Chas Berry

(CPSA Hackney and Tower Hamlets personal capacity)

## Yinka Olatunji

OLAYINKA OLATUNJI (Yinka) has lived half her life in Britain. Her two-year old daughter Nicole was born here. All her family have British citizenship. Yet a mistake on her registration form over 20 years ago means she now faces deportation.

Asked what she would do if she was deported to Nigeria, she said: "I've not given it much thought because I've nowhere to go. The heat would be too much for my daughter and me because we are not used

to it. The chance of getting a job is nil. I don't even speak the language.

"I've made a life for myself here and it would mean leaving everything for nothing. Nicole has never left the country and will be heartbroken if she has to go. Liverpool is home to her."

In May, City College students' union organised a one-day strike, demonstration and rally against deportation. Now Yinka's campaign has won support from thousands of black

and white workers throughout Merseyside.

In June, Yinka's MP, Terry Fields, handed in a petition with 6,000 signatures to the Home Office. City College students' union are circulating resolutions to every Labour Party branch in Liverpool and trade unions throughout Merseyside.

## Campaign

The campaign has already won the support of the National Union of Students, branches of Nalgo, Natfhe and the GMB, Riverside Labour Party,

Liverpool City Council, black organisations in Liverpool 8 and colleges throughout Britain.

Everywhere the campaign has won unanimous support and Yinka's speeches have received standing ovations. When the issues are explained, working-class people will fight deportations and racism.

In no way would British workers gain by deporting Yinka. Many more people leave Britain each year than immigrate in. The Tories use immigration controls in a racist way to help them blame the results

of their policies on a minority in society.

As a student at Langside College said: "Yinka would probably have stood a better chance of staying if she were an Olympic athlete or an ex-SS war criminal".

## Scapegoats

As the number of unemployed and homeless increases, so will the deportations as the Tories will try to use black people as a scapegoat.

Thatcher shouts about human rights in the Soviet Union, yet her system shows little regard for the

human rights of Yinka or blacks in Britain.

Due to the work of Terry Fields, Yinka's deportation is being reconsidered, but hundreds of deportations are taking place throughout Britain.

Capitalists around the world use racism to divide working people. Workers of the world should unite to fight deportations, defeat racism and end the system that breeds it.

By Cheryl Varley,

NUS Further Education National Committee (in personal capacity)

# NO TO WORKFARE PROPER TRAINING WITH PROPER PAY

**WORKERS ON the Community Programme (CP) schemes which will be incorporated into the Employment Training (ET), are keen to fight the Tories' workfare plans.**

**Manchester CP shop steward Ricky Byrne talked to Jane Briars about the fight against the schemes:**

"I work for CSA, a church organisation that runs quite a lot of CP schemes in Manchester.

There are different names for the schemes; ET, JTS and CP. The government is trying to make out that they're putting on loads of different training schemes, but they're all the same thing. All it means is you work for your dole plus £10.

Everybody on a scheme from 18 upwards will be involved in ET from 3 September. CP schemes will be phased out by 28 February 1989.

The government say the scheme won't be compulsory. But their White Paper says that if the places aren't completely filled, which they definitely won't be, clause 26 of the paper will be implemented. That clause will make it compulsory.

On top of that, workers at the Job Centres will be given £15 for every placement they make.

What it will mean is that, after paying fares and so on, you will pay to go to work. Private firms will make profits out of absolutely free labour. It's a handout for the bosses. And it will undermine wage levels and lead to job losses.

The Job Training Scheme (JTS) has already started. People are already working for the dole plus £10 on it. At CSA 60 of them started today. Many of them have been forced onto the scheme by threats of their social security aren't supposed to do that yet. At a building contractors in Stockport, 600 places on JTS started running the other day.

One lad that I heard about has to walk to work because he's got children and he can't afford to pay the fare for the four buses he'd have to use every day.

Another lad worked for a private firm and got Marks and Spencer's vouchers instead of his £10 top-up.

Every scheme you go to people are angry about workfare. Young people have told me they'll refuse to work for their dole and they'll take up robbing. You'll see young people not signing on to avoid it.

The schemes will work against the Tories in the end because you'll have young people crowded into places who don't want to be there. Strike action will blow up on them.

I think that the present CP schemes should be carried on, but should be properly paid with trade union rates of pay and forty hours, instead of part time which most of them are now. You should get proper training on the schemes and a guaranteed job after. The training should be extended to two years.

The other thing is that the schemes should be properly funded.

At the moment they're massively underfunded and a lot of them, like the one I work for, have run out of money. On ours we're supposed to do up old caravans for charities. Since I've been there we've put out two, that's all, because we don't have the materials we need.

On another scheme I visited in Salford, one workshop was supposed to do French polishing, but they had no polish. They had no equipment but they were still expected to sit there all day.

Big courses are run for management where they stay in posh hotels and get freebies. A lot of the money tends to go on that. So I think the schemes should be properly funded, under trade union control."

## UNIONS MUST FIGHT

"THE TUC voted to accept workfare," says Ricky Byrne. "The TGWU voted against it, but all the leadership has done is pull its members off the Manpower Services Commission boards.

"They have 25,000 or more members on CP schemes and they should organise them to fight ET. They are willing to fight.

"Local convenors and shop stewards in the North West had to fund and organise the demonstration a couple of months back. Ron Todd was supposed to speak at it but didn't turn up.

"The TGWU has appealed to unions and councils to boycott the scheme. This is good, but it won't stop non-unionised private firms taking on CP workers. The union must campaign to organise them too.

"After the demonstration we put forward that shop stewards' meetings should be held in every city. Following that a national combine of all CP shop stewards should be organised.

"It's no good just calling these and sending letters out, as has been done. You need a campaign to make sure every steward knows about it and sees it will be worthwhile. From a proper national combine a 24-hour strike of all schemes could be called, appealing to other workers to join us.

"Workfare affects everybody and, if they understood that, people would be prepared to fight it."

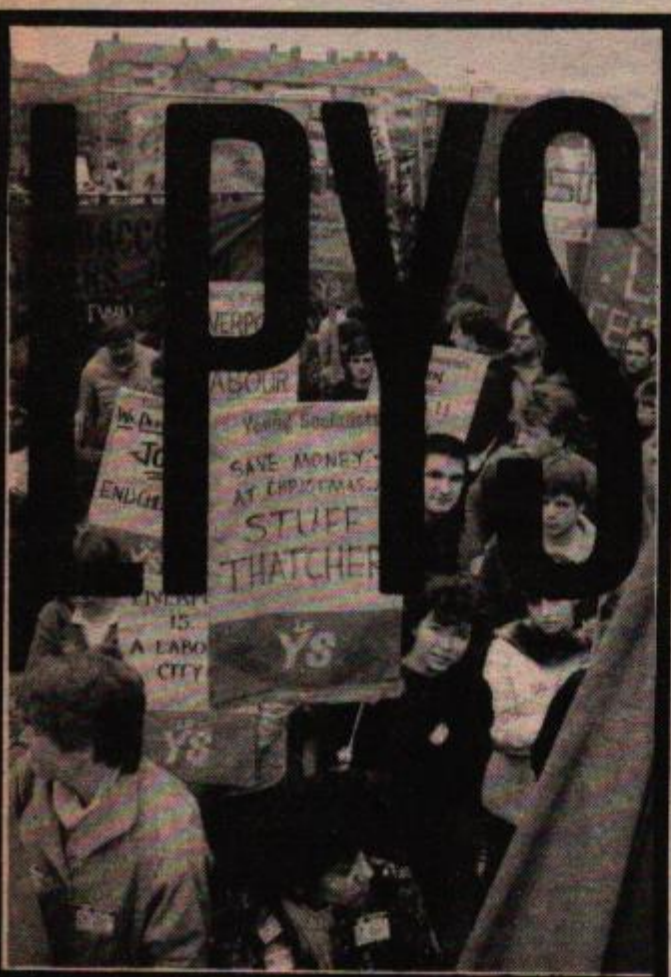
- A DEMONSTRATION against ET is being organised by the North-West CP schemes shop stewards combine on 20 August. It will be in Birkenhead.
- Labour Party Young Socialists branches should support this demonstration and organise meetings to expose the Tories' workfare plans. They should visit CP schemes, especially local authority-run ones, to speak to and discuss with the trainees.



THE FOLLOWING local authorities are either joining or intend to join the Employment Training programme:  
East Kilbride, Cardiff, Newcastle, South Tyneside, Birmingham, Leeds, Sunderland, Gateshead, Wakefield, Kirklees, Calderdale, Coventry, Sandwell, Dudley, Rotherham, Barnsley, Doncaster.

East Kilbride Youth Trades Union Rights Campaign are going to lobby the Labour Group there on the question. Labour Party Young Socialists members should organise similar campaigns to get these councils to reverse their decisions.

## SAVE THE



## Carmarthen closure

CARMARTHEN LABOUR Party has voted to close down the local, very active, LPYS branch. The main complaint was that the LPYS had produced a journal without the constituency party's agreement.

The journal had brought nine new LPYS members and helped to establish an anti-poll tax union on a local estate. Everyone admitted it was an excellent journal and accepted the LPYS's apology for not approaching the constituency, but the meeting still voted to close the YS.

The LPYS is fighting for re-instatement. Please send letters of protest at the closure to R. Edwards, secretary Carmarthen LP, 17 Barn Road, Carmarthen. Copies to Robin Murphy, Cheriton Ponds, Johnstown, Carmarthen.

## Usher's hypocrisy

**QUESTION 1:** Who wrote on 4 March in *Tribune* that the Labour Party had "ill served the youth of the country for too long" and warned Labour's National Executive (NEC) that activists are "rapidly coming to the conclusion that the Labour Party has no serious intention to build a thriving youth movement"?

**Answer:** Neil Usher before he was appointed National Youth and Student Officer of the Labour Party.

**QUESTION 2:** What has improved since his appointment?

**Answer:** Nothing. In fact Usher put forward proposals to damage the Labour Party Young Socialists' (LPYS) campaigning work!

In his *Tribune* article Usher complained that the

party had not produced "one mailing for CLP youth and student officers." It still hasn't.

He slammed the NEC for not establishing regional Youth Campaign Committees (RYCCs) and regional offices for not giving any suggestions about the structures and role of the new RYCCs.

Again nothing's changed and the proposals going to Labour Party conference say no region has to set up a RYCC.

In *Tribune* Usher attacked the NEC for not organising the suggested national youth festival (a "most important and imaginative idea"). We're still waiting for Usher's proposals for a festival...or any other national event.

"Most damaging of all," wrote Usher in March, "is the fact that no CLP in the

country is aware that the consultation is...taking place." No notice had been sent out from head office, he noted. Usher never sent out any notice and then co-wrote so-called conclusions of this non-existent 'consultation'.

Usher's article was pure hypocrisy. He has spent his time trying to hamper the party's youth. That's the purpose of the proposals that will go to this year's party conference.

Given the discrepancy between what Usher has said and done, perhaps he would like to resign. Or better still, stand for election by the party's youth.

**By Paul Ursell  
Youth and student officer  
Brent East CLP  
(personal capacity)**

# LEFT AND RIGHT

## No freebies, you're poor

ONE OF our readers got a letter from Holiday Ownership Exchange offering him one of seven prizes ranging from a Ford Fiesta down to £200 cash. All he had to do was visit their award centre, no obligation to buy or join anything.

The snag was hidden in the small print. You had to earn over £10,000 a year. As the reader says he is "on the poor side of this economic apartheid", no free prizes for him. After all, what's the point of showing someone with little or no money around their showrooms for two hours if they can't afford to buy anything? Isn't Tory Britain wonderful?

## Thin air

OF COURSE the Tories would put a price tag on the air we breathe if they could. A Brighton property developer has given the lead by paying out £20,000 plus for 30 foot by 10 foot of thin air on the roof of a plush Regency house for conversion to flats. They say the property was a bargain. "We expect to make a profit and move on to other things."

## Flat rates

BUT SUSSEX still has a long way to go to equal Tokyo where a tiny one-bedroom flat costs 34.4 million yen (£146,000) — seven times the annual income of an average family. Land prices have risen 70 per cent in one year.

Even to buy a 25 million yen flat with a 30-year mortgage, a Japanese government study says the average family will "teeter on the brink of bankruptcy for three or four years". That's while the boom is still with us. After it's over, many are likely to go over the brink.

## Money problem

TRACY GARY of San Francisco has started a counselling service for people with a serious hereditary handicap — too much money. The symptoms of this illness, it seems, are guilt, isolation and low self-esteem. (Well that's fair enough, we don't think much of them either).

Ms Gary charges \$20 a session, but if any of our readers have a similar problem, you can give away as much as you like to *Militant's* fighting fund.

## Learn from history

ARCHAEOLOGISTS HAVE found clay tablets giving the original Babylonian version of the biblical Noah's Flood story. This myth says that human beings were created after a number of minor gods refused to work for the higher deities.

The top gods created humans as strike breakers! But the elite gods, being followers of Keith Joseph, soon regretted it. People bred too rapidly and made too much noise so they decided to drown the lot of them except for one family who built an ark.

The lesson for all scabs is-never trust the bosses!

Thanks to Chris Webb and Martin Smith



A power station in the north of England. A threat to the environment?

Photo: Jacob Sutton (Gamma)

## Global warming

# The profit effect

"GLOBAL DISASTER imminent". "Earth's ecological system on the verge of destruction". These are the alarming predictions of official international scientific organisations.

By Ronnie Sookhdeo

The drought and forest fires which have destroyed the year's harvest in the US mid-west have set off alarm bells even in establishment scientific circles.

Dramatic changes in the earth's atmosphere around the world threaten our ecological system. The changes are put down to gaseous pollution, mainly by carbon dioxide, which causes the so-called greenhouse effect.

"If present trends in production of carbon dioxide and deforestation continue, the resulting global temperature increases will have catastrophic consequences", the scientists say.

They predict enormous weather fluctuations with disruption of agriculture, recurrent cycles of drought and famine and the submergence of whole countries as the polar ice cap melts — all within the lifetime of today's youth. The USA for instance would become a giant dust-bowl.

Our planet only supports life because of the delicate and harmonious relationship between the sun's rays, oxygen and carbon dioxide. The small quantity of carbon dioxide is essential directly or indirectly for all forms of life.

Plants absorb carbon dioxide and convert it into essential foodstuffs and oxygen. These in turn are consumed by humans and other animals who release more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere — completing the cycle.

But today this fine balance is being disturbed. The anarchic development of capitalism and the rapacious greed of today's

THE PRO-NUCLEAR power British Nuclear Forum Bulletin is trying to dampen fears about their industry's safety.

Scientists are worried by the cluster of leukaemia cases near nuclear power stations. The bulletin claims that discharges from Sellafield and Dounreay are "too small" to cause any increase in leukaemia in those areas.

They even quote a former professor of applied radioactivity that "moderate doses of radiation over a long time" can increase the expectation of life by stimulation and improvement of the immune system!

The forum takes the most optimistic view of the level of radiation normally discharged by nuclear installations. And Chernobyl shows that such power stations do not always act normally.

The claim that radiation is good for you is amazing. The experience in areas affected by nuclear testing shows that low-level radiation years after the tests can harm the body's immune system.

If the galaxy of firms who subsidise the Nuclear Forum transferred the money spent on this ludicrous public relations exercise into research on safe renewable energy sources, the world might become a healthier place. They won't, of course.

multinational corporations threaten humanity with extinction.

Large-scale combustion of fossil fuels — oil, gas and coal — for energy since the industrial revolution has increased the volume of carbon dioxide produced while deforestation and destruction of the rain forest lowers the amount which can be absorbed.

The carbon dioxide level in the atmosphere has gone up from an estimated 270 parts per million (ppm) in the 1850s to 335 ppm today and rising by 1-2 ppm a year. Combustion processes alone emit over 6.4 billion tons annually. Jungle clearances add 1.5 billion tons.

The released carbon dioxide creates a dense blanket around the earth, letting the sun's rays enter but trapping the heat that would otherwise be radiated into outer space.

This "greenhouse effect" has already raised global temperatures by 0.5 degrees over the past 100 years. This is made worse by a cocktail of chemicals dumped in the atmosphere, the most notorious being the chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) found in aerosols.

These seriously damage Earth's protective shield of ozone gas which filters out harmful radiation. Its erosion has been responsible for the growth in skin cancers.

## Obstruction

Now scientists have shown that each molecule of CFC is up to 10,000 times more effective in trapping Earth's heat than carbon dioxide.

Big business interests and capitalist governments like Britain's are obstructing the banning of CFCs by threatening, for instance, to transfer production to desperately poor third world countries if banned elsewhere.

CFCs and carbon dioxide together could push up the planet's temperature by 4.5 degrees by 2030 and 8.6 degrees over the next century. Using the most conservative results, scientists say sea levels would rise by as much as 4-5 feet. A rise of 18 inches would submerge Asia's rice growing areas.

The weather would change and the USA would no longer produce wheat and cereals. Permanent homelessness, famine and the collapse of many count-

ries' social and economic structure would result.

Among many tell-tale signs, the arctic permafrost has warmed up as much as three degrees over the past hundred years.

Industrial development has given the human race the possibility of a better life for all. But this development has to be planned.

At present scientific research is dominated by the needs of profit-hungry corporations and military powers. We need to ensure that the future of our planet comes first.

A planned economy under the control of the working class could devote far more resources to finding a clean efficient alternative energy system to both the extremely dangerous process of nuclear fission and fossil fuels.

A combination of conservation, wind, solar and geothermal energy would stop excess carbon dioxide formation. It would also make sure that limited oil, gas and coal resources are used as a source for essentials like drugs, chemicals and clothing materials for future generations.

Future generations may benefit from a near-infinite energy source in nuclear fusion when that process is perfected and made safe.

The wanton destruction of the rain forests must be halted. Big business is creating deserts out of former rain forests in the Amazon. The rich earth, unprotected by the trees, can be washed away by heavy rains.

Corporations cut down millions of acres for timber or, like Macdonalds, for cheap ranching land, with no concern for the consequences. That is a crime against the future.

The destruction of the environment has reached calamitous proportions and is inevitable in a society where the blind forces of the market predominate. The greenhouse effect and the destruction of the ozone layer are products of capitalism's disastrous policies.

# Disabled fight for their rights

**HALF A million disabled people have directly lost out thanks to Thatcher's malicious Social Security Act, along with millions of unemployed and single parents.**

By Stuart Bracking

Tens of thousands of new disabled claimants will also lose due to lower benefit levels and because of the new disabled premium, which groups all the disabled's needs together and is hopelessly inadequate. It is worse than the old system of additional payments.

Since I left college in June, I have learnt I can no longer claim domestic care allowance, which was about £50 per week, because of the changes. This allowance allowed the disabled to pay for a

care assistant to give them independence from their family.

The £30 that is available under attendance allowance is insufficient to pay for adequate care assistance.

Being a care assistant is a 24 hour job. They help you with bathing, toileting, cooking, dressing and making sure you get around. Even at night they have to turn you over in bed.

The old system was inadequate, but at least there was enough to pay a care assistant a pittance. There is now a danger that severely disabled people will no longer have a chance of living independently. Their families will be forced to cope.

The Tories have recognised this gap. They have created the independent living fund with a budget of £5 million. This does offer a way of achieving in-

dependence by helping pay for a care assistant. But it is not part of the social security system and there is no right to payment. It is to be administered, to their shame, by the Disablement Income Group.

Why should we have to rely upon a charity handout to achieve independence? Our needs like any other person should be met as of right. If I want to employ a full time care assistant and pay them decent wages, the money should be available.

## Poverty

The Social Security Act will increase poverty among the disabled. In 1983 60 per cent of the disabled lived in poverty. Unemployment is more than double the national average. Even where the disabled have jobs, it is

likely to be low skilled, low status and low paid.

The Tories have never been prepared to admit to the real levels of poverty amongst the six million disabled. A new survey into the conditions of the disabled by the DHSS has had its publication delayed until September to minimise the political damage.

There is no way the Tories are going to meet our needs. We have to fight for a political solution to poverty conditions we endure and that face millions of other workers.

We demand the repeal of the Social Security Act and the establishment of a comprehensive disability income scheme tied to a minimum wage of £135. The disabled have the right to a living wage or a living benefit. We must fight for the same minimum wage

levels for care assistants.

A proper level of mobility and attendance allowance should be paid, along with an allowance to meet all the extra individual needs of the disabled, to give the opportunity to work and to play a full part in society.

The British Council of Organisations of Disabled People must link up with the labour and trade union movement to campaign for these demands and to resist further Tory attacks. With them we must fight for the return of a Labour government committed to socialist policies that can fund the programme of demands for the disabled.

**British Council of Organisations of Disabled People Demonstration against Social Security Act**  
**Thursday 28 July, Assemble 12.30 Kennington Park.**

### Debates:

**Perestroika—Can Gorbachev's 'revolution' succeed?**  
 Lynn Walsh

**Fighting for a Socialist South Africa**

Phil Frampton/Anti-Apartheid

**Should women have abortion rights?**

Janice Glennon/SPUC

**Rallies: Fighting the Poll Tax**  
**The Life of Martin Luther King**

### Other Meetings:

**Marxism and Science**  
**AIDS—The socialist answer**  
**Child Abuse—Whose fault?**

Courses at the camp: Introduction to socialism; Marxist Classics; Youth and the fight for socialism; Revolution and counter-revolution—the Germany 1918-21; Ireland—divide and rule; Revolution in Europe, 1968; 1930s—Britain and America after the crash; Liverpool—A city that dared to fight; The Middle East—States of turmoil; The trade unions—A force for change; Women and the fight for socialism; Marxist Economics

Seats available on London coach. Cost—£10, reduced rates for children. Seats must be booked, phone George Roberts: 739 9123.

Coach leaves from outside BBC, Shepherds Bush, 11.30 am, 6 August.

# Come to Summer Camp '88

## 6-13 August

Bracelands Campsite, Gloucestershire

Name .....

Address .....

Enclosed is.....for.....5-14 yrs (£5 each)

.....14yrs and over (£40 each)

.....deposits (£10 each).

Return to: **WEG, PO Box 332, London E15 3BY.**

Make cheques payable to WEG.

THE MAIN lesson of Manchester's sales campaign with issue 905 is that there is a massive market for *Militant*. On estate sales one in three houses where people were in bought the paper.

Many sellers achieved magnificent results. The highest individual sale was 106 by Phil Frampton. Another group of sellers all sold more than 70. And a single parent with two children sold 75.

Two young black sellers sold more than 50 each and two sellers with new born babies sold over 30 papers.

Sales were also pushed in several workplaces where *Militant* sellers work. One engineering worker sold 44 and a local council worker sold 38. Sales were also organised outside 50 workplaces. 20 papers were taken by the newspaperman to sell on his rounds at one of the major hospitals.

More than £200 was collected in paper extras. On a street sale two 12-year olds gave all their pocket money to the *Militant* fighting fund.

Many of the new buyers agreed to take the paper regularly.

But the best accolade went to sellers in Preston who were out on the streets each day. At the end of the week a passer-by said: "You lot never give up."

# SELL Militant

## 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.



BECOME A  
**Militant**  
 SUPPORTER

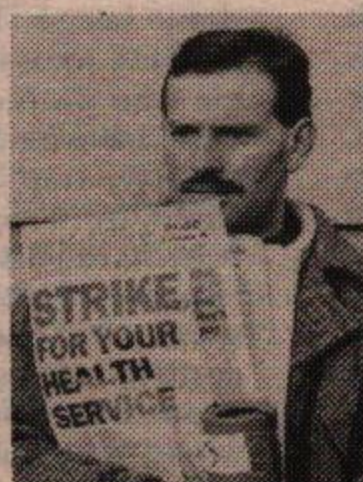
**YOUR NEXT STEP...  
 OUR FIGHT IS YOUR FIGHT...JOIN IT**  
 I wish to become a Militant supporter:

Name .....

Address .....

.....Tel.....

or telephone 01 533 3311 now!



**Sheffield:**  
 Communist Manifesto  
 17 July Victoria Hotel  
 7.30 pm  
**Liverpool:**  
 Marxist discussion  
 group 31 July and  
 fortnightly 2, Lower  
 breck Road. 7.00 pm

**Southampton:**  
 Redbridge Marxist  
 discussion group,  
 every Wednesday.  
 7 Goodwin Close,  
 Millbrook  
 2.00pm.

# The battle on Poll Tax

**IN THE** afterglow of her re-election in 1987, Thatcher confidently declared that the poll tax was to be the 'flagship' of her government. The *Titanic* was the flagship of the British merchant navy and was considered unsinkable until it hit an Atlantic iceberg!

Now the Tories are on a collision course with a far more formidable obstacle – the embittered and mobilised Scottish working class, and only just behind them their English and Welsh counterparts!

With clear leadership the labour movement can sink the Tory flagship without trace. And when the flagship goes down, the Admiral either goes down with it or is sacked!

Thatcher is achieving what the Labour and trade union leaders have failed to do in the last nine years – unite and generalise the struggles of the working class against her government.

## Liverpool

Young and old, employed and unemployed, the sick and disabled, council tenants and house-owners, the black and Asian population – all except the upper middle class and rich will be hit hard. Thatcher has ignored the first rule of politics – never take on everyone at the same time!

She conceded to Liverpool in 1984 partly because she wanted to avoid a 'second front' during the miners' strike. She hesitated a long time before proceeding with poll tax.

However, the defeat of the anti-ratecapping battle, and particularly the isolation of Liverpool City Council by the Labour and trade union leaders, gave the green light to her acolyte Nicholas Ridley to introduce this draconian attack on the living standards of the working class.

The government and the whole ruling class were terrified by the movement in Liverpool. This is underscored by Ridley's recent attempt to justify introducing the poll tax: "Above all, the new system will remove from Liverpool that poisonous power base on which extremism thrives – the power base of spending power without local accountability."

The poll tax is designed to destroy 'local accountability' by concentrating even greater power in the hands of central government. It will only account for 20 per cent of a council's income, 80 per cent coming from government grants and the business rate.

Through government largesse and its enormously increased, centralised power, the Tories hope vainly to restore their flagging fortunes in the inner-cities.

As the *Sunday Times* put it: "In Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow and Newcastle, where much of the worst inner-city conditions are found, there is now not a single Conservative MP. Labour domination at least in the town

By Peter Taaffe

halls and council chambers is almost as complete... Ridley with the lion's share of the inner-city budget takes the hardest line over freezing out the uncooperative authorities."

However the serious strategists of capital, and a majority of Tory MPs, fear the social convulsions which will flow from poll tax. The *Economist*, *Financial Times* and *Mail on Sunday* amongst others have urged Thatcher not to proceed with it.

Two thirds of Tory MPs, according to *The Independent* recently, were opposed to both the Social Security Act and the poll tax. Yet when it came to the vote, they loyally trooped into the government lobby.

Tory opponents have reconciled themselves to the tax because of what they see as the ineffectiveness of the opposition.

But their gauge for the level of resistance to poll tax is the tops of the labour movement. They are making a fundamental error in taking this as the temper of the working class.

It is like the captain of the *Titanic* – estimating the size of the iceberg merely by the one-tenth visible above the surface.

In general the working class only respond to the attacks of the capitalists when they feel the lash on their backs. But opposition to the poll tax is colossal in advance of its introduction.

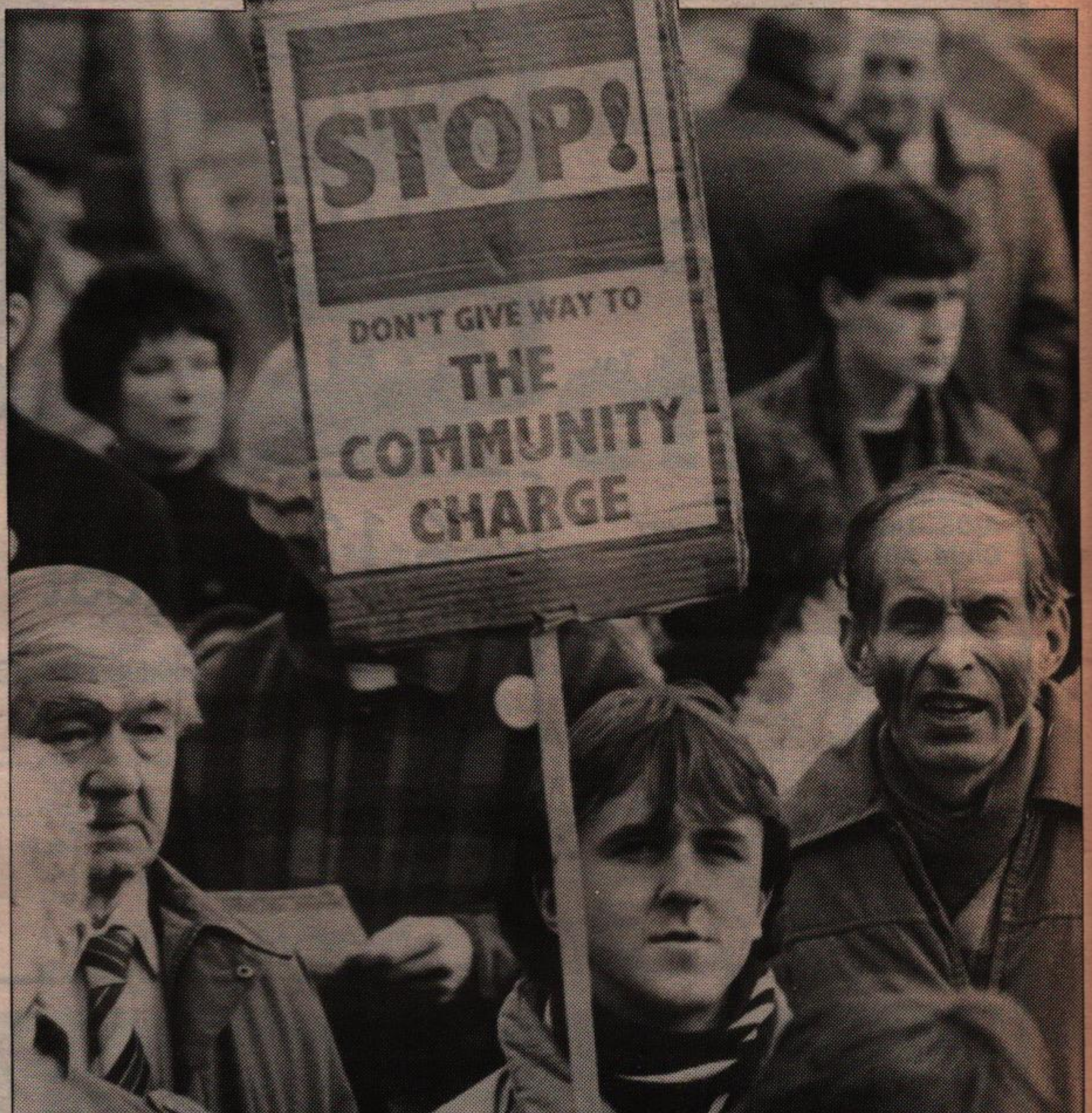
In Scotland one poll after another has demonstrated overwhelming opposition. The most recent shows 72 per cent opposed.

In England and Wales ten months ago 60 per cent of those polled were opposed to the tax. Now a poll indicates 80 per cent opposed, fully 20 months before it is introduced there.

Opposition is not restricted to the working class but to wide sections of the middle class as well. It is generally perceived as a brutal shifting of resources from the poor to the rich.

Even in the financial columns of *The Guardian*, it was recently revealed that in South Buckinghamshire the average adult would gain £180 a year! In Hackney, however, where the average rates per household is now £362, the average poll tax for a three-adult household will be £2,073!

So fearful are the Tories of the electoral consequences that they are introducing the tax in one fell swoop in England and Wales in 1990. It was originally proposed to introduce it gradually over



Anti-poll tax demonstration in Edinburgh.

Photo: Steve McTaggart.

three years, but this would have postponed the full force of the tax until just before the next general election.

These facts alone shatter the Tory myth that they have a 'mandate' for this measure. Even 40 per cent of Tories are opposed.

And the poll tax is only the latest attack. It follows the Social Security Act and the Housing Bill.

The groans of the poor have even occasionally reached the ears of Tory MPs like Hugh Dykes who said recently:

"I am worried because in recent years we have seen the development of two societies. I am not overdramatising the position, but I have noticed the haunted look in the eyes of people who shuffle into my surgery. They have been caught up in the poverty trap which has come about by a combination of our benefits and tax system."

Some Scottish Tories now speak of Thatcher in the most derisive terms. One told *The Guardian*: "Formerly loyal Tories would never vote for the party while she remained Prime

Minister."

Michael Heseltine has warned that the poll tax will go down in history as "the Tory tax".

The scale of the attack is shown by the increased number who will pay it compared to rates. In Britain 18 million people pay rates. When poll tax is introduced, 35 million will pay. In Scotland two million pay rates and 3.8 million will pay poll tax.

## Scottish workers

This is the biggest single general attack on the living standards of the working class not just from this Tory government, but probably this century.

Thatcher has broken the second rule of the capitalists – never confront head-on the mighty Scottish working class.

Ted Heath, her predecessor, retreated ignominiously in the early 1970s in the face of a 'social upheaval' when the UCS shipyards were threatened with closure.

Introducing the poll tax in Scotland first is pouring oil on a raging fire. Thatcher has quite consciously chosen Scotland as a tes-

ting ground. She calculates that the Tories, reduced to the proverbial number of MPs who would get into two taxis, have little to lose.

There is also probably an element of revenge against Scotland for voting Labour so overwhelmingly. More serious representatives of capital, like Heath, are holding their heads at the long-term consequences of Thatcher's approach to Scotland.

Not only has it inflamed the working class (Thatcher dared not meet the teams on the pitch at the Scottish Cup Final), it has fed the national resentment of the Scottish people.

Support for an independent Scotland, although only expressed by a minority, has leapt from 29 to 35 per cent.

The Tories claim to be the 'Conservative and Unionist Party'. Yet Thatcher's measures threaten not just the 'unity' of the Tory Party but of 'Britain' as well.

In the local elections they were pushed into third place, behind the SNP. Their vote dropped from 29 per cent in 1984 to 19 per cent this year.



# MILITANT INTERNATIONAL REVIEW



**90p** Article on poll tax

From World Socialist Books  
3-13 Hepscoot Rd  
London E9.



Meeting to establish Strathclyde Federation of anti-poll tax unions.

Thatcher and Scottish Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, treat the Scottish people almost as colonial slaves, singled out first to bear the brunt of the poll tax. The calculation is that once the Scots are driven into the ground, England and Wales will meekly acquiesce.

But, notwithstanding the leadership of the labour and trade union movement, mass opposition is brewing in Scotland.

Initially the Tories claimed the tax would involve 'only' £200 per head of the population. An expert at Strathclyde University then upped the estimate to £400 per head.

Now William English, Director of Finance for Strathclyde Council, says the average per head will be an astronomical £529! *Militant* has pointed out this could very quickly rise within a few years, with inflation and increased burdens on local authorities, to £1,000 for every Scot above the age of 18.

### Labour leaders

And the working class will foot the bill for the instruments of their own torture. The extra money to set up the poll tax will largely come out of existing council spending. It will cost £400m to set up the machinery and £700m to implement and collect it.

The opposition of the official leadership of the labour movement is a combination of parliamentary phrasemongering, posturing and impotence to prevent implementation.

Labour's national executive, (NEC) in its recent statement *Local services, local choices*, correctly say: "Some will face stark choices. They will have to decide whether to pay their poll tax or buy essential food or clothing."

Yet disgracefully they conclude that any effective campaign to prevent the introduction of the tax should be opposed: "Even if non-collection were a viable legal option, we would not advocate it."

They admit working people will have to go without adequate food and clothing to pay this iniquitous tax. The pioneers of the labour movement must be turning in their grave at the spectacle of Labour's leadership worshipping at the shrine of capitalist 'legality'.

The most finished expression of what even a right-wing Scottish Labour MP, Dick Douglas, has called the "puerile and pusillanimous" (cowardly) attitude of the Labour leadership, was an article by John Maxton MP in the *Glasgow Herald* on 24 June:

"If such a mass campaign (of non-payment) were to succeed, what would be the result? Local

authorities would lose a vital part of their income. Services would have to be cut and jobs would be lost.

"It is the poorest in our society who would be hit hardest by such action, first by cuts in services upon which they depend, and secondly because that part of the poll tax which they have to pay will be increased the following year."

This is no different to the arguments Thatcher deployed against Kinnock, when he called for sanctions against South Africa.

She accused him of advocating increased suffering for the black workers. Those workers would answer that they are prepared to put up with temporary increased deprivation if real sanctions - effectively organised by the labour movement - were used to undermine the apartheid regime.

Similarly the Scottish workers consider this attack so draconian that if needs be they would be prepared to accept a temporary loss in services as the cost for defeating it.

But an effectively organised 'non-payment' campaign could collect money at the level of the existing rates, bank it and use it to maintain services, including emergency services for the old, sick and infirm.

Maxton deploys another weapon: "The law has been so devised that non-payment is extremely hard to organise. If someone in employment refuses to pay, after three months the local authority will obtain a court order arresting their wages and the tax will be paid. No court appearance will be necessary. The government have made it clear they are even going to allow arrestment of DHSS payments. Thus martyrdom will not be easy."

Marxists are not looking for 'martyrdom' but a mass, collective resistance to poll tax. Maxton forgets that it will be Scottish Labour councils who will be called upon to impose and collect fines for non-payment. It would be working people in local government and the civil service unions who would be called upon to arrest wages and benefits.

If Maxton had one ounce of the fight of the old 'Red Clydesiders', including his famous uncle James Maxton, he would be calling on Labour councils and their workers not to take such anti-working-class measures.

Any attempt to arrest wages should be met by strike action. *Militant* supporters and others in the labour movement will certainly be pressing for this.

Maxton declares: "All responsible politicians have now rejected the case for a mass campaign of non-payment, leaving it to the SNP, the *Militant* Tendency and a few Labour Party activists who should know better to continue in partnership down that irresponsible road."

The attempt to link *Militant* with the SNP is, as Maxton knows, completely false. The SNP are conducting a demagogic, merely verbal campaign against poll tax. Their advocacy of 'non-implementation' has not prevented them in Angus council, the only one they control, from setting up the machinery for implementation.

- ★ For a mass campaign against the poll tax;
- ★ For mass organised non-payment and non-compliance by local authorities and council trade unions;
- ★ Build anti-poll tax unions and prepare for industrial action to defend those victimised for non-payment or non-implementation;
- ★ Turn the STUC day of action on 13 September into a one-day general strike in Scotland.

Nevertheless the abandonment of the struggle against the poll tax by the official Labour leaders has been a gift to the SNP. Their vote increased from 14 per cent in the general election to 21 per cent in the local elections in May and in the polls they now stand at 24 per cent.

Labour's share of the poll, which was 42 per cent in the general election, increased to 49 per cent in May. Support has now dropped dramatically to 40 per cent.

This is entirely due to the passivity and impotence of the official leadership. The semi-official 'Stop It' campaign has 'stopped' precisely where a real campaign should begin, by organising mass resistance.

Brian Wilson, the main spokesman for 'Stop It' is implacably opposed to the non-collection/

non-payment campaign. This body seems to be more concerned to 'stop' such an effective mass campaign.

He has revealed their impotence in a *New Socialist* article: "Obviously neither of these tactics (extensive programme of public meetings, publicity work and 'clogging up the works' by sending back registration forms) is in itself going to stop the poll tax, but by giving people something to do, we hope to keep the Tories firmly on the defensive in Scotland."

The only alternative advanced by the right-wing leaders of the movement is the one derided by Neil Kinnock as the philosophy of 'the seventh cavalry'. The working class must lie down before Thatcher's juggernaut, patiently suffer the full horror of the poll tax and wait for a Labour government.

As Maxton bluntly states: "The only certain way to defeat the poll tax is to defeat the Tories at the next election and return a government committed to the repeal of the poll tax legislation."

For good measure he adds that "any non-payment, either mass or individual, will not achieve that aim."

On the contrary, an effective non-payment campaign could paralyse the government and defeat this tax. In so doing it could prepare the way for a Labour government.

Labour's massive vote in the last general election was achieved precisely because the whole Scottish labour movement, drawing behind it significant sections of the middle class, supported the 'illegal' actions of the Caterpillar workers in defending not just their own factory but the very existence of a manufacturing base in Scotland.

The 'illegal' stance of the immortal 47 Liverpool councillors paved the way for Labour's historic victories throughout Merseyside.

Moreover it is not a question of supporting or not supporting non-payment. Local authorities have estimated that between 15 and 25 per cent will simply be unable to pay. This amounts to three quarters of a million people in Scotland alone.

The choice is whether non-payment will be organised in a mass campaign or working people will be forced to fight alone and become the 'individual martyrs' so derided by Maxton.

The NEC's harebrained alter-

native to the poll tax is to introduce two taxes, a property and local income tax, which will be eagerly seized upon by the Tories.

Even the *Daily Mirror* concedes that Labour will be seen as "the party of more taxation". Kinnock and Hattersley are committing the same blunder as 1987. Labour should demand the full restoration of the 1979 rate support grant to councils and link the struggle to the idea of a socialist planned economy.

Once organised behind the mighty labour movement, the Scottish workers will be an irresistible force that could bring the government to its knees.

If one or two million workers refuse to pay the tax that will be the end of the matter. And the success of the anti-poll-tax unions, organised by the Marxists with the best forces in the Scottish labour movement, have given a glimpse of the potential.

Whereas six months ago, the slogans and demands of *Militant* were dismissed as 'an irrelevance', now the summits of the trade union movement have been forced to respond to the organised pressure from below.

The right wing has predictably reacted to this by threatening expulsions of those leading this struggle.

The Scottish TUC, however, responding to the mood in the housing schemes and factories, has come out for a 15-minute stoppage on 13 September. Thatcher is not likely to be quaking in her shoes at that!

Nevertheless, there will be pressure to make this an effective demonstration of working-class power and opposition to poll tax in the form of a 24-hour general strike.

As the full horror of the poll tax is borne in on working people, they will exert remorseless pressure on their leaders to take effective action to prevent its introduction.

No amount of expulsions or threats will prevent the mighty movement now taking shape in Scotland. This is an historic struggle of vital concern not just for the Scottish labour movement but for the working class throughout Britain.

The Thatcher juggernaut is at the gates of Glasgow and Edinburgh. She intends to roll it over the 'whitened bones' of the Scottish labour movement and then trample over the English and Welsh working class.

However, if the Scottish labour movement organises around the slogans and ideas of the Marxists, Thatcher will meet her match. It can stop the juggernaut in its tracks, which will be the beginning of the end of Thatcher herself.

As the Iran/Iraq war ends

# Social conflict looms in the Gulf

AFTER EIGHT years, the loss of a million lives and at a cost of \$400bn, the Iran-Iraq war seems to be finally grinding to a stop.

Both states have been exhausted politically, economically and militarily. It was not the United Nations cease-fire resolution that finally ended the war but the realisation in Tehran that Iran cannot fight on any longer.

The background to the conflict was the Iranian revolution which overthrew the Shah. In the absence of a conscious working-class leadership it brought to power the reactionary theocracy under Ayatollah Khomeini, based on the Shiite branch of Islam. This exacerbated social and national conflicts in Iraq, where the Shiites constitute a majority in a state dominated by Sunni Moslems. Before the war there were border clashes and Iraq expelled over 200,000 Shiites of Iranian origin.

When Iraq launched a 'blitzkrieg' invasion in September 1980 it gambled on achieving a swift victory over an Iranian army decimated and purged in the course of the revolution. Iraq's president, Saddam Hussein, hoped to topple the mullahs' regime, win a strategic advantage over the Shatt-al-Arab waterway that separates the two countries - Iraq's only outlet to the sea - and generally enhance the power and prestige of his regime.

## Mistake

In the first weeks Iraq captured over 4,000 square miles of territory. Two cities, Korammshah and Abadan, were virtually destroyed, the latter having up to then the biggest concentration of oil-refineries and processing plants anywhere in the Middle East.

But Saddam had made a serious mistake. The invasion further consolidated the Iranian regime around the mullahs. The exhortation to 'defend the revolution' brought tens of thousands of volunteers to the fighting.

Within two years Iraq had lost most of the territory it had seized, and for most of the time since then-backed by all the reactionary Arab Gulf states and the imperialist powers - was fighting to avert a military and political disaster at the hands of its much larger antagonist.

In eight years Iraq has gone from having \$35bn in reserves to being \$60bn in

By John Pickard

debt. Enormous sums of money were poured into the Iraqi war effort, especially by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. With huge quantities of arms from France, Italy and especially the Soviet Union, Iraq has been able to equip itself far better than Iran, which could not even manage to get spare parts to keep its ageing jets in the air.

But despite the Iraqi hardware, the size of the Iranian economy and population - three times bigger than Iraq - appeared to give it the edge. Iran began to register a number of successes in the war to the point where at one stage it looked as if Iraq's second biggest city, Basra, could fall.

In early 1987 it became clear that Iraq could not win the war, but could conceivably lose it. A US Congressional report, pointing to this fact, noted that "an Iraqi defeat would be catastrophic to Western interests..."

As Iraq seemed on the brink of defeat car bombs rocked the capital, Baghdad, trade unions were abolished and the government wrestled with the problem of thousands of army deserters infesting the countryside.

A defeat would almost certainly have had catastrophic implications for Saddam's regime, and there would have been as much danger of some of the other Arab regimes, like Kuwait, going down with it. Many of the smaller Arab Gulf states have sizeable Shiite populations, many of Iranian extraction and consequently influenced by the Iranian revolution and Islamic fundamentalism.

During the war from time to time Kuwait was attacked by missiles fired from Iranian-held territory. Tremors of fear reached a peak in summer 1987, when the holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia was shaken by demonstrations of Shiite pilgrims, leading to the massacre of over 400 of them.

In order to stave off the expected Iraqi collapse, with all that would imply for the instability of the other Gulf states, there has been a significant direct intervention by imperialism, especially the USA, in the last year. Iraq set out to 'internationalise' the war by stepping up air attacks



Top: victims of mustard gas used by the Iraqi regime in the Kurdish region.

Above: despite its theocratic distortions, the Iranian revolution presented a threat to imperialist interests in the Gulf.

on Iranian oil shipments in the Gulf, inviting Iranian retaliation against merchant shipping plying the ports of the Arab states.

## Build-up

Kuwaiti oil-tankers were 're-registered' to qualify for US naval protection. To make doubly sure of outside intervention, Iraq 'accidentally' attacked the US frigate *Stark*, killing 37 naval ratings. US imperialism demanded its 'apology' from Iraq, and promptly began a massive naval build-up against ... Iran.

By the autumn of last year, the NATO powers had assembled a fleet of nearly 70 ships. Smaller navies like Britain's provided minesweepers, with the US navy providing an awesome firepower in battleships and aircraft carriers.

This enormous military presence effectively prevented Iranian retaliation

against Iraqi or Arab shipping. After a number of one-sided clashes with the US navy the Iranian navy was virtually crippled, losing two of its three frigates.

Meanwhile Iraq, with almost unchallenged air superiority, was able to inflict great damage on Iranian oil facilities, storage and shipping.

With the intervention of imperialism as an added burden, Iran was beginning to experience serious exhaustion and war-weariness. The 'final breakthrough' that was to end the war seemed more and more remote as the army found increasing difficulty getting volunteers to go to the front, getting military supplies on international markets and handling the growing domestic discontent.

Inflation was estimated at 50 per cent. Unemployment, even officially, was 20 per cent. There was no prospect of economic improvement with the war ab-

sorbing 40 per cent of government expenditure.

A few months ago, any talk of a truce with Saddam would have been denounced in Tehran as 'treachery'. But faced with the possibility that the army may have collapsed in any case - like the imperial Russian army in 1917 - Iran's rulers have had to call a halt.

The powerful speaker of the Iranian parliament, Ali Akbar Rafsanjani, referred last week to the imminent "disintegration" of the Iranian army unless an immediate cease-fire was enforced:

"We may well be facing not only a catastrophe on the battlefield, but even the collapse of the regime" - adding, with an eye to the growing discontent in the streets, "we could all swing in the main square of Tehran".

## Upheavals

After the colossal sacrifices and efforts of the war there is no guarantee of social peace either in Iraq or Iran. The war has been compared to the First World War in Europe, with trenches, artillery bombardments, poison gas and astronomical casualties for little territorial gain.

But just as the First World War ended in a storm of revolutions in Europe, so also the end of the Gulf War could usher in big upheavals in Iran, Iraq and the other Gulf states.

In Iran, the revolution that overthrew the Shah was overtaken by the reactionary clericalism of the mullahs. But within the body of the Islamic movement itself different strands reflect different class forces.

The leading clerics in the powerful 'Council of Guardians' have been able to veto any radical legislation like land reform or nationalisation, so that there has been the consolidation, for a period, of a capitalist regime in a theocratic form.

But during the latter stages of the war all the class forces that threatened to explode during the revolution have begun to resurface. Under the pres-

sure of the masses new legislation has been put forward for land reform, the nationalisation of foreign trade and for other radical economic measures.

Earlier this year Ayatollah Khomeini removed the veto powers of the Council of Guardians, and in the May elections called for voters to reject "those who are defenders of capitalist Islam", while endorsing those candidates "who have experienced the bitter taste of poverty ... the defenders of the Islam of the barefooted of the earth, the Islam of the deprived and the meek".

These statements and proposals are a product of mighty class forces at work, at this stage largely subterranean, but capable of bursting into the open with the end of the war and the 'national emergency'. Having dragged the war out in the last few years in hope of a victory to save its prestige, the Tehran regime may find the peace as precarious as the war.

In Iraq also the opposition that has been bottled up may now begin to express itself openly. For a small nation of 17 million a third of a million dead and half as many again injured represents a huge loss. The massive debts will now have to be repaid on the backs of workers' living standards. But the workers will also be demanding that Saddam pays a price for all their blood and suffering.

The consequences of this 'peace' for Iran and Iraq may be repeated for the other Gulf states, not least Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, as well as for the Middle East as a whole. The imperialist powers have intervened actively to shore up their vital strategic interests and to prevent an Iraqi collapse.

But none of the fundamental social and national contradictions have been eliminated by the war, and most have been made worse.

From the point of view of imperialism and stability in the Middle East, the 'peace' has come too late. Too much has been sacrificed and too much blood spilt for things ever to be the same as they were.

# 'The tribe of the homeless'

"SINCE MONDAY I've been approached by beggars at least a dozen times in streets around the White House. Washington residents confirm that it has been a growing phenomenon in the last four to five years.

"The homeless stretch out on park benches, a different tribe from the beggars." (Joe Rogaly in the *Financial Times*, 15 July)

Jesse Jackson estimates that three million people live on the streets of the USA, the richest country in the world. A *Financial Times* correspondent writes that within a decade homelessness in the US, unless it is checked, will be as widespread as in India.

Here there is no 'dependency culture'. You have to stand on your own two feet (or crawl). If you don't have the money for a place of your own, there is the street to live on.

Even if you come from a 'privileged' background you can end up on the streets—especially if you have a problem. Like the young black woman who was turned out of her middle-class home because she had a drink problem. She ended her days sleeping in derelict buses, "dying a little at a time", until some youths threw a Molotov cocktail into the bus and burnt her alive.

Being disabled doesn't help either. No special favours are granted by the authorities. And don't think that compassion extends into the streets. In broad daylight a young homeless woman confined

## By a recent visitor to the USA

to a wheelchair is punched unconscious and raped by a homeless man.

In the parks some people are so good at building tree houses and evading the authorities that they remain undetected for years. The most primitive methods of living triumph over the most modern municipal law.

'Enterprise' is supposed to triumph over everything. If you work hard enough, presumably, you can graduate from the streets or tree houses to join the 47 individuals and 20 families who each own over a billion dollars.

But the dividing line between 'enterprise' and corruption seems to be barely detectable. Graft seems to pervade every layer of society. Could it be that barbarism and corruption are seeping down from the top?

For example, the city cultural commissioner (not a low-paid job) is on her second shop-lifting charge. Her millionaire boyfriend is serving four years for tax evasion. Currently 11 doc-

tors are indicted for obtaining \$8.7m illegally from public health funds.

The health inspectors who look after restaurants have obviously decided to ape their social 'betters' and get in on the act. Half of them are now on charges of extortion and bribery. In one case they even put poisoned meat back into a restaurant.

'Enterprise' can achieve anything. Keep the state out—private companies do things more cheaply and effectively.

Like the phials of blood and tons of surgical waste, supposedly disposed of by a private firm, that washed up on a 26-mile stretch of beach.

## Real face

This is New York, colossus of capitalism, whose skyline is dominated by the twin towers of the World Trade Centre 107 stories high, at whose base you find the outcasts of the system. Here we can see the real face of capitalism behind the glitter and razzmatazz of the presidential election campaigns.

Could this be why millions will not be voting for either of the two capitalist parties?

But New York has another face. The tenants who are fighting back against rogue real estate developers. The trade unionists (more are unionised than in any other



Youth at a rally in the Bronx, New York, in support of an anti-drug trading campaign launched in the local area.

state) who fight to defend their conditions. The tens of thousands who rallied to Jesse Jackson's meetings, looking for the road to a new future—among whom there were thousands willing to buy the Marxist paper *Labor Militant* and discuss socialist ideas.

The task of defeating capitalism may seem enormous. But the World Trade Centre, which is visited by 500,000 people daily and in whose towers work 50,000 people, is organised and supervised by a small number of workers. They are clear about their

tasks.

Similarly a party of labour, though it might be small in the beginning, could find an echo and organise millions of workers if it is clear in offering an alternative to capitalism's dismal future.

## Eye-witness report from Israel

# Palestinian socialist detained

AT TWO a.m. on Sunday, 17 July, Machmoud Masawri was dragged from his bed in Baqa village, Israel, by members of the Shin Beth (Israeli internal security service) accompanied by civilian police and paramilitary border guards.

Subsequently, the police have refused to give any details of the reasons for his arrest or what he has been charged with. Orders have been given by the head of the Shin Beth barring Machmoud from seeing solicitors during the period of his interrogation. His family only found out by chance where he was being held after seven days of inquiry.

This example is typical of the type of oppression practised by the Israeli state in an attempt to crush the magnificent *intifada* (Palestinian uprising).

The *intifada* is not at the same intense level as it was in December and January. There have been setbacks with some 10,000 activists interned.

In some areas the entire leadership of the uprising have been imprisoned, with no youth between the ages of 18 and 25 to be found in some refugee camps.

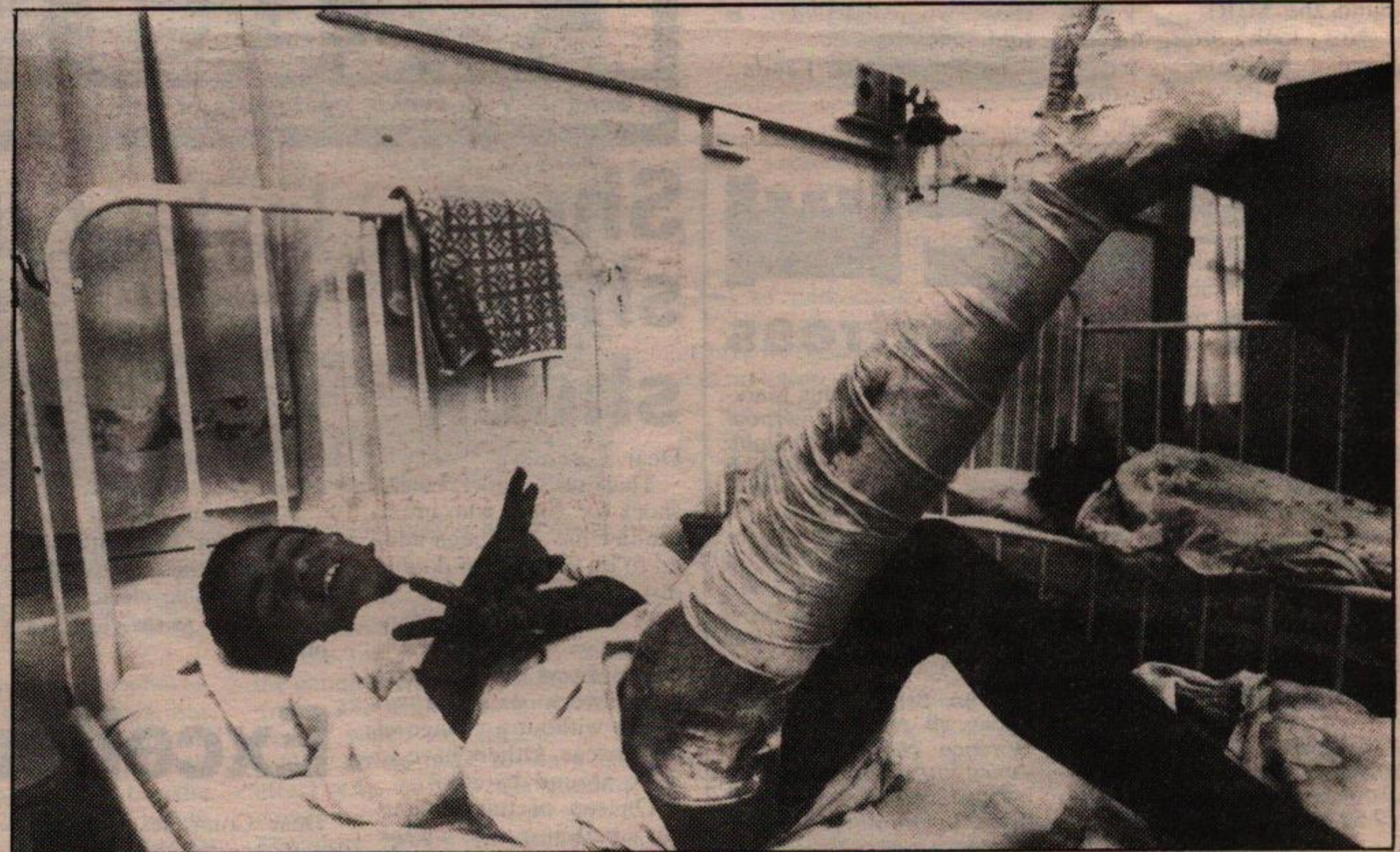
The present stage is one

of assessment and rebuilding for the next round of struggle. The mood is reflected in the nickname given to new prison camps by the authorities: 'universities of revolution'.

Government ministers speak of negotiations with what they call "senior, responsible" Palestinian sources" on re-establishing 'normal' relations in the occupied territories—in other words, rebuilding a layer of collaborators in the territories, and preparing for a crackdown by the Civil Administration.

Identity cards have been re-issued, and everyone over 16 now has to carry them. Parents of children imprisoned for stone-throwing must deposit NIS5,000 (over £1,650) with the Civil Administration as a condition for their release. A second conviction results in the forfeit of this sum.

Owners of buildings with slogans supporting the *in-*



Nine-year-old Ala Liskfy of Gaza City after soldiers burst into his home, throwing tear gas canisters and knocking over a kerosene stove. His five-year-old sister was burnt to death in the fire. Ala's burns are so severe that the bone in his right leg is infected.

Photo: Peter Gardner.

*tifada* on their walls are liable to a NIS15,000 (£5,000) fine and five years' imprisonment. But all these repressive measures merely deepen the will to struggle.

## Splits

A recent editorial in the *Jerusalem Post* admitted:

"That is why the suppression of the *intifada*, even if successful, will most likely only sow the seeds of another, more violent uprising."

The *intifada* has brought deep splits in Israeli society to the surface. This was shown when over 400 workers from the Beit Shemesh engine plant recently protested against

planned redundancies in front of the Finance Ministry.

Police had to flee the scene when rocks were thrown at them. Workers wielding clubs stormed the building, throwing a smoke bomb and using metal plates to break through the glass doors.

As they went in they shouted: "This is the Jewish *intifada*!" Significantly, they used the Arabic word and not its Hebrew translation.

The hypocrisy of the Israeli ruling class, preaching 'sacrifice' while giving enormous golden handshakes to top executives, has not been lost on workers. Recently, severance pay of over £40m

to 23 Bank Leumi executives was only prevented by government intervention.

## Homeland

Marxists support the right of the Palestinian people to a homeland, and will participate in all struggles for democratic rights. These rights can only be ensured by breaking with imperialism, overthrowing the capitalist and landlord regimes of the region—Arab as well as Israeli—and creating a socialist federation of the Middle East.

The task over the next period is to build a leadership that is conscious of these tasks.

Machmoud Masawri has

a record of struggle for his fellow workers, both Jewish and Arab, and sees his commitment to Palestinian national liberation as intimately linked to the fight for the socialist transformation of the region.

Dave Nellist MP has already protested against his arrest to the Israeli embassy. This must be matched by thousands of letters of protest from the movement calling for his immediate right to see a lawyer, for his unconditional release and that of all other political detainees.

Protests to: Embassy of Israel, 2 Palace Gn, London W8.

From a correspondent

## Rewarding life?

Dear Comrades,

On a recent visit to a casualty unit I met a woman I knew. She is about 28 with five children. She sat clutching her arm, which despite one dressing was still pouring with blood.

She had already passed out once because of the pain. I didn't recognise her at first, she looked about 50. The man she lives with had attacked her with a Stanley knife and it still wasn't clear if she had lost the use of her arm.

She was scared, not for herself, but for her kids. If he was arrested and she was in hospital who would look after them? Anyway she relied on him to babysit. She holds down two jobs, one in the morning and one in the evening. She was

saving for their first ever holiday.

That's what they had argued over—money. But it wasn't the first time. Misery and violence had become almost routine. She understood only too well that next time her injuries could be fatal but that was a chance she had to take, for now anyway.

For millions of women the demands for jobs, decent wages and nursery places are absolute necessities, not pie in the sky.

Thatcher says that there is no job more rewarding than that of a wife and mother. For many working class women there is nothing further from the truth.

Gail Frampton  
Withington

## MIR sales drive

Dear Comrades,

When *Militant* supporters in Leeds heard that the editors of *Militant International Review* (MIR) were planning to improve MIR and bring it out every two months, a few of us looked at ways of increasing sales in the city.

One comrade came up with the idea of making a list of local subscribers. This would give us a base of sales on which to build. We considered what a bi-monthly subscription (delivered locally) would actually cost. A quick calculation suggested the heading for a subscription form: Pledge 10p a week to build the MIR!

Not long after many Leeds supporters were travelling down to the

*Militant* Rally, so this was a good opportunity to launch the sales drive. First someone went round selling the latest issue and later we passed round some subscription forms on a clipboard. When it came back we found we'd got 39 individual subscriptions.

Several fresh readers of MIR immediately offered to take a copy to sell on top of their own.

From just half an hour's work it will be relatively simple to double or treble MIR sales in Leeds. We are now making sure the drive is firmed up and extended on paper rounds and in Labour Party and TU branches where *Militant* is sold.

Lionel Wright, Leeds



Tooled up for confrontation - police behind their riot shields.

Photo: Militant

## Illusions smashed

Dear Comrades,

Some of the illusions fostered in the neutrality of the British police were recently smashed with the acceptance by the Metropolitan Police of responsibility for the death of Blair Peach.

Peach was a New Zealand school teacher killed by blows to the head during an anti-National Front demonstration in Southall in 1979.

At the time the police vehemently denied allegations of involvement in the

death of Blair Peach but recently Peach's family accepted £75,000 damages from the Metropolitan Police. Marchers claimed at the time that the Met's Special Patrol Group (SPG) was responsible. This was refuted but the

SPG was subsequently disbanded amongst allegations of its members possessing illegal offensive weapons.

This incident further highlights the role of the police within capitalist society. In recent years the police have been used more openly as an agent of the bosses and right wing, as seen in Warrington and Wapping print disputes and the miners' strike. These incidents show that the part played by the police in class conflicts is anything but neutral.

Jon Driscoll

# Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

## 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.

□ **TO PAM** — condolences from the Basildon comrades.

□ **Stickers available** in rolls of 250—'Fight the Poll Tax', 'For a Socialist South Africa'. £2.50 per roll.

**Militant Rally** Commemorative Tee-Shirts still available, various designs. 'Trotsky picture': sizes; XXXL, £6.00 each. *Militant* Rally '88: sizes; XXXL, XXL, £6.00 each. *Militant*: sizes; M, L £5.00 each. XXL, XXXL, £6.00.

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Available from Fighting Fund Dept., 3-13 Hepscoth 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.

*France 1968—Month of Revolution*. Read Clare Doyle's book on the lessons of the general strike. £2.50 5 copies for £8 post free. Order from Fortress Books, PO Box 141, London E2 ORL.

□ **CPSA Broad Left Disco**. Friday 29 July, 7-midnight. Florence Nightingale pub, Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1. Tickets £2.50 (£1.50 unwaged). All socialists welcome

□ **Revolutionary**. History No2 Summer 1988—58 page. Spanish Civil War issue—published by Socialist Platform. Available for £2.80 (includes postage) from Socialist Platform, BCM Box 7646, London WC1N 3XX.

**Commemorative tapes of the Militant Rally '88**

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

**Tape 1:** Opening remarks, John Macreadie (CPSA), Sue Haines (P&O striking worker), Lyn Martin (Health worker), Peter Taaffe.

**Tape 2:** Entertainment, closing ceremony.

**Tape 3:** Jeremy Birch, Tony Mulhearn, Ted Grant.

**Tape 4:** Veronika Volkov, Esteban Volkov (live link-up), closing remarks.

**£2.00 per tape, £6.00 for set of four tapes.** Order from *Militant* tapes, 3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB.

## Short sharp shock

Dear Comrades,

Thatcher's short, sharp shock for youth who break the law has now been added to by the dose of double dirt and degradation.

A report on Manchester's Strangeway's prison shows that prisoners now have to go up to two weeks without a change of underwear. Others have to walk around barefoot.

On top of this inmates get a bath just once a week and access to toilets is so difficult that prisoners urinate out of the windows and defecate in the cells.

The magistrates and judges who knowingly sentence people to live in such humiliation should be locked away themselves. You can be sure that not too many of their rich friends are ordered to this hell.

Labour must take up the prisoners' demands for decent conditions. With all the anti-trade union laws passed by the Tories we cannot ignore the fact that even the most sociable worker is a criminal in Tory eyes.

Those squalid cells Thatcher intends for the soldiers of socialism one day. Labour has every reason to fight for a humane prison system.

Phil Frampton  
Manchester

## Instant dogsbody scheme

Dear Comrades,

One of the main issues concerning today's youth is the YTS (young trainee slave) scheme which turns the youth of today into instant 'dogsbody' overnight.

I was on one of these schemes for 12 months and for four of these I was left to run the whole clerical side of an office as the clerk was off sick!

During this time I was expected to sort out the office filing system. As the office did not have a Xerox machine I had to walk a quarter of a mile through a fitting shop to the main offices to get copies. I bet that saved the company a worthwhile amount!

Despite this I accepted the situation, feeling that full time employment would come at the end of the

course. When it did not I felt so bitter as I had worked harder than a full time employee and proved that I was capable of doing the work on my own initiative.

Yet through the Thatcher government the company is able to replace me with yet another YTS trainee and therefore save themselves vast amounts of money.

A *Militant* supporter

## Excellent but...

Dear Comrades,

Congratulations to Lynn Walsh for his generally excellent article on the so-called 'glorious' revolution of 1688 (*Militant* 904). There is, however, one small error which should be corrected.

He gives a figure for the electorate of 4.5 million being 15 per cent of the adult population (which would mean 30 per cent of the adult male population, as no woman had a vote).

Angela is quite right to draw attention to the blunder I made in typing out my article. According to a contemporary writer, Gregory King, the population of England in 1688 was about 5.5 million. The historian J H Plumb ('Past and Present', vol 45:1969), estimates that the electorate in the period of William and Mary was about 250,000, that is about 5 per cent of

the total population or 15 percent of the adult male population.

The genealogy of the House of Stuart also came to a sticky end. James II was Charles II's brother, not his 'son' as it said in the text. The family tree was unfortunately muddled. It was meant to make clear William and Mary's claim to the succession: William III was son of William II of

member put it very well, when he said "We be the gentry". This had in no way changed by 1688 or after.

But of course the myth of William of Orange continues to be fostered by the ruling class and by sectarian bigots in Ireland. Lynn's article effectively challenges this myth and his small error is of very minor account.

Angela Anderson  
Bristol

Orange and Mary, the sister of Charles II and James II; Mary, his wife and joint monarch, was daughter of James II and his first wife, Anne Hyde.

Regrettably, in the last section of the article three paragraphs were misplaced in the lay-out, which made the conclusion difficult to follow.

# When the matchgirls fought and won



A HUNDRED years ago this month, the matchgirls at Bryant and May in East London went on strike. It became one of the most significant events in the history of British trade unionism. DAVE FRYATT of Bow and Poplar Labour Party tells their story. THE MATCHGIRLS' strike changed the face of trade unionism. Ben Tillett who was a year later to lead the great dock strike, said: "Their action was the beginning of the social convulsion which produced the new trade unionism."

They demonstrated in action that trade unionism was not, as before their strike, the preserve of skilled or craft workers but that any workers can organise and fight back.

Many union leaders today wring their hands at the 'difficulties' which make a struggle for their members impossible. But the difficulties today are nothing compared with those faced by the pioneers of the movement.

## Poverty

Unskilled, unorganised, mainly illiterate, in an area of high unemployment and facing tremendous victimisation, the matchgirls fought back and won. It was a lesson that was not wasted on other workers at the time. Neither should it be forgotten today.

Conditions in London's East End in the 1880s were exactly the Victorian traditions that Thatcher is working so hard to recreate. The two main industries, shipbuilding and silk weaving, had collapsed. Thousands had been thrown into appalling poverty, desperate for work at any price to avoid the horror of the workhouse.

Outdoor relief, the social security of the day had been cut back and people were told they must rely on charity. This the rich showed little temptation to give, believing that charity was corrupting.

The term 'sweating' became widespread at this time and chief among the sweated industries of the East End was match and matchbox manufacture.

Workers employed in the match factories earned as little as four shillings a week (20p) and regularly less due to a system of fines.

Wages could be docked for dropping matches, 'having dirty feet', having too many matches on the table or a host of other petty 'offences'. Some girls could find their wages docked by as much as 2/6 a week without even being told what their offence was.

Bryant and May were good Liberals—they showed this by erecting a statue of Gladstone in Bow Road, paid for from deductions from the matchgirls' wages.

Poverty wages were not the only problem facing the matchgirls. Health and safety have never been something the bosses consider unless forced to.

Match heads were made of highly poisonous phosphorus. The air in the factory was full of phosphorus fumes. The workers were not even provided with a room to eat in and consequently were forced to eat phosphorus dust on their bread. The result was that an estimated 11-12 per cent of workers in the industry



Top right: Annie Besant; top: striking matchgirls; below: a typical East End slum of the period.



could expect to contract phosphorus necrosis, the horrific 'phossy jaw'.

A safer form of phosphorus had been discovered in 1845, but even as late as 1906, the British government refused to join an international campaign to ban the more dangerous form: it might damage the profits of British firms.

The bosses' profits from this suffering were enormous. In 1885 £30,000 was paid out in dividends. By the time of the strike, a £5 share in Bryant and May had become worth £18/7/6d. Dividends ran at around 20 per cent and were sometimes as high as 38 per cent.

Yet, the unions showed no inclination to organise the matchgirls even though the mood of bitterness had broken through several times.

In 1885 the girls had walked out over pay and phossy jaw but the strike was unorganised and no funds were available. The girls were beaten.

The spark which was to transform the situation came from a most unlikely source. In June 1888, at a meeting of the Fabian Society, a resolution was passed

to boycott Bryant and May matches. Annie Besant, who was at the meeting, decided to expose the conditions in the match industry in *The Link*, a small socialist weekly which she edited.

Her article was to have an effect way beyond the modest circulation of the *The Link*, Theodore Bryant threatened to sue but decided that this would not be wise given that the charges were all true.

Instead, management sacked three girls who had spoken to Annie Besant. She publicised their case and appealed for funds to tide them over until they found other jobs.

## Support grows

But Bryant and May were not content. They demanded that all workers should sign a statement that the allegations in *The Link* were false. Not a single worker could be found prepared to sign this statement.

So the girl who was deemed to be the ringleader of this defiance was also sacked. At this all 1400 workers walked out.

Besant and other socialists gave the matchgirls all the help they

could. They elected a strike committee, organised public meetings all over London, sent press releases to all the daily papers, who almost without exception ignored them, and even arranged a lobby of parliament.

Particularly important were the efforts to raise money. The girls had no union and so no strike pay to fall back on. Collections at public meetings helped and a public appeal was launched.

Popular support grew steadily. £100 was collected in the first week and Besant was able to ensure that all the 600 girls who needed it were paid strike pay.

As public support grew, the bosses' papers carried furious condemnations of Besant and the socialists, fuelled by Bryant and May. The girls, *The Times* insisted, had all been blissfully happy until Besant came along.

Bryant and May insisted that no compromise was possible. However Annie Besant had organised for a delegation of the matchgirls to meet the London Trades Council who were particularly outraged by the system of fines which were seen as a threat to all workers.

They agreed to organise a levy on all their members for the strike fund. As soon as it became clear that the girls would be able to sustain the strike the bosses' resistance crumbled. A meeting was arranged with the strike committee and a delegation from the London Trades Council.

Bryant and May capitulated completely. All fines were stopped, a penny cut in wages that was supposed to pay for assistants was restored and the firm agreed to provide a canteen. In addition they agreed to recognise a union.

CHARLES DICKENS, in his 'Travels in the East', recounts his visit to a matchbox maker, an old widow. When he asked what her husband died of, she replied: "Same as I'm a doing—starvation". Her last meal had been a piece of bread four days previously.

A SURGEON at Bradford infirmary described the later stages of 'phossy jaw': ".....on the lower jaw abscesses frequently form which discharge putrid matter.

"The teeth.....whether they were first decayed or not, become loose and either fall out of themselves or may be easily pulled out with the fingers. More abscesses now form on the gums, which lose their bright red colour and become livid and are so undermined by the matter as to suggest sometimes the appearance of a sieve, through the holes of which an offensive discharge wells up.

"In some cases the whole gum, the bone, the tissue composing the cheek and even the throat have been attacked and eaten away by this terrible malady."

The matchgirls had learned the need to organise. The Union of Women Matchworkers was formed. Annie Besant, despite never having worked in the industry, was elected secretary.

Their victory was a tremendous inspiration to other workers. Unskilled women workers, previously untouched by trade unionism had stood together and won.

## New unionism

Within a year their example had been followed by many other sections of the working class. Tram workers, gas workers and in 1889 the dockers had taken action.

The new trade unionism had begun. These were trade unions of a different type to those that preceded them, unions of the unskilled who saw industrial militancy as the most powerful weapons they had.

The conditions which the matchgirls fought against however did not die away as a result of their strike. Sweat shops still exist. Women workers still face low pay and bad conditions.

Home work still takes place with women and children forced to work long hours in dangerous conditions for a pittance. Too often the trade unions treat these women workers in dead end jobs as a section which cannot be organised.

The matchgirls' strike shows how far from the truth this is. It was women workers in sweat shop conditions who did much to create the modern trade union movement.

Above all, the matchgirls' strike showed that workers who organise and stand together are never weak.

## Girobank sell-off

# Stop private plunder

"I'm 87 and live near the Post Office, can't walk far and live alone. I feel as if I am losing a friend in Girobank - no handling cash, bills paid, no charge, burglar proof. It seems like a vicious plot to me. The Giro will have to fight."

By Richard Venton.

This is from one of the flood of letters which have poured in since the announcement of the privatisation of Girobank, expressing dismay and anger.

What a contrast to the arrogant ambition of managing director, Malcolm Williamson, who many Girobank workers believe was appointed in 1985 with the express aim of preparing privatisation.

When asked why he left his previous job, as London regional director of Barclays, he commented, "because I like to run my own show".

The loss of 5,000 jobs at Rover and the threat to another 30,000 in Northern Ireland as a result of the privatisation of Shorts and Harland and Wolff, graphically show the effects of government sell-offs.

The Girobank trade unions need to unite customers with the workforce in a mass campaign of opposition to privatisation before the October sell-off. It would be fundamentally mistaken to delay action until after the sale.

A clear alternative to private

plunder on the one hand and capitalist management of a public Girobank on the other must be spelt out. The workforce won't be motivated to fight just to defend the status quo when Girobank management are downgrading jobs, threatening union reps and those who dare talk to them, and attacking sick leave rights.

Customers' letters show a clear understanding of public needs. These needs must be combined with the expertise of the workforce, whose labour and skills produce the service to customers.....and created last year's record £23.5 million profit.

The Department of Trade and Industry has refused to give any clear commitment to unions on jobs, wages, pensions, union rights or Post Office branches. If guarantees are not given, then the unions should recommend industrial action to a members' mass meeting before the October sale.

### Strike action

Strike action, as the nurses demonstrated, is the only language the Tories will listen to, and if properly prepared for it can defeat privatisation.

Tory minister Kenneth Clarke has banned a management-workers' buy-out. This confirms *Militant's* warnings that a buy-out was a non-starter. The Tories would never tolerate genuine share ownership of Girobank by the workforce.

What is certain is that the Tories

instead have a private bank or financial institution lined up to buy it. It is quite possibly one of the 25 foreign banks who are bidding to asset strip Britain's one publicly owned bank who will succeed.

The Post Office unions should campaign for democratic workers' control of a publicly owned Post Office. In conjunction with unions like Bifu, they should fight for nationalisation, with workers' control and management, of all the big banks and finance companies.

It is impossible to save the rest of the Post Office from privatisation without taking up the fight against the Girobank sell-off. But equally it is impossible for Girobank to survive as an island of public banking in a sea of capitalist financial institutions. The 90 plus bids for Girobank from private finance monopolies underline this argument.

A unified state bank and state post office requires a democratic system of control and management which combines the needs and interests of the workforce, the customers and society as a whole.

Boards of management should be elected on the basis of a third from the unions representing the workforce, a third elected from the TUC to represent all trade unionists and their families, the vast majority of customers, and a third from a socialist Labour government to link it into the general economic plan.



## An appeal to women

ANN BANNISTER of *Boo-  
tle Labour Women's section* spoke to *Militant*.

"THE PRIVATISATION of Girobank will be devastating, particularly to women who make up 70 per cent of the workforce.

"The Tories and their big business friends have no concern for the problems women face but they are quite prepared to exploit them at work when it suits them, usually using them as a cheap unorganised workforce.

"Any potential buyer will want to do what private contractors have already done to catering and cleaning in the NHS and local authorities, slash jobs, hours of work, pay and conditions such as holiday, pension and maternity rights.

"But women can't afford these cuts; their income is essential, not pin money. Labour women's organisation nationally has shown its support for Giro workers, passing an

emergency resolution at the recent national women's conference against the sell-off and calling for local women's sections to organise days of action with petitions outside local post offices and Girobanks.

"I want to thank individual Giro workers who gave so generously to *Boo-  
tle* women's section funds to enable delegates to attend conference. I hope we can assist them in their struggles in return.

"*Boo-  
tle* women's section has been active along with the LPYS in organising petitions, stickers etc. against the sell-off.

"We call on all women to get involved in the campaign, join the Labour women's organisation and join the political struggle to get rid of the Tory government. Make sure it is replaced with a Labour government committed to policies making a real improvement to women's lives such as those laid out in the Charter for Women Workers."

# GCHQ sacks gay worker



GCHQ workers protesting at the Tory union ban.

THE REMOVAL of trade union rights at GCHQ, the government's secret communications establishment, has taken away workers' protection on the basic issues of jobs and conditions. Now, it has also led to a case of blatant victimisation against a gay worker, Andrew Hodges.

The 22 year old data processor had his positive vetting removed when he was suspended on basic pay, even though he'd given a full account of his gay relationships to his manager in

November 1986. He continued to work normally until a letter arrived last year from the head of GCHQ's security branch, withdrawing his clearance because he was "vulnerable to pressure or blackmail by a hostile intelligence".

### 'Blackmail'

Considering GCHQ bosses, workmates, the man's family and friends all knew that Hodges was gay, it would be difficult to

understand quite by whom or how he could be 'blackmailed'.

But since no unions are now allowed in the establishment, Hodges had nothing to support him and had to rely on a local law centre for defence. There was no possibility of united trade union action to defend Andrew because the government de-recognised trade unions at GCHQ in 1985.

Without the threat of workers' action to support him, the judges at the High

Court felt confident to uphold the decision of GCHQ director, Sir Peter Marychurch, even though they paid tribute to Hodges' courage and integrity - little consolation.

Not only must the civil servants' unions fight for Andrew's re-instatement, but the TUC has to launch a campaign to re-establish trade union recognition at GCHQ.

By Mark Ovenden  
Southampton Labour Party

Photo: Militant

### Girobank public rally

Saturday 30 July, 11am - 1pm

Philharmonic Hall, Hope Street, Liverpool

Speakers: Tony Benn MP, Terry Fields MP, Terry Farley (NCU branch secretary), Tony McNulty (secretary LPYS/Girobank defence campaign)

## Easterhouse strikers still defiant

AS THE CPSA and NUCPS strike at Easterhouse benefit offices and job centre moves into its eighth week, the mood of the strikers remains firm and defiant.

The dispute arose in the offices with the introduction of new extra working practices as part of an integration pilot scheme. The scheme involves claimants making fresh claims in job centres and unemployment benefit offices dealing with job vacancies with no staff allocation to cope with the extra workload.

The result of these changes was the rundown of the system and a totally unacceptable service to the unemployed in the Easterhouse area. On the day staff walked out of their offices, there was a one week backlog of claimants waiting to make their initial claim.

The strikers hold meetings twice weekly where their instructions to the union negotiators remain as firm as they were on day one of the strike. The strikers realise full and

well the implications of the present government attacks on jobs and services and received a massive boost recently when 28 Glasgow offices joined them in a one day strike.

Addressing a 200 strong rally in Glasgow, CPSA branch secretary John McNally stressed the urgent need for both unions to look at ways to escalate the action. He pointed out that management could sit out the Easterhouse strike while it remained isolated and noted that during last year's London Department of Employment dispute it proved necessary to involve computer centres.

John then made the following call: The unions should use every method at its disposal to ensure a successful conclusion to the dispute. If this includes action at Livingston computer centre, then so be it.

Messages of support to: TGWU, 290 Bath St., Glasgow.

By Gerry Croall  
and Ian Nisbet,  
Easterhouse strikers.

# British Library strike

LAING'S PRESTIGIOUS £300 million British Library site is heading for a total shutdown as we go to press. Up to 1000 building workers on the site are being balloted. TGWU and Ucat stewards were confident this would produce a strike vote and an official dispute.

This marks an escalation of the strike which erupted last week when brickwork subcontractor Vogue Developments was removed from the its £2.8 million contract for the basement (brickwork) works over a contractual dispute, leaving 90 bricklayers and 40 hod carriers out of work.

Mowlem, who were employed by Laing for all work below ground level, and who subsequently employed Vogue (this is what is known as management contracting) had given the stewards a guarantee of continuity of employment if Vogue were withdrawn from the contract.

## Guarantee broken

However, when the new brickwork subcontractors, Frank Staden Brickwork and O'Keefe Ltd, commenced work, this guarantee, along with the pay and conditions achieved by the lads over the last 18 months or so went out of the window.

Vogue themselves have been on record as saying that its withdrawal from the site was over "problems that have nothing to do with the standard of workmanship or the progress of the contract".

Most of the 130 brickies and hods on strike are '714' holders or on 27 per cent (the 'lump'), showing that it is a myth that self employed workers won't strike.

The dispute took an ugly turn last week when on Monday a Laing's employee, thought to be a labour relations adviser, was involved in a scuffle with pickets as he tried to take photos of them, no doubt to be used in compiling a blacklist.

By Ian Mackie,

UG 296 branch, London region Ucat



Pickets outside the British Library site

# Short's sale announced

ANOTHER BLOW has been dealt to the workers of Northern Ireland with the announcement of the privatisation of Short Brothers in Belfast.

Short's is the biggest employer in the North, with 7,500 workers in the aircraft, missiles and shipyard divisions.

Private companies linked to the sell-off have included American aircraft manufacturers, Boeing and McDonnell Douglas, no doubt keen to exploit what Tory ministers have described as the attractiveness of the aircraft and missile sectors.

The fact that these areas of work were selected is a clear hint that the company could be split up, before or after sale, with the shipyard allowed to go to the wall. Fears are that aircraft manufacturing would later be drastically run down as well.

In terms of employment, the missiles part of Short's operations could be the most profitable for a private buyer, although it employs least workers.

It has been estimated that the run down of Short's would threaten 30,000 jobs in the North.

Coming as it does shortly after the announcement of the sale of Belfast's Harland and Wolff shipyard, where Ravi Tikko's plans to build a luxury cruiser will also mean job cuts, this is a devastating announcement.

## Mass meetings

Whilst representatives of trade unions from Short Brothers, Harland and Wolff and Northern Ireland Electricity, which the Tories also want to sell off, have met together, no clear plans for industrial action

have yet been made.

This is now an absolute must. The fight of all three must be kept together. A programme of workers' mass meetings with a clear strategy for strike action, can stop the Tories in their tracks.

The Labour and Trade Union Group is mounting a campaign against privatisation. Maximum support for this is required to prevent the Tories wrecking the lives of tens of thousands.

By Tim Harris.

# Defend the job centres

CIVIL SERVANTS in the Department of Employment (DE) are in the front line of a major attack on jobs and services following the disclosure of plans to close more than 50 offices nationally.

Management claim they are 'necessary' because unemployment is falling. But Treasury cutbacks in the money available to run the Employment Service (ES) are really to blame.

Every region has suffered overall cuts of between 15-20 per cent. No doubt these 'savings' are necessary to pay for the huge tax concessions handed out by the government to their rich friends!

Undoubtedly, the closure proposals only represent the tip of a titanic iceberg.

As integration of the functions of job centres and unemployment

benefit offices proceeds, as many as 500 offices could come under threat.

Already the 'Restart' interviews, part of the 'Action for Jobs' programme, is being gradually incorporated into fresh claims interviews at UBOs. This will leave job centres to deal with job finding. However, many job centres have been forced to restrict opening hours because of staff shortages. Yet the staff who deal with job finding are to be cut by a further 14 per cent. No wonder many members believe the proposed closures herald the end of the job finding service.

## Golden opportunity

It is vital that members are mobilised to withstand these attacks. If management get away with the an-

nounced closures, they'll come back for more at a later stage.

CPSA members should follow the initiatives taken by the DE London region committee which has produced two leaflets and has organised a meeting open to all members.

The DE section committee must lead the resistance to management's plans by carrying out the policies put forward by Militant supporters at conference. The closures provide a golden opportunity to launch the long awaited group-wide staffing campaign and build support with the wider labour and trade union movement for a more comprehensive service to the public.

By Tom Taylor,

CPSA Eastern division convenor, personal capacity.

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



## News in Brief

### Vickers 'soup dragons'

"SOUP DRAGONS!" In response to this cry, all the pickets on the main gate of Vickers ran towards a red car, which appeared to be trying to get in at another entrance 20 yards away.

A lone policeman and myself were left guarding the gate. He didn't seem to be worried by this swift departure, or by the fact that the pickets had surrounded the car. Then I realised that it wasn't a hostile charge but a response to a promise of food and drink.

The 'soup dragons' were two Labour women from the workers' support group. Anne Burns and Mary Irwin are part of an army of labour movement activists who have joined in

the battle for victory in this strike.

Many trips are made each day to ensure the pickets at five gates are kept going in food and drink.

Perhaps the most remarkable fact is that most of the provisions are donated by small businesses, who rely on the patronage of shipyard workers. This expression of solidarity is in turn a reflection of the depth of feeling in the whole town.

The job done by the workers' support group is an indication of the determination of the whole town to ensure a victory.

Terry Harrison spoke to Barrow's 'soup dragons'.

### EETPU disaffiliated?

AT LABOUR'S national executive Tony Benn moved that as soon as the EETPU is expelled from the TUC it should be disaffiliated from the Labour Party. But he

only got four votes in favour. On Sam McCluskie's advice, the NEC will seek legal advice on whether it can disaffiliate and affiliate.

### Left wins in DNS

THE CPSA Department of National Savings section has completed its delayed elections. The outcome is a severe blow for the right wing.

Peter Coltman, the section chair for many years and a former vice president, was defeated by

Militant supporter Danny Williamson and Eddie Phillips also defeated his Communist Party rival, Brian Massey for the assistant secretary.

By Edwina Donald, CPSA National Savings Bank, personal capacity.

### Non-political fund?

NALGO'S NATIONAL executive have got themselves into serious difficulties over the union's newly established political fund. At the recent national conference they backed a rule change which prohibited any donations to political parties being made from the funds.

But now the Union Certification Officer has said that he's not prepared to accept the political fund on

this basis as it contravenes the 1913 Trade Union Act.

No doubt many Nalgo members will have been mystified themselves as to how you can have a non-political political fund!

It is rumoured that the union's national leaders knew as early as February that the Certification Officer would take this action but kept this fact from conference.

### Marconi, Gateshead

"MARCONI'S, GATESHEAD depends on you as a workforce to get the work out." These words of wisdom from management to the shopfloor were designed to get them to break an overtime ban.

A week later, management announced that the plant must close with the loss of 450 jobs.

The decision of GEC directors to transfer work and machinery from Gateshead to other plants in Leicester and Chelmsford has shocked the workforce.

The convenor, along with the shop stewards committee, plan to campaign against the closure.

By John Killen.

# Stop Vickers' hidden plans

**BARROW-IN-Furness is a town on strike. The local economy is dominated by Vickers' shipyard whose 12,500 workers have been out on strike for seven weeks.**

This first ever all-out dispute has resulted from management's attempts to impose fixed annual holidays. The workforce see this as the beginning of a drive to reduce many of the rights and conditions won by the union since the First World War.

A spokesman for the strike committee reported that in recent negotiations with the unions, Vickers' chief executive had dismissed the question of holidays as a minor item. He went on to say that there were other things that they wanted to discuss, one of them being a three shift system.

It is the bosses' hidden agenda that has produced such determination to win from a population that is so dependent on shipbuilding for its living. Workers at the yard refer to Barrow as a "one horse town" because of Vickers' dominance. For this reason one spokesman told me: "We've always been at the bottom of the list in terms of shipyard wages and conditions".

Previous redundancies mean the remaining workforce is young. This is certainly reflected on the picket lines. Feelings run so deeply that only senior management are working.

A union spokesman reported that in some sections of management the decision to work on was

By Terry Harrison

only carried by a narrow margin.

Work has halted on the £1 billion Trident submarine programme. The local and national press are warning that the chances of a £3 billion Canadian order for nuclear submarines may be jeopardised. But strikers are still determined to win on this matter of principle.

The spokesman for the strike committee believed that Vickers had won the order but were keeping quiet. He said that a number of strikers' relatives living in Canada had contacted Barrow to say that the Canadian media had announced the award of these orders.

A national campaign has now been launched to publicise the dispute and raise funds.

The local council has set up advice centres and are helping the 3,000 tenants who are unable to pay their rents. Free school meals are being provided to the strikers' children during the summer holidays.

The latest development is that the shop stewards have voted to invite the shipyard negotiating committee to join the local Confed members for talks. This will open the door to the intervention



Pickets outside the VSEL shipyard, Barrow.

Photo: John Harris (IFL).

of national union officials.

*Militant* believes that Frank Ward, local secretary of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, is quite right to voice fears that Vickers' plan to re-introduce fixed holidays is "the thin end of the wedge", because other methods of improving efficiency, such as three shift working, are also plann-

ed. If talks with management take place in the near future, the unions should ask what these efficiency plans involve. Management's intentions should be reported to mass meetings of the strikers so that they can decide their attitude to these issues before they return to work.

Failure to do so could mean

that management could use the hidden agenda as a bargaining counter for agreement on the continuance of flexible holidays.

All messages of support and cash to: Frank Ward, secretary CSEU, 114 Duke St., Barrow in Furness, Cumbria, LA14 1LW. Phone: 0229 20080.

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## Don't hesitate — donate today

THROUGH THE campaign to sell *Militant* on the streets of Manchester over £200 has been raised in just one week. Every seller was encouraged to use the 'official' red *Militant* tin and ask for the £1 solidarity price. Hundreds of workers donated during the campaign, building support for continued success.

In Pollok £40 was raised last week with the Fight The Poll Tax stickers and elsewhere in Glasgow £23 came from stickers on just one sale.

These examples show the great potential for collecting fighting fund. We need £43,000 in the next six weeks to reach our target and provide the necessary wherewithal to carry the struggle forward.

Organise your own sales and fundraising drive this week on your estate. Draw up a petition

and use the Fight the Poll Tax stickers to raise money.

Nurses have been cheated out of their pay rise, whilst Lord Hanson and Sir Ralph Halpem are now earning upwards of £7,000 a day — more than most nurses take home in a year!

Send a donation to help fight back against this rotten Tory system.

This week Gavin Dudley from Newcastle donated £200, pledged at the Rally.

If you haven't paid your pledge off yet please redeem it urgently. Fiona Doyle from Glasgow donated £30 — a month's child benefit. Bob James, Gwent FBU donated £10.

Comrades from all over the country have sent special donations in memory of two great socialist fighters, Muriel Browning and Dudley Edwards. After

Target £50,000 by 3 Sep This week £3,301

## Fighting Fund

| Area               | Received     | % of target achieved | Target        |
|--------------------|--------------|----------------------|---------------|
| 1 Wales            | 1,040        |                      | 3,510         |
| 2 South East       | 422          |                      | 1,570         |
| 3 London           | 1,821        |                      | 7,090         |
| 4 South West       | 296          |                      | 1,270         |
| 5 West Scotland    | 478          |                      | 2,520         |
| 6 Manchester/Lancs | 343          |                      | 2,900         |
| 7 East Scotland    | 261          |                      | 2,150         |
| 8 Merseyside       | 540          |                      | 5,000         |
| 9 South            | 201          |                      | 2,020         |
| 10 West Midlands   | 375          |                      | 3,960         |
| 11 Yorkshire       | 519          |                      | 5,950         |
| 12 Northern        | 268          |                      | 3,270         |
| 13 Eastern         | 158          |                      | 2,260         |
| 14 East Midlands   | 153          |                      | 2,530         |
| 15 National        | 731          |                      | 4,000         |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>7,606</b> |                      | <b>50,000</b> |

the £1861 reported last week, another £280 cash was raised at a meeting in Brighton. Individual donations included £30 from a supporter in Berrnondsey, £20 from

Kevin Blake and £10 from a Pollok reader.

Don't hesitate — send off your donation to *Militant* today!