

Militant

THE MARXIST PAPER FOR LABOUR & YOUTH

ISSUE 690
9 March 1984

25p

INSIDE

Labour's forward march
Delayed not halted

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Liverpool council Pages 3, 13
Miners reports Page 15

Miners say: 'we've had enough'

"I fully support the
area action and hope
it will accelerate
throughout the
country."

—Nick Ellis, Maltby pit

● Stop the closures

No more redundancies

● National action needed

Defeat the Tory strategy

● For the full claim

Miners demand
a proper wage

"It's now or never. We'll have to extend the strike nationally, unless our claims are conceded. If we can get Scotland, Wales and Kent out, the rest will follow."

—Silverwood picket

MINERS ARE incensed by Coal Board boss MacGregor who has announced plans to close 20 pits and do away with about 25,000 jobs. Yorkshire mineworkers had already taken strike action over the blatant provocation of the NCB in attacking the overtime ban and threatening local closures.

Mac Gregor's new round of butchery has built up a mood to fight in pits throughout Britain.

In Yorkshire, miners struck this week at Manvers Colliery and Yorkshire Main, (full details page 15). They were on different local issues of break time and safety. But they have one common thread. Management were trying to artificially boost production to cut across the effects of the overtime ban. All joint negotiation has gone out of the window.

By
Richard Clarkson
(Prince of Wales NUM)
and **Rob Jones**



Arthur Scargill. Miners want a national campaign.

Photo: Militant

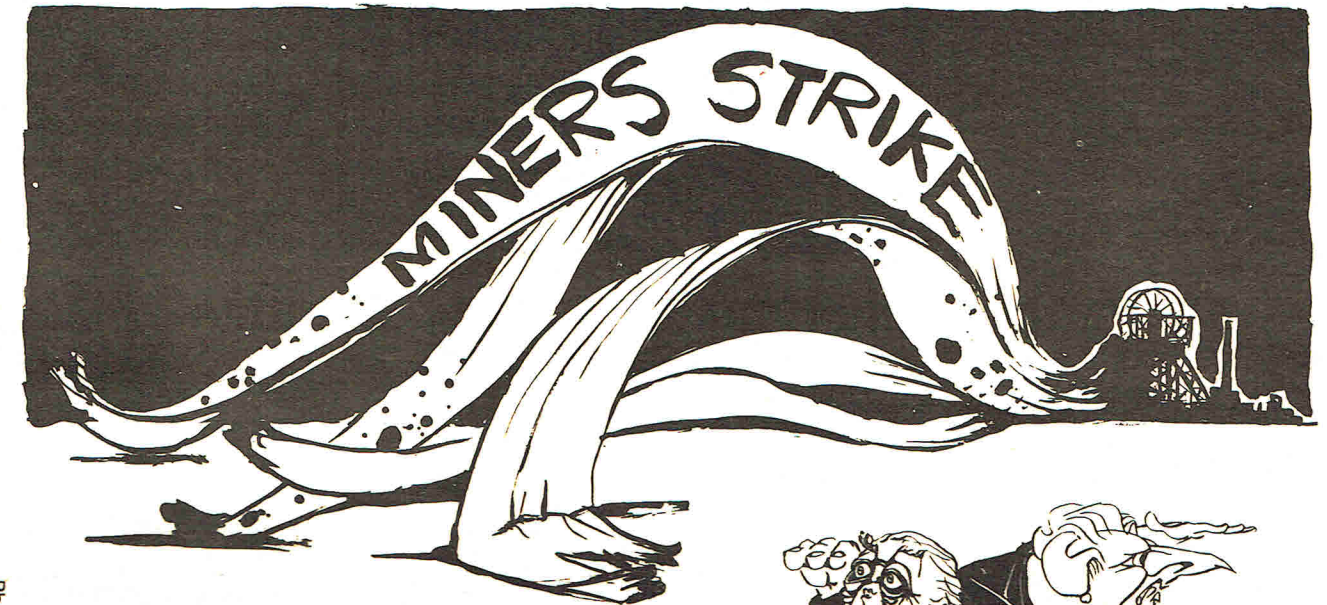
Closure threats

Workers have been angry at this, and many want a more speedy resolution of the pay claim after 19 weeks of overtime ban. When the NCB announced the closure of Cortonwood colliery the bitterness deepened, and the whole of Yorkshire came out. Then along came the new MacGregor package.

The Tory government claim there will shortly be new jobs in the industry. But how can they be taken seriously when their own hand-picked executioner, MacGregor, having destroyed the steel industry, now sharpens his axe over the pits?

Officially, MacGregor reports that he wants to cut coal production from 101.4 million tonnes to 97.4 million tonnes. But mineworkers suspect the Coal Board have even bigger cuts in mind. About 20,000 jobs have gone in the past year alone, a rate of closure not experienced since the days of Alf Robens, and a mood of anger has been simmering below the surface in area after area.

In Scotland the area NUM have joined Yorkshire in the call for an all-out strike to stop the NCB cutting Scottish pits jobs to the bone, particularly with the threat to Polmaise and Bogside pits.



THAT SEEMS TO BE ABOUT
THE LOT .P.M.

Alan Harman

In South Wales, even before Yorkshire struck, a 400-strong meeting was held at St Johns Colliery, Maesteg, where closure is threatened. Only five out of 400 miners opposed the lodge recommendations to oppose all transfers out, unless cast iron guarantees were given about the future of the pit. This one meeting shows the undoubted mood of the whole South Wales coalfield which will rally to a call for national action.

From Durham, Stan Pearce, NUM member at Monkwearmouth Colliery, spoke to *Militant*. He thought local miners would "vote with their feet" without a ballot. Other areas like Staffordshire have shown a strong feeling for strike action in recent months and that mood is likely to be rekindled.

CONTINUED ON
BACK PAGE

URGENT! Money to move *Militant*

WE can get the
building if YOU
get us the money!

See page 4 for progress
in the race to get new
premises.

Another magnificent
£13,000 reached us this
week for the Building
Fund and the Fighting
Fund together.

Tens of thousands
more are needed to clinch
a deal AND to finance the
move. RUSH YOUR
DONATIONS TO OUR
OFFICES TODAY!

Two weeks to BLOC conference

BLOC National
Delegate
Conference

Saturday 24 March
11 am—5.30 pm at Octagon
Centre, Western Bank,
Sheffield 10

Sessions to be opened by David Blunkett, Leader of
Sheffield Council and LP NEC, and Joan Maynard MP.
Main speaker: Tony Benn.

Any bona-fide trade union body is welcome to send up to five
delegates. For credentials and further information contact: George
Williamson, Organising Secretary, 11 Sutton Place, London E9
6EH.

TRAVEL FROM LONDON
Reserve seats on 07:45 St Pancras to Sheffield for
only £12.50 return (normally £15.00). Train leaves
Sheffield 19:25. Bookings must be made in advance.

See articles, pages 15 and 16

Militant Benn victory crushes Tories

TONY BENN'S election in Chesterfield is an important victory for the whole Labour Party but especially for the left.

Yet his return to the House of Commons after an absence of 270 days has been described by some commentators as a defeat because Labour recorded its 'lowest' vote since the war and the majority was slightly down.

But in the context of the present political situation, after a string of by-election losses and allowing for the disgraceful personal abuse heaped on Benn by the press, Labour's success in increasing its 1979 vote is a marvellous victory.

When Benn was selected in January the press indulged in a campaign of mock celebration—"Labour must be bonkers", one paper bawled out, in anticipation of his defeat. Yet against the very candidate they claimed they "most wanted to fight" the campaigns of the Alliance and the Tories flopped.

Red scare

Tony Benn is identified with the left of the Labour Party. No one in Chesterfield could have been in any doubt as to where he stood politically.

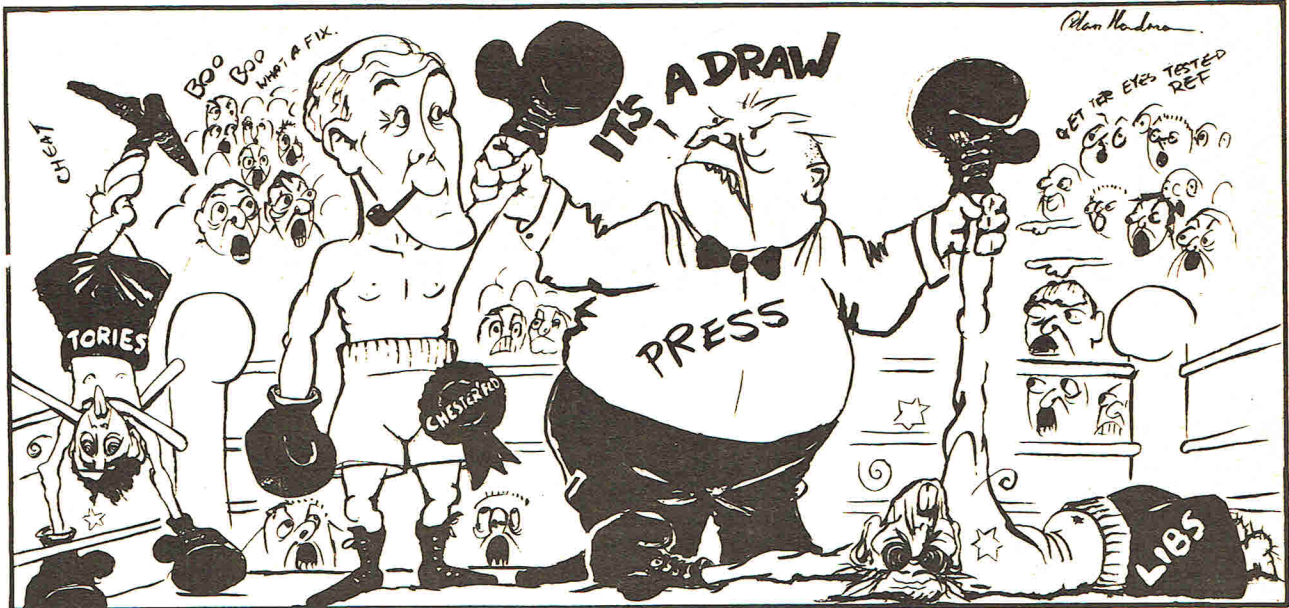
To reinforce his 'reputation' the Liberal and Tory candidates both ran campaigns almost entirely on a

"red-scare". The Liberal candidate seemed to have little else to say on the 170,000 pieces of literature he gave out, other than "stop Benn", who was later predictably described as standing "at the head of a screaming mob of Trotskyites."

Yet these tactics failed utterly to dislodge Labour's vote. The whole policy and purpose of the Alliance—to stop the left of the Labour Party—has become unstuck.

"One of the most puzzling aspects of the campaign", lamented one *Guardian* correspondent just before the close, "has been the effect of attempts by the Liberals and the Conservatives to appeal to 'moderation' and to compare the political record of Mr Benn with that of 'moderate' and respected former MP, Eric Varley... There is evidence from the polls that the Conservative vote may be drastically cut, but little evidence that the idea of 'moderation' has made much impact among Labour voters who may be looking for the exact opposite." (February 27)

The most significant feature of the result was the collapse of the Tory vote. Less than one voter in six could bring themselves to support the policies of the government. That is an indication, notwithstanding the general election result, of the widespread and intense unpopularity of the Tories.



The authoritarian image presented by Thatcher personally is no more than a reflection of high-handedness and contempt she has dished out to workers for nearly five years. The workers' response was shown in the Tory candidate's derisory vote and can also be seen in the national polls that put Labour three points ahead of the Tories.

But Benn's election has also come at an important time for the Labour Party. Most of the rank and file will be delighted that he is back in Parliament, but no doubt there will be dark mutterings

among the right wing of the PLP.

The political correspondent of the *Financial Times* warned that the by-election result "may be marginally less satisfactory for Labour leaders, who might have preferred to see Benn return to Parliament with a majority much more clearly below that achieved by Mr Varley... a smaller majority would have been more helpful in countering pressure for a further shift to the left."

Such comments have been accompanied by hints and coded warnings to the effect that Benn should not break

Labour's new-found unity. In actual fact, it is the right wing of the party which monotonously picks away at party unity by reneging on conference policies.

There are moves by the right wing not only to reverse well-established conference policy questions, but also to reverse the historic decision on reselection. It has been reported also that there are moves to unseat Albert Booth as Labour's treasurer, to replace him with another candidate more closely aligned to the leadership.

Last but not least, the right wing are involved in a number of local witch-hunts

against supporters of *Militant*, including one in Blackburn where a number of good party members have been expelled in the most disgraceful manner. As we explained last year, the party can have unity or witch-hunts, but it cannot have both.

Benn's election, therefore, will strengthen the rank and file in defending those leftward moves of recent years that have pushed the party towards socialist goals.

Opposition grows

The disastrous state of British capitalism and the Tories' relentless drive on living standards will create a big groundswell of opposition, in the future even greater than that shown in Chesterfield. The Labour Party must not take this inevitable opposition to Toryism as the excuse for watering down policies. On the contrary, it provides an unequalled opportunity to explain the bankruptcy of the capitalist system and the need for urgent and fundamental socialist change as the only answer to the problems faced by working people.



Benn delivers his victory speech at the Chesterfield by-election count. Photo: John Smith (IFL)

Labour student protest

PRINTED BELOW are extracts from an 'Open Letter' to Labour Clubs and other labour movement organisations from three leading members of the National Organisation of Labour Students.

For the last eight years NOLS has been led by the misnamed 'Clause 4' group who have used it as a stepping stone to careers in the NUS and beyond. The 'Clause 4' have only kept their positions in NOLS by manufacturing an artificial majority at successive NOLS Conferences.

Unfortunately the signs are that the forthcoming NOLS Conference will be no different. Already at the NOLS National Committee meeting on 25 February, John Dennis, the Student Organiser, refused to release the membership figures of the Labour Clubs applying to re-affiliate to NOLS. It is feared this will allow the system open to abuse and guarantee 'Clause 4' a "majority".

Unless the Labour Party NEC acts to implement the Emergency Resolution passed at the 1983 Conference (see letter) there can be no guarantee that the 1984 NOLS Conference will be genuinely representative of Labour Students:

Dear Comrades,

The main task facing the labour movement is to win back the support of youth. NOLS, with around 100 Labour Clubs in different Colleges throughout Britain, should be in the forefront of this campaign.

But unfortunately the ability of NOLS to campaign as a united organisation was seriously impaired by the events that took place at the 1983 NOLS Conference. It was marked by bitter organisational wrangles over who was entitled to attend as delegates from Labour Clubs.

Many of the Student Organiser's rulings

involved technicalities or evidence which, at present, is only available to the Student Organiser himself. Because of the bitterness and distrust that was generated by those motivated by political considerations, the conference unanimously agreed the following Emergency Resolution:

"This Conference agrees that all correspondence to and from the Student Organiser concerning NOLS Conference, and all Labour Club cards as sent to the Student Organiser, shall be open to inspection by any member of the NOLS National Committee."

This unanimous decision of conference was confirmed by the NOLS National Committee at its meeting on the 4 December 1983. But at the 29 January NC meeting, the Student Organiser ruled that he could not allow the Conference decision to be implemented.

We believe that this action by the Student Organiser will be greeted with dismay and anger by the vast majority of Labour Students. Nobody wants to see a repetition of the events at last year's conference. To remove the distrust and suspicion, it is vital that the 1983 Conference decision is implemented. We appeal to Labour Clubs, Labour Club Officers, Constituency and Ward Labour Parties and any organisation of the Labour movement to call on the Labour Party NEC to ensure that the Emergency Resolution passed at the 1983 NOLS Conference is carried out and applied to this year's Conference.

Kath McDonnell
(NOLS National Committee)
David Jones
(WLS rep on NOLS NC)
David Maples
(NOLS Standing Order)

Marxists gain in Midlands

LAST WEEKEND saw the best ever Conference of Labour Party Young Socialists in the West Midlands.

Despite the fact that Tony Benn was unfortunately unable to attend, about 180 delegates and visitors attended, a substantial increase on previous years.

A record 32 branches were represented and discussed a wide range of resolutions from nuclear disarmament to economic policies.

One of the most lively contributions came from Steven Cox (Wolverhampton

South-East LPYS) on YTS. He told how he been placed on a clerical YTS scheme but was then sent on an 'Outward Bound' course. Steve said he could not see himself abseiling down a filing cabinet!

In the election for the LPYS National Committee Mark Meredith, from Stoke Central LPYS, said he was standing as a Marxist. Mark won the position by 23 votes to a combined opposition vote of 6. (The previous year Les Kuriata, the retiring NC member won 17 votes to 7).

Out of the nine available Regional Youth Committee

places, *Militant* supporters took seven. However, there was concern among many delegates about the inexplicable disappearance of the nomination papers of one of the candidates. He was not allowed to stand for the committee even though four of the five branches and in that area supported him. Even so a number of new YS branches are in the pipeline. Young Socialists in the area will be looking for an even bigger and better Conference next year.

By Jeremy Birch

Margate enquiry thrown out

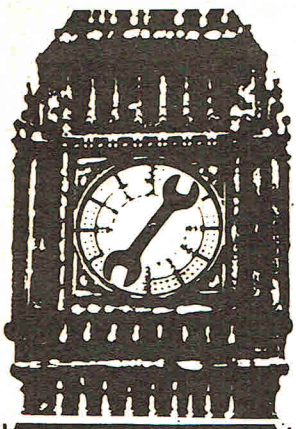
THE ATTEMPT to mount an enquiry into *Militant* supporters in Margate has been decisively rejected by the executive of Thanet North Constituency Labour Party.

This followed right wing officers of one ward condemning *Militant* supporter Barry Lewis for an "unauthorised recruitment drive", in which he

had recruited 15 new members to the party!

The Thanet North CLP executive committee met last week on February 28—the TUC day of action. They were met by a large lobby of local Labour Party activists who protested about the enquiry proposal. In the event, the EC voted 13 to 1 to drop the enquiry and take no further action.

LPYS National Conference
at Spa Royal Hall,
Bridlington,
April 20-23
Many debates, top
labour movement
speakers, disco,
bands, films
Details from LPYS,
150 Walworth
Road, London
SE17 1JT



Out of order

I WAS chucked out of the Commons last week after an incident during a debate on Barclays Bank. The Tory MP for Havant, Ian Lloyd, objected to remarks I made—the deputy Speaker intervened, but I wouldn't withdraw them so out I went.

This clash follows on from a motion I put condemning the conditions faced by black South African miners, which has the support of 118 Labour MP's. This must have upset Mr Lloyd. In 1982 the South African government sponsored a visit by Mr Lloyd to South Africa. His attitude to the apartheid regime can be seen by his motion (in reply to mine) which defends the treatment of black SA miners.

His motion starts off attacking ITN, whose recent programme highlighted the terrible conditions faced by black miners. Lloyd accuses ITN of "conforming to the fashionable trend of denigrating all South African institutions". Its ironic that on the one hand the Tory leadership attack BBC's *Panorama* for accusing them of being infiltrated by racists, then another Tory attacks ITN for criticising one of the most hideous racist governments in the world!

Lloyd is undeterred though and trumpets the "immense achievements of the South African gold mining industry." These 'immense achievements' include 800 miners killed and 17,000 injured in accidents last year, and the 100 killed by security forces in the past seven years in the battle for union recognition. His motion also describes the SA miners as "voluntary migrant workers", ignoring the fact that these workers are in reality no more than economic and semi-colonial conscripts. We put an amendment to his motion pointing out that any improvements in mining conditions there were won by the mineworkers' union.

Myself and other Labour MPs have now put a further motion which says the House regrets that the interests of these workers "could be so lightly described as a 'fashionable trend' by the hon. member for Havant."

By Dave Nellist MP

Liverpool-Liberals budget a fake

THE LIVERPOOL City Council Labour Group has dismissed the Liberal Party's 'alternative budget' as a 'fake'.

Finance Chairman Councillor Tony Byrne said: "It will fool nobody because it's an illusion that everyone will see through. The Liberal budget is a fake. It doesn't address itself to the real financial crisis facing the City. It would mean massive cuts in jobs and services, including compulsory redundancies."

Councillor Byrne went on to say: "The cruellest deception in the Liberal budget is the so-called 'cast iron' no redundancies pledge. It is maintained that 8% of council jobs (2,400 jobs) are changed every year. No basis is given for this figure.

"It is said £8 million can be saved by the non-filling of 1,000 vacancies. Yet even during a period of a strict moratorium on this during the Liberal/Tory control only 500 jobs were lost.

Redundancies

"A Liberal budget of £220 million could only be achieved by compulsory redundancies. It is also proposed that permanent council jobs be replaced with 5,000 temporary MSC jobs. No mention is made of how these MSC jobs are to be funded by the council. The council's contribution would be nearly £8 million to top-up wages and pay for other costs.

"No mention is made of how the Liberals would pay for the costs of new schemes in the council's capital programmes for housing, health facilities and Partnership schemes. These include new council houses, improvement grants and planned maintenance schemes.

"Nothing is said about the £6 million of cuts agreed in the previous Liberal budget which the Labour Party refused to implement. That spending is still there. The Liberals also left no reserves or funds to keep spending down next year—they spent them all. They will not be available to keep spending down next year."

Councillor Byrne added that it was important to understand the scale of cuts the Liberals would be faced with next year: "It would mean cutting around £50 million of jobs and services. A single figure rate increase for 1984-85 would mean a total spending of around £220 million. Even the Tory Party has admitted that the council would need to spend at least £245 million next year—equivalent to a 70% rate increase for the City's services.

"When the county council services are added to that figure the overall rate increase would be over 50%. Even assuming the previous

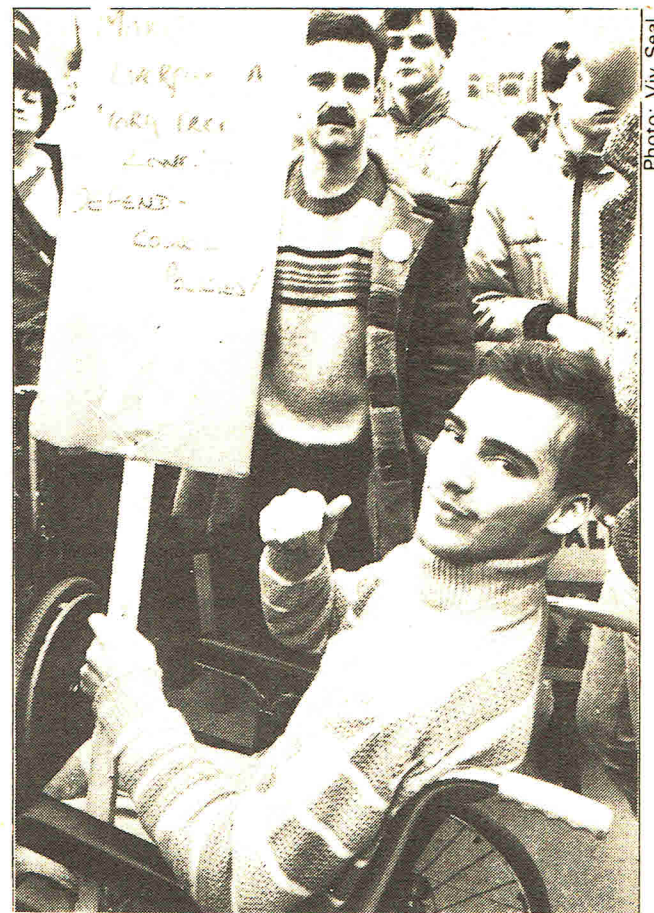
Liberal budget was still at £218 million their budget for next year would be well over £245 million and could be high as £268 million. That is the level they would have cut from."

Councillor Byrne then stressed that a Liberal budget as proposed would mean compulsory redundancies: "It would mean the privatization of the bins and street sweeping. A Liberal budget would create chaos with the trade unions whose members would be under attack.

No solution

"A Liberal budget would threaten many community services and renew the attack on council tenants and the unemployed. It would add to the dole queue of over 60,000 people in the City. It would swell the ranks of the 15,000 unemployed building workers. It would cut permanent jobs. It is a cruel deception which needs to be exposed.

"Council workers who think it offers a 'lifeline' should think again. Members of the public who think there is a painless way out of the City's financial crisis should think again. The Liberal figures are an illusion. There are no easy options—if there were we would have taken them."



A demonstrator makes his protest at the march in defence of the council on November 19.

Mass canvass in support of Liverpool Council. Saturday 17 March. Meet 10.30am at the old District Labour Party Rooms, 70 Victoria Street, Liverpool. All Labour Party members from any area welcome. Organised by the Liverpool District Labour Party.

Support for council builds in union ranks

MASSIVE support is building up amongst the ranks of the Liverpool local authority unions. A series of meetings have voted to support the City Council's stand, and take strike action on 'Budget day', March 29.

Liverpool NALGO planned a mass meeting on Tuesday. 3,500 turned up but the management at the venue, the Liverpool stadium, locked out about 1,000 members citing fire regulations: no prior warning about this was given to the NALGO branch leadership.

Despite this frustrating interference, the meeting went ahead with 2,500 present. There was not one contribution against the call for support for the council and the one day strike, and the strike received overwhelming backing along with a decision to recall the meeting should there be any redundancies following March 29.

However, the vote could only be consultative because of the other thousand members locked out of the meeting.

It is now likely Liverpool

NALGO may go for workplace meetings, given the decisive vote at the mass meeting.

A mass meeting of 1,000 from the Liverpool GMBATU City Council Cleansing Department voted—with only one abstention—to support strike action on March 29.

Deputy convenor Bernie Hogan attacked the former Liberal/Tory council—he pointed out that during their decade of control they planted more trees in Liverpool than built houses. He

added: "If we are not careful Liverpool will end up like Sherwood Forest with us poor robbing the rich barons!"

The Tory Press gave much publicity to the decision of Liverpool NUPE district committee not to support the strike. Yet they have kept quiet about the fact that two NUPE branches—the Education and Markets department branches—voted overwhelmingly to overturn the District Committees' decision and support the strike.

The Tory Press also did not mention that the majority of NUPE's members in Liverpool—the 1,200 in Social Services—would be given an exemption from the strike action, given the nature of their jobs. Despite the wishful thinking of the Tory press, clearly support is growing amongst trade unionists for a stand against the Tories.

By Richard Venton and John Tobin
(Senior Shop Steward Liverpool City Council Cleansing Dept. GMBATU)

London Labour backs campaigns

FACED WITH the biggest challenge in its history, the London Labour Party last weekend saw its annual conference resolve to fight on all fronts.

It agreed to defend the GLC saying "the campaign should not be primarily based on pleading to the Tory government, but on an appeal for action to the labour movement including industrial action." The massive demonstration on January 24 shows that this kind of support would be forthcoming.

Conference opposed the transfer of control over London Transport to a govern-

ment quango. It was pointed out this would lead to a fragmented and inefficient system, and public transport would be left with higher fares and reduced services.

Socialist issues

The Tooting/LPYS resolution pointed out that working class women were suffering the worst of the Tory attacks on living standards. This resolution which was backed by conference, called for a campaign to recruit working class women to the party, on the one hand giving practical measures to assist their involvement, and on the other through taking up socialist campaigning issues that affect working class women.

Amongst the other debates taken up were trade union rights for YTS trainees, and the campaign to defend the NHS and the Inner London Education Authority. One of the biggest debates at the conference however was on the question of positive discrimination for blacks. This question will be taken up fully in a future issue of *Militant*.

Readers' meeting

The conference *Militant* Readers Meeting was the most successful ever held at the London Conference, with over 100 delegates and visits coming to hear Terry Fields MP and Bob Labi of the London LP executive.

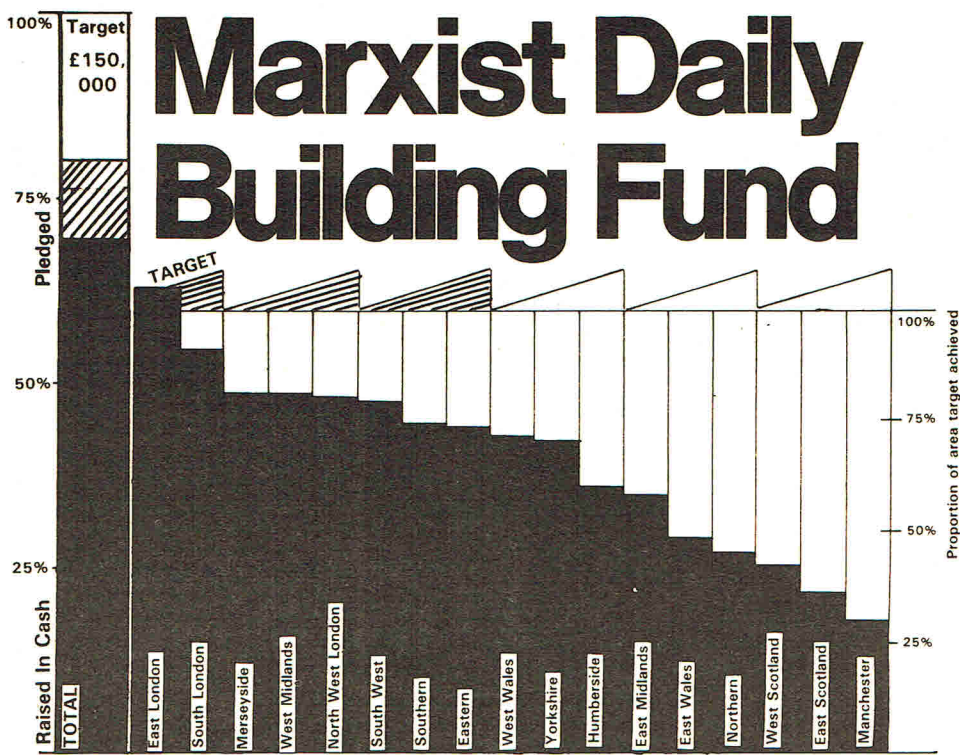


Terry Fields MP.

AN EMERGENCY resolution on Liverpool received overwhelming support at the London Labour Party conference. The resolution, moved by the LPYS, included the following:

"This annual meeting believes that no Labour council should be left isolated in a struggle with the Tory government and calls upon the London Regional Executive to do all that it can to mobilise support for the stand of Liverpool City Council from the Labour Parties, trade unions and Labour Groups in Greater London.

"We call upon the NEC and PLP to give full and unequivocal public support for the stand of Liverpool City Council and District Labour Party."



WE COULD be moving into new premises very soon.

Negotiations have begun on premises that would be ideal for our purposes but these negotiations cannot be completed until we have raised the full £150,000.

Don't let us miss this opportunity. It may be a long while before similar suitable premises become available and we don't want a longer delay than necessary.

Our campaign to raise sufficient funds to obtain these new premises is no doubt being watched closely by our political opponents. It will be little comfort for them to see what a magnificent response we have had so far.

No other political trend within the labour movement could have aroused the enthusiastic response that we have. Up and down the country readers have been finding ways of raising the money to make us a donation.

They recognise what a significant development it would be to obtain these new premises. It will be possible, once they are acquired, to

begin seriously planning the production of a more frequent and ultimately a daily Marxist paper.

In the last week we have received a further magnificent £9,955 which means that the overall total stands at £102,164. However, we still need the target set at the beginning of the campaign of £150,000.

That means we need to raise another £47,836. The more we raise in cash from the donations of our supporters the less we will have to borrow from the bank.

Opening the post brings constant amazement at the widespread nature of the support for the ideas of Marxism and the commitment and sacrifice this engenders. A further £890 has come in from the Cardiff

area; £923 is on its way from West Wales and another £600 has arrived from Swansea. £555 has come from the South West, £260 from Liverpool, £350 from Hampshire and an extra £668 from Edinburgh.

Eddie Phillips, Glasgow has given £135 and Davy Chapman, also Glasgow, has given £150. JM Boadle, Coventry, gave £200. Another NUPE branch, South-West Herts, Health, has sent in £20. Kitchen staff at Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham, collected £7.50.

It seems everybody wants to participate in the campaign so don't be the one left out. Special Commemorative Certificates will be awarded to every contributor to this historic fund.

If all our readers follow the remarkable examples already set, then we should have the money in time to go ahead and finalise negotiations on the premises under discussion.

By Nick Wrack

ADS Militant

CLASSIFIED: 10p per word, minimum 10 words.
SEMI-DISPLAY: £2 per 2 column centimetres.
All advertisement copy should reach this office by **SATURDAY.**

MILITANT STICKERS. Still available. 200 for £2.30; 500 for £5.60; 1,000 for £11.00. Contact: 'Militant Circulation, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

"Militant Turn left for workers unity and socialism"

T-shirts—£3.50—white, yellow, navy black.

Sweatshirts—£6.75—grey, pale-blue, navy, dark green.

Small 32"-34" chest
medium 34"-36"
large 36"-38"
extra large 40-42"

All proceeds to Militant Fighting Fund. All cheques and postal orders with size and colour preference to R. Harris, 2 Dukes Brow, Blackburn, Lancs.

COMPLETE SET of novels of Agatha Christie novels in paperback (71 books) + two novels written as M Westmarchott and her autobiography for sale. All proceeds to Building Fund. Offers to Box 27, 1 Mentmore Terrace.

ZX81 and 16K RAM for sale: £40 (money for Building Fund). Contact: Tony Nicholls, 3 Craven Street, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire.

Cassette tapes with two issues of *Militant* (one each side). Available fortnightly. £3.50 per quarter, £13 for year. Write to: 'Militant Tapes', 26 Aston Terrace, Harehills, Leeds 8, or phone (0532) 493440.

MEETINGS

For events in your area contact your local Militant seller.

BLACKBURN (WEST LOTHIAN) 'What Militant Stands For' Speaker: Eddy Donaghy (Scottish Council Labour Party Personal Capacity) Blackburn Community Centre Monday 12 March 7.30pm

SOUTH BRISTOL: Readers' Meeting 'Militant Tendency—who are they? Hear Robin Clapp (Member of Bristol South CLP) 7.30 pm, Wednesday 14 March at West Town Lane Junior School, Stockwood.

CHESTERFIELD: Tuesday 13 March, at 7.30 pm. Speaker: Ted Grant (Political Editor, *Militant*) at the Assembly Rooms, Chesterfield Market Hall.

WEST LONDON: "Socialist policies and Liverpool's Fight". Speakers: Terry Fields MP (Liverpool, Broadgreen) and Keith Dickinson (*Militant* Editorial Board Member, Expelled from Labour Party last year) at the Community Hall, Corner of Bulwer Street and Wood Lane, off Shepards Bush Green, London W12 at 8.00 pm on Wednesday 14 March 1984.

SHEFFIELD: Speakers: Dave Nellist MP; Lynn Walsh (*Militant* Editorial Board, expelled from Labour Party) on 2nd April at 7.30 pm. Venue to be announced.

THANET: *Militant* Readers' Meetings are held on alternate Monday evenings. For further details phone (0843) 291293.

HARTLEPOOL: Marxist discussion groups. Held weekly. Ring Malcolm Fallow, Peterlee 867789.

TOWER HAMLETS: "Defend Liverpool Council! Fight Against Council Cuts!" Speakers: Terry Fields MP (Liverpool Broadgreen) & Chris Rackley (Tower Hamlets Councillor) at Bethnal Green Town Hall, Patriot Square (off Cambridge Heath Road), London E2 on Tuesday 20 March, 7.30 pm.

ISLE OF WIGHT: "No to council cuts. Save jobs. Save services." Wednesday 14 March at 7.30 pm. Speaker: Nick Brooks (Southampton Labour Party personal capacity). At Ryde Labour Hall, Star Street, Ryde, IOW.

JESMOND. on Sunday 18 March at 7.30pm. Speakers include Peter Taaffe (Editor *Militant*) and Malcolm Graham (AUEW Convener, personal capacity) at Friends Meeting House, Archbold Terrace (nr. Jesmond Metro).

SOUTHERN REGION Labour Party Conference: Militant Readers' Meeting on Saturday 17 March. Speaker: Terry Fields MP. "Fight the Tory Attacks—Defend Trade Unions, No to Council Cuts". Time: After the Conference session (approx 7 pm). Place: Room F, Central Library, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth. All welcome.

SRI LANKA: The tasks today. New pamphlet from the Nava Samaja Party (UK Branch). Obtainable from World Socialist Books (see address below). Price 75p plus 10p postage.

FIIGHTING FUND

This week: £2,272

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target 7 April
Eastern	617		2500
East Midlands	697		2900
Humberside	364		1500
London East	1154		3250
London West	434		2050
London South	652		2650
Manchester & Lancs	493		3520
Merseyside	1015		4000
Northern	743		3350
Scotland East	389		2150
Scotland West	525		3000
Southern	1160		4300
South West	361		2000
Wales East	626		1880
Wales West	486		1650
West Midlands	681		3500
Yorkshire	1043		4100
Others	965		2000
Total received	£12403		50,000

DO YOU have *Militant* supporters in your area who never shut up? Well, now you can put them to good use.

They can follow the tremendous example of Simon Duerden, a reader in Sheffield. He raised £30.30 by talking non-stop for twelve hours on over thirty different aspects of Marxism.

Obviously Simon's understanding of Marxism as well as his erudition

has shown him the need to raise money for the Marxist cause. He got people to put their money where his mouth was!

By donating to our Fighting Fund you will be bringing closer the day when *Militant* appears daily and can offer a daily counter—balance to the lies of the Tory media.

By Nick Wrack

THIS WEEKS CONTRIBUTIONS INCLUDED:

D Musker, Bootle, POEU, £50. Neil Allen, East London £50. Tony Mulligan, GMBATU, Liverpool Local Authority worker, £30. Maureen Brown, Knowsley, NALGO, £10. Colin Haslam, Newham, £10. Keith Gardener, Southampton, £5. Hannah Commings, Partick, (on supplementary benefit) £1. Ian, Flash & Cos, Musselburgh, each gave £2. Grant Webb, Hillington, ASTMS, £1.60. J&T Levele, Paisley £1. L Parkinson, TGWU, Gedling, £4. Rattling Tins, Sparbrook, £19.

SELLING Militant

Eight months ago we began to sell the paper on our construction site.

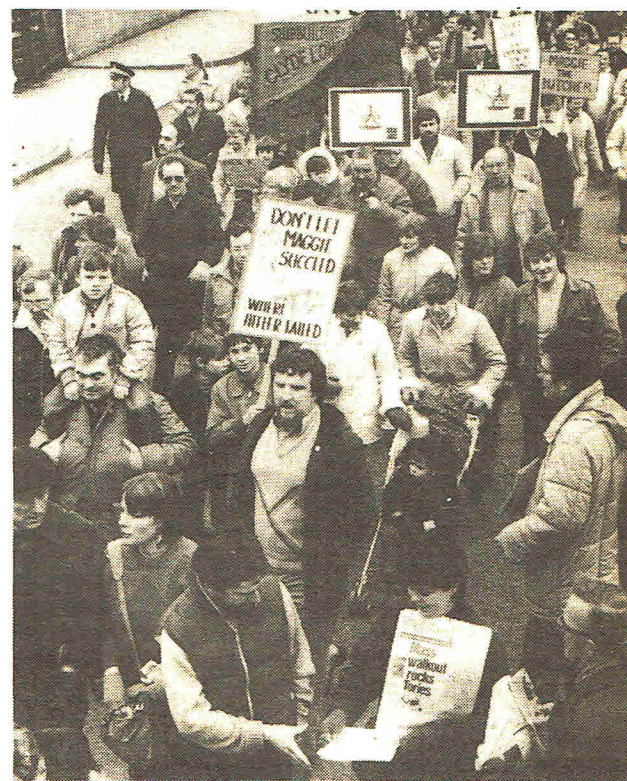
The number of papers sold each week is 40 plus, out of a labour force of approximately 350. We've been told by some comrades that our sales are pretty good, but we're far from satisfied and we continue to break new ground.

For us selling the paper isn't just routine; political discussion is essential if we are to consolidate readers and give practical support to the marxist tendency in the labour movement. On average we collect £6 a week for the fighting fund.

People who are new to the ideas and programme of the *Militant* greet them with great enthusiasm and strive to learn more about Marxism, not just in a theoretical sense but also by regular discussions. To a point we have a favourable environment for political gains, an industry where even at the best of times, employment is on a temporary basis and a continuous struggle is waged with employers over a whole number of issues.

Won't sell if keep quiet

Gone are the days when to be a Marxist you were virtually classified as social outcast. The contradictions of capital and the consistency of *Militant* mean the political argument can be won every time. *Militant* is a household word and on our



"Stop the rot" demonstration against closure of industries in Scotland, Glasgow 3 March. Photo: R Matthews (IFL)

site it's a starter for a whole range of discussions.

But you don't get a fair-sized paper sale by keeping your mouth shut and hoping that socialism will inevitably arrive on the scene. Boldness and enthusiasm are the keynotes to success.

Most supervisors aren't sympathetic to men selling papers in work time! So the technique of whipping a paper out of your jacket and delivering it in one passing movement does require a bit of developing as does collecting money from the driver of a vehicle going by; but it's

'all down to team-work', as we put it.

It's doubly satisfying when someone approaches you and tells you the witch-hunt stinks and places a regular order, or when someone looks into your bag of 50 papers and asks is it alright to buy one or are they all ordered?

We urge all sellers to write to their paper and give their own experiences.

By two AUEW comrades on an East Coast construction site.

'New deal': how can we win?

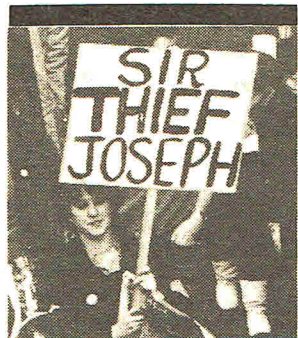
THE RECENT proposals by the Tories to change the system of covering students' travel costs is another blow to our living standards.

Already, according to a survey by the National Union of Students, 800,000 students in Further and Higher Education receive less from the government than if they were being paid £25 a week on a Youth Training Scheme.

Polytechnic and University Students can, under the present regulations, partially offset the low level of the grant by claiming back any money spent in excess of £50. Now the Tories propose to replace travel claims with a fixed rate payment of £110. Thousands of students will lose money as a result.

These proposals are one reason why NUS has launched a 'New Deal For Students' Charter of demands in six key areas including travel allowances, housing for students and grants.

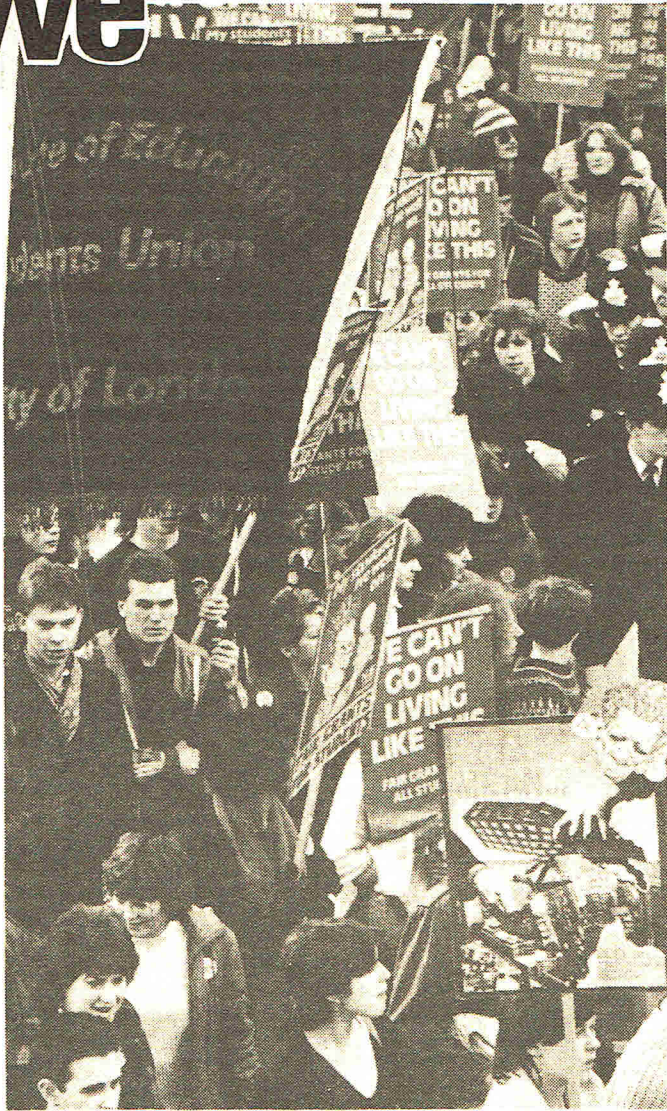
However, while the demands in the 'New Deal' have received a good response from many students the main question being asked is: 'how can we win it?' A massive turnout on the March 10 demonstration and Festival in London will be an important first step. But the experience of the past two years has shown that large demonstrations by themselves are not enough to move the Tories.



BEVERLEY WILLIAMS of Gorseinon Technical College in West Wales talked to *Militant* about the problems she and her friends faced on a pre-nursery course at the college:

"Because we are training to be nurses, a two week visit to the local hospital was arranged, but we had to pay our own fare back and forth each day. Most of the girls live up the valley and it is costing them a bomb. My friend is already owed £20 in transport costs.

"Because we don't have a grant, it's difficult to make ends meet. It's getting so bad now that we have to pay for food which is used up at cookery classes; mincemeat alone costs 80p a time. The cuts are forcing us to look for work during the night. Most girls have night jobs such as part time working in Tesco or night clubs. It's no joke having to work in Tesco till 10pm or a night club till 2am, then back home to finish your homework for the following day."



Students demonstrate against the Tories in 1982.

Since November 1981 there have been four major NUS demonstrations of over 15,000 students, and four national 'Days of Action'. And yet, despite these protests and displays of anger, the Tories have forged ahead with new attacks on education. The main reason for this lies in the failure of the leadership of NUS, in the hands of the National Organisation of Labour Students, to link the campaigns of the student movement to the labour movement.

Instead, they have argued that defending education means conducting a "battle of ideas"—of convincing enough MP's to vote against the government's proposals. The NOLS leaders of NUS produced 'A Handy Pull-Out Guide For Students Unions. Lobbying Parliament and Your Local MP', which even included the advice: "As a start, invite your MP to meet you in your office and give him/her a meal!"

But the experience of last year's NUS grants claim shows that this approach is doomed. In October 1982 NUS put forward a grants claim of £25 a week for FE students, the raising of the parental income threshold so that students whose parents earned less than £9,000 a year would get a full grant, and a £207 increase in the main rate grant.

Militant supporters in NOLS argued that the claim could only be won through linking students with the labour movement; through a drive to set up College Joint Trade Union Committees with student representatives, and a campaign for a representative conference of public sector trade union branches and shop-stewards committees, Student Unions, local Labour Councils etc. to co-ordinate the defence of the public sector and the defeat of the Tories' plans.



ALAN MURRAY and **Emmanuel Bly** both attend the South East London Tech college. The only way they have enough money to attend college is part time work. Emmanuel Bly works at Sainsbury's, while Alan and his 15 year old brother Wayne body-pop at the local disco to earn a little cash. Most of their friends at college work in shops, and some busk in places like Covent Garden. Emmanuel told how the cuts affected him:

"There is hardly any decent books. I have to buy my own equipment for my designing course. If the college needs extra money to buy important equipment the only way it can raise it is to get the students out on sponsored walks."

Our arguments were scornfully dismissed by the NOLS leaders, including Neil Stewart, NOLS President of NUS. Unfortunately for students the Tories' also scornfully dismissed our grant claim—giving a 4% 'increase' in the main rate and ignoring the call for a grant for FE students.

The lessons of that claim must be learned. With the attacks on the Metropolitan Councils, privatisation, the assault on trade union rights, the public sector is once again under siege. A co-ordinated fightback, involving students, could defeat the Tories. The last time Thatcher was defeated was during the Tory government



Labour Club round-up

LIVERPOOL University has been comparatively unscathed by the cuts in the past—until now that is. This year one of the Halls of Residence will be closed, losing 140 places, and next a 12% cut is proposed in the grant to the Students Union, with the building engineer department under threat. In this climate, now is the time to build our Labour Club. One way we have boosted recruitment is to hold paper sales outside lectures and in the departments themselves. Last Friday, one comrade sold over ten papers simply standing outside two lectures.

By John Betteridge
(Liverpool University Labour Club)

ON February 23 over 600 students from all over the Midlands demonstrated against the proposed closure of West Midlands College, a teachers training centre in Walsall. The mood was defiant—students from North Staffs Poly came with red flags to decorate the march. An enthusiastic rally followed with local Labour MP David Winnock and SU speakers, as well as Les Kuriata of the LPYS National Committee who was often interrupted by cheers and applause.

By Richard Stockdale
(Walsall Tech.)

OVER 150 attended a successful pre-conference ral-

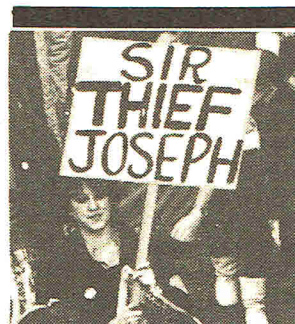
ly called by the Welsh Organisation of Labour Students in Cardiff. Speakers were Dave Nellist M.P. and Ian Issac of the South Wales NUM executive who urged students to link themselves to the power of the labour movement.

Two years ago WLS was literally a shell of an organisation. Two years ago *Militant* supporters won a majority at the conference and since then WLS has been rebuilt on the basis of joint action with the LPYS. At this year's conference, the biggest and most successful yet, *Militant* supporters were returned to the regional committee unopposed.

By Mark Brake
(NOLS National Committee elect.)

NEWCASTLE Polytechnic held its student Union executive recently. The Tories were hammered, keeping only two seats—the rest went to those opposed to the government's round of cuts. The two Labour Club candidates were elected after canvassing the Halls of residence and the Poly buildings. *Militant* supporter and secretary of the Labour Club, Dai De Ivey, has won the position of President, while the other Labour candidate, Mark Rothwell, is SU Treasurer.

By Tim Beasley
(Newcastle Poly Labour Club)



HACKNEY YOUNG Socialists Sean Kelly and Michael Supka are both 6th form school students. They explained the problems they face.

Sean: "We have to share books for an increasing number of lessons. Seeing as we're doing 'A'-levels this means that homework is really hard. Quite often there's no reserve teachers. On Thursday for instance, we sat through a whole lesson without a teacher."

Mike: "The equipment's been cut down and the opportunities aren't as great. They charge us for school trips and if you haven't got the money you don't go. Most of the teachers tell us how to cheat on application forms for jobs because they know full well that most of us haven't got a chance of getting a job."

of 1970-74. Then as Education Minister, she was forced to retreat after a massive campaign by a student movement linked with the labour movement. With a determined socialist leadership of NOLS and NUS, the same could be done today!

By John Jennings
(Sheffield University Labour Club)

YTS protest petition launched

THE YOUTH Trade Union Rights Campaign has launched a nationwide petition to gain a million signatures in the fight for better rates of pay and conditions for YTS trainees.

Every LPYS branch has now been circulated with 20 copies of the petition and should start planning straight away to ensure that the target of a million is reached by later in the year. To reach the target means that every LPYS branch needs to get over 3,000 signatures.

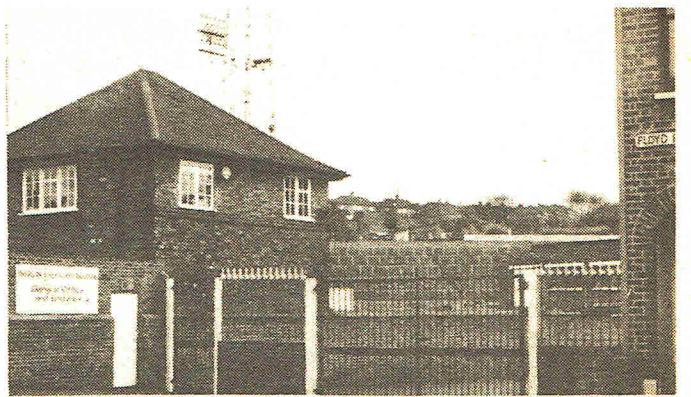
YTS schemes are obvious targets for signatures but there will be plenty of other openings and opportunities as well. At the recent TUC youth conference over 50 delegates signed. Town centres on Saturday mornings as part of a YS day of action along with bus and train stations are useful venues.

The petition can also be used to get donations for YTURC to assist in the task of ensuring that YTURC has the cash to finance full-time workers and purchase an office ensure the fight to get organised and for proper jobs for all trainees goes ahead.

about us? what



The strange case of Charlton Athletic



It reads like a 'who-dun-it' except it's not yet clear who exactly held the smoking gun or why.

The immediate 'villains' on the scene are predictable. The heavies who administered the near-killer blow were the taxmen. It was Charlton's inability last week to cough up the necessary ready, the £108,000 owed to the Inland Revenue, which led to the High Court ordering the official receiver to take over the football club.

1982 mystery take-over

The total debts were over £1,200,000. But how Charlton got itself into such a financial mess, has not yet been properly explained.

The club are not among the football greats. Their last success was nearly forty years ago when they won the

By Jim Chrystie

FA Cup. For nearly three decades they have languished in the Second and Third Divisions.

Their major asset was that they owned the largest ground in the whole of the Football League; a ten-acre prime site near the railway, river, motorway and Blackwall Tunnel linking North and South London.

Two years ago the club was taken over by Marman and a new chairman appointed. Nothing strange in that at first sight. But the reasons for the take over and the terms agreed with the old chairman were more than somewhat unusual.

Roughly speaking the normal reasons for businessmen running football clubs can be divided into three categories. Firstly to provide them with a hobby—like Elton John at Watford.

Secondly to use it as publicity for the company. And thirdly to utilise the assets of the club, e.g. at Chelsea the owners have been considering a plan to turn the ground into a £10m housing estate.

Yet none of these seem to have been the motive at Charlton. The company which took over, Marman AG, was a Swiss trading company with only marginal interests in Britain. Their acquisition of Charlton has not been as part of a massive sales drive into the British market.

New consortium

The club may have been a hobby for the new chairman, Mark Hulyer, but how did he persuade the Swiss company to take over an English football club?

It cannot have been to acquire the ground. For the most extraordinary aspect of

the 1982 deal was that ownership of the ground stayed in the personal possession of the former chairman, Michael Gliksten. He kept the ground by transferring it, for £420,000, to the Adelong company, which he owns 100%. He then leased back the ground to Marman at the high rate of £110,000 a year.

This was not the only way Gliksten benefitted from the take over. Marman paid him 'a considerable sum' for the club and took over a debt Charlton owed to his subsidiary company Adelong. At first Marman were able to pay the rent and loan arrears, but as attendances continued to decline payments fell.

Gliksten, whose family had owned Charlton for fifty years, showed where his interests lay. Even if it meant that the club went under, he demanded his money from

Marman. He began the whole series of legal actions against the club.

Now it seems at the very last moment the club may be saved. A consortium, headed by a local property company, Sunley, have put in a bid for the club. Gliksten flew back from his Australian ranch last week to offer them the ground for about £1m, or more than two and a half times the amount his company paid him for it just eighteen months ago.

Players and fans come last

And the players? How much value does this property company put upon their human commodities? Well they've offered just £5,000 to purchase them. Property before people—what could be a clearer sense of priorities under capitalism?

Clubs are bought and sold in secret, as business deals, without any control by those most directly affected. Neither the players or workers at the club or the fans whose support sustains it through good times and bad, have any say whatsoever. If Charlton had been allowed to die, it would have been a scandal, but a scandal which would have thrown much light on the twilight world of football finance.

Now it seems as if it has been saved. And what are the plans of the new company?

Firstly to purchase the ground outright. Then to lease it back for rent to the football club for twenty years. On part of the site they plan to build a housing estate. And to show their priorities, the new chairman will be a surveyor.

TUC daily paper flops

THE TUC'S plan to start a daily paper has failed. The committee set up to raise the necessary £6¾ million was only promised £2 million by the trade unions. Now it seems it is ready to throw in the towel.

This is a significant setback in the struggle against the Tories. Last year both the Labour Party and TUC conferences backed the proposal for a labour movement daily. How can the labour movement seriously expect to get its ideas across without a voice of its own?

Existing papers are overwhelmingly pro-Tory and the *Daily Mirror* supports Labour's right-wing. The *Morning Star* is dependent on the revenue it receives from sales in Eastern Europe, which hardly qualifies it as an independent workers' paper.

Going through the motions

We desperately need a daily to put the workers' point of view. As Moss Evans said, "...we are talking in terms of well under £1 per trade unionist. And that is not a very big price to turn a dream into reality."

All along the TUC leaders have been going through the

motions just to appear to be doing something in response to rank and file demands for a socialist paper. They set up a feasibility study under Lord McCarthy which came up with the figure of £6¾ million needed to start the venture.

Not a workers' paper

But McCarthy's whole idea was not a worker's paper but a paper to fill the "gap in the market" with highly paid journalists hired from the Fleet Street press. He even believed it could rely on backing from big commercial advertisers like the other papers.

At best most trade union leaders have seen a labour paper as a nicety not a necessity. Some big unions like GMBATU have refused to contribute a penny towards it! Two million pounds hardly seems like a serious effort when compared to the estimated £388



There has been no serious campaign for a daily. Above TUC 1983 Conference: Chairman Frank Chapple, General Secretary, Len Murray.

million assets of the trade union movement.

Ironically a figure close to £6¾ million has been raised to set up a trade union bank. Some union bosses such as David Bassnett evidently feel more secure with a 'sound' capitalist investment than with a campaigning pro-trade union paper.

Lack of funds?

It is scandalous if the TUC drop the Labour daily "due to lack of funds". A bold political appeal to all trade

unionists and Labour supporters wasn't even considered. Undoubtedly this will provoke renewed demands from the movement to take up this question in a serious way.

If the trade union leaders cannot set up a daily paper, we will show them how it is done by building a daily *Militant*. And we will continue to campaign for the TUC and Labour Party to set up a daily as well.

By Andy Beadle

LEFT and RIGHT

Ghost of dictators past

Maybe the "Funeral March" at Andropov's funeral wasn't just for the late Russian leader. According to the *Guardian* (and who could argue with them) one of the world leaders, resplendent in uniform, who quickly filed past Andropov's coffin, was President Somoza of Nicaragua. Perhaps with a few vodkas the *Guardian* reporter might have seen General Franco and Adolf Hitler as well.

Unequal rewards in Zimbabwe

Two reports from the Zimbabwe newspaper *The Herald*, 11 November, 1983, shows who works and who gains in that country.

First the praise:

"Comrade Mugabe stressed that progressive managements—those therefore likely to produce profits—were those which recognised the role of the worker as a motive force in all production in processes: a concept certainly being employed to good effect by private enterprise.

"A shining example is Truworthis, whose moves to step up workers participation are cited as one of the main reasons for substantial financial recovery: a rise in profits from \$145,000 last year to \$561,000 this year."

Secondly the rewards:

"Worker of the Year 1983, Mr Isaac Mauku, who works at Truworthis, received a return air ticket to Victoria Falls, just 200 miles up the road. Businessman of the Year 1983 Mr Sam Gozo, leading Harare businessman won a return ticket to London as did Businesswoman of the Year 1983, Mrs Jone Blanchfield, retail director of Truworthis Zimbabwe Ltd.

Unbiased industrial diplomat

The *Financial Times* reported, 10 February, that Michael Posner is to become economic director of the National Economic Development Office. The paper reports his attitude: "Yesterday he emphasised the diplomatic role in his new job. One of the most important things will be to help the parties (government, unions, and CBI) to talk turkey and come to sensible conclusions".

Is this the same Mr Posner who last year was the chairman of the Social Science Research Council when SSRC staff went on unprecedented strike for nearly two weeks in protest at management's failure to consult them on job cuts. The answer of course is yes. So much for good industrial relations.

(Thanks for this week's Left and Rights to Dave Hardy and Viv Seal)

Save Our Health Service



A question of class

HEALTH IS a clear, class issue. On average the tops of British society live five years longer, have only half the number of long term illnesses and are five times less likely to have a handicapped child than those at the bottom.

Parents on low incomes are twice as likely to see their baby die within the first month of birth than a family on high earnings, and infant mortality in the first 12 months of life is four times greater for girls and five times higher for boys from working class families than those of wealthy ones.

Large disparities exist on a regional scale. For instance North Tyneside, which has some of the

worst health records in the country, only receives one half the health resources spent in the rich areas of Kensington and Chelsea.

'Third World' in inner London

"WE HAVE a big problem of dysentery and there are cases of typhoid and the other day a case leprosy. We are virtually working in a Third World situation."

These are the words of Dr. Jean Richards, District Medical Officer, not from Ethiopia or Bangladesh, but from Tower Hamlets in East London. The words are from a confidential report by Dr. Richards on the state of Health care in the Borough.

This month sees the 150th anniversary of the birth of William Morris. IAN HUNTER (Sacriston Labour Party) takes a look at this British socialist who has mostly been either ignored or dismissed as a 'romantic utopian'.

William Morris: Romantic or revolutionary?

THE CAPITALIST establishment and press desperately try to present Marxism as a force alien to the traditions of British Labour—as narrow, sectarian, and dogmatic. Any study of the origins of the Labour Party, or the history of the labour movement this century would show the ridiculous nature of the first claim.

One could go further and even argue that in some respects the British Labour movement had Marxist aspects before Marx! Marx himself acknowledged that, before 1840, English socialists such as Thomas Hodgskin, William Thompson and John Bray had already anticipated several concepts now regarded as Marxist; in particular the identification of the source of profit in the expropriation of surplus value from workers, and the recognition of the impossibility of reconciling the interests of capital and labour.

Similarly William Morris, when he made the momentous step to revolutionary socialism in 1881-3, had already worked out for himself the materialist concept of history and class struggle.

Marx's influence

To mention these individual achievements in no way takes away the epoch-making contributions of Marx and Engels, begun with the 'German Ideology' and 'Communist Manifesto' of 1846 and 1848, and developed in 'Grundrisse' and 'Capital'. As Morris freely admitted, like many others before and since, in Marx he recognised a far more highly developed and comprehensive exposition of the outlook and analysis to which he had only been struggling.

Morris, however, did not become any slavish follower of Marx. He continued to develop his own themes, in close collaboration with Engels, and made individual contributions to Marxism which still deserve attention.

Unfortunately Morris had few friends. Along with

Engels he broke with the arrogant and dogmatic H.M. Hyndman, the opportunist leader of the Social Democratic Federation, as early as 1884, but Morris' unyielding adherence to Marxist revolutionary socialism prevented him from gaining a firm position in any of the other early socialist bodies.

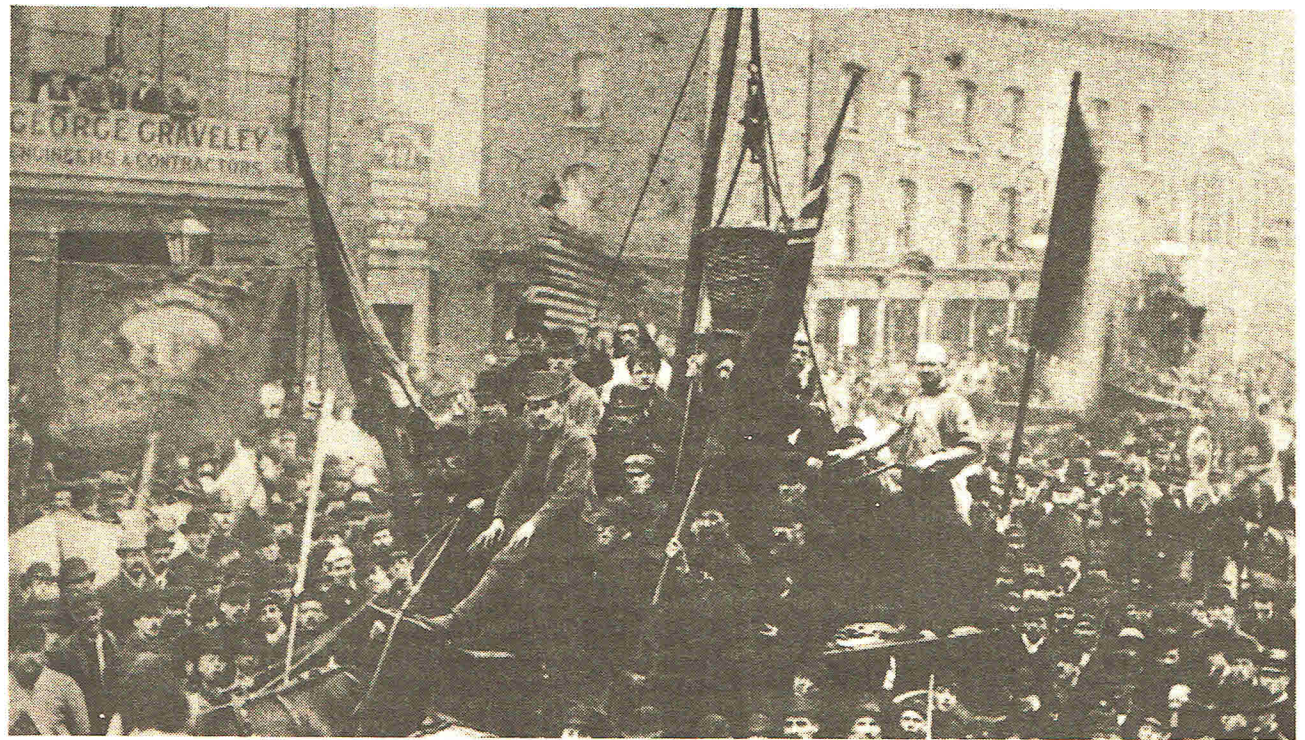
He quarrelled fiercely with the Fabians when they denied the reality of class struggle and called for evolutionary reformism. And unfortunately he rejected the ILP because he felt it was too bound to a Parliamentary approach. He failed to see how it could be built into a mass Labour Party.

But his work as a pioneering socialist propagandist alongside Eleanor Marx, Champion, Blatchford, Mahon, Tom Mann and Keir Hardie has never quite been forgotten. However, with no one to defend him, his historical reputation has been coloured by the assessments of his Fabian enemies. EP Thompson, in his excellent biography of Morris, explained:

"In disputing Marx's economic theory, they (the Fabians) had only Hyndman and Aveling to encounter... But Morris' breadth of knowledge, his profound historical understanding, were without equal in the socialist movement; and every page of his socialist writing served as a demonstration of the process of class struggle.

Falsified views

"Typically the Fabians failed to challenge his position; instead they made a detour... No open and frank controversy; no attempt to meet Morris'



"A revolt against oppression" was how Morris described the great dockers' strike of 1889 (above).

arguments and defeat them fairly; the only time when his views are referred to they are falsified; and the bulk of the criticism given over to insinuation, philistinism, and condescension, so that the reader may emerge with a picture of a brawny, loveable and irresponsible man with 'eccentricities' and 'peculiar views', of much more value to the socialist movement designing tapestries..."

Fabian attacks

This hostile Fabian denigration became so universally accepted that even many Marxists have been misled into dismissing Morris as a romantic utopian. His excellent expositions of Marxism, such as *Socialism: its Growth and Outcome* written with Belford Bax, and *Communism*, both written in 1893, have been all but forgotten.

The key as to why this has happened can be seen in the case of *Communist*. Written in 1893 it brilliantly outlined the tendencies within Fabian reformism which were to lead to the creation of a

'reformed' welfare state capitalist economy as an alternative to the direct struggle for a genuine socialist transformation of society.

Marx, especially in his earlier writings, gave considerable expression to the human aspect of a socialist transformation, the opening of new horizons for personal fulfillment, freedom, and development. Only later, as Engels explained, did more immediate political demands lead him to concentrate so largely on the materialist and economic aspects of his theories.

Unfortunately this led many self-proclaimed 'Marxists' to an excessively 'deterministic' outlook, a perversion which reached its most sterile and oppressive character in the Stalinist dogmatism of the 1930s.

Morris' great achievement was to continue to investigate the human aspects and potential of a socialist transformation using the Marxist method. In *A Dream of John Ball* he brilliantly contrasted the so-called 'freedom' of the individual under capitalism with social relations in

mediaeval England, outlining at the same time the Marxist analysis of capitalist class relations.

Other works, *How we Live* and *How we Might Live, Useful Work Versus Useless Toil, Art and Socialism, A Factory as it Might Be*, and *News from Nowhere* use the Marxist method to explore the possibilities which a socialist future could open up.

These are his most challenging works. How far are our desires and outlooks conditioned by capitalism? How might priorities change under socialism? Where is machinery and technology of genuine value, and where has capitalism created phoney 'consumer' markets for junk goods?

Socialist future

The reader is forced to examine all of these questions, and, in these magnificent works of propaganda, all the limitless potentialities for human fulfillment which Marx could only hint at are laid bare before us. Morris was writing before the advent of motor transport, so

his people still use horses; and before combined harvesters, so they still flock out to the harvesting; and he made no attempt to delve into the science fiction of future technology, but the relevance and challenge of his writings shines through today as powerfully as ever.

No wonder that the Labour left-winger, Harold Laski, in the 1920s and 1930s, found that copies of *A Dream of John Ball* and *News from Nowhere* were prized possessions of North-East miners, who found in them an inspiring vision of the socialist future to which they strived. Read *News from Nowhere* and nothing is left of the arguments that Marxism is a negative and oppressive ideology.

"Go back again", writes Morris at the end of this dream, "now you have seen us, and your outward eyes have learned that in spite of all the infallible maxims of your day there is yet a time of rest in store for the world, when mastery has been changed into fellowship... Go back and be the happier for having seen us, for having added a little hope to your struggle..."

When German young socialists were banned

THE ATTACKS which we have seen on the LPYS over the last few years are not unique in the history of the labour movement.

Failure to campaign for the rights of young workers, particularly at times of recession, when the capitalist class uses youth as a source of cheap labour and curbing the independence of youth sections have long been a feature of the leadership of the labour movement.

'Cultural societies'

The youth movement of the German Social Democracy was set up spontaneously between 1904-6, by apprentices in Berlin.

Political activity by youth was banned by the government in the north of Germany, but the Youth League grew rapidly in illegal conditions.

In so doing it recaptured the earlier radical years of the SDP as the apprentices broke down the barriers between economic and political activity. They strongly embraced the cause of antimilitarism against the arms race which led to the outbreak of World War 1 and revolutionaries in the SPD, such as Karl Liebknecht,

took up the cause of the youth. He believed that they were "the most reliable force to keep us from resting or rusting... at the side of the adult fighters, whose duty it is to weigh and to consider, there must be younger elements who have the will to risk, to dare..."

The leadership of the party took a different position; they argued that the party had to choose between a youth movement regulated to suit its needs and one which would "grow wild". Trade union leaders also feared an independent youth movement, and wanted the youth to be organised from above.

In 1907 political activity on behalf of youth was banned in the south of Germany as well as in the north. Instead of fighting this ban the SPD planned to curb the activities of its youth movement; the Youth League branches were to become cultural societies, and the paper *Young Guard* was to be handed over to the party executive. These issues were backed by the trade union congress in 1908, but the youth resisted and called their own united conference in Leipzig.

The radical wing of the SPD, represented by Liebknecht and Luxemburg, took up the cause of an in-

dependent youth section. In 1908 the SPD Congress had no less than 24 resolutions calling for an independent youth section. The executive of the SPD argued that the youth had to be protected by the adult party from the arm of the state (ie they collaborated with the that the youth movement was illegal).

Revolutionary in 1918

They amended their own resolution to include the task of educating youth for the class struggle! As a result of these 'compromises' their proposals that local youth

committees under the control of the parent party replace a centrally organised youth section with its own policies was carried.

Although the right wing of the SPD had their way on this issue they could not prevent the further radicalisation of young workers, which became the basis of an outright challenge to the government and the leadership of the German labour movement during the course of World War 1 and provided the basis for the defeat of the German Empire by a workers' revolution in 1918.

By Barbara Humphries
(Ealing-Southall CLP)

Labour's Forward March

- Delayed not halted

ONE OF the major growth industries in the labour movement recently has been the publication of books and pamphlets, especially those written in learned academic circles, about the "historic decline" of the Labour Party and trade unions. The conclusion inevitably drawn has been that the Labour Party must move to the right, jettison its "outdated" image, go after the "upwardly mobile", seek a "new realism", etc, etc. Unfortunately while academics have fallen over themselves to write epitaphs for the old Labour party, some of their ideas have found an echo in the upper layers of the labour movement. Here PAT CRAVEN looks at some of the ideas of the most well known of these "professors of pessimism", Eric Hobsbawm.

Their fundamental principle", Engels commented on the Fabian Society in 1893, "is fear of revolution." History, however, has a way of playing tricks. At last year's Labour Party conference the Fabian Society was addressed by Professor Eric Hobsbawm, member of the editorial board of *Marxism Today* and leading theoretician of the British "Communist" Party.

This seems a strange paradox, but in reality it is a very appropriate platform for someone who has provided a theoretical justification for those in the Labour movement, like the Fabians, who have no confidence in the ability of the working class to change society.

Hobsbawm's record of despondency has been consistent: 1978—"the forward march of labour and the labour movement which Marx predicted, appears to have come to a halt in this century about twenty five to thirty years ago. Both the working class and the Labour movement since then have been passing through a period of crisis."

1981—"nobody can seriously deny that the British Labour movement today is in a considerable mess. It is in a state of deeper crisis and confusion than was easily foreseeable even three years ago."

1983—"it is important to remind ourselves just how terrible a beating the labour movement took at the 1983 election." "In

short, there is not a glimmer of comfort in the results of this election."

These latest comments are from an article entitled "Labour's Lost Millions", from *Marxism Today* October 1983, analysing Labour's major defeat on 9th June, confirming how right his earlier pessimism had been, and noting "the failure of even the gloomiest among us to appreciate the rate and distance of Labour's imminent retreat."

In addition to election results, the "evidence" for his pessimistic conclusions is:

"that 35% of the employed are not in any trade union, and that this percentage has not declined in thirty years",

that he "suspects" the number of those active in the movement has fallen;

"that we now see a growing division of workers into section and groups, each pursuing its own economic interest irrespective of the result";

and, despite his admission that "at the same time the trade union movement became more militant", "this was, with the exception of the great struggles of 1970-1974, an almost entirely *economist* militancy:" (Hobsbawm's emphasis).

What is most incredible about this list of "facts" from a "Marxist historian", is the total failure to look at the development of the working class in its

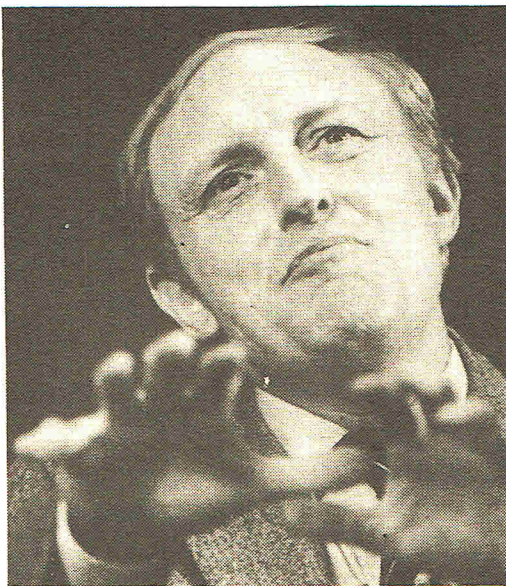


Photo: Militant



Above left: Neil Kinnock, new Labour Party leader. Although sections of Labour's leadership want to see the party push they will face is one of increased class struggle epitomised by the struggles over the *Messenger* newspapers at the

historical context, in particular the economic background. It is absolutely basic to the Marxist method to view society's political super-structure in its relationship with the economic sub-structure.

In the same Marx Memorial Lecture of 1978 from which the above statements are taken, he said that "what makes this all the more tragic is that today we are in a period of world crisis for capitalism, and, more specifically, of the crisis—one might almost say the breakdown—of the British capitalist society, at a moment when the working class and its movement should be in a position to provide a clear alternative and to lead the British people towards it." Thus he talks as if the capitalist crisis and the state of the labour movement are quite independent of each other!

The post-war economic boom had profound effects on the labour movement

Marxist analysis of the period in question shows how closely linked are the two. For Hobsbawm, the high point for the British Labour movement seems to have been 1951, the year in which the Labour Party received the highest vote any party has ever achieved, despite the Tories winning more seats in Parliament.

What he fails to point out is that that year also marked more or less the beginning of the post-war economic boom which was to have such profound effects on the movement for the following 30 years.

The most important effect, which on its own is sufficient to refute Hobsbawm's whole position, was the enormous strengthening of the trade union movement at the workforce level. To a far greater extent than any previous generation, workers could force the bosses to concede wage rises and better conditions through action, or the threat of it, at shop-floor level, because new markets were opening up,

profits were rising, labour, especially skilled labour was in demand, and the employers could afford to pay up.

These "economist" struggles played a major role in strengthening the trade union structure and even the recession has not destroyed these gains.

This period also saw the growth of trade unionism in previously unorganised sections of society, as millions of public sector and white-collar workers, many the sons and daughters of industrial workers, followed the example being set in the factories, docks and mines. Even Hobsbawm grudgingly admits that this is one exception to his rule—"the 'new' labour aristocracy of white-collar technical and professional workers has become unionised."

These developments brought about real improvements in living standards, and more importantly broadened the support for the trade union movement. The other major effect of the boom years, however, was a negative one, although one which Marxists have recognised in previous periods. This was the strengthening of the position of the right wing leaders within the labour and trade union movement.

The very fact that improvements can be achieved relatively easily in a boom gives credibility to those leaders like Gaitskell, Wilson and Callaghan, who argued that fundamental changes in society are unnecessary, only a legislative programme of reforms was needed to make the existing economic system more efficient and more humane. The partial success of the 1945-51 Attlee government seemed to justify their belief.

The failure of these policies in the 1964-70 and 1974-79 governments, as boom turned to recession, and reforms turned to counter-reforms, led to the electoral defeats in 1970, 1979 and 1983. The impossibility of solving today's severe recession by these old policies had become apparent to large numbers of Labour voters, so that even after four years of Thatcher, Labour was soundly defeated, generating Hobsbawm's latest bout of despondency.

Yet five years earlier he had more or less put forward the same analysis; "the workers," he said, "and growing strata outside the manual workers, were looking to it (the Labour Party) for a lead and policy. They did not get it. They got the Wilson years—and many of them lost faith and hope in the mass party of the working people."

Again in 1981, "Labour got a majority because it offered the hope of change, and it lost, not only because like all governments since then, it proved incapable of coping with the crisis of the British economy, but also because it did very nearly the opposite of what Labour voters and trade unionists expected from a Labour government."

Falklands factor

But the most important factor in Labour's defeat of 1983 was the Falklands war. Even though during the election it was not a dominant issue, it nevertheless reflected the essential background.

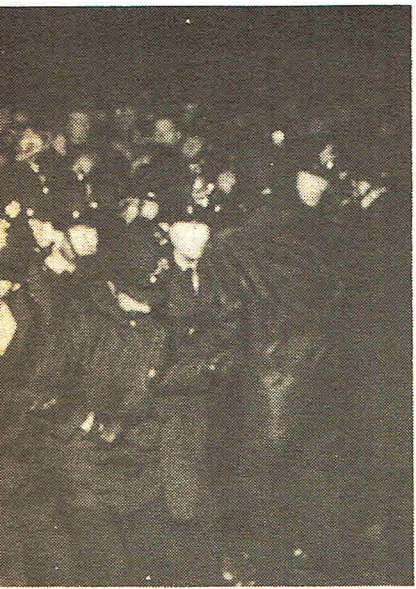
The Tories were able to draw upon the old ideals of the past, resurrecting the theme of Britain as a "great" power, economically and politically. Thatcher and company postured in a way that tried to match the "resolution" and "determination" of past generations of the capitalist class.

On the other hand the Labour leadership by their policy of equivocation and appeals to the (dis) United Nations were seen as irresolute, hesitant and dithering. This image was compounded by the witch-hunt against the Marxists, which undermined a fundamental premise of the working class—a desire for unity to fight the common enemy.

During the election attention centred on the more immediate issues such as the economy, with many sections of the working class adopting a questioning and critical attitude to Labour's programme. Seventeen years of Labour government in the post-war period have not solved any of the fundamental problems.

Disillusionment with the policies of the right wing have therefore been translated into disillusionment with Labour.

March



...d to the right, the objective situation
Warrington picket line (above).

Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (IFL)

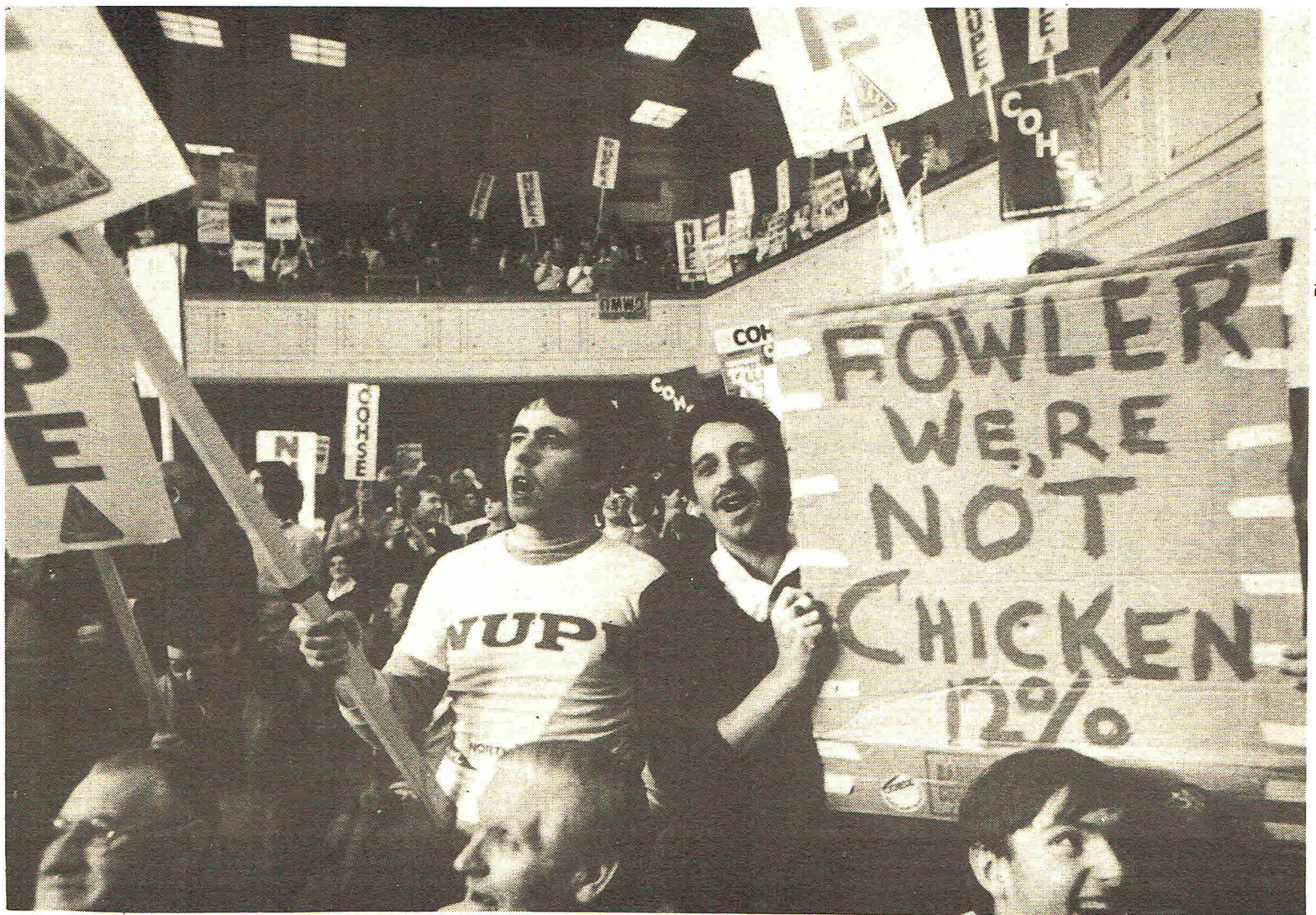


Photo: John Smith (IFL)

The labour movement cannot be said to be weakened when it now numbers in its ranks many workers who were not organised in the past, including health workers (above) involved in industrial action for the first time.

Commonly heard on the doorsteps during elections is the expression that "there's no difference between them". But that certainly does not imply that workers do not want change.

Only a bold socialist campaign could have cut across the scepticism of workers as was demonstrated in Liverpool Broadgreen and Coventry South East where Marxist candidates were elected.

The same is true on the industrial field. There too, since 1979, there have undoubtedly been defeats, but again they should be put into their historical context. A generation of trade union leaders had enjoyed a fairly easy life, negotiating improvements for the members around the table. They, and many of their rank and file members, were stunned and disoriented by the effects of the recession and the Tories' monetarist policies. As jobs were being lost by their thousands, and whole industries were being run down, the kind of trade union action which had been enough to bring about improvements was useless against this new kind of onslaught.

The bankruptcy of the old trade union leaders was revealed most clearly in the steel industry. But even in traditionally militant car factories, strong organisation was not enough to resist the whip of unemployment in the hands of the new-style managers like Edwards and MacGregor.

But it has never been the Marxist view that recession automatically rouses the workers to new levels of militancy, any more than that booms automatically destroy that militancy, as the fifties and sixties proved. What is remarkable in the present recession is how well the trade union movement has withstood its effects. There has not been the catastrophic fall in union membership which followed the 1926 general strike defeat. There have been many magnificent examples of resistance, often by sections of the class with no tradition of struggle, like the NHS workers and the women of Lee Jeans.

In short, the crisis of capitalism brings about, in-

evitably, a crisis of leadership in the labour movement. The recent setbacks are a reflection of this crisis. From this is emerging a new layer of young trade union militants who have not experienced the boom years and are prepared to fight at a different level of intensity; the young miners moving into action at the moment are typical. Since the last election there has already been a wave of bitter strikes as workers fight to avenge the election defeat.

Pessimism and gloom

So too in the political arena. Marxism has now become an important factor in the Labour Party. Around *Militant* a new leadership which is prepared to break completely with the discredited policies which led to Labour's defeats is being forged, which will be able to regain and add to the support which has been lost over the last thirty years, by putting across and campaigning vigorously for a programme which can transform the prospects for the whole of the British working class.

Hobsbawm is one of the main theoretical props of the pessimists and defeatists

Someone who will have nothing to contribute to this renewal of the labour movement, however, is Eric Hobsbawm. On the contrary, he has been one of the main theoretical props of those who are trying to hold the movement back. For the pessimism and gloom which permeates his writings will encourage such an attitude on the part of any activists who read his works. He is not a mere passive observer of the scene. His ideas will spread defeatism and despair, if they are not effectively refuted within the movement.

What is most striking of all about this alleged "communist" is his conclusions. Despite his condemnation of "the Wilson years", the clear implication of his writings is that the Labour Party should return to precisely those policies which led to the loss of support for Labour in the first place. It is necessary to say "implication" since nowhere does he spell out just what his alternative is. He even admitted, in 1981 that his Marx Memorial Lecture of 1978: "Was not intended as a political statement... but as a historian's statement of what had happened to the British working class over the past century."

"Labour" he says, "must, of course, recover the support of the working class as a whole, but Labour must also become, once again, the party of all who want democracy, (his emphasis) a better and fairer society, irrespective of the class pigeon-hole into which pollsters and market researchers put them; in short, to use the old Labour phrase, 'all the workers by hand and brain'—and that includes the vast majority of Britons who earn wages and salaries." (*Marxism Today*, October 1983).

"All who want democracy"? Lenin once wrote: "It is natural for a liberal to speak of 'democracy' in general; but a Marxist will never forget to ask; 'for what class?'" It is not pollsters and market researchers who put people into classes, it is the capitalist system. Within the confines of that system there can be no programme which can satisfy all classes. It is precisely only those "workers by hand and by brain" who have an interest in, and the power to bring about, the socialist transformation of society.

The clearest sign of the sort of policy which Hobsbawm favours is his enthusiasm for the Italian Communist Party (PCI), which he claims, "has never forgotten that the party of the working class must also be the party of the people." To this end it has adopted a policy to the right of not merely the Labour Party in 1983, but the Labour Party at any time since the war.

The reason why this party has retained its working class support is the fact that it has not yet had to form a government and try to carry its policies out. The best that Hobsbawm can say of the PCI's record in power is that in local government—"In Bologna and Florence even businessmen would be worried if the Christian Democrats took over; for one thing they would be more inefficient and corrupt". Presumably these businessmen would not be too unhappy about a PCI government given that it proposes no further nationalisation, but actually a certain amount of denationalisation!

In all the other countries where left wing governments have actually come to power, France, Spain, Portugal and Italy, Hobsbawm is forced reluctantly to concede that they have failed to deliver the goods, and, in passing, explains precisely why he thinks so: "the best government today is at the mercy of the world situation."

Exactly the same conclusion was reached, according to *The Times* (11 October, 1983) by the five "socialist" leaders of France, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece. They agreed "that until socialism could produce its own answer to the world's economic crisis, they should be content to just administer it in a more equitable way than President Reagan, Mrs Thatcher or Chancellor Kohl administered capitalism".

Mass support for change

The experience of these governments should be sufficient refutation to those such as Hobsbawm. They show the futility of solving society's problems on the basis of capitalism. Given the nature of the economic crisis, reforms on a lasting basis are ruled out, even where the capitalist class is forced to make concessions, through mass pressure, they will take them back at a later stage.

The mass support which the French Socialist and Communist Parties gained have not made them immune from this process.

Under pressure from big business the Mitterrand government has already moved away from reforms and has been forced to introduce austerity measure.

This has had its effect in the growing disillusionment of the middle classes who voted in large numbers for the Socialist Party. Frustrated in their desire to see real solutions to the crisis these same sections can now move rapidly to the right.

For the capitalist class and its representatives there can be no better propaganda: "This is socialism" they proclaim. Their intention is to use the government to do the dirty work and in-

Confidence in working class

roduce cuts in living standards and jobs. Such measures are possible only because of the moral authority and trust which the government has with workers—at this stage. But such policies will lay the basis for disillusionment amongst sections of the working class and then they will seize a favourable opportunity to bring down or defeat the government.

Hobsbawm's ideas reflect the strand in the labour movement which lacks any confidence in the working class to change society. But the objective reality is very much different. The potential strength of the working class has never been greater. Despite the effect of recession and the attacks of the Tories, the trade unions remain intact and present a formidable obstacle to their plans.

The crisis of capitalism both nationally and internationally has never been greater. The crisis in Britain is of a special aggravated character, assuming the form of a long drawn-out decline, which affects all sections of society.

Given these objective conditions Marxists should be confident that workers through their own experience will draw the conclusions that socialist solutions are the only answer. The ideas of Marxism will inevitably fall on fruitful ground and gain enormous support in the labour movement.

Spain



One of the CSI posters in the February Basque elections.

Why the left stood

THE CSI in Alava were forced into standing against the PSOE candidates, having been expelled from that party and the socialist trade union UGT, by the national leadership. The CSI candidates were formerly the leadership of the provincial UGT in Alava and enjoy the overwhelming support of the union membership.

The UGT in Alava, was expelled by the national union because of the policy and struggles its leaders pursued to defend members' interests, opposing the counter-reforms pursued by the PSOE government in Madrid. The candidate of the CSI received the overwhelming support of the active UGT membership.

Their programme included support for the reforms promised in PSOE programme of the general election, realising that they could only be implemented and maintained on the basis of a socialist plan of production. The CSI supported the right of self-determination and demanded that the PSOE government in Madrid and the PSOE leadership attack the bankers and industrialists rather than the rank and file members of the UGT in PSOE.

In Alava province a vote for the CSI was a vote for a real socialist programme. A vote for a PSOE candidate however, was a vote for the programme of Solchaga and not even the programme and demands of PSOE at the last election.

The CSI candidate campaign gained enthusiastic support from thousands of workers in the province. Especially popular was the pledge of the CSI candidates, that if elected to the Basque Parliament they would live on the average wage of a worker in the Basque country.

At the outset of the campaign the CSI convened a conference of 200 UGT activists. 600 signatures were collected for nominations of the list of candidates. Every UGT member was sent a letter asking for support in the campaign, and a series of factory gate and public meetings were organised.

Unlike the PNV, backed by big business, or the PSOE, which receives much of its funds from bank loans, the CSI had to finance all its campaign from the donations of workers. For many workers in Alava this made a refreshing change from the so-called "professional" campaigns of only newspaper advertisement, television and radio broadcasts. A pensioner donated 1 months income to the campaign.

One specially successful feature of the campaign was the door-to-door canvassing conducted by supporters of the CSI. Canvassing had not been heard of previously in Spanish election. For the first time workers were visited on their doorsteps and the situation discussed with them.

Basque elections

Bitterness at Gonzales' retreat

THE RECENT elections to the Basque Parliament have many lessons, which are being studied in the labour movement throughout Spain.

The PNV (Basque Nationalist Party) received 42% of the poll. Herri Batasuna, the Basque Party associated with the ETA got 13% and the Socialist Party PSOE 23%. The CSI (candidates of the Socialist Left) standing only in the province of Alava obtained 2507 votes or approximately 2% of the vote.

These elections took place against the background of a severe and worsening crisis throughout Spain and especially in the Basque country.

High expectations

PSOE was swept to power nationally with a landslide majority less than eighteen months ago. Spanish workers had high hopes of this new government. Despite the attempts during the general election campaign by leader Felipe Gonzales to play down the PSOE programme, many radical reforms were promised, to increase the minimum wage, reduce the working week, lower the age of retirement, and, above all, create 800,000 new jobs.

However, the enormously raised expectations have been dashed. The PSOE government has tragically succumbed to the pressure of the Spanish bankers and industrialists, and a ruthless programme of counter reforms has been implemented, viciously slashing living standards and increasing unemployment.

Pensions (linked to wages in Spain) have been cut. Unemploy-

ment has increased and with the government's industrial 'rationalisation' proposals it will rise still further. Right-wing Minister of Industry Solchaga has announced his intention to carry through the government's so-called "industrial reconversion plan", a measure



Felipe Gonzales.

which has started a tidal wave of opposition throughout the Spanish working class. It will mean the loss of 200,000 jobs!

Previously the Basque region was a relatively affluent area for the working class, but it has suffered from a brutal slashing of living standards. In the 1970's unemployment in the Basque country was below the average for the rest of Spain. Today, it is 3 or 4% higher, officially standing a little over 20%.

The measures of the PSOE government have now unleashed a movement of opposition amongst the working class, especially in the Basque country, which in addition to the economic measures of the government was savaged by widespread flooding for which disaster the government has totally failed to provide.

Workers in the Basque country over the past weeks have been searching for an alternative to the measures of the PSOE government and a massive strike wave has occurred. Throughout the Basque Parliament's election campaign, strike has followed strike and demonstration followed demonstration. Hundreds of thousands of workers, both in this region and the rest of Spain, have been involved.

This movement has been directed against the measures of the PSOE government, in particular against Solchaga's hated plan. In just four weeks over 500,000 workers have struck. 200,000 metal workers have been involved in the general strike against the plan. In Madrid's so-called "red belt" there was a general strike against redundancies. On two occasions 30 to 40,000 workers marched in the industrial city of Bilbao. Teachers have been involved in strike action in Vitoria. 1,500 workers from the steel town of Sagunto battled with police in Madrid.

In a small industrial town near Vitoria, called Llodio, every day for three weeks a demonstration of between 3,000 and 10,000 workers had occurred. The demand for Solchaga's resignation and the call for an all-out general strike was frequently on the marchers' lips.

The Basque elections were held against this stormy background. In the province of Alava workers were offered an alternative to Basque nationalist party (PNV), the right-wing PSOE candidates and those of Herri Batasuna, in the form of the Candidates of the Socialist Left.

Without any doubt the programme of CSI won enthusiastic backing from thousands of Alava workers. It seemed a strong possibility, throughout the campaign, that the CSI would

achieve the 5% of votes required to secure the election of one deputy. Neither the PNV or PSOE, because of the measures being carried through by the government in Madrid, had enthusiastic support.

However, a few days before the election, the political situation was changed by an

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assassination, which exposed the reactionary consequences of the blind alley of terrorism. A leader of PSOE, number 3 on their list of candidates, was shot by the so-called Autonomous Anti-Capitalist Commandos, a group of individual terrorists close to ETA.

A surge of revulsion swept through the working class and a general strike was called just before polling. The day after this strike a leader of ETA was shot in south west France. Without any doubt these events had a considerable impact on the outcome of the election. The size of the poll increased to 68%, 8% above the turn-out at the first autonomous elections in the Basque country four years ago.

The vote for PSOE undoubtedly increased as a result of the murder of one of its candidates. Prior to these events one opinion poll gave PSOE a mere 14% of the vote.

The PSOE's vote went up throughout the Basque country from 14% to 23%. However, it would be wrong to take this as a measure of support for the programme implemented by the PSOE government in Madrid. Their higher than expected vote still left PSOE with a smaller share compared to their vote in this region in the elections a year ago to the National Spanish Parliament.

There is a bitter feeling of betrayal towards the PSOE government in Madrid. If the Socialist Party is to defend the interest of the 10 million workers who voted for them in the last election then there must be a fundamental change in the course of their policies.

The power of the monopolies and banks must be broken and a socialist programme implemented. That is the real lesson of the recent Basque elections and the events of the period since PSOE won its landslide majority.

Despite the failure of CSI to secure election a tremendous campaign was conducted. 2,507 workers voted for a Marxist programme. This election campaign in that sense is the beginning of a vital struggle to win the Spanish workers to the programme of Marxism.

Nuevo Claridad

Spanish Marxist paper.
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Greece, France

New wave of militancy in Greece

ON 9 February 400,000 Greek workers staged a four-hour strike in Athens, Piraeus, Patras and Elefsina. It was called by the GSEE (Greek TUC) after wage negotiations with the bosses organisation SEB had broken down.

By our Athens correspondent

The GSEE's main demands of an index-linking of wages (the sliding scale) payable every three months, a minimum wage of 1,350 drachma (about £10) a day, a lump sum payment to compensate for losses due to inflation in 1983, and a 5-day, 40-hour week, all proved too much for the bosses.

The strike was a great success. Not only did the traditional big battalions of the labour movement come out, but also fresh layers of young and women workers, some not even unionised!

Enthusiasm by this success workers demanded more. But the GSEE leaders did not build on the mood. They couldn't get back to the negotiating table quick enough. Only four days later they signed a shameful agreement where the bosses conceded only the sliding-scale and beat the GSEE down to a 1,200 drachma a day minimum wage.

The PASOK leader of the GSEE, Raftopoulos, described it as an "historic agreement", though it was condemned by both 'Communist' parties, the KKE and the KKE (Interior).

The GSEE has recently come under complete control of the left. So workers in the private sector expected a real fight against the bosses, encouraged by the socialist party (PASOK) government's abandonment of the previous year's policy of restraint and the re-introduction of the sliding-scale for workers in the public sector.

They also saw an agreement being reached between PASOK leader and prime minister Papandreu and the KKE leader Florakis. Whilst many activists saw this agreement for what it is, the KKE agreeing to apply the brake on industrial action in

return for positions in the GSEE and the trades councils, many workers believed that the agreement heralded real unity in action against the employers. These hopes were quickly dispelled.

Unions forced into action

From the outset of negotiations, GSEE leaders were obviously anxious to reach an agreement at any cost. When talks dragged on the rank and file, already restless, became bitterly angry. In meeting of trades councils and union federations PASOK and KKE militants put forward the demand for a 24-hour General Strike.

Here the true nature of the PASOK-KKE agreement showed itself. The members were told not to raise such demands because agreement with SEB was needed, not strikes. They even went so far as to tell members to report the names of workers who put forward strike demands!

This ham-fisted attempt at intimidation had no effect whatsoever; pressure from below was so intense that the GSEE were forced to very reluctantly call the 4-hour stoppage.

Despite the subsequent sell-out, big struggles have only been temporarily averted. The Greek working class are ready to enter into battle. The PASOK government has been forced to give concessions because of this mood.

The KKE's call for the struggle to go on just reflects the determined feelings of workers. At the same time they try to dampen the workers' spirits by shrugging their shoulders and asking "but what can we do?"

Action can be taken.

The GSEE-SEB agreement only covers unskilled workers. Still to come are negotiations between unions and bosses in the various branches of industry. It is here that big battles are looming. Already 15 trades councils in different parts of the country have called for 24-hour stoppages, and these struggles won't be isolated. In Greece there is now a marked tendency for workers to co-ordinate their activities.

The crisis of Greek capitalism is throwing newer, wider sections of workers into action. Women workers in a garment factory have shown a unique way of dealing with management victimisations. After 3 workers were sacked their comrades helped them climb over the factory wall and installed them back at their machines, guarding them against possible ejection.

Women workers in another garment factory on strike for a 5-day, 40-hour week were beaten by police. In protest they organised a march to their local government offices, cheered and supported by the people of the area. The minister of labour had the nerve to admit that he had in fact sent the police!

One day strike call

The police were used against 100 workers occupying a shoe factory, arresting strike leaders for not allowing management to remove machinery. Two thousand people promptly marched on the police station and forced the police to release the workers. All of this under a PASOK government.

Things are moving rapidly in Greece. Just one small incident could lead to a massive strike wave and a 24-hour general strike at least. Greek workers are showing that neither police, courts, the deceit of a reformist government, nor the chicanery of its leadership can hold back for long its determination to fight for socialism.



ABOVE: A meeting organised by supporters of the Marxist paper XEKINIMA, showing the growing opposition to Papandreu's right-wing policies.

RIGHT: Tsatsos, the former boss of the Iraklis Cement Company, used loans and credits from the state bank to become extremely rich. Union members want government action against the likes of Tsatsos, not against workers.

ΞΕΚΙΝΗΜΑ
Greek Marxist paper
ΜΑΡΞΙΣΤΙΚΗ ΕΦΗΜΕΡΙΔΑ ΓΙΑ ΤΟΥΣ ΕΡΓΑΖΟΜΕΝΟΥΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΗ ΘΕΩΣΙΑ

Write to: Xekinima
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Athens
Greece



Workers' balance sheet

GONE are the days when workers would swallow arguments about holding back to give the government time. Workers want results and have drawn up a balance sheet of two years of PASOK's so-called 'socialism'. The Gross National Product has fallen by 0.5%; industrial production is down 6%; investment has dropped 12%, and the standard of living has been cut by 10%.

In addition, unemployment has risen by 40% to 350,000. This rapid increase is due to the accelerating closure of bankrupt industries. At the same time, multi-national firms are closing down their Greek factories finding it cheaper to export to Greece due to lower tariffs imposed by EEC membership.

Two-thirds of Greek industry made a loss in 1983 and one-third is on the verge of bankruptcy. With the prospect of mass unemployment staring them in the face Greek workers are currently involved in over 20 factory occupations.

Workers voted for PASOK for socialist change. They argue: "We have the government, we have the GSEE, we have

agreement between PASOK and the KKE. What more do we want?" But a recent speech by finance minister Arsenis in London, February 1 showed how remote the government are from reality.

While Greek workers have been demanding nationalisation and workers management of state run firms, he said: "There is no place for the nationalisation of private enterprise. We are forced in some cases to intervene... but we hope that in some cases where the state banks were forced to take over some companies, after these companies are modernised they could be given back to private enterprise!"

These words were spoken while powerfully organised public sector workers are embarking on strikes against the face of the government's so-called "socialisation" of nationalised enterprises. The workers demanded workers' councils to run the enterprises, but the government supported the SEB proposal that these councils should only be 'consultative' and the prerogatives of management should not be questioned.

FRANCE: The people behind the lorry blockade

THE ARTICLE in *Militant* (2 March), "Mitterrand's Road Blocked" correctly pointed out that the lorry drivers' dispute arose from the complete failure of the Socialist-Communist coalition government to solve the crisis of French capitalism.

French labour is fighting back. In the first few months of 1984, workers in the motor industry, shipbuilding, steel, the public services, education, and banking have been involved in strikes. The miners' strike for 48 hours was the biggest movement in the industry since the great strike of 1963 and

the revolutionary movement of 1968.

However, the article gives a somewhat misleading impression of the character of the lorry strike in particular.

The demands of the 'strikers' were not in the interests of lorry-driving wage-workers, but of lorry-owners, and drivers paid according to load and distance, who have a very individualistic 'cowboy mentality', preferring to cut corners on safety and working conditions in order to boost earnings.

Not only the CGT and the CFDT, but also the more right

wing Force Ouvrière union, did not support the strike.

The only organisations involved in the strike were those directly or indirectly linked with the business and employers' organisations such as the SNPMI, close to the extreme right.

Only a minority of lorry drivers were involved in this action. The go-slow of the Italian customs officers brought border traffic to a standstill. The small-time employers were losing money. The parties of the right, the RDR and the UDF, together with the haulage associations such as the FNTR and

UNOSTRA, intervened to turn the 'strike' to their own advantage.

They demanded the government stop 'police harassment' of drivers, which meant, a slackening of regulations concerning maximum loads and maximum periods of continuous driving. They demanded a reduction of VAT on petrol for lorry owners. They tried to force the government to give contracts presently made with the SNCF (French Railways) to private road hauliers.

The government has made important concessions to the strike movement, including, probably,

turning a blind eye to some safety regulations. The CFDT and the CGT, on the contrary, have been demanding a higher basic rate, with shorter hours and maximum load restrictions.

The lorry drivers' strike was not like other strike movements in France in defence of jobs and wages. It was intended to force Mitterrand to make more concessions to private business interests to the detriment of conditions and rights of transport workers.

By Philippe Roland
(CGT, Parti Socialiste, Paris)

Letters

Write to *Militant*, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN

SDP cross solidarity picket

Dear Comrades,

On the 28 February Day of Action, committee clerks at East Ham town hall, members of Newham NALGO, formed a picket line in the evening to stop council meetings. Their ranks were swelled by Labour councillors who refused to cross in support of the GCHQ workers. Even the odd Liberal joined in. But not the SDP of course.

Oh no. The three SDP councillors demanded access, but the Labour councillors and the NALGO pickets barricaded the town hall entrance. The 'democrats' of the SDP immediately called in the police who after much pushing and shoving managed to escort the SDP into the meeting. The Mayor went in with them—and promptly shut the meeting down because it was inquorate.

Yours fraternally
Maureen Wade
Newham North East
LPYS

Nuclear plant abandoned

Dear Comrades,

Over the past ten years on the US more than 100 nuclear plants have been cancelled during the planning and construction stages. The latest of these come when our own government is hell bent on introducing a Pressurised Water Reactor at Sizewell B.

A half-completed PWR at Marble Hill on the River Ohio is being designed by the American Company 'Westinghouse' the same firm who designed the plant

for Sizewell, and who have not had a single order for a PWR in the United States since 1978.

High costs have been blamed for the cancellation of the project, the original budget was £1,000 million but the final bill has been estimated at over £5,000 million. With £2,000 million already spent the project proved to be too expensive even for the Yanks. Could it be the Americans are at last seeing the folly of nuclear power? Maybe our own government should learn from them before it's too late.

Richard Clarkson
Wakefield LPYS

Police red faces

Dear Comrades,

I thought I'd send a letter about an article I read last week. The Greater Manchester Police spent £60,000 on wet weather overalls for their dog handlers. But Chief Inspector Eatonby worried they might be used off-duty, and sent back the 'bright-yellow' overalls to have 12" high POLICE signs stitched on. But the Police Federation reported: "All those little perforations let the water flood in". The police chief, however, issued sticky tape to mask the holes.

Red face number two was in the Federation's report: "Everyone was pleased when a young probationer brought

in a much sought-after prisoner." After being instructed to finger print the prisoner, the young PC said: "He's got a bad skin disease, sarge." The sergeant replied: "Use rubber gloves, lad." A few moments later, the sergeant found him merrily printing the prisoner—who was wearing the gloves.

The Federation said: "These things happen," and a Greater Manchester Police spokesman said the matter has been referred to a superintendent.

Comrades, the Tories may have taken my job away but they're not getting my sense of humour.

Fraternally
Iain Hamilton
Musselburgh

Tobacco bosses' evil history

Dear *Militant*,

The feature in issue 687, "BAT's strategy", further serves to emphasise the stand this company has always taken. Only three years ago I attended evening classes for 'O'-Level history, and it was there that I first really became aware of British-American Tobacco, and of

their involvement in China as long ago as 1902.

The methods adopted to make profits were of the most evil-natured kind, all I assume in the name of 'free enterprise'. Now in 1984 in Liverpool I find myself reading about them again, the comments made by ex-workers about them again have always been relevant—from 1902 until 1984.

Yours
NJ Griffiths
Chester

Unbiased reporting?

Dear Comrades,

Recently I watched a television programme about the Chesterfield by-election and Tony Benn's visit to an old people's home there. I was actually canvassing in that very same place a few days before his visit and the overwhelming majority of the old people there supported Labour. Only one person wasn't voting for

Labour because of Tony Benn's reputation but on the programme they deliberately picked out this person to interview!

This is the kind of programme the Tories would have us believe is "unbiased" and "free" but the truth is that it is just another example of big business Tory propaganda designed to smear Mr Benn!

Yours fraternally
Barry Jones
South Ribble LPYS

Cannabis criticism

Comrades,

I write to comment on the piece published in issue 688 about cannabis. It's all high and mighty of you to abhor drug use but how many of you will be going for a pint later? The present law on the personal use of cannabis does much more harm that good. All the evidence points to cannabis being a less dangerous drug than alcohol yet people who prefer cannabis risk their jobs, educational prospects and travel opportunities. They risk being arrested and threatened by the police, dragged through the courts and sometimes imprisonment. The present law is misused by racist police officers; remember the Black and

White Club in St Georges, Bristol and part 2 of the 1981 Brixton riot. It takes little imagination to work out the potential abuses of the 'Intimate Body Searches' which will be permitted under the Police Bill.

You seem to imply that it is necessary to make a choice between the present prohibition and totally unrestrained exploitation by multinational companies. This is a total misrepresentation of the case for legal change. I believe the most important change would be to allow the small-scale cultivation of cannabis for personal use whilst retaining restrictions on the sale of materials so produced. This activity is no more pernicious than people brewing their own beer. It can lead to getting your door smashed in at 6.00 am. Allowing the small scale cultivation of cannabis

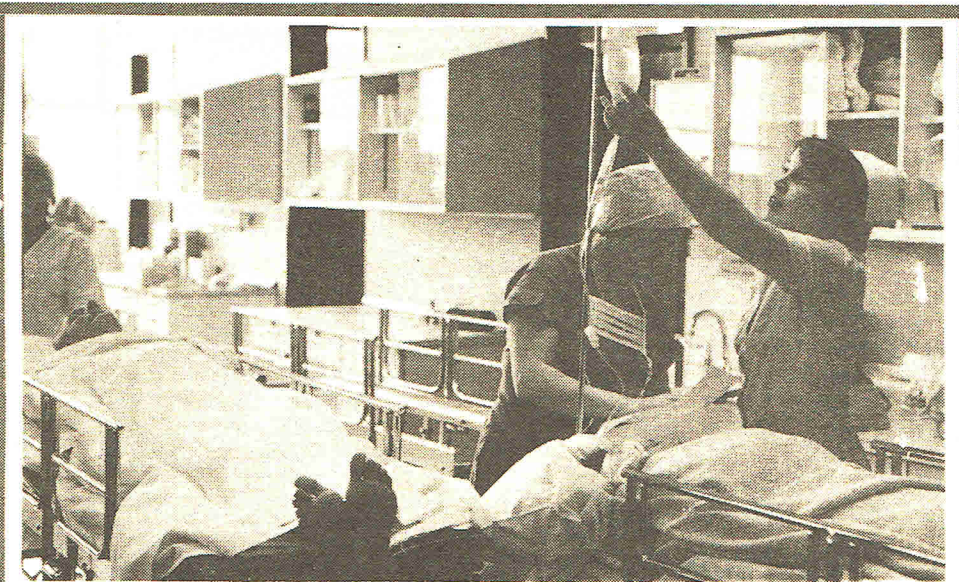
(which at present carries penalties of fines up to £1,000 and/or six months imprisonment) would provide an alternative source to illegally imported supplies.

The illicit market grosses about £500 million per year and some of this is used to finance all sorts of other unsavoury operations. 12,000 people were busted for possession of small quantities of cannabis last year and this makes up 80% of all drug convictions. In some cases the use of cannabis does lead on to the use of other, far more pernicious, chemicals but this is only because the source of supply is the same. You omit any mention of one of the most threatening chemicals, dispensed like 'Smarties' by some GPs, Valium. Maybe withdrawal symptoms and side-effects suffered by people prescribed withdrawn

drugs like Zomax! It is vital that the likes of Roche are nationalised and made publically accountable by the next Labour government.

There is a difference between use and misuse. Someone consuming a bottle of wine over dinner is as much a recreational drug user as someone rolling a few joints at a weekend. How would most of your readers like it if they were strip-searched in the middle of a field for possession of a bottle of Guinness? I must emphasise that whilst I am no encouraging anyone to use cannabis I believe people have a right to decide what they do with their own minds in the privacy of their own homes.

Yours fraternally
Richard F Clement
Woolwich and Eltham
Labour Party



Staff shortages and increasing demand have led to a 'production line' system in many hospitals.

Musical beds for hospital patients

Dear Comrade,

I had to go into hospital last week for an operation on my hand and when I arrived at approximately 8 am, I was asked to wait as the bed I was to have was still occupied. After about an hour, I was told the bed was ready so I went into the ward, got undressed and into bed.

After about another hour a nurse arrived and told me I would have to vacate the bed to let someone else into it who had to be shaved prior to an operation, and who was obvious a more urgent

case than myself, although I was due to have my operation after lunch.

One of the nurses who had been on duty all night had come back on duty at midday because of the shortage of staff.

Incidentally, after the other patient had been prepared for his operation, he had to get out of the bed and sit at the table and wait while I got back into the bed, when they wheeled me away, the guy was still sat at the table, presumably waiting for a bed.

This is just one illustration of how the cuts are having a disastrous effect on the National Health Service and its staff for whom I am full of praise after the way they looked after me, but this is an example of the fact that no matter how good the staff, if they are short handed and starved of capital, the service, and then the patients must inevitably suffer.

Yours fraternally
Adam Turff
Littlehampton

Russia defended

Dear Editor,

I am no doubt old enough to be the mother of most of your readers, I have been a member of the Labour Party longer than I care to remember, and I also read *Militant*. Usually I am in the forefront of any resolutions at branch meetings condemning "witch-hunts". Therefore when I received your paper dated 17 February, 1984 I thought my young delivery boy had changed his allegiance to the Bull Dog.

The three bitter attacks on the USSR (and the cartoon illustration on page 2) would

not have been out of place in the *Daily Mail*.

When the country was ruled by the Tzar, the workers were little more than slaves, most were illiterate. Remember the starving workers mowed down by the military in front of the Winter Palace. Russia has been invaded three times this century, and millions died during the last war.

In spite of this there is still full employment, many workers retire at fifty five, if they decide to continue at work they still get their full pension. There are many more doctors per head of population than any other country in the world. Basic

food is very cheap and plentiful, queues are for luxury goods (ours are rationed by price). No one is cold in Russia heating is 50 copeks (50p) a month irrespective of how much gas is used. These are facts I heard from ordinary people, not the bureaucracy.

So for goodness sake stop knocking Russia—remember the saying "divide and rule". Socialists must stick together otherwise we shall be playing right into the hands of the capitalists. Fight the Tories not the socialists should be our slogan also.

Yours sincerely
(name and address supplied)

Sale of the Century

Dear Comrades,

At this time when the Tories are accusing Liverpool Council of being spendthrift and responsible for wasting millions of pounds, an example of their hypocrisy has surfaced with the publication of a report criticising the 1982 sale of Hamilton Teacher Training College.

The government closed

the college in 1981, preferring to see class sizes increase rather than train and employ teachers. As if the closure wasn't bad enough the buildings, residences and grounds were then sold to private companies for next to nothing, despite the fact that to build a similar sized college would now cost £20 million.

Although the asking price was £6 million the main teaching block was sold for £270,000 to a fee-paying school and the student residences were sold to a

building firm for £410,000. It's widely believed that after converting the buildings into luxury flats the company could make £5 million from their sale.

The Tory minister responsible for this Sale of the Century has said he won't resign. Why should he? He's only doing what his class is good at—wasting our money so his rich friends can benefit.

I wonder if they'll surcharge him?

Fraternally
Frank White
Glasgow Central LPYS

Deadly diet

Dear Comrades,

World in Action on ITV has recently completed a two-part documentary on the British diet and its corresponding effects on human arteries.

A hundred years ago, or even less, the upholders of capital used to paint a rosy picture about future technology and its beneficial effects for those living in poverty conditions throughout the world.

Today that technology is with us, but capitalism has shown itself unable to use the advances made for socially useful purposes.

Two-thirds of the planet lives in poverty and inhuman conditions today. But not only that, and here is the crunch, even when workers have been able, through sacrifice and struggle, to achieve reforms as in Britain and reasonable health is gained the capitalists then decide to poison our diet. What greater example of an ailing system do we need than this.

Also, contrary to the 'rosy picture' of technology, the situation is getting worse. During the two programmes some frightening information came to light. Apparently half the soldiers killed in Vietnam examined had varying degrees of arterial disease, (furred arteries caused by hard fat deposits).

Half of the people in their twenties examined as a result of fatal car crashes in Britain had similar results. British capitalists are increasing the fat in our foods. Children, even aged under ten, have now been found with the beginnings of disease, once the process starts it is irreversible.

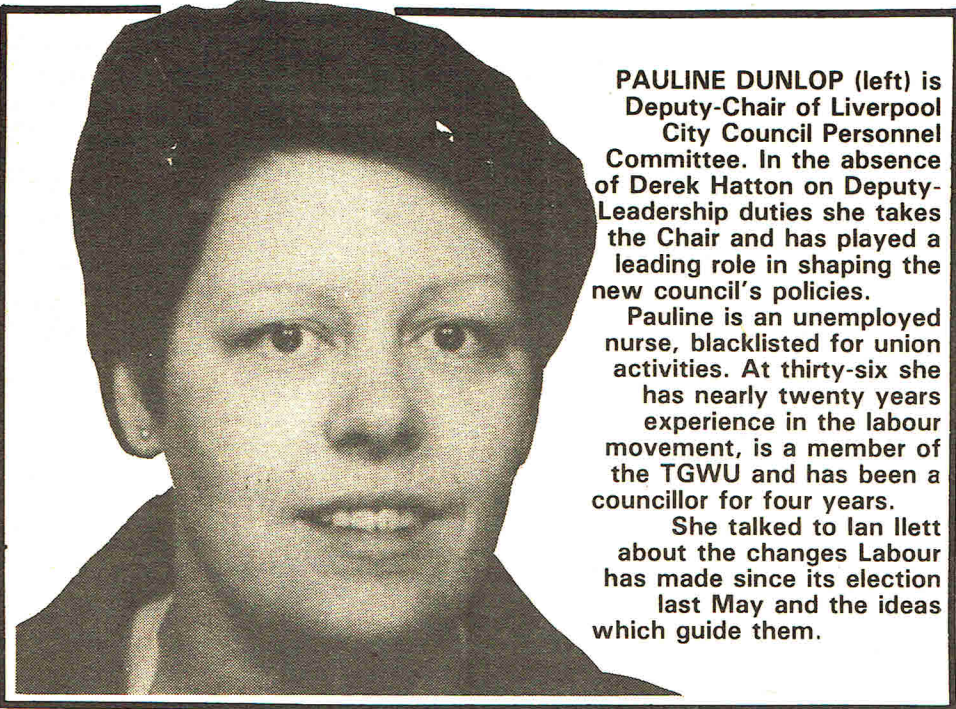
The programme called for government action, but surprise, surprise, the Tories have done nothing. After all the fast food junk and fat infested foods are mainly the lot of the working classes, so why should the Tories and their class bother anyway.

It was found where fat in food was highest in Britain, Glasgow, there existed the highest rate of heart disease in the world.

Couple this with Tory plans to cut heart surgery this year, and NHS cuts in general, we get a better picture. The two programmes are an indictment of Tory policy on the one hand and the uncaring capitalist class who's only concern is quick profit.

Yours fraternally
Gary Nightingale
Maidstone CLP

Liverpool council and class politics



PAULINE DUNLOP (left) is Deputy-Chair of Liverpool City Council Personnel Committee. In the absence of Derek Hatton on Deputy-Leadership duties she takes the Chair and has played a leading role in shaping the new council's policies. Pauline is an unemployed nurse, blacklisted for union activities. At thirty-six she has nearly twenty years experience in the labour movement, is a member of the TGWU and has been a councillor for four years. She talked to Ian Ilett about the changes Labour has made since its election last May and the ideas which guide them.

In the past I understand there have been problems with holding Chairs of committees when not having a majority on the Council?

Yes there was an argument that we should take the Chair when we didn't have a proper majority. But every time we put forward any major policies they were defeated. It was nonsense to take such positions in that kind of situation. So we decided that the only time we would take such positions was when we had an effective working majority.

But even now Labour only has a slim majority?

It does have a slim majority but it is an effective working majority. For the first time in ten years we have overall control of the Council.

What changes have you been able to make as a result of this new position?

The committee deals with all items that affect the staff in the corporation, including manual and white collar workers.

When we took over in May 1983 there were 30,042 employees on the Liverpool City Council.

We are part and parcel of the trade union movement... There is no way we have taken on the role of bosses

The latest figure we have shows an increase of 894.

That is not including other jobs we are creating—for example the MSC are releasing an extra 300 jobs that we hope to start in March. Along with those there's the 1,200 jobs we have saved by refusing to implement the Liberal cuts.

We reckon to have saved and created nearly 3,000 jobs by May of this year.

The trade unions have been given nomination rights to 50% of new appointments.

We have given an extra day's leave to all employees.

We have given the trade unions far more access to committees and councillors and we now have the best disciplinary procedure in the country.

There is easy access and quick process of the procedure. From a dispute first arising, to the final stage, which is the dispute hearing, takes a maximum of six weeks.

The executive of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee has seats on the personnel committee. The trade unions sit on all the disputes and appeal hearings. Because of the new disputes procedure, at the first stage when they have dealt with their own management they can approach the Chair of the Committee. There is a time limit of three days by which the grievance must be heard. So within three days any dispute will be heard.

Closer links

If they are not satisfied at that stage then they can go to a disputes panel and put their case before the disputes panel. We have had about forty disputes in about five months. Although the trade unions haven't won all the disputes, because they have been dealt with quickly and are seen to have had a fair hearing they are happier. It has meant closer links between ourselves and the trade unions.

Negotiations have been started with the unions on

wages. In a major department, recreation and open spaces, bonus has been consolidated into the wages, increasing them by £20 to £30.

What has been the Liberal and Tory response to these steps?

Outrage at any involvement of unions on committees. As far as they were concerned it was quite all right for management to be paid to attend committee meetings but not all right for the trade unions to be there.

We have always said that if management are going to be there to give their professional advice then the trade unions should also be there to give us their professional advice. What happened in the past was management would give their own opinions and also give their version of what the unions were saying.

Why do you deal directly with the Joint Shop Stewards Committee rather than the trade union officials?

Because as far as we are concerned the JSSC represents the council workers directly.

We have most contact with them. We have never said that we would refuse to meet any full time officials and are always available if full-time officials want to meet us. But the convenors represent the workers directly—we deal with them at the first stage.

What is the attitude of the officials to this?

They have complained. A delegation came to see us to object that too much power is given to the JSSC. Our response was that the JSSC was set up originally to fight cuts, represents 30,000 workers and its power has always been unofficially recognised.

We have taken the step of officially recognising it. We consider this an advance because it means closer links with the council workforce.

Do you find a contradiction between your role as a councillor representing the interests of the electorate at large and your identification with the trade unions?

As far as we are concerned we are part and parcel of the trade union and labour movement. Our role has been to involve not only the trade unions in our campaigns but also the public as widely as possible.

The people who voted us in, the people on the housing estates who actually support us—we consider them to be part and parcel of the movement and I don't think there is any contradiction when you see it that way.

There is no way that we have taken on the role of bosses. I'm not saying that we won't have disagreements at times in day to day negotiations. But we see our role as joining with the unions in trying to provide the best services possible—even if it means taking on the government in order to defend those jobs and services.

How did the previous council's attitude to these problems differ from your own?

First of all there was no trade union representation on the committees and secondly they caused disputes because they took a long time to actually hear the grievances. Their attitude was so anti-union they weren't prepared to sit down and discuss.

Liberals

They just used to reject claims out of hand. A lot of the disputes we have been getting have been built up because of the frustration the unions felt under the Liberals when they couldn't get a fair hearing.

Now because of our disputes procedure they are coming to us and not taking strike action.

What about consultation with the public in general. How has the council set about that?

We have had far more consultation than the Liberals ever did. They came to power on community politics and pavement politics. But they never really consulted the people. They just barged their kind of policies through. Since we've been in power we have had consultation on every major policy item.

Over the schools reorganisation we held public meetings in every area affected. Over the pre-school nursery issue we did the same thing and consulted with the people.

On the other major policy issue—the designation and plans for seventeen priority re-development areas—to start with we opened up the

Town Hall and put a display on.

Hundreds of people came in to see how their area would be affected and talk on a one to one basis with their local councillors. This is going to be followed up with more public meetings in the areas.

We are now in the process of holding a series of public meetings to explain the financial position of the council and why we face confrontation with the Tory government.

Hundreds of people are turning up to their local meeting to listen to the council's case, ask questions, and talk individually to their councillors afterwards.

We've only been in office ten months and we have had more consultation than in the whole ten years of the previous administration.



Councillor Pauline Dunlop (centre), a trained nurse, trying to help dying youngster, David Moore, killed by a police landrover during the so-called Toxteth riots in July 1981. The Liverpool 8 Defence Committee, backed by the District Labour Party and Trades Council called a national demonstration in response to these events, demanding the sacking of Merseyside Police Chief Oxford and democratic control of the police.

The Personnel Committee must face the problem of racial discrimination. What is your approach in recruitment to combat such problems?

The previous administration declared Liverpool City Council an equal opportunities council but the only equal opportunity they gave was the opportunity of unemployment.

They cut the council workforce by 5,000 so it was just a farce to say it was an equal opportunities employer. We have created jobs and thereby created more opportunities for black and white.

Lip service

The Liberals set up a race relations committee but it didn't function properly. And they paid lip-service to the idea of positive discrimination because they saw it as a popular thing amongst a small minority.

But the reality of

unemployment in Liverpool and the community of Liverpool 8, which is the largest black area, is that we all share a common misery.

Positive discrimination would mean saying to the black youth of Liverpool 8 "yes you can have a job" but to the white youth, they have grown up with, "no you can't have a job because you happen to be white". That would split the community right down the middle.

Double oppression

You have areas in Liverpool, in Croxteth for example, where unemployment is even higher than Liverpool 8. Youth unemployment in Croxteth is 90%.

One of the problems we have found is that blacks don't even apply for the jobs we have created. It's partly because they are removed from the trade union movement and part-

ly that because of the double oppression they face, they haven't been in previous employment.

What we have done is to have the trade unions sit on the interviewing panels to make sure that no one is discriminated against on grounds of sex, colour or previous trade union activities.

Secondly, the largest manual trade union, the GMBATU, have approached the employment office of Liverpool 8 and asked for the names of black unemployed youngsters who won't have had the opportunity to get themselves on a trade union nomination list for a council job.

They have processed those names along with all the others to the council as part of their 50% nomination rights. The only criterion they have laid down is that the people concerned are willing to join a trade union and have never taken voluntary redundancy.

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS



Further job threat

ANOTHER 1,000 jobs at Fords are under threat—at the Ford Motor Plant in Basildon.

Leaked information shows that Ford management have taken part in secret talks which could have drastic consequences for 2,600 workers. Clive Jenkins, of the ASTMS, says that Ford is to share control of the factory with farming equipment firm Ferry Mullholland and other companies.

Management lies

This revelation directly contradicts the claims of Bill Hayden, vice-

president of Fords Europe, that UK operations are safe from any run-down. In reality, it would appear that no job is safe. This announcement is consistent with the imminent closure of the foundry at Dagenham.

Conflict inevitable

While recognising that a national Ford strike may be postponed for the meantime it is only a matter of time before there will be major conflicts. Ford workers will have to fight to avoid wholesale redundancies.

Ford workers in Basildon have been a traditionally moderate workforce only to be rewarded with this. They must stand and fight. The national leadership must be forced to mount a campaign in preparation for united action to defend jobs in Fords.

Militant Public Meeting Basildon Foundry today—Basildon tomorrow Which way forward for Ford workers? Speaker: Colin Adams (AUEW, Ford Foundry), 7.30 pm at Pitsea Leisure Centre, 22 March

Health workers in action

Kingston

THIS MONDAY, over 200 workers at Kingston Hospital voted to return to work, having been in strike for two weeks. The return to work was recommended by the stewards from COHSE, NUPE, GMBATU and T&GWU, after negotiating an agreement with management.

The strike originally involved only members of GMBATU. They were protesting at forty four hours work, taken from the hospital when the laundry contract was awarded to Advance Linen Services. It spread however to other members, angry at management's refusal to honour the disputes procedure, which allowed for a return to the "status quo".

Tactics

NUPE members working in the domestic range agreed to give token support by taking one hour off to go on the picket line at different times, allowing departments to be adequately covered. This was done with the agreement of the domestic supervisors. Management responded by locking them out.

NUPE was at first hesitant to support the G&MB initiative, feeling that the timing was wrong. The membership had not been prepared, the public had not been made fully aware of the issues posed by privatisation. Nevertheless, when GMB stewards appealed for support, NUPE felt



Photo: Melanie Friend (Report)

Picket line during Kingston hospital strike.

obliged to respond. Management's attitude revealed their intentions. Next on the agenda for privatisation is the domestic departments.

The strike, made official by all four unions representing the ancillary grades, grew. Non-members came out and joined up before taking their place on the picket line. A noticeable aspect of the strike was the involvement of low-paid women workers, particularly on the picket line. Mothers with their children, grandmothers, all showed their determination by turning out in very unpleasant weather conditions. They weren't just fighting for their futures, but for a free NHS for their children.

Kingston is not a particularly militant hospital, and in-

dustrial action in the past has been patchy, often with the union divided. This, according to workers with twenty-five years service, has been the best supported strike ever at the hospital. It has been helped by the various unions sinking their differences a year ago and working amicably together, through the Joint Shop Stewards' Committee. The membership are walking with heads held high. Solidarity has been forged at rank and file level.

By a NUPE steward

Hull

ABOUT ONE hundred catering and domestic staff at Hull Royal Infirmary staged a lightning strike last Wednesday and marched on the health authority meeting to protest against privatisation plans.

Tempers were inflamed by the cynical way that workers' jobs and conditions were discussed. Things were not helped by one authority member apparently falling asleep, the absence of two Labour nominees and the lack of opposition from some others.

Out to tender

Consequently the meeting was 'adjourned' twice and the police called. In the end

the 'officers' timetable for putting services out to tender was accepted.

Fighting on

COHSE steward Pete Wilson said the authority now wanted to introduce the proposed changes as quickly as possible to prevent any more trouble.

Gordon McDougall, NUPE Secretary, warned that staff would not cooperate in cutting their own hours, wages and conditions to try and compete, and that there could be further strike action. "We are not going to let the issue go without a fight" he said.

By Alistair Tice (NUPE steward, Hull Royal Infirmary)

British Rail axe March

WITH THE disappearance of traditional wagonload freight on British Rail, and its replacement by a limited network of air-braked speedlink wagonload trains, the need for large railway marshalling yards has disappeared.

Staff at Whitemoor yard at March (Cams), and the loco maintenance depot at March, co-operated with rail management during 1982 in a partial closure of the yard in the name of 'good housekeeping.'

Hard hit

1983 saw the closure of the line from March to Spalding and now BR have announced the total closure of Whitemoor yard and the loco maintenance depot in 1985. Railways are the biggest employer in the town of March. This amounts

Phillips Rubber, Manchester Re-occupied, courts defied

STRIKERS AT Phillips Rubber Company in Manchester were ejected from their factory by bailiffs after a repossession order was issued. But then on Monday 5 March the factory was reoccupied in the early hours of the morning.

There was also a mass picket outside with many delegates from factories around Manchester in a show of solidarity.

At a strike meeting on 1 March workers called for escalation of the dispute and a mass demonstration in support of the strikers.

The senior steward for the strikers, Tommy Watkins, made the following appeal "We are at the point of no return—we need all the support possible, morally financially and most of all physically. We must get out and fight these employers who are trying to knock us down. Don't be intimidated

by the employers and by the Thatcher regime which is backing them."

A picket spoke of conditions in the rubber factory. "When I began here I was paid £25. I think this job kills you. When you come out from the press rooms, your body is covered in carbon black and there are only seven showers for 110 workers and only three showers work properly."

"If that's what your body gets like, what about your lungs? All this for £48 a week basic pay."

Tommy Watkins summed up the mood, "This occupation and the picket is a fur-

ther indication of our steadfastness. We don't intend to go away or crawl into the brickwork as the management said this morning. They also said they weren't prepared to negotiate with us. They think they can outlast us. But we fully intend to show them we can outlast them."

Strikers are asking all trade union branches in the Manchester area to attend the mass demonstration of support on Saturday 17 March at 11 am. All marchers to assemble under the Mancunian Arches.

All donations to Bro. T Watkins, 6/702 branch TGWU secretary, 16 Barker St, Heywood OL 10 3DU.

By Paul Henry and Jane Briers

Gas workers' pay strike taking on Thatcher

DESPITE A recommendation from negotiators to accept the gas corporation's "final offer", the national re-call conference overwhelmingly voted to reject the corporation's offer.

a national one-day stoppage to indicate to British Gas their dissatisfaction at what one delegate called "this derisory offer".

Thatcher

The mood of the conference was militant. Delegates from Scotland, Yorkshire, Manchester, Liverpool and Wales all angrily attacked the in-

One-day stoppage

Not only was the offer rejected but delegates called for

fluence that the Thatcher government have over the gas corporation.

Gas charges

Thatcher was blamed for the gas corporation's reluctance to reduce the working week, and using the gas corporation as a tax gathering body, with the exorbitant increases in gas charges in recent years.

Gas workers are ready to follow the example of their brothers in the water industry—take on and beat the gas corporation and show Thatcher that when workers fight workers win.

Coventry engineers meet Militant

On the day before the TUC's day of action over Cheltenham, Coventry's first ever Militant Engineers meeting was held.

Lack of lead

Jock Orme, Convenor of Self Changing Gears reported that his factory was walking out at dinner time the following day, despite the lack of lead by the AUEW leadership at both district and national leadership.

Jock used his own experience to illustrate what is happening to the whole working class. Referring to Militant's warnings in the past he said, "It is easy to dismiss all this and understand we had the strength on a plant basis to get our fair wack. This was when the slogan 'I'm alright Jack' could be heard around Coventry. I never hear that phrase now". That it wasn't only the Tories, but also the failure of Labour governments to fight for workers that had

driven him to support Militant.

Democracy

Militant Industrial Correspondent, Martin Elvin, explained Militant's programme to democratise the Trade Union Movement and both speakers stressed the importance of the forthcoming BLOC Conference to the struggle for fighting Trade Unions.

By Tony Cross

Militant Engineer, journal of Militant supporters in the engineering industry. Only 30p incl. p&p from World Socialist Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

Yorkshire miners out

GEC Staffs

YORKSHIRE COALFIELD has been brought to a standstill by a strike of 56,000 miners led by the NUM's Area Council.

This action is our reply to the growing provocation by the Coal Board over pit closures.

Miners are not prepared to see their future chucked away. They've seen what has happened in the steel industry and are now prepared to make a stand.

The NCB have announced closure of Corton Wood Colliery arguing that there was "no market" for coking coal produced at the pit. But miners understand that the Tories and MacGregor himself engineered the closure of steel plants. We are not going to let them use their own butchery of steel as an excuse to close down pits!

The closure of Corton Wood together with Bulcliffe Colliery near Barnsley would mean the loss of over 1,100 jobs. The Area Council should be congratulated for coming to the defence of these pits by invoking the 1981 ballot on pit closures.

Fight and occupy

More than 80% of Yorkshire miners voted to fight the closure of any pit, it's today that we make that stand. The men now feel that we are fighting for the industry itself. This was highlighted when the NCB threatened to abandon Yorkshire Main Colliery. If that was the case, we could kiss goodbye to hundreds of jobs.

Just as the NUM is having to lead the fight against pit

closures, so the union will have to take immediate action over any pit abandoned during this dispute. Only the occupation of such pits with the NUM taking over safety work and full running of the pit can save millions and millions of pound worth of resources from being thrown down the drain by Mad Mac MacGregor.

Triple Alliance

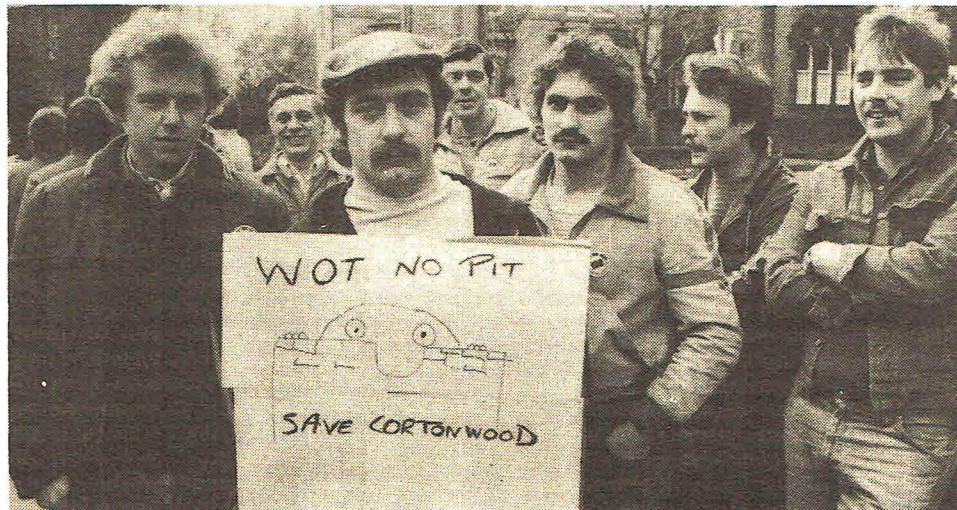
By their own actions, the NCB have shown us the way the dispute must be fought. Jobs lost in steel have led to the plight of miners at Corton Wood. If that and other pits close the Tories will probably put MacGregor in charge of railways to slash thousands of "superfluous" jobs there.

The time has come to stop the Thatcher-MacGregor devastation express in its tracks by using the Triple Alliance of steelworkers, railworkers and miners together. The determined stand of the Yorkshire miners must be taken up by all the British coalfields.

We can then call on the rest of the trade union movement for solidarity action and support.

No pit closures! All out action in support of the Yorkshire miners!

By Richard Clarkson
(Prince of Wales, NUM)



Corton Wood miners lobby NUM headquarters.

Photo: John Harris (IFL)

WITH THE decision of the South Yorkshire panel of NUM delegates to take all-out strike action from 5 March, the mood against the NCB's tactics has hardened.

For two weeks, Manvers Colliery has been on strike, swiftly joined by the neighbouring pits of Wath Main and Kilnhurst. Branch officials at Manvers Colliery explained the dispute to Fraser Jeffery and Rob Jones.

On the face of it, it is a dispute over snap (break) times. Manvers and Wath have a common man riding time, as a pit shaft is shared between the two pits.

Miners at the two pits start work at different times. Onsetters and Banksmen also start work at a different time from the majority of the workforce, but the NCB want all men to have their snap at the same time.

At the back of the dispute

is the miners' overtime ban, which is beginning to take great effect. At Manvers, for example, production is down from approximately 12,000 tonnes per week to below 6,000 tonnes.

Low bonus

This means that management is trying to cut all corners to increase production and profit, without going through any consultation with the NUM. The mainspring behind the strike is the battle on the question of the overtime ban.

Pickets at Manvers Colliery expressed their anger over the way the bonus system has operated. Since the overtime ban came into being, management has refused to pay for stoppages in production, which they would normally pay. For example, if a conveyor belt is broken down for 30 minutes, then no payment is given to

make up for the bonus being lost.

In the past few weeks, bonus for a faceworker at Manvers been approximately £1 per shift, even as low as 45p per shift. The maximum bonus which can be earned by a faceworker nationally is £23.50 per shift.

The Manvers men have been looking for wider support with representation from the South Yorkshire area being made to the Doncaster and Barnsley area panels in the hope of ensuring more support against management's heavy handed tactics in trying to sabotage the overtime ban.

With the announcement of threatened pit closures in the area, in the last few days, no doubt Yorkshire miners will be even more determined to resist.

By Fraser Jeffery
(Rother Valley LPYS)
and Rob Jones

THE DISPUTE of 800 AUEW, EETPU and TGWU members of GEC measurements Stafford previously reported has escalated due to the management's intransigence.

Shop floor workers staged a sit down strike from 11.15 am Wednesday 29 February in protest against threatened suspensions of the night shift.

Refusal of management to lift suspensions has led to an all out strike of shop floor workers. Support at the picket on Monday morning was 100% solid. Further report next week. Send support to Joint shop stewards committee c/o 40 Drydon Crescent, Stafford.

SDP/EETPU protest

THIS RESOLUTION was passed with only one vote against at the London Press Branch, EETPU 28/2/84:

This branch believes the appointment of John Grant as an employee of the EETPU is an insult to the membership. It is noted that John Grant as an SDP member stood against the official Labour candidate during the general election and received the general secretary's support and as a party the SDP has consistently supported this Tory government's anti-working class measures. He will be treated by this branch for the renegade that he is and we hope the same attitude will be taken by all the EETPU's members.

It was pointed out that John Grant is going to be some form of highly paid PR man for the EETPU but it will take more than that to change the image of the EETPU.

Hull postman sacked

ON MARCH 1, after twenty seven years loyal service to the Post Office, a Hull postman was sacked, left with no future prospects of a job, and smeared with a charge of dishonesty.

He is, as you can imagine, shattered. He has always claimed his innocence. He was dismissed by a kangaroo court.

On returning to the Hull Post Office after the previous day's delivery, he was confronted with the ac-

cusation that he had deliberately left a first class letter that should have been delivered the previous day.

Some justice!

PO management said they had 'found' the letter after he had gone out on delivery. He told them that he had never seen the letter before and asked what proof they had. They had none.

He had even cycled by the

house to which the letter was addressed so had the letter been there he would have delivered it. The management said, "we say you put it deliberately back—prove you didn't!"

What Hull's postmen want to know is, as the Post Office continue their efforts to cut staffing by 'natural wastage', how many more postmen will have letters 'appear for delivery' after they have already gone out to deliver?

By a Hull UCW member

to clock out.

The same day the shop stewards called a mass meeting. All departments agreed to come out on strike. It was made official, with

United action

picketing 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The lorry drivers are refusing to cross the picket line. One hundred workers joined the union so they too could be part of the action at the factory.

FTAT has tried to negotiate with management but unsuccessfully, resulting in talks with ACAS, but they too have had little response from management.

by Gwyneth Cullen

Not so quiet at Silent Nights

THE BEGINNING of 1984 saw mass recruitment to the Furniture Timber and Allied Trades Union (FTAT) at Silent Nights bedding factory in Barnoldswick, Lancs.

Things soon were not so quiet. The lorry drivers came out over a wage claim and the demand for a £1 shift allowance.

Two disputes

The lorry drivers staged a one day strike over wage negotiations and a £1 shift allowance.

The loading bay workers had a separate grievance. Temperatures of -4 (Feb 14) and -2 (Feb 15) were recorded in the loading bay. So they requested thermal underwear. Whilst management pondered, the workers walked out for two hours. They agreed to restart work pending a management decision.

On Thursday 16 February management introduced a new piece rate in the SI mattress department, which would mean workers losing between £15-£30 per week. They refused to accept it and were told



National Delegate Conference

Saturday 24 March

THE UNEMPLOYED members of Sheffield LPYS have been busy building support for the BLOC conference. We have been visiting all the local factories and discussing with the shop stewards and convenors.

New mood!

Today two of us arrived at a small private steel firm. We had visited this firm in November about the Young Workers Assembly. Then we had been taken round the plant by the receptionist and

introduced to the Convenor.

The response this time was some what different. After asking the receptionist if we could see the Convenor we were approached by a member of the management. He asked me who I was and why I wanted to see the Convenor.

Then another member of the management came out. His suit was of a better quality so I assumed he was more 'important' than his colleague. He repeated the same questions and I repeated my non-answers. He then said: "I'll have to ask you to leave my

factory". His factory indeed! It was built with profits made from the toil of generations of workers. And judging by its run down appearance he was doing a very bad job of running 'his firm'.

Hit back

Anyway it won't stop us, the struggle goes on to get rid of parasites like him. And there's no better place to start than Sheffield on 24 March.

By Simon Duerden
(Hillsborough LPYS)

How the BLOC's going

Some of the delegations notified to the organisers of the Broad Left Organising Committee conference.

TGWU 6/611 (Crosby); ISTE Manchester Steel Branch; TGWU 6/505 branch (Kirby); TGWU 6/153 (Manchester); TGWU 6/522 (Liverpool); NUPE Beverly (North Yorks); NUPE Stockport Social Services; Shell Carrington Craft Shop Stewards Committee; AUEW 339 BE branch—Bracknell; TGWU 1/317 Camberwell Bus depot; GMBATU JSSC WBC; TGWU 1/1354 branch (Staines); NUPE Enfield General branch; NUPE Gateshead Central branch; NUPE South Cambridgeshire; NUPE Sunderland Local Authority branch; AUEW Welwyn No.

2. NUM Treeton Colliery South Yorks.; GMBATU North Tyne L/A; COHSE Fareham; NUR Rotherham; NUR Hull Rail branch; NUR Wrekin & District; Colchester & District Trades Council; AUEW (Mullards) Blackburn; AUEW Sheffield George Turton Platts (Aurora Group); NUPE Leeds Civic Hall; GMBATU Edinburgh (Slateford Branch); NUPE Peterborough Hospitals branch; NUPE Middlewood branch (Sheffield); NUPE South West Herts. Health District branch; NUPE Hull Hospitals Central branch; NUR Rainham (Kent); NUM Sutton Colliery; NUM Kinsley Drift branch (Pontefract); Derry Trades Council; TGWU Nottingham Area District Commit-

tee; IPCS Research branch, Department of Employment, Sheffield; GMBATU (branch 60 Glasgow); Hackney Trades Council; AUEW Central Repair Depot (Swansea); GMBATU Mexborough branch; NUR (Liverpool); TGWU 5/373 Pork Farms branch (Nottingham); TGWU Stanlow Refinery, Ellesmere Port; TGWU 6/776 Preston; NUPE Wolverhampton Health District (Area 2); UCATT Southport; AUEW Mansfield No. 2; Seamen's Union Manchester branch; TGWU 7/245/24 (1) Dryborough & Co (Edinburgh); TGWU 3/17 branch (Bristol); NALGO GLC/ILEA branch Executive; EETPU London Press Branch; GMBATU North London Thames Water Authority.

Students and youth

Fight for your future

THE STATE of our education system is a disgrace. Buildings are often crumbling, classes of 35 or over are common and food prices in the canteen are ludicrous.

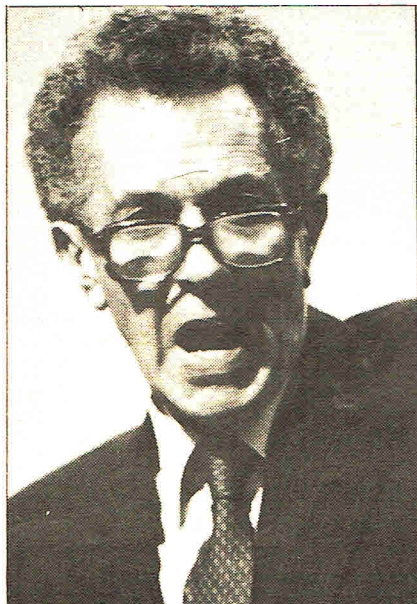
Last week the temperature in my Maths lesson was around 5°C. When I complained that this was well below the legal minimum I was told: "Well you're right, but try telling that to the examiner."

In Further Education Colleges like my own you find students and their parents are financially crippled. You find people have to lie and say they are studying less hours than they actually are in order to claim a pittance on the dole. Many others have to drop subjects to go part time, so they can claim, or do part time jobs when they can get them, which of course interferes greatly with studying.

Grants lacking

As the National Union of Students (NUS) have pointed out, 350,000 further education students get no grant at all and only 30% of higher education students get a full grant. Nearly half (47%) of students who should get a parental contribution do not get the full sum.

Students frequently live on the poverty line. 800,000 get less on their grant than Youth Training Scheme trainees' miserly £25 per week. What is more a new government scheme to scrap travel awards and give a flat rate payment will mean many students being as



Education secretary Keith Joseph. A campaign involving the strength of the labour movement is the only way to make him see sense.

much as £1,000 worse off. Students cannot be seen as a pampered section of society as the Tory press sometimes makes out.

Stop the Tory axe

More and more school leavers take on further education to try and get a decent job, but no less than 11,000 of last summer's graduates, that is more than one in six, were still looking for employment at the start of this year.

By Steve Sims
(Chair, South Normanton LPYS)

We need to fight back. The student union office at our college is like many others around the country—about the size of a broom cupboard. Even so, despite drawbacks like these, the Students Union has launched the present campaign to fight against the conditions we face.

The NUS are launching a campaign for a "New Deal" from the government (see page 5). Previous moves by the NUS have tended to fizzle out without achieving the real improvements needed. Students in all levels of the education system must build firm links with the labour movement to fight in a united manner against our common enemy—the Thatcher government.

At our college much of the driving force for this campaign will come from our newly formed Labour Club. If the Tory axe is to be prevented from falling on our education services, Labour Clubs must be set up in every college across the country and join with the Labour Party Young Socialists in their fight.



Join the Labour Party Young Socialists!

THIS SATURDAY, 10 March a big rally for youth rights will be held in London.

It is organised by the National Union of Students, and will push for a "New Deal" for students. The rally is not just about education; it is also aimed at YTS trainees and unemployed youth.

Rally. Assemble 10 am behind LPYS banner at Jubilee Gardens. March to the rally at Battersea Park.

BLOC Conference—Come to Sheffield

EVERYWHERE the message is the same. "I'm glad someone's doing something". That is the response to the Broad Left Organising Committee (BLOC) conference in Sheffield on 24 March.

Stan Pearce, NUM member at Monkwearmouth colliery in Sunderland described the reception he got at his pit. "We're sending six from the adjoining coke works, eleven from the miners lodge, and I understand the engineers are sending delegates."

"There are NUM members from other Durham pits going and the Durham NUM Broad Left are supporting the Conference. We want a fighting leadership for the unions and the TUC."

"It is obviously going to be a huge success. We've been asked by other unions

if we could run a bigger bus for them as well.

"Last week's demonstration showed that people are fed up to the teeth with this government. I see dinner ladies in Hertfordshire are on strike. Disputes are breaking out all over. It's all coming to a head, but it needs pulling together, that's the importance of the BLOC conference."

"Miners are up in arms, rail workers are up in arms, the only people not up in arms are the TUC."

"We can't go on with the TUC as it is. Members are angry with Murray and the way the Tories are trampling all over the unions. That's why we see the BLOC as helping to change that."

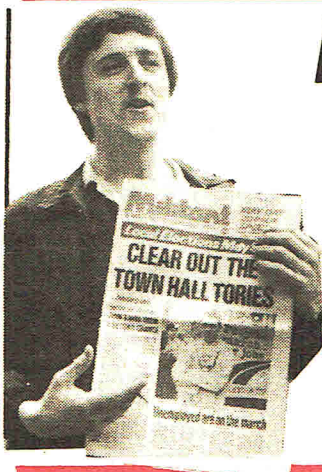
Delegates from the nearby Austin Pickersgill shipyard are coming and dockers on the Tees are sending

delegates. As Dave Jennings TGWU member at Tees Dock explained "When I first raised it, one member asked, is that about getting rid of Murray? If so I'm interested in going. We've got a full delegation to go without difficulty".

Newcastle local BLOC have booked a large luxury coach with video, bar etc. Harlow trade unionists are selling tickets including a packed lunch, and other areas are following suit. Luton area are taking London's example. They have made a block booking on the train.

North and south, blue collar, white collar, rural and urban workers are on their way to Sheffield. If you believe something must be done make sure you are there.

By Martin Elvin



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