



Thatcher's policy— 'persecute poor'

Tory plan means

- ★ New means tests for people receiving Housing Benefit—one in four currently receiving benefit will be hit.
- ★ The State Earnings Related Pension being scrapped and replaced by a compulsory private insurance scheme.
- ★ Unemployment Benefit for the under 25s being reduced.
- ★ For the rest an increase in Unemployment Benefit—but only payable for six months. Mortgage repayments will not be covered.
- ★ Family Income Supplement to be scrapped. A new system will pay benefit directly in-
- to wages, but families earning over £100 will be hit.
- ★ Supplementary Benefit being changed to Benefit Income Support with only four categories: pensions, long-term sick, single parent families and unemployed. The current wide range of discretionary payments will be scrapped regardless of individual cases.
- ★ Death and maternity grants to be scrapped, replaced by means tested allowances and loans.
- ★ Inflation proofing for Child Benefit to be scrapped.

UNEMPLOYED, pensioners, single parent families, the long term disabled—all are targets for the Tories in the next round of savage cuts.

Social Services minister Norman Fowler will announce £1 billion cuts in welfare benefits, on Monday 3 June. Reports in the press reveal that vital welfare schemes will go while harsh new means test rules will be introduced.

Already conditions for the hardest hit in society are intolerable. Single parent Lynn Wiseman from Gateshead has four children. She told *Militant* how Thatcher and co pick on the weak:

"My eldest is 18 and has just started a part time job after being unemployed for two years. I received a letter from the Housing Department saying that I now have to pay £9 a week towards my rent. As I only get £50 a week to feed and clothe us, I don't know where they expect me to find this money.

"After £10 for the coke, electric and gas bills we are left with very little to feed us, let alone clothe us. Do I take it off my son who is getting just £36 a week? He's already paying £10 board.

"My son has passed the

Army entrance exam which I am opposed to, but he now says at least when he goes I won't have to pay rent. The new social security regulations are destroying me and my family, and thousands like me".

So much for the Tories being the 'party of the family'. The new regulations will make things even worse.

Fowler has the arrogance to say these measures will increase 'work incentive'. The four million put on the dole by the Tories don't need 'incentive' they need jobs to go to!

Slashing benefits is part of the Tories' campaign to drive down workers' wages and living conditions. Intolerably low benefits, far wider use of means test and new housing benefit rules, are designed to hound the unemployed and low paid to take any job at any wage.

Such is the outrage at such proposals that Fowler may 'tone down' the cuts when he

By Bob Wade



Photo: Mark Risher (FL)

LOW PAID: Family Income Supplement will be scrapped, inflation proofing for Child Benefit ended, and a new means test for Housing Benefit.

announces them on Monday—but only to introduce them all at a later stage.

Labour

The Labour Party and trade unions fought hard to win most of these benefits over the past 40 years—the Tories hope to roll the lot up in a matter of months. Every attack, every cut must be fought.

YOUTH: As if the new housing rules and conscription onto YTS were not enough, now Unemployment Benefit for under 25's is to be reduced.

But Labour must learn the lessons too. Only socialism can guarantee permanent reform—any advance won while the capitalist system remains intact is only temporary. What the ruling class are forced to grant under pressure, they will take back later when their profits are at risk. The fight against welfare cuts is a fight against capitalism.

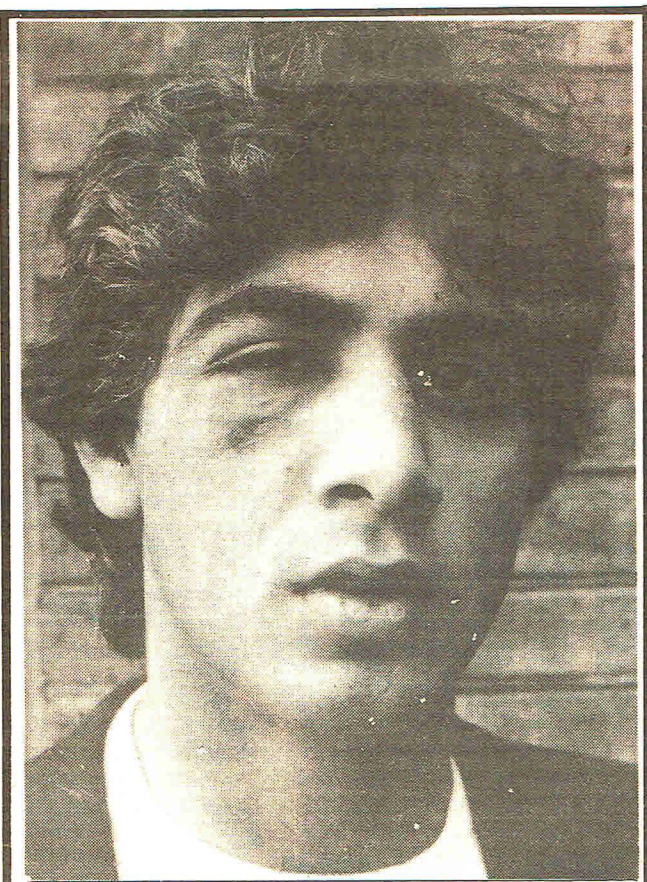
PENSIONERS: The State Earnings Related Pension to be scrapped and replaced by a private insurance scheme.

MARCH FOR JOBS

NO YTS CONSCRIPTION

LIVERPOOL • JUNE 29
BILLY BRAGG • CHINA CRISIS

11am Shaw Street • March to Pier Head for rally + bands + lots more



Newham Asian assaulted in jail

A NEW brutal twist was added to the Newham 7 campaign on 22 May, the first day of the trial. After the lunch break Parvaiz Khan (above) appeared in court with serious cuts and bruises on his face. Held in custody for trial, he had refused to eat a pork pie offered to him by the prison officers. He is a Muslim and could not eat it. He was then beaten up.

The campaign started out as a campaign for the right of black people under attack to defend themselves. It has now become clearly a campaign about wider issues—especially about the police and about the bias of the legal system. How can there be any pretence at “impartiality” by the courts when two striking miners can be jailed for life for the killing of a taxi driver, yet a racist from Newham is only jailed for just nine years after killing a black ticket collector, deliberately stabbing him through the eye with a spike. How can ‘justice’ be expected from a system where the defendant is beaten up by the so-called ‘custodians of the law’.

All labour movement organisations should attend the court pickets every Monday at 9.30 am (Old Bailey—nearest tube, St Pauls) to protest against racial attacks and police and prison officers’ brutality.

By Mark Avis (East Ham LPYS)

Engineers’ choice

THE CAMPAIGN to get the AUEW Broad Left candidate for president, John Tocher elected was given a big boost in Wales recently.

Broad Left members in the union decided to launch a campaign, inviting John Tocher for a three day visit, to counter-act the mood of despair and apathy amongst members through many years of right-wing control.

Under the right’s leadership wages and conditions have declined drastically and a real fight to save jobs hasn’t materialised.

The Broad Left campaigners put in a lot of groundwork before the visit, writing to shop stewards, leafletting and making telephones calls to finalise arrangements for factory meetings and interviews with the press. The highlight of the tour was when John Tocher spoke alongside Ian Issac, South Wales NUM executive member, and Bill Connor, Broad Left candidate for general secretary in the shop workers’ union USDAW, at the first all Wales BLOC conference on 11 May.

Following Tocher’s visit Welsh Broad Left engineers proposed at the national conference of the Broad Left’s journal, that a mass



John Tocher, AUEW Broad Left candidate for president.

rally be held later in the year to publicise Tocher’s campaign, with leading left wingers such as Tony Benn and Arthur Scargill speaking.

Broad Left members in Wales are confident that John Tocher could win the presidency if a campaign like theirs is taken up nationally with Tocher being invited to visit other areas. If Tocher was elected it would be a victory for the whole of the labour movement.

By Ken Armin (AUEW shop steward, S. Wales personal capacity)

Flood disaster hits poor

BETWEEN 15,000 and 40,000 people have been swept to their deaths in Bangladesh.

The people, and their homes, cattle and crops were washed away when a cyclone and tidal wave engulfed the islands on which they lived.

TV news reported this as yet another great “natural” disaster like an earthquake. It was nothing of the kind. These thousands of poor peasants were killed by an economic system which forced them to try and scrape together a living on islands which were known to be death traps.

150,000 died in 1961 and half a

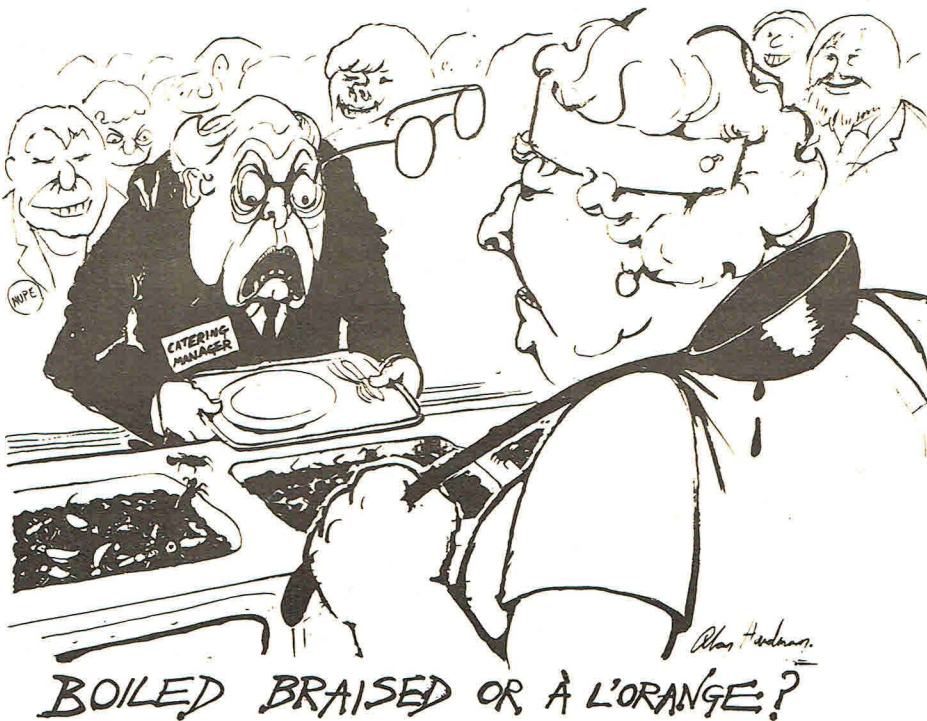
million in 1970 in similar cyclone disasters in the same area. An early warning system may have prevented an even worse catastrophe but many who heard the warning had no means of escape. Apart from building earthen dams and embankments which were swept away in the floods, nothing has been done to protect people in the danger areas.

So poor are the landless peasants who constitute half of Bangladesh’s 90 million population that they are prepared to risk death to live as farmers or fishermen on these islands. Some are little more than sand banks in the estuary, only feet above the

water level. One, Urirchar, is not even marked as an island on the map. It is under water for part of the year, yet 10,000 were on it last week grazing their cattle and living in mud and thatch huts.

The disaster showed what a living hell Bangladesh is for the vast majority of its population. The cyclone has already claimed tens of thousands of lives. The economic crisis and food shortage which always follows such floods will claim thousands more. No country in the world cries out louder for a socialist solution to provide a way out of horrors like this.

By Pat Craven



A NURSE at the Royal Free Hospital was sick for three hours after finding a cockroach in her chicken pie. However, the hospital catering manager, Mr James Chambers, told The Guardian (24 May) that while understanding the distress caused: “The cockroaches do not pose a threat to health...” He explained they were harmless if cooked properly.

Mr Chambers went on to explain that cockroaches finding their way into pies was not a result of health cuts. Of course not.

Liverpool goes ahead on equality programme

EVER SINCE Sam Bond was appointed by Liverpool City Council to head its Race Relations Unit, he and the council have been subjected to a hostile campaign by a group styling itself the “Black Caucus”.

By our Liverpool correspondent

In February, Sam Bond was physically attacked in the municipal offices. Last week, at Liverpool City Council’s Annual General Meeting, a volley of eggs was thrown at councillors by members of the Black Caucus. Individual councillors were then physically assaulted and abused. The council security force and the police were asked to clear the council chamber.

This incident followed the council’s decision to reorganise its committees for the first time for eight years. The Race Relations Unit is to be replaced by an Equal Opportunities Committee, which is designed to fight against all forms of discrimination.

The Black Caucus and

two Labour councillors, Alex Doswell and Dave Leech, who represent Granby ward in Liverpool, protested at the use of the police.

But what is the alternative? Do we allow a violent and unrepresentative group who disagree with our policies to physically disrupt the council and block democratic discussion?

At each demonstration the same 20 to 30 people turn up—as their support grows weaker they become more physical and violent.

Meanwhile confidence in Sam Bond is growing. 240 people from the Toxteth area have visited him since he took up his job with frustration in the black community building up over jobs, housing and education.

Press backing

The Black Caucus has been consistently supported by the press to try to discredit the council, the implication being that abolishing the Race Relations Unit is an attack on the rights of the black community. The idea behind the creation of the Equal Opportunities Committee, however, is to create an

integrated strategy to achieve a fair deal for those who are discriminated against by virtue of race, sex, disability, religion or creed.

Consultation

Under this, sub-committees will be established and they will elect representatives to serve on the main committees. The structure, composition and terms of reference will be determined by each group.

The intention of the council is to “initiate an extensive programme of consultations, culminating in a series of major public conferences”. In other words nothing is being imposed, no rights being taken away.

The Black Caucus is mostly concerned that they won’t be represented in the new structure. They admit themselves not to represent the whole black community and in desperation resort to hooligan tactics to try and preserve their positions. Worse still this comes at a time when councillors are under threat from the District Auditor for defending jobs and services.

Brittan bends rules to reject Tamils

MORE THAN 500 Tamils from Sri Lanka have come to Britain over the last week to seek refuge and have received a hostile reception from the Tories. On 20 May Home Secretary Leon Brittan announced: “There is no reason to believe that Tamils returning to Sri Lanka face persecution and few are likely to qualify for refugee status in this country.”

“All Sri Lankan Tamils who failed to qualify for leave to enter but express fear of return shall have their cases considered on merit in the light of all the circumstances. Normal appeal rights will apply”.

By Dave Nellist MP (Coventry South East)

But the first case I dealt with was a young male Tamil due to be deported on 24 May at 3.00. He was told by the Home Office that he had only 24 hours to present his case. Normally you’re allowed four to six weeks and the Home Office take as long or even longer to consider the case.

At the same time Brittan issued instructions to all Western airlines not to accept for flight any Tamil from Sri Lanka who does not have entry clearance documents. This is not a legal requirement.

This tightening of rules, made without any Parliamentary discussion is a totally political decision. Compare this action with the speedy welcome for the Vietnamese boat people. But then Sri Lankan President Jayawardene is one of Thatcher’s heroes, a dictator who worships the shrine of unfettered private enterprise. The president’s opponents, the working class, the peasantry and particularly the Tamils can expect nothing from the Tories. During Thatcher’s visit to Sri Lanka, Jayawardene told the Prime Minister to put pressure on Tamil groups in Britain. A number of Labour MPs are taking up the issue with the government.



Gordon Bennet

Ah the burdens of leadership. If it wasn't for the miners and other awkward sods, Labour would now be racing ahead in the polls. Or at least that seems to be the view of the coterie of former lefts who surround Neil Kinnock—they're galloping to the right at a rate of knots which makes Napoleon's retreat from Moscow look like a leisurely Sunday afternoon stroll.

But what of the dream ticket? Unburdened by such tiresome business as fighting for the people who put them into Parliament, they've been occupied in PREPARING FOR POWER (in between expelling one or two socialists here and there).

Although much trumpeting about learning the lessons of the past has been heard—not least from Neil's mentor, Lord Eric Frogspawn—sadly it appears that neither Neil or Roy are in the least bit capable of doing so.

Take just one example. In between churning out monumentally tedious drivel for the *Guardian* once a week, Hatters seems to spend most of his time arguing in favour of an incomes policy for the next Labour Government. Not to be outdone, Ginger's started on this tack as well. At the Wales TUC, as part of a speech on wages policy he said: 'We are going to some extent to have to plan with the market, rather than against the market, and every trade unionist knows it.' Well perhaps one of you lot out there could let me in on the secret.

Back in October, Hattersley went one better. At the Aneurin Bevan Memorial Lecture (of all places) he said that in order to help the lower paid and the unemployed, a Labour government would need an agreement with the unions to restrain the increase in wages for the more fortunate. And he threatened that 'if the trade unions cannot come to an agreement on planning incomes, the next Labour Government will be forced to move more slowly towards the reduction of unemployment.'

This sort of Mickey Mouse economics is hair raising. How can you 'plan' the market when the whole point about the market is its unplanned nature, and what if the capitalists don't feel like being 'planned'—they're not going to roll over and play dead.

And if Hattersley can point to one occasion when a pay rise foregone by say, Ford workers, has ended up in the pay packets of nurses, then he gets my vote. I'd even be interested to hear how it would work in theory but then I used to like the Brothers Grimm as well.

You can't plan incomes in any meaningful socialist way in an unplanned economy: it just becomes wage restraint for workers and a profit bonanza for the bosses. And we all know what happened the last time Labour tried a stunt like that.

Countdown for Edinburgh council

EDINBURGH District Labour Party has reaffirmed that there will be no going back on the policy on which the District Council was elected.

They will maintain services and jobs despite being told that if they do not comply with George Younger's budget before 12 June, there will be a Parliamentary Order to make them comply.

To meet Younger's demands it would mean the loss of 200 jobs, increased charges for services and a decrease in housing maintenance.

If they still refuse after 12 June, their budget will be declared illegal. They will not be allowed to raise rates or borrow money and will be open to surcharge and

disqualification.

If councillors are disqualified, the party has a list of 34 candidates to stand in their place on the council's policy.

As part of their campaign, a rally has been called for 12 June. Council workers and the public have been leafleted and industrial action in the workplaces has been called for on that day.

By Tom Burke
(Pentlands Labour Party)

Hackney

AMID SCENES of anger, Hackney Council voted to set a rate on 22 May

after a minority of Labour councillors voted for a cuts programme.

The previous day had seen 400 or more people on the national anti-ratcapping demonstration in the borough. The unions led a delegation to the council to explain their opposition to renegade councillor Tony Millward's attempt to set a rate. When the council chamber was invaded and workers refused to leave the meeting it was adjourned to 22 May.

This time no one was allowed into the council chamber. 24 Labour councillors voted with the opposition to set a rate by 33 votes to 26.

They decided on a 14% rate rise and £5.9 million worth of cuts, about

half of it through non-filling of vacancies, the rest through "creative accountancy" like rescheduling of debt payments.

The unions will oppose the cuts as some departments can't cope now with present staff levels. The Labour council leaders and Left council chairs refused to implement the cuts and resigned. They are solidly backed by the local parties who are angry at the renegades and determined that in future only real class fighters would become Labour councillors in Hackney.

By Simon Cole
(Hackney South and Shoreditch CLP)



CALL IT BLIND RUTHLESS AMBITION
KEVIN - BUT I'M AFTER THE
SHEEP DOGS JOB.

THE FOLLOWING story was printed in the *Birmingham Evening Mail* recently:

"Farm manager Mr Eddie Waltham, who runs a fruit farm in Kent, is looking for eight Birmingham school-leavers

to become Worzel Gummidge to stop birds eating the ripening cherries in his orchard.

"He is willing to pay £50 per week and provide self-catering accommodation for a month.

"I know there is a lot

of unemployment in Birmingham, and this is an opportunity to earn a bit of money. It will also be a change and there's plenty of time for relaxation".

Bermondsey support for council fighters

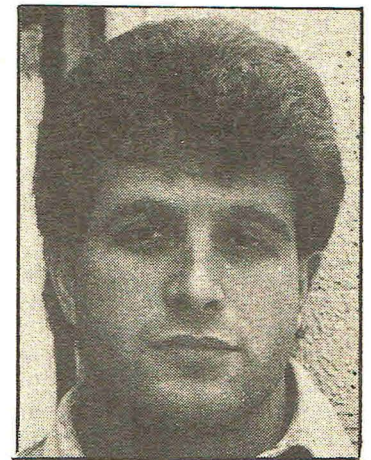
THE LAST Bermondsey Labour Party management committee meeting solidly backed-Southwark councillors in not setting a rate.

The meeting demonstrated the rightward shift of the 'trendy', middle-class, former lefts. Backed by former parliamentary candidate Peter Tatchell, they moved a motion to set a legal rate which was overwhelmingly rejected.

Many of these former lefts are now clearly bereft of ideas and have more in common with the councillors who caved in at the vaguest hint of possible surcharge than with those who stayed in the fight.

However the big majority of delegates gave strong support to council deputy leader John Bryan when he said he was not worried about surcharge as he'd moved all his assets into Bruce Springsteen tickets.

By Bob Law
(Bermondsey CLP, personal capacity)



John Bryan, deputy leader of Southwark council.

Last week Southwark council maintained its position of not setting a rate by a hair's breadth. Both Tories and Liberals were split. Right-wing Labour councillors failed in their attempt to get a budget passed. The final vote was tied but the mayor didn't use his casting vote and no rate was set.

Tories threaten to end state pensions

ON TOP to all the other attacks on the welfare state the Tories are now threatening to abolish the State Earnings Related Pension (SERP) scheme.

The threat to pensions is part of a wider strategy by the Tories to try to force down the level of wages by reducing social security and other benefits.

Previously pensions and other benefits were paid for out of the national insurance contributions, but these were cut in the last budget for low-paid workers. The employers' contributions for those earning less than £90 a week were also cut encouraging firms to take on cheap labour. A large part of the income from national insurance now goes to pay for the four million unemployed. So the pressure is on to reduce pensions and SERP will go.

It is not as if SERP was expensive, as the Tories argue. The most you could receive is a quarter of your earnings after a 20 year period. And since SERP was only introduced in 1978 you

would have to wait until 1998 to retire on the maximum.

The government also wants to encourage personal pensions through insurance companies. They intend to make joining a private pension scheme compulsory when they abolish SERPS offering insurance companies the chance to make big profits.

In addition to abolishing SERPS the Tories may go on to abolish the guaranteed minimum pension which was based on SERPS.

Retire capitalism

If British capitalism cannot afford to pay even quarter pay on retirement then it is time for the system itself to be retired. Pensioners have needs which are as great as those who are working. To the Tories, the elderly are dispensable because they provide limited opportunities for making a profit.

By Peter Redfern
(Deptford Labour Party)

N. Ireland school union planned

THE FOUNDING conference of the School Students' Union in Northern Ireland is being held in Belfast on 29 June. This conference has been called by the School Students' Action Committee and the Youth Campaign for Jobs.

A steering committee of school students from various Catholic and Protestant schools is meeting regularly to mobilise support and publicity for the conference and the fight against conscription onto the Youth Training Programme (Northern Ireland's YTS). Speakers from the trade unions in the North will be invited to address the conference, while a constitution and a "statement of aims" will be presented.

Support for the union is growing all the time. Already

in St Patrick's school in East Belfast over 60 people have agreed to join. School students are raising finance for the campaign by insisting on a 10p weekly levy from every union member.

By Roisin Gorman
(Belfast School Students' Action Committee)

KIRKBY

"I AM absolutely sickened by what's happened. My son is only 15 years old, he was held in police cells for 10 hours and was not given so much as a drink of water. They think they can get away with anything they want to. Well I'm going to fight this".

So angry parent Geraldine Lloyd slammed the arrest of

16 school students following last month's school strikes in Kirkby, Merseyside.

One youth was in court on 20 May and the other 15 on 23 May. The School Students' Defence Committee organised a lobby which was well supported by students, parents and the community in general. A lot of parents and students were under pressure from the police—especially with exams coming up for the 15 and 16 year olds—to plead guilty. The police said if they did they would be bound over for £50.

The police admitted in court that they had been picking up youth at random just to get them off the streets. Three of the students pleaded not guilty, their cases are being deferred to 27 June.

Support sacked union journalist

THE DISPUTE at NALGO headquarters over the sacking of journalist Jimmy Roberts has reached an unsatisfactory phase, with union members returning to work.

The strike began after Jimmy Roberts was picked out for dismissal because he was a *Militant* supporter and came from the North West, after union documents were 'leaked' to Liverpool City Council. Jimmy Roberts vigorously denies he was responsible, and the

deputy leader of the council Derek Hatton has said he did not receive the documents from Jimmy Roberts.

However, the dispute is not over. NALGO conference meets in two weeks time, and no doubt NALGO branches up and down the country will be passing emergency resolutions to conference demanding Jimmy Roberts be reinstated.

Left strategy

TWO RECENT opinion polls showing the Tories in third place, the open splits in their leadership and the collapse of their economic strategy have created a mood of optimism within Labour's ranks that the end of this hated Thatcher government is in sight.

Labour will not win the next election, however, simply through the unpopularity of the present government. The growth of support for the Alliance, temporary though it will prove to be, shows the urgent need for Labour to convince the working class electorate that it has the only alternative that can reverse the damage inflicted on British society by the Thatcher government.

The failure of the Wilson and Callaghan governments in the past, and those of Mitterand in France, Papandreou in Greece, and Gonzalez in Spain today to escape from the effects of the capitalist crisis, are a warning. Through not taking over the wealth and power of the big industrial and financial monopolies these governments have been forced not only to abandon the reforms on which they were elected, but to move to counter-reforms.

These take the form of "austerity programmes", to cut government spending, freeze wage rises while prices keep going up, and curb the powers of the trade unions to fight back. What was shown in Britain in 1979 is that

such governments will lose support, especially from those most exploited and down-trodden section of workers who have seen no benefit from such policies.

In a memorandum to Labour's NEC, rejected by 14 votes to 12, Tony Benn and Eric Heffer have drawn attention to serious changes within the Labour Party recently which could lead to the next Labour government following the same path. "The 1983 policies", they say, "far from being too radical, are likely to prove quite inadequate to deal with the situation the next Labour government will inherit, which will be so critical that we shall be forced to consider the development of stronger policies to deal with it."

They promise a further paper to the NEC which will concentrate on future policy, but point out that at the moment the Party leadership are abandoning even the programme of 1983. "The 'Alternative Economic Strategy,'" they claim, "has effectively been replaced by a more general 'Jobs and Industry' campaign, from which some of the clear socialist commitments to public ownership, economic planning and exchange control have been omitted."

The memorandum also warns about organisational moves which have weakened the power of the elected NEC in favour of the Parliamentary Labour Party and the Trade Unions for a Labour Victory. Most seriously, "Despite solemn assurances given to the Conference that there would be no witch-hunt based upon the opinions of party members, the attack upon some of the left has been stepped up."

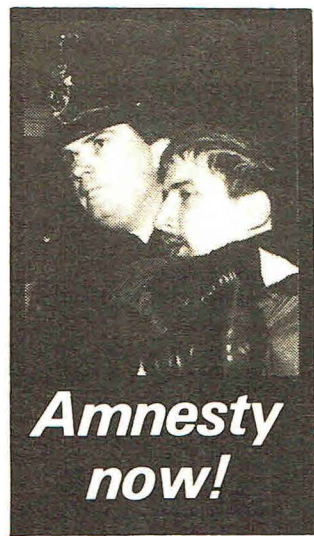
Many of Benn and Heffer's organisational policies will receive overwhelming support, but on policy, the memorandum offers no real alternative. The abandonment of the Alternative Economic Strategy, withdrawal from the EEC, the cutting of defence spending and other commitments, marks a move to the right, but those policies never did add up to a socialist strategy for transforming society.

The policy of the Labour left still fails to recognise, despite all the evidence of past Labour and present European socialist governments, that a Labour government operating within the framework of a capitalist society, will be forced to implement capitalist policies, of cuts, wage-restraint and unemployment.

A socialist programme to transfer wealth and power into the hands of working people and their families is vital, but even more so is the mobilisation of those workers into active involvement to rally behind the Labour government in its confrontation with the vested interests of society.

With such a movement behind it, a future Labour government will be able to nationalise the major monopolies, with compensation on the basis only of need and begin, through workers' control and management of industry, to plan the country's resources for need and not profit. Any programme which falls short of this will leave the capitalist millionaires free to undermine the elected government and through a "strike of capital" force it back on the road of counter-reform.

Photo: D Sinclair



Message from a jailed miner.

Last week *Militant* highlighted the case of Dennis Pennington, a miner from Bold colliery, Lancs, who was sacked immediately after being sentenced to three months imprisonment. Dennis spoke recently at a Lancashire miners' wives meeting, having been released. Here is what he said.

"THE TORIES have the satisfaction of sentencing two 21 year old miners for life, for murder. Compare that to the case of the man who planned the murder of his wife, cut up the body, cut off an identifying ring, and when the body was found, this man from the plush South, a wealthy man, got six years for manslaughter.

"I urge you to write to miners in prison. I've only been in prison a short time, and it's not a nice place.

"One of management met me in the street and sneered, "was it worth it?" I just said "yes", but when I got home and thought about it, every hour, every second of the last twelve months was

worth it. The fact that we face a temporary setback in no way diminishes the worthiness of our fight.

"The tactic management are using is to say "Let's get back to normal" to raise your hopes of reinstatement, then they won't take you back.

"Anyone can still be sacked, the scabs can still pick strikers out. In one pub scabs phoned up the police after trying to provoke a striker. Six police cars turned up. Bold lads were laid off for being accused of hitting someone in a night club—later the scab was thrown out for being drunk!

"When you're inside, the main

sufferers are the families. We get tucked up in bed at ten o'clock, you get institutionalised very quickly.

"Send letters only, no photos. A letter from a complete stranger is great—you tend to think you've been forgotten.

Another Lancashire lad is now inside, so please write to him: Steven Hardman P48840, HM Remand Centre, Warrington Road Risley, Near Warrington, Cheshire."

Back the Miners' Amnesty Campaign!

★ Amnesty for all sacked miners.

★ No pit closures without the full agreement of the NUM.

★ Workers' control and management of the NCB.

No choice for workers in NI elections

THE LOCAL government elections in Northern Ireland ended in a sectarian head-count with the Tories of all varieties coming out on top.

(See last week's *Militant*).

The official trade union movement remained mute and workers had no choice but to vote in the words of James Connolly; "for the devil they knew rather than the devil they didn't".

Only seven labour candidates stood in the elections, three from the Labour and Trade Union group in Belfast where successful campaigns were held but voting remained on sectarian lines.

If the trade union movement had participated then the results could have been completely different. 200,000 or more trade unionists marched in Belfast for the May Day rally—these activists could also have been mobilised in the elections.

Sinn Fein

In the Catholic areas it was a fight between the SDLP and Sinn Fein, whose success was at the expense of smaller right-wing nationalist parties which were squeezed out. The Irish Independence Party was obliterated, going from 21 to four seats.

In West Belfast two seats won in 1981 by People's Democracy were taken by Sinn Fein. In 1981 this group claimed to have had two councillors elected on a Trotskyist programme; last week only one candidate, a sitting councillor, stood for People's Democracy and got 131 votes.

In Catholic areas the vote was polarised into an anti-SDLP vote and an anti-Sinn Fein vote. The SDLP is seen as middle-class and pro-establishment, with no attraction to the workers and youth. Sinn Fein is seen as anti-Thatcher, anti-establishment and anti-repression. Due to the lack of any socialist Labour alternative in the urban areas, Sinn Fein is able to tap this anti-Tory mood amongst the

workers and youth.

In the rural areas, having squeezed out the right-wing nationalists, Sinn Fein now gets this traditional right-wing nationalist vote.

In the 1984 EEC elections they got 13.3 per cent, this time 12 per cent. But they did not make any electoral breakthrough, nor can they. They will hold onto this share of the vote due to the conditions of economic collapse and repression in Northern Ireland, secure that the middle-class nature of the SDLP will not be able to take them away.

But Sinn Fein can't break the sectarian or Tory mould. It is a sectarian based party with no appeal to Protestant workers. Even if it obtained a majority of Catholic votes it would still not defeat the Tory Unionists in the North. Their strategy of sectarian head-counting, no different from the SDLP or right-wing nationalists, means continual Tory domination.

Paisley

In the Protestant areas the fight was between the Official Unionists and Paisley's DUP. In the 1984 EEC elections Paisley topped the poll. This time the Official Unionists obtained the majority of Protestant votes, but no real alternative was offered to Protestant workers.

Only the development of a trade union based socialist Labour Party fighting against poverty, unemployment, sectarianism and repression, can offer any alternative to workers. This is the only conclusion activists can come to as a result of these elections. The real majority in Northern Ireland is the working class.

In Britain also, trade union and Labour Party members must push to implement the 1981 Labour Party conference policy to support the convening of a conference of labour in Northern Ireland to begin the process of setting up a Labour Party.

By Manus McGuire
 Northern Ireland Labour and
 Trade Union Group)

Form national school union

THE SCHOOL'S strike of 25 April, represents the birth of a new movement—a movement of school students fighting for their future along with YTS trainees, young workers and FE students.

All over Britain students have enthusiastically taken up the call to form a school students' union.

Therefore on Saturday 15 June in Manchester (not Liverpool as previously announced), the founding conference of the School Students' Union will take place.

Already, Tory MP Harry Greenaway has asked Education Minister, Keith Joseph for an assurance that the "seriously subversive" school students' union will be banned in schools. Greenaway is chairman of the Parliamentary Human Rights

Group!

He also said: "The future of the nation's youth could be at stake". Quite right! The School Students' Union together with YTURC and the LPYS will be fighting for a decent future for youth, free of the dole, low wages and YTS slave labour.

There must be a campaign in the labour movement now, to ensure that school students are not denied the basic democratic right to belong to a union and discuss political ideas. Pressure must be put on Labour-controlled local authorities and Education Committees for such a commitment.

The School Students' Action Committee, the group of LPYS members at school who called the school strike, are asking the action committees/unions from each town to send up to five delegates to the founding conference on 15

June.

At the conference, the School Students' Action Committee will be putting a statement of the union's aims, a constitution, and a list of officers and executive members. These may be amended at the conference.

Local action committees may pass their own resolutions to send to conference.

The conference will be addressed by NUM, NUT and international speakers.

Every town must now organise school student meetings to elect their delegates. Every area must be represented to debate and hear what can be done. The conference is the preparation for bigger campaigns in September.

(For conference details see panel).



SCHOOL STUDENTS' UNION FOUNDED CONFERENCE

AT MANCHESTER TOWN HALL
SATURDAY 15 JUNE

Send names, addresses, schools and ages of delegates to SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACTION COMMITTEE, c/o 109 Rannoch Road, London W6.

Credentials—£1 each.

PLEASE NOTE:

No credentials will be issued on day. Deadlines for resolutions and applications for delegates is Saturday 8 June.

Right condemn strike

THE RIGHT wing of the Labour Party have reacted hysterically to the success of the school students' strike. On the day of the strike itself, 25 April, right wingers did everything they could to try and prevent support for the action.

In Newcastle-under-Lyme, for example, when school students formed up to attempt to march to Stoke they were confronted by Labour councillor and chairman of the school governors Tom Meir. He harangued LPYS members he spotted and together with a headmaster even photographed them.

He said they would be expelled from the Labour Party.

Meanwhile in the south, on the recommendation of the executive, Havant CLP voted 16 to eight to suspend the LPYS branch after two of them were seen leafletting schools. Young Socialists are angry at their heavy handed treatment. At the same meeting a resolution condemning six Labour councillors who crossed an official NATFHE picket line was passed, yet any action on it was 'left in the hands' of the Labour Group (most of whom crossed the picket).

Suspended—three times!

FOLLOWING THE nationwide walkout, Preston school students have experienced high levels of intimidation. Immediately after our half-day strike, 50 pupils were suspended from my school, William Temple High.

I was allowed back to school after the strike on the following Wednesday but was again suspended after being victimised for political activities. This time I had to see the District's Education Officer before I could return.

When I returned for the third time I received another suspension. This time for the alleged 'crimes' of selling political material (*Militant's* "No to slave labour" stickers) and trying to form a

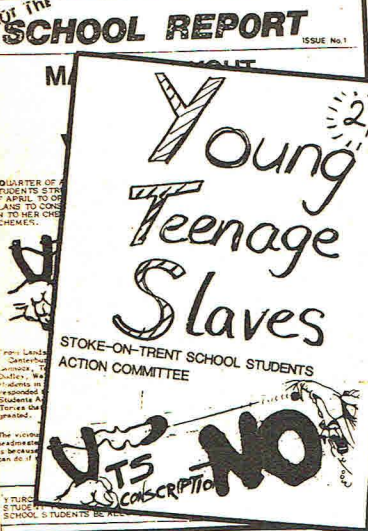
union. Two others who were with me were let off after an interview with the headmaster in which they had to promise never to try to unionise the school. He then proceeded to tear up some 500 leaflets, damage which he refused to pay for when I asked him. I refused to promise never to set-up a union and was suspended.

I have received three forms from my headmaster explaining that the suspensions were merely "matters of discipline". Yet before the strike I have known drunkardness, violence to teachers and truancy be punished far less than the distribution of harmless pieces of paper.

By Jonathan Cottam



School students demonstrate on April 25 in Liverpool. Photo: Militant.



Bulletins being produced by school students in the Stoke and Staffordshire area. All committees/unions should produce their own material.

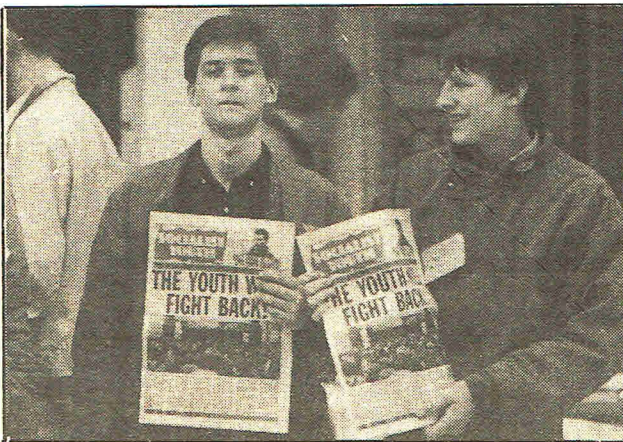
Give LPYS more resources

THE 1980s have seen the Labour Party Young Socialists launch into mass campaigning work.

The LPYS mobilised its members in the miners' strike—at the height of the strike there was at least one major LPYS rally or demonstration a week in the different regions of the country. Through active participation in the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign there have been mass lobbies of Parliament against the Tories' YTS programme. And through its support for the half-day schools' strike on 25 April called by the School Students' Action Committee, the LPYS helped mobilise a quarter of a million students onto the streets.

Yet the present catch phrase of our 'left' and right wing opponents in the current round of attacks on the LPYS, is that it is "small and sectarian"!

One charge often thrown at the LPYS is that it compares unfavourably with its European counter-parts, in particular the Swedish socialist youth movement, the SSU, with its membership (on paper at least) of 45,000. Of course, the Labour Party itself compares badly with the Swedish Socialist Party—Britain's population is seven times the size of Sweden's yet the



Selling the LPYS paper, *Socialist Youth*. Photo: Militant.

Labour Party membership is only 295,000 compared to Sweden's 300,000—but we never hear about that.

Also there is no age limit on the SSU and its leadership are usually aged between 25–35. Imagine the size of the LPYS if it had an age limit of 35!

Compare the resources between the SSU and the LPYS. The SSU receives 30 per cent of the parent party's finances and has 100 full-time staff, along with numerous party premises such as its own 300 acre site in Stockholm.

The LPYS has one full-time officer, one office and receives less than one per cent of the party's budget.

But a static comparison is insufficient. The SSU became a mass organisation in the 1930s when in the fight against unemployment,

young workers flocked to its banner, its membership soaring to 104,032 in 1936. In the post war years the SSU has unfortunately declined. In 1983 its claimed membership of 66,320 was written down to 45,000. Like its European counter-parts, only a small proportion of the membership are active while its leading members are predominately middle class students.

The vast majority of the 10–12,000 young workers in the LPYS (with its age limit of 25) are actively involved in campaigns and the weekly running of the branches. Membership is growing especially in the wake of the miners' strike and the school students' action. In 1970s when the Marxists were first elected into the leadership of the LPYS there was less than 150 Young Socialist bran-

ches. There are now 573.

It is the LPYS's political ideas that are stimulating its current growth. In contrast to the doom and gloom theories prevailing in the movement, the LPYS predicted the politicisation of youth and the development of mass movements and a thirst for socialist ideas amongst young workers. A taste of this has been seen in the mines and the schools.

As such the call for trade union affiliation to the LPYS made at the recent Scottish Labour Party conference will be supported. The LPYS have backed this demand for the past 15 years. It would bring a whole new layer of young workers to the LPYS and the ideas of socialism—which is precisely why the right wing have opposed union affiliation in the past.

In the unions LPYS members are at the fore of campaigning for trade union youth sections. Youth sections must be formed in every trade union and allowed to directly affiliate to the LPYS. This development, alongside the continuing mass campaign work of the LPYS on its clear socialist policies will see the establishment of a mass socialist youth movement. The Labour leadership can aid that development by giving the youth the resources they need.

By John Hird
(LPYS National Chair)

Workers told 'keep out'

"WE DON'T want people on part-time motor mechanic courses being allowed membership of NOLS."

This anti-working class sentiment brought loud cheers from the Kinnockite 'Democratic Left' group at the recent conference of Scottish Labour Students. They were arguing against the call by *Militant* supporters for part-time mainly working class students to be allowed membership of NOLS, the Labour Party's student section.

The whole conference saw hysterical attacks against the Marxists in the labour movement. The most disgraceful slur came from the Edinburgh University's delegate who said that the South African Marxists involved with the Southern African Labour Education Project were "friends of the CIA". Abuse such as this is used by the 'Democratic Left' to camouflage their opposition to calls for direct links to be formed with 500,000 black workers organised in independent trade unions in South Africa.

The Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign was at-

tacked, as was Liverpool City Council. The LPYS with its Marxist leadership was denounced as "small and sectarian". However, they could not explain why over 450 attended this year's Scottish LPYS conference, yet there were less than a hundred at the Scottish Labour Students conference.

This hysteria extended to organisational attacks. *Militant* supporter Simon Kaplan, despite being on the NOLS National Committee, was refused a visitor's ticket on the basis that he came from an "English Labour Club"!

However, the abuse from the SLS leadership could not stem the growing support for Marxism amongst Scottish students. In the debate on nuclear disarmament for example, the Marxist position was defeated by only eight votes. This support will grow as students increasingly reject the name-calling and organisational methods of the SLS leadership and look for socialist policies that can take the movement forward.

By Douglas Blackstock
(Glasgow College of
Technology Labour Club)

ads

Militant Meetings

CLASSIFIED: 15p per word, minimum 10 words.
SEMI-DISPLAY: £2 per column centimetre. Three weeks for the price of two. *Militant* meeting ads free.
All advertisement copy should reach this office by Saturday.

MAKE some Fighting Fund for your Area! *Militant* "No Slave Labour On YTS" stickers now available. Price: £1.50 for 100—but they must be sold for a donation! Send order to *Militant*, 3-13 Hepscoth Rd, London E9. Cheques/Po's made payable to *Militant*.

"LIVERPOOL MILITANT Labour" badge with Labour logo, "Black and white youth unite" badge with red *Militant* logo, 25p each plus 25p minimum p&p. FF cheques payable to P Cooper, 31 Balmoral Road, Fairfield, Liverpool, L6 8NB.

Derek & Susan McMillan are moving to 46 Fairfield Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex. RH19 4HB Telephone number unchanged (East Grinstead) 28957.

Defend SALEP against Labour Party proscription! Buy a SALEP T-shirt! £3 & postage. Also still available: SALEP bulletin with NUM member Roy Jones report on his visit to SA NUM. 20p & 13p postage. Available from Southern African Labour Education Project (SALEP) 28, Martello Street, London E8. Phone: 241-0434

NATIONAL meeting of rank and file members of UCATT. Saturday 8 June 11.00am-3pm. Manchester Town Hall Conference Hall (Lloyd St entrance). This meeting will discuss the most effective way to fight back against the Tories' 1984 anti-trade union legislation and attacks on DLO. All UCATT members welcome.

Militant Disco, Saturday 1 June, 8.00pm. Approach Tavern, Approach Rd, Bethnal Green London E2. Only 50p entrance.

SOUTHAMPTON: Marxist Discussion Group meets every Sunday, 7.30pm, 206 Honeysuckle Road, Bassett, Southampton. Tel: 551420 for details of subjects or any further information.

DOVER: Marxist Discussion Group meets on Wednesday evenings at 8.00 pm at 36 Priory Hill, Dover. Subjects and dates as follows:
5 June: The future for the Stalinist States.
12 June: The state, the media and the party.
19 June: Trade unions and leadership.
For further details ring (0303) 43541.

TGWU BIENNIAL Delegate Conference *Militant* Meeting, Tuesday 25 June, 7.30pm. Speakers: Dave Nellist MP and Christine McVicar (delegate to Conference, personal capacity). Wessex Hotel, West Cliff Road, Bournemouth.

MANSFIELD *Militant* Public Meeting. 'Fight back against the Tories, build a socialist Labour Party'. Mansfield Library Lecture, Theatre, Westgate, 7.30 pm Thursday 13 June. Speakers: Lynn Walsh (*Militant* Editorial Board), Paul Shawcroft (Expelled member of Mansfield CLP), A school student. Chair Kevin Cocker (NUR, Mansfield No 2 Branch, personal capacity)

CPSA *Militant* Readers Meeting. Date: Wednesday 5 June 1985. Venue: Cock Tavern, Phoenix Road London NW1 (nearest tube: Euston). Time: 6.30 pm
Speakers include John Macreadie (CPSA full-time official personal capacity) All Civil Service Union members welcome.

LONDON *Militant* Readers Meeting 'Smash Apartheid—for a socialist S. Africa'. Tuesday 18 June 7.30 pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Square WC 1. Speakers to be announced.

MILITANT SUMMER DRAW

- 1st Prize—Holiday worth £500 in resort of your choice
- 2nd Prize—Portable Colour TV worth £200
- 3rd Prize—Camera worth £100
- 4th Prize—two prizes—
a Cassette Recorder worth £50 and
a Personal Stereo worth £50
- 5th Prize—five prizes of £20 worth of socialist books

Price of ticket: 10p
Get your ticket now from local *Militant* sellers.
To be drawn 27 July.

Marxist Weekend School 1985

London 14/15 September

Courses on: Marxist Philosophy, Marxist Economics, The Russian Revolution, Marxism and the state, Black workers and the struggle for socialism, the Colonial Revolution, The Trade Unions—the 1920's and Today, The lessons of Popular Frontism, Women and the struggle for socialism.

Plus a rally/debate on Saturday and disco. Professionally run crèche. Put the date in your diary and make your transport plans now!

Only £7 (£5 unwaged). Book now! Cheques to "Marxist Weekend School" 3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9.

I would like to register for the course on _____ at the Marxist weekend school (Reading guides will be sent out from July)

I will need accommodation (Bring a sleeping bag) for Friday/Saturday nights.

I will require the crèche for the following children (name and age)

I enclose _____ booking fee

Manchester *Militant* Weekend School. June 22nd/23rd Sat + Sun Theory of Marxism—Historical Materialism—Dialectical Materialism. Speakers include Roger Silverman.

Overnight Accommodation. Cost £1 unwaged, £2 waged. (includes study guide) Further details contact: Gordon, Tel. 061 969 4383 or write to 17 Catterick Ave, Sale, Manchester M33 4GQ. Crèche available.

South Wales Summer Camp

THIS YEAR'S *Militant* Summer Camp has an international theme, with talks planned on Britain, Chile, South Africa, Northern Ireland and Marxism and the Labour Party.

What better way to spend your August Bank Holiday than at the Gower Peninsula. Price is still £12.50 per adult and £2.50 child (5/15 years). Because of the ever increasing numbers attending the camp, we will be operating on a strict first come, first serve basis. BE SURE to send your bookings early to Roy Davies, 181 Hanover Street, Swansea—Telephone Swansea 463623.

WE NEED £10,420 each week to get us back on target if we are to reach 50 per cent by 18 June! So every area must be organising events. Make sure the black line for your area speeds across the chart!

This week readers have told us about a sponsored walk from the Yorkshire Dales to Bradford, a sponsored diet and a sponsored swim. Raising money can be fun and healthy.

But you needn't organise mammoth events. By far the bulk of our fighting fund comes from our readers donating tenners and fivers and people giving extras when they buy a paper. One seller this week collected £20 in his rattling tin!

Workers' donation

Marxists have always built their strength on firm foundations and nothing can be firmer than our regular small (and some not so small) donations from working class people. Could you imagine any reader sending a donation to Rupert Murdoch in support of the *Sun* or even Robert Maxwell to help him fight in the courts over exclusive rights to publish his 'tales of the unbelievable'?

But attacks on our paper are increasing almost daily. That's why we must build

FIGHTING THIS WEEK
FUND
£1,185

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	336		3200
East Midlands	141		2900
Humberside	108		1900
London East	94		2850
London West	175		2650
London South East	193		1950
London South West	38		1100
Lancashire	104		1100
Manchester	26		2650
Merseyside	365		6200
Northern	277		4650
Scotland East	90		3000
Scotland West	98		3800
Southern	318		5000
South West	75		2150
Wales East	257		2450
Wales West	219		2150
West Midlands	333		4350
Yorkshire	189		5950
Others	305		10000
Total received	3740		70000

even firmer foundations. Every £1 to our fund is a blow to the bosses and Labour's right wing. Help us fight back.

DONATIONS THIS week include:

Huntingdon LPYS £1.50; students in Cambridge £50.27; Mrs Connor, Blackpool £4.75; S Passmore, Bodmin, £1.75; Cllr McQuat, Glasgow £5; Jeffrey Harper,

Berks £10. Once again the Littleton Colliery sets the tone with a donation from Trevor Smith of £5; SCPS member from Strathclyde £5; Stafford YS £1.69; social in South Staffs raised £18; K Moore NUS, Birmingham £5; To Paul Martin, received with thanks your £1 for the badge; A Buckley, Bristol £5; D Muscro, Bristol £5; P Philby, NUPE, Liverpool £5; G Connolly, Leicester 80p; P Stamp, CPSA, Leicestershire

£4.75; public meeting in Wakefield £219; *Militant* readers' meeting at Carlisle Labour Party Regional Conference raised a minimum of £120 not including expenses.

We have raised £144 not including expenses at the FBU conference and a magnificent £523 at the UCW conference. Full details of the total raised in fighting fund at the CPSA conference will appear in next week's issue.

GET
Militant

SALES OF *Militant* in workplaces and at union branch meetings are going up all the time. If you have not yet tried selling at work, now's the time to start.

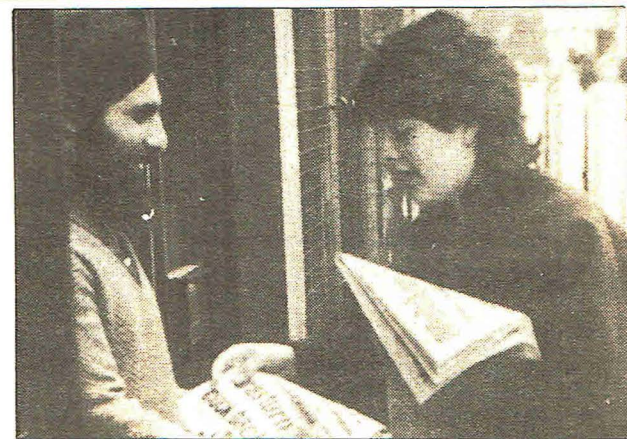
Militant's full coverage of the miner's strike has led to it being sold in more pits, in every part of the country. 50 papers are being taken in to Littleton colliery, Staffs each week. 20 are being sold at Whitwell, Derbyshire and 15 in Marine colliery, S Wales.

A regular sale of 20 has been built up in Bilston Glen, Scotland and 12 were sold at the last NUM Branch

meeting, even though only 20 miners attended. In Nottinghamshire 11 were sold at the last meeting of the Linby NUM lodge. Let us know of your pit sales.

Other workers in Nottinghamshire are reading *Militant* too. Sharon Devaney, President of the Nottingham Branch of the Bakers' Union sold 10 copies in five minutes at a Union rally in Birmingham, and then another 12 at her own branch meeting, and raised £8.77 for the fighting fund.

"It's clear to me," she writes "that people in our union are becoming more aware of the need to fight for a better future and see *Mili-*



Getting a good response in Newham.

tant as a way forward for the working-class. Before the last two weeks I was only selling 2 copies a week. I didn't have much confidence in selling the paper. But now I see how many people are interested, it gives me encouragement to approach people to buy it."

The UCW Conference also showed the potential for union sales. 107 copies were sold of the first week's issue and 85 of the second.

There are workers everywhere searching for an alternative. If some of them do not read *Militant*, it is only because they have not yet discovered where to buy it regularly.

Militant sellers have the solution themselves, for their workmates, their union colleagues are all possible regular buyers. Send us details of sales in your union branch, your factory or pit.

Marxist Daily Building Fund

	£		£
Eastern	2626	Scotland East	2249
East Midlands	2816	Scotland West	2442
Humberside	1595	Southern	3517
London NE	3063	South West	720
London NW	3905	Wales East	1820
London SE	1908	Wales West	1453
London SW	2045	West Midlands	1786
Lancashire	523	Yorkshire	1250
Manchester	1877	National	1292
Merseyside	4407		
Northern	2527	Total	43,822

tle they do have.

Three readers in Harlow have sent us £130 towards the Marxist Daily Building Fund and £210 has come from Kent. Twenty pence has been donated by 5 year old Sarah North, daughter of a Kent miner "for the paper that helped the miners".

These donations are all good investments for the future—building a Marxist Daily Paper is the way to build socialism so that we can improve the lot of all working people. If you

haven't already donated a week's income or more to the campaign, "underwrite" your future by sending your donation in.

Help needed!

A READER entering the Mobil Petrol competition just needs Miss Scarlet for the £50,000 first prize. All proceeds to fighting fund.

Write to *Militant*, 3-13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB.

One day the alarm clock rang

THE CARNEY siblings have never been noted for being good early risers. And I'm no exception. My god! That alarm clock! Whoever invented it was either a sadist or had never done a day's work in his life. How I hate that semicomatose battle with that small mechanical lump of misery as that feeling radiates from the pit of your stomach—the dull nausea of a boring day of work ahead of you.

The flat is cold, freezing, the bed is cold, the water's cold, even the toast is luke warm. Breakfast TV serves up the usual irrelevant garbage; the clock at the corner of the screen yells at you: you're late! Three minutes to the bus stop. The bus comes at five past—any later bus and the rush hour jam means you'll be late. Split second timing. Mechanical, like a clock.

Some days—if you're lucky—the post arrives before you leave. Today it's a letter from the ex-girlfriend. Somebody out there remembers me! On the top deck smokers have their

first fag, cough, splutter and feel the better for it. Other workers on their way to other factories, offices and shops. Silent, stealing an extra 20 winks. You read the letter—another instalment in a useless tale of empty acrimony.

Private

Work. In the library our team—MSC team—is partitioned off from the punters. There is a sign on the partition: 'Private: MSC staff only.' This is of course code for, "This bunch of dummies who were on the dole for at least 6 months before they got this cheap labour scheme aren't good enough for you."

"Morning!" you cry, in a vain attempt to be cheerful. Soon we're on our way—slowly grinding through the 80,000 books you have to

catalogue, that is, place on the library's record. Yes, you read right, 80,000 books! It's a slow, dull, boring, tedious, monotonous clerical job. I'm relatively privileged. Working on the VDU. Getting cataracts and a subversive dose of radiation;

First coffee-break and first fag. Ah! such relief! No one ever talks for the first five minutes of every break. Like a clock you unwind. We discover that we have tongues. Football, TV, cinema, who hates Maggie the most. The end of break and we unwillingly trudge back to stamping books, filling in forms, pressing typewriter keys.

The rhythm returns. The tick-tock of the clock; the tap-tap on the type-writer; the click-click of the computer read-out. You and the machine. You are part of the machine. There is nothing of you beyond the machine.

Half-hour dinner break is the pivot of the day. Some bring sandwiches, some have canteen food. You and your workmates chat and converse, moving from topic to topic. Sometimes I'm quizzed on my politics, the role of the Labour Party leadership is discussed. Should we be in a union? How will it benefit us? Why haven't we got a written contract? Questions go unanswered as Old Tyrant Time whips us back to work.

More books to catalogue: books for children, books for business, books on Marx, books on history, books, books, books. How many academics write books just to get their name in print? We have a competition for the most boring book title. It's a close run thing but *A Warwickshire Traffic Survey 1964* is piped to the post by *14,000-gear ratios*. I tell no lie!

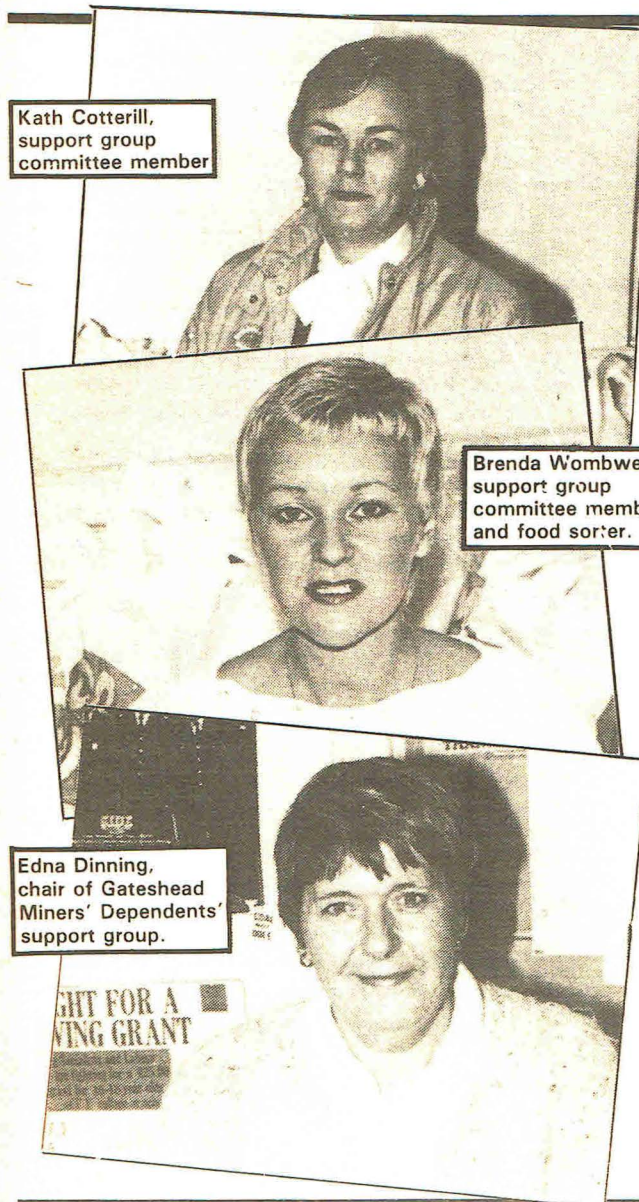


Today is pay day, so you finish work early to cash your cheque at the bank. On the bus there, we're happy, relieved, chatty. All's well with the world. As we step off the bus, the pace quickens, the slower walkers are mercilessly left behind. Nothing's going to get between you and that cash and the quicker you get it the better. At last you're there; cash in wallet and bills to pay, rent, electric, two day-old

debts. By Monday, it'll all be gone.

Half an hour later, you're back home. As you open the front door to your cold and empty, dank and dingy death of a flat you are invaded by that vague feeling of dark despair induced by the lonely sound of a clock going tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock...

By Dermot Carney
(Chairman Erdington
LPYS)



Kath Cotterill,
support group
committee member

Brenda Wombwell,
support group
committee member
and food sorter.

Edna Dinning,
chair of Gateshead
Miners' Dependents'
support group.

Festivities and tributes at miners' welfare

ON THE evening of 11 May Heworth Miners' Welfare Hall in the heart of Gateshead's east end was once again buzzing with the sound of laughter, singing and dancing, as miners, their families and supporters enjoyed themselves in what has now become a monthly event.

Everyone from lodge officials to unemployed workers, juniors to grandparents, tucked into a marvellous spread of all kinds of goodies seen off with either a jug of ale, a glass of spirits or a simple beaker of fruit juice laid on by the Gateshead Miners' Dependents' Support Group.

To the support group this night was to be just another good old get-together for all the lads and lasses. A drawing together of a family which the disgraceful antics of Thatcher and her NCB puppets has actually helped to create.

To the miners, however, this was to be a special night. This was the night in which the lads could show their ap-

preciation and give their official thanks not only to the women who formed the committee but to all the other lasses who worked so hard in support of the miners over the past months.

Each and every one of these women to their surprise was presented with a carriage clock, a gold chain and trinket and a big bouquet of flowers and every single one of them deserved the lot if not more.

There were miners' wives and committee members Kath Johnson, Christine Dick and Brenda Wombwell who were forever in Gateshead East Labour rooms sorting out hundreds of various products of food into hundreds of plastic shopping bags.

Miner's wife Betty Crozier who kept the men (on many occasions over two and three hundred of them) warmed up with hot cups of soup and tea as they listen-

ed to the speeches from various speakers week in and week out.

School teacher and committee member Kath Cotterill, main liaison officer with the Labour council, forever pressing for more financial and practical help.

There was Ann Suddack "flying all over the place doing this and doing that", and many more, too many to mention but every one of them stand up as giants in the eyes of all the lads.

Two women, I must mention. First of all Maureen Cussack, secretary of the support group who, amongst many other activities, handled all the various questions, problems and worries about rent, gas, electric etc like a professional. And of course there was Edna Dinning, chairperson and one of the main engines which kept the group going.

One hour Edna would be seen miles away picketing at

Philidelphia workshops, the next she would be found either sorting through a mass of paperwork checking the hundreds of miners who registered for a food parcel, or organising socials, demonstrations and days out for the bairns.

Other groups and organisations came in for a special thank you. One of these, the local LPYS branch who collected hundreds of pounds, recieved a tremendous reception.

The women themselves paid tribute to all the miners, their families and supporters and as Edna Dinning correctly stated, "if there is one thing good that's come out of this strike, it is that this government has made us a family again. A family which grows stronger each day and which shall never be broken up!"

By Bob Harker
(Gateshead East CLP)

Pit changes but union loyalty stays

A YOUNG NUM member from Renishaw Park, North Derbyshire, describes the changes that have taken place in his pit since the end of the miners' strike. He spoke to Roy Davies, Chesterfield CLP.

"THE MAIN change for me is that my interest in the job has gone and, given the chance, I'd get out. Why? Being away from it for a year perhaps. But it's more the change in atmosphere.

"I can't speak to the scabs although I have to work with them. I had one good mate. We went cricketing together and I spent

Christmas with him, but he went through the picket lines as we were stood in the snow. I've not spoken to him since.

"The management's changed as well. Before the strike they had to treat you with some respect. Now they act as if they have the upper hand. They call the teams into the office and speak to men who've been working 30 years or more like school kids. "More coal has to be turned", they say. "or your bonuses will go or we'll reduce your wages".

"One of my mates who'd been sacked during the strike had the area manager playing like a cat with him before he got reinstated. speaking to him like this: "Yes I

think I'll give you your job back, but then no I don't think I will—but I might".

"Another big way I've changed is in my attitude to the police. Before the strike I once helped a copper arrest a youth, but now if I saw one being attacked I'd look the other way.

Chased and beaten

"The harassment that makes me feel like this was having your picket fire kicked out, seeing £10 notes sellotaped onto windows of police transit vans, seeing a 50 year old miner who'd taken a few logs being chased and beaten up by a copper twice his size.

"The harassment is still there. I got stopped in the car and told to take my documents into Chesterfield nick and on the police form the patrolman had printed 'miner' so his mates knew to play rough.

"The police have kept a high profile since the strike ended. You see them everywhere. Their transits are a common sight. You never used to see them before the strike.

"One thing that hasn't changed is that I was and am a strong union man. It's been bred in me. I was lucky in the strike in having my family solidly behind me. Ordinary people have nothing without the unions. Scargill is still the best union man in the country.

"The worst thing that has hap-

pened is the split in the union. The union needs to get heads together, to build bridges. Even many of the scabs know this has to happen because of management's attitude.

"We had a day's strike the other week when management refused to pay the usual money for repairing the hydraulics and some of the worst scabs were among the first out.

"My worst moment in the strike was the day I went back to work, my best, when it looked as if the deputies were coming out.

"The main lesson of the strike is that if we'd had the same support from the Labour Party leadership as the NCB had from the Tories things would have been different".

THE QUARTER million strong school student strike against YTS conscription coincided with the 25th anniversary of the 1960 apprentices' strike.

WILLY GRIFFIN tells the story of that momentous event and looks at its implications for young workers today.

THE APPRENTICES' strike of 1960 began in Glasgow on 20 April and lasted over three and a half weeks til Monday 16 May. At its height over 60,000 apprentices were involved the length and breadth of Britain.

For six years previously the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU) had demanded wage increases from the Engineering Employers' Federation (EEF) on behalf of the apprentices. For six years the employers ignored these demands.

Anger amongst the apprentices at the intransigence of the employers had been building up and reached boiling point.

The 1959 annual youth conference of the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU), to which most of the apprentices belonged, adopted a resolution that had been passed by the AEU National Committee:

Support pledge

"This National Committee states emphatically that it is no longer prepared to tolerate the continued refusal of the Engineering Employers' Federation to grant increases to Junior Workers. We instruct Executive Council to make an immediate application to employers along the lines of policy already decided and in the event of an unsatisfactory reply, to take steps to involve the membership in action calculated to force the employers to reconsider their decision. We pledge full support for any such activity decided upon".

This resolution had been taken on board by apprentice leaders on Clydeside, where plans were made for strike action. A Clydeside Apprentices Committee (CAC) was set up involving 130 apprentices.

They demanded a wage increase averaging £2.12s, 6d, then issued a one day strike call to all Scotland's 40,000 shipbuilding and Engineering apprentices on Wednesday 20 April 1960.

The response was overwhelming. The apprentices came out all over Scotland. In Aberdeen striking apprentices carried banners which read "BOSSES NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD—APPRENTICES NEVER HAD IT SO BAD" and "PROFITS NEVER SO HIGH—WAGES NEVER SO LOW", mocking the infamous comment of the Prime Minister of the day Macmillan that the workers "had never had it so good."

On Clydeside where the stoppage was almost total, the mood of the apprentices was euphoric:

"We have waited six years for a wage increase. We'll not wait a minute longer." Clyde Apprentices Committee secretary Donald McLaren told a mass meeting on Glasgow Green. In Clydebank 2000 came out. "When Babcock and Wilcox, where 1,000 apprentices are employed, succeeded in preventing them joining in, apprentices from neighbouring firms marched in, banners and all and brought the Babcock and Wilcox boys out."

(Daily Worker 21 April 1960)

Following the success of this one day strike, the CAC called on the EEF to start negotiations on their wage demands under threat of an all out apprentices' strike in Scotland. The EEF ignored the apprentices' demands and an all out strike was called from Friday 22 April 1960.

The strike had the overwhelming backing of older workers. When

500 apprentices at Greenock and Port Glasgow had been suspended for three days for taking part in the one day strike, the older shipyard workers walked out in protest with six shipyards coming to a complete halt. The Scottish Trade Union Congress (STUC) annual conference was meeting as the strike began and unanimously passed a resolution supporting the strike.

The momentum of the strike developed at breakneck speed. Newspaper headlines read "CLYDE AFLAME AS APPRENTICES STREAM OUT." The strike organisers operated from a backroom in Govan, they had no phone and collated information by sending out runners to the shipyards and factories.

Initially over the weekend there was some confusion over how much support there was for the strike. However as reports began to stream in to the strike HQ on Monday, the situation became clear. 130 factories in the Glasgow area had been affected. Throughout Scotland 35,000 apprentices had come out. The headline on the *Daily Worker* read: "ABOUT 5 BOYS ARE WORKING ON THE CLYDE... the apprentices' strike for more pay is as solid all along the Clyde as Dumbarton rock".

(Daily Worker 26 April 1960)

With the strike now solid in Scotland, with a total of 35,930 apprentices on strike, the organisers turned their attention to the other major industrial centres throughout Britain. Letters were sent to Junior Workers' Committees in Dagenham, Manchester, Coventry, Tyneside, Yorkshire, Birmingham and Belfast, appealing for apprentices to take strike action. Car loads of striking apprentices travelled south from Glasgow addressing meetings of apprentices calling on them to join the strike.

Works stormed

In Manchester the response of apprentices was almost immediate; "FACTORY WALLS STORMED BY BOY STRIKERS; 700 apprentices held mass meeting at the Metro Vickers factory; afterwards about 500 stormed the works apprentice school. When 300 tried to get through the AEI works gate at Trafford Park to bring out 200 at the school, the gate was closed to them. They marched half a mile around the school where security guards closed the gates. Shouting "get them out", the boys stormed the gates. They then marched through the giant Trafford Park Estate. Chants of Out! Out! Out! brought out hundreds from surrounding factories."

(Daily Worker 30 April 1960)

On Saturday 30 April 1960 over 100 delegates representing apprentices from Sheffield, Manchester, Coventry, Tyneside, Merseyside, Surrey, Belfast and all parts of Scotland met in Glasgow. The meeting unanimously called a national stoppage of all apprentices from the following Monday.

Again the response was tremendous with the strike reaching new heights with the lead again coming from Manchester.

By now, as well as the 35,930 apprentices on strike in Scotland over 13,000 were out throughout England and the action was snowballing fast.

Pressure was now growing on the employers to open negotiations on the apprentices' claim. But just as the strike was beginning to hurt the employers, the first real blow to the strike came, not from the

1960 apprentices' strike

Young workers historic fight

TODAY THE crisis facing youth under capitalism is far more severe than in 1960. Then at the height of the post war economic upswing, unemployment was reduced to a few hundred thousands. In fact there were labour shortages in some sections of the economy.

Today the post war economic upswing has long since ended. Now capitalism faces stagnation and crisis, with shorter booms giving way to deepening slumps.

Over 1.3 million youth are registered as unemployed.

The catastrophic collapse of British industry over the last 25 years, coupled with the continued inevitable deskilling imposed by new technology, has led to the apprenticeship system all but collapsing.

In 1960 there were over a quarter of a million apprentices in manufacturing industry, with big concentrations of hundreds or even thousands of apprentices in a single factory or shipyard. In 1984 there were only 82,000 apprentices in manufacturing industry.

The decline of apprenticeships has posed the need for the labour movement to extend its influence to the schools, colleges and Youth Training Schemes. For those thousands of youth now becoming actively involved in the labour movement in the fight against YTS conscription, there are a number of important lessons that can be drawn from the 1960

strike.

The 1960 strike had been prepared for by apprentices in Scotland, but elsewhere the preparation for the strike amounted to nil. Today the movement of the schools students from the outset is being organised on a national scale.

At its height the apprentices' strike involved over 60,000 young workers. Already at its birth the movement against YTS conscription has involved over a quarter of a million youth.

This is only a fraction of the youth who will become involved in the movement in the coming months, as it irresistibly spreads throughout the schools, colleges, Youth Training Schemes and amongst young workers. The challenge before the new generation of activists is to organise these youth into the labour movement under the banner of the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign.

In 1960 the apprentices demanded, after waiting six years, higher wages. Once the higher wage was attained, there was nothing else to fight for; there was no reason to organise and so almost as soon as the strike was over the magnificent apprentices' movement collapsed.

The mass movement that is developing against YTS conscription can, if led correctly, undoubtedly force a humiliating climb down on the Tories on this issue. However it would be a tragedy if having achieved this limited aim the youth movement lost its reason for existence.

The youth movement today is on a far higher

level than in 1960. The demands of the youth movement today are far more advanced than those of the 1960s. They are no longer confined to profit making but to the control of the economy.

The YTS conscription is a broad lead or would be about to be.

Trotter's slogan: And the relentless hypocrisy born in to life's and the world found live, to be"

Le This before

Le This before



Demo in defence of BREL workshops and training school in 1980—in 1984 there were only a pitiful 82,000 apprenticeships in manufacturing industry.

employers but from the leadership of the CSEU.

The Shipbuilders Employers' Federation wrote to the CSEU saying it would be wrong to discuss the application for an increase in apprentices' wages as long as they were on strike. So like a tame dog, the CSEU secretary, HG Barratt, responded to the shipbuilding employers' letter by writing to all affiliated unions and asking apprentices to return to work immediately so negotiations could begin.

The apprentices took a different line. Far from going back to work they stepped up the strike and mass demonstrations were organised in support of their demands. Only five from a workforce of 4,000 turned up for work at the big Babcock and Wilcox works as older workers joined a march in support of striking apprentices.

The march led by striking girl apprentice drawers from John Browns held up traffic for over an hour. As the head of the march led by the Clyde Apprentices Commit-

tee banner approached Glasgow Green the tail was just leaving Blythswood Square, one and a half miles away.

In Manchester at a mass meeting of apprentices on Platt Fields, apprentices responded to the call to go back to work by the CSEU with a roaring No! No! No! No!, accompanied by slow handclapping. They then marched through the city escorted by mounted police as well as their own motor cycle escort chanting "2, 4, 6, 8 we want the higher rate."

ike ers' t

an 1960. It goes far beyond economic
s, like "No YTS conscription", or "union
pay for all YTS trainees". Youth are in-
n a political struggle against the Tories.
searching for an alternative to the bosses'
system which condemns them to a future of
employment or slave labour.

Class movement which is developing around
scription must be organised around a
Youth Charter which as well as giving a
all the immediate struggles facing youth
link these up to the broader struggle to bring
socialist society.

ky explained that the ruling class indo-
young people "... concealed behind the
the younger generation is outside politics?"
at is why Vladimir Ilyich (Lenin) so
sly and implacably fought against this base
y. Young people live in society, they are
o definite conditions, they step forward in
arena in particular historical circumstances,
sooner these youngsters open their eyes to
d around them the better and more pro-
they grasp the conditions in which they
easier will their path through life prove

n Trotsky: *Young People Study Politics*
advice from Trotsky sums up the task
the labour movement at the present time.

By now 11,618 lads were on
strike in the Manchester area.
10,000 had joined the strike on
Merseyside. Now the strike had
been joined by apprentices in Bury,
Rochdale, Hanley, Stoke on Trent
and at Hawker Aircraft and APV
in Surrey. In total 60,000 apprentices
were out.

Not all union leaders took the
line of HG Barrett. Speaking at the
AEU National Committee, John
Tocher (NC member Cheshire)
protested: "The lads' parents are
subsidising very prosperous
employers." As well as campaigning
for higher wages, the AEU National
Committee also raised
political demands, passing a motion
urging the Labour Party and
TUC to campaign for votes at 18.

Despite the inexperience of those
involved the strike was organised
brilliantly. Apprentices' Commit-
tees were set up in every town and
city involved.

Terry Harrison was an apprentice
boilermaker and a member of
Walton Young Socialists at the
time. He described to *Militant* how
the strike was organised on
Merseyside:

"We read about the Glasgow
strike in the press and Walton YS
felt the need to get in contact with
the apprentices in Scotland. The YS
branch organised a collection and
raised enough to send me to
Glasgow. We then organised a
public meeting in Liverpool and a
group of apprentices from Glasgow
came down to speak. We had
leafleted the factories along the
Docks Road and were astounded
when between 200 and 300 apprentices
turned up. The meeting agreed
that the following Monday we
would go to work and present
management with our demand for



Above and below: Liverpool school students on strike against YTS conscription, 25 April. The 1960 apprentices' strike was over a pay demand—today youth are fighting for the right to proper training and real jobs.

a wage increase. If management
refused we would call a walk out.
"At the Westminster Dredging
Co. in Birkenhead I led a delega-
tion to see management. We were
taken aback when they actually
agreed to give us a wage increase.
Nevertheless we decided to go out
on strike till the Employers'
Federation made an offer.

"We got a rowing boat and
crossed Bromborough Dock and
brought neighbouring companies
out on strike.

"The lads from English Electric
marched the length of the Docks
Road bringing out small firms
along the way to the Pier Head. At
Cammell Lairds not all were on
strike. There were police guarding
the front gates but when a lorry
drove in at the side gates, about 500
apprentices charged in. The
management had the apprentices
locked in the joiners' shop so the
strikers picked these massive roller
doors off their hinges and marched
through Lairds bringing the lads out."

"At Grayson and Rollo appren-
tices leaving to go on strike were
confronted by an old foreman
dressed in bowler hat, waistcoat
and gold watch. One apprentice
picked up an empty oil drum, hit
him on the chest, knocked him on
the floor then marched on top of
him. Over 7,000 joined the strike
in Merseyside. I was elected
secretary and another YS member,
Ted Mooney, who worked at
English Electric was elected
Chairman."

'Flying squad'

On Merseyside a Strike Commit-
tee had 54 apprentices from 34 dif-
ferent factories and shipyards.

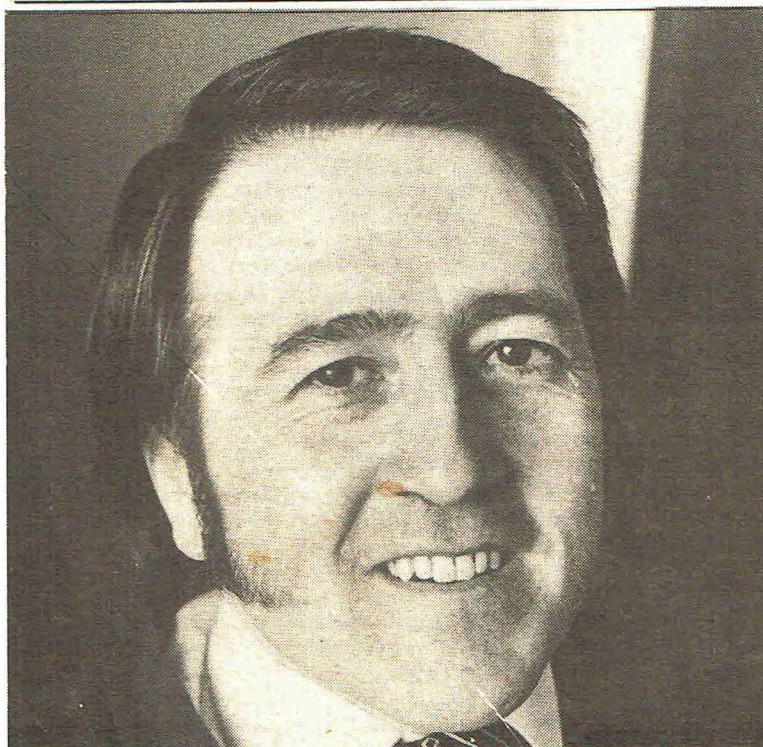
A list was made of all those will-
ing to picket, another of all
available cars and motorcycles. A
special "Flying Squad" was
organised to spread the strike.

Under the slogan "Ideas need
organisation, organisation needs
money", a strike fund was
established. A bank account was
opened and three members of the
strike committee acted as
treasurers. Collections were
organised amongst older workers.
Letters appealing for finance went
to all sections of the labour and
trade union movement.

A hardship fund was set up with
standard payments of £3 to mar-
ried apprentices; £2.10s to those
with widowed mothers; £1 for
those whose fathers were
unemployed. As well as these, the
list of "personnel with dependents
or debts," included T Bleasdale
(Recently bought "Tiger Cub"
m/cycle, payments of £2 a week)
and F. Mackay (age 20, recently
bought "BSA 250 star" payments
of 30s weekly). The apprentices'



Photo: Militant.



Terry Harrison—a striking apprentice boilermaker and Liverpool YS member in 1960—"We crossed Bromborough Dock and brought neighbouring companies out on strike".

strike was also one if not the
liveliest and most humorous
strikes in the history of the labour
movement;

"Apprentice pickets at Kelvin
Hughes Factory sang 'How much
is that doggy in the window' to
police who turned up with alsation
dogs. The angry dog handler
threatened to have a square go
with the lads, leaving his dog in
the van, but was quickly ticked off by
his sergeant."

(Daily Worker 7 May 1960)

Another headline ran: "44 Ar-
rested after Clyde lads march";
One of the liveliest and one of the
funniest demonstrations the city
has ever seen. Passers-by were
beaming and laughing; even the
police escort could not refrain from
smiling. The 44 arrested after
marching through a shopping arcade
were later released charged with
disorderly conduct. A mock
funeral party of apprentices in top

hat, long black frock coats and car-
rying antiquated umbrellas, carried
a coffin with the legend, "This lad
died trying to live on apprentices'
wages."

Another carried a paper and
wooden skeleton with the words,
"he died from dog bites at Kelvin
Hughes." They marched past the
offices of the Employers' Federa-
tion singing a parody of John
Brown's body, "The masters
federation lies a smouldering in the
grave but the boys go marching
on." In addition one lad played
"the saints go marching in" on his
bagpipes!"

On Friday May 13 1960 the
Employers' Federation finally
cracked. They wrote to the CSEU
conceding talks would begin on the
apprentices' demands 20 May. On
the same day 60 apprentices'
delegates lobbied the CSEU
meeting in York.

The mood of that meeting was
summed up by Ted Hill, leader of
the Boilermakers Society, who
said: "The employers must now
realise that they have got to pay up
if the skilled workers of the future
are to be retained in industry.
These lads have done a grand job
of work in focussing attention on
their claim. We expect both sets of
employers (engineers and ship-
builders) to pay up from early in
June."

Having been given assurances by
the CSEU leadership that if the
employers did not meet their
demands, they would have a go on
their behalf, the apprentices'
leaders recommended a return to
work on Tuesday 17 May 1960.

Greece after the war

A revolution disarmed

THE BARBARITY of capitalism in Greece from 1941-1949 resulted in 650,000 dead—approximately 10% of the population. 150,000 were killed in '40-'41 fighting the attacks of the German and Italian armies; 250,000 died of starvation; about 100,000 were executed by the Germans during the occupation, and a further 150,000 died in the civil war of '46-'49.

After all this, Greece presented a picture of catastrophic destruction. 1,600 villages out of a total of 6,500 razed to the ground; hundreds of thousands of families uprooted; industries, roads, railways and telecommunications completely destroyed.

Following the liberation, hundreds of thousands were left homeless. There was mass unemployment, hunger and malnutrition, uncontrollable inflation, and tortures and concentration camps from the "democratic" governments, plus the flight of 100,000 refugees to the Eastern Block countries by the end of the civil war.

Despite its pro-fascist leanings, the dictatorship of Metaxas (1936-41) was forced in 1941 to reject the provocative ultimatum of Mussolini, who, despite Hitler's advice, demanded the immediate surrender of Greece.

Heroic resistance

Mussolini hoped the occupation would be a walk-over. However, the threat of fascism aroused the Greek people, who, despite their officers and because of their hatred of Metaxas, defeated Mussolini's attack at the Albanian border. After a series of victories, they threatened to drive the Italian forces into the Adriatic Sea. Hitler was forced to intervene to save his ally from humiliating defeat.

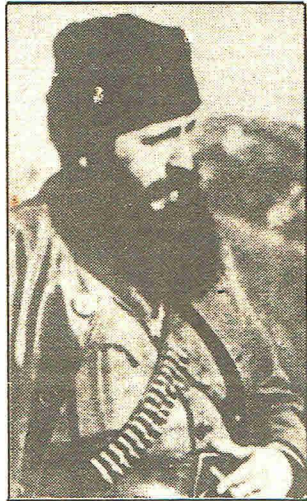
Because of the Greek generals' desertion, and the enormous military superiority of the German army, Greece was occupied in 1941, after fierce battles, which eventually forced the German general staff to delay their attack against the Soviet Union for three weeks.

Tens of thousands of heroic workers and peasants (men, women and children) built the resistance movement. They formed an 80,000-strong army (ELAS) from nothing with rank-and-file officers (the Capetani) who proved themselves in battle, and EAM, a popular movement of 1.5 million members, its youth section alone (EPON) numbering 150,000. By 1944 they had occupied all the countryside, and forced German high command to tie up nine divisions of 150,000 men in Greece.

The heroic resistance in the mountains was strengthened by mass mobilisations and strikes in the cities. In February 1943, a mass demonstration in Athens against plans to send Greek workers to labour camps in Germany overran

disarmed

IN OUR second article marking forty years since the second world war ended, NICOS REMOUNDOS, editor of *Xekinima*, the paper of the Marxist tendency of PASOK, looks at the war in Greece, and its aftermath.



Aris Velouchiotis.

the police, and forced the German army to intervene, killing 100 people.

EAM called a general strike for 5 March. 200,000 unarmed men and women, a quarter of Athens' population fought for a whole day against tanks, machine guns and hand grenades. After killing dozens of soldiers and policemen with their bare hands, they forced them to retreat, and burned down the hated Ministry of Labour. Next day the German command announced that no Greek would be sent to labour camps. This victory was unique throughout occupied Europe.

As a result of these heroic struggles, when the German army evacuated Greece in October 1944, power rested in the hands of the armed fighters of ELAS. All the hopes of the workers and peasants could now be realised peacefully.

Following the defeat of the Greek army by Nazi Germany, the Greek bourgeoisie either fled with the king to comfortable exile in Cairo, along with the British forces, or collaborated with the Nazis against the Greek workers and resistance. Workers and peasants and the CP rank and file started the resistance as early as 1941.

The capitalists and the right wing officers were terrified of the consequences of a mass resistance movement, so they tried initially to discourage it as "premature" and "illegal". After the first successes of EAM-ELAS, however, they began to set up some resistance groups (EKKA-EDES), with the guidance of the more far-sighted British ruling class, to try to check the rapidly expanding influence of EAM, and make sure that after the defeat of Germany they would have a strong military presence in the country, ready for use against ELAS.

These groups not only avoided engaging the Germans, they co-operated with the Greek collaborators and



Resistance members in the mountains of Greece.

the German high command to ensure a 'safe' transfer of power to their hands. Nevertheless, despite enormous material support from the British Army, by 1944 they had minimal influence, and were tolerated by ELAS only because Communist Party leaders insisted that the "democratic" Allies should not be upset.

From 1945-49, to establish 'democracy' and 'freedom' in Greece, the British and American imperialists assisted their Greek brothers in drowning EAM-ELAS in blood. They quickly rehabilitated collaborators with the Nazis. Together they executed and murdered tens of thousands of resistance fighters; tortured, raped and maimed over a



The revolutionary spirit lives on in the working class. Supporters of *Xekinima* the Greek Marxist paper insist that the socialist PASOK party should not support the capitalist Karamanlis as President. Greece goes to the polls again on 2 July.

hundred thousand more, and set up concentration camps.

"The Greek government", writes an American reporter in 1949, "offered lucrative contracts to rich industrialists who had collaborated with the Germans. They bought from it the

food parcels sent by UNRA for the starving children and sold them on the black market, making enormous profits." (C. Tsoukalas: *The Greek Tragedy*).

The Minister of Merchant Navy gave 109 US liberty ships, part of the reparation aid programme, to 23 Greek Ship-owning families. It was estimated that in 1947 one thousand families (0.3% of the population) 'earned' half of the national income.

"Spheres of influence"

The tremendous heroism of the workers and peasants did not deter Stalin from selling out the Greek revolution to the imperialists in October 1944 in Moscow, when

he accepted Churchill's proposal that Britain and the USA retained a 90% 'interest' in Greece in return for 90% Russian influence in Rumania.

As a result, the leadership of the Communist Party, instead of consolidating the power it already controlled,

gave it up to the capitalists. It joined a "national government of liberation", accepted a few ministries, subordinated ELAS to the British Gen. Scobie, and allowed the British expeditionary forces to land in Athens.

The CP leadership had learned nothing from the disastrous consequences of their policies in 1936, when they supported the liberal capitalists to "save democracy". The liberals in turn had then handed over power to Metaxas.

Once more their attempt to complete the so-called "democratic revolution" led them to dampen down the socialist aspirations of the workers, and to look desperately to Churchill and Roosevelt as allies. That is why the CP, while holding power, asked initially for 50% of the ministries in a national government, was prepared to accept 25%, and in the end settled for none, provided it could stay legal. It also explains why the CP daily paper hailed Churchill as "a protagonist in the war for the liberation of the people", on the very day of Scobie's ultimatum ordering ELAS to evacuate Athens.

Despite their leaders, the resistance fighters would not accept defeat. After the December massacres, led by the collaborator police with the support of the "national" government, EAM-ELAS, with the assistance of thousands of women and children, fought against the invading British army, and re-occupied Athens, except for one square mile in the centre of the richer part of the city.

Instead of calling reinforcements, however, and arousing the people and taking over the cities, the CP leadership sent Gen. Sarafis (chief of staff of ELAS) and

World War II



Aris Velouchiotis (the brilliant and heroic leader of the Capetani), and strong forces, on a "special" mission far away from Athens and Salonika. For a fortnight they restrained ELAS from taking over Athens, hoping for a compromise, until Scobie received reinforcements to drive the resistance army out of the city.

The British Ambassador in Athens, Sir R. Leeper, wrote "During the first days of battle British forces were outnumbered, and concentrated only in the central part of the city. If ELAS had shown greater resolution, and attacked the centre they would probably have succeeded."

Bankrupt government

Even after 1946, in spite of the defeats and confusion, and the strengthening of reaction, a victory of EAM-ELAS would still have been possible. The Greek government was totally bankrupt in the eyes of the people. Churchill had lost the elections. The British soldiers were exhausted by the war, demoralised by the crimes against the Greek people their only desire was to go home.

Nevertheless, the CP leaders and the USSR were using the sacrifices of EAM-ELAS not to take power, but to put pressure on the Greek capitalists and the Imperialists to accept them as junior partners in a parliamentary democracy, and accommodate Russia's regional strategic interests.

When the Capetani and the fighters were told that their leaders had agreed that ELAS would give up its arms, and "go peacefully" to their homes, they gave up only old weapons, and hid the best to protect themselves.

And how right they were. The collaborators and the fascist gangs, with the support of the British army, began a massive bloody campaign against EAM-ELAS. From February 1945 until 1 March 1946, 1,300 people were murdered, 6,600 injured, 31,600 tortured, 18,800 imprisoned and 85,000 arrested.

As if this was not enough, CP leaders attacked and liquidated as Trotskyist or Titoist every ELAS officer or militant who disagreed with their criminal policies. Velouchiotis himself was denounced as a traitor, isolated and left to be murdered by fascist gangs. So it took two counter-revolutions to break the spirit and the stamina of the heroes of the resistance.

Hungary, Chile, Sudan

Hungary: reforms from above?

IN JUNE, Hungary will go to the polls to elect a new National Assembly. For the first time in 36 years it is legal for candidates to campaign and organise meetings to put their "programmes" forward.

This is only a very cautious reform, though. Only the official Patriotic People's Front (the Communist Party) is allowed to organise meetings and candidates are allowed to spend only 1,000 forints (£16) on propaganda.

But on 8 June—in all but a small handful of constituencies—seats have to be contested by at least two candidates. The authors of the 1983 electoral law hope this mild competition will transform this into an election proper, with some western-style electioneering.

This departure was not totally new; it has been legal though unusual, to stand against official candidates since 1971. In 1971 in only 46 out of 352 constituencies was there a contest and only one had three candidates. Contests declined to 34 in 1975 and 15 in 1980.

In most cases even the second candidate was nominated by the Patriotic People's Front. Only one unofficial candidate ever made it onto the list in 1980 only to fail to get elected. What are Hungary's Stalinist bureaucrats up to?

A recent interview in a Hungarian weekly, sheds some light. Zoltán Szép, a blind ex-historian, created a sensation by standing against two official candidates in 1971 and getting elected in the first round. He told the journal:

"Some said that I was put into Parliament by the conservative electorate of

By Magda Szabó

Óbuda (a working class district of Budapest) because my uncle was a well-known local Catholic priest. But I had been a member of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party for years by then and I wrote many of the speeches for the local Lenin centenary celebrations.

"It was the party district committee who sent me into the Young Communist League to explain the significance of the new electoral law. I explained that they should support only those candidates who would represent the interests of Óbuda's residents, especially as the whole district was going through complete redevelopment. At the nominating meeting the party put forward two women workers who read prepared speeches.

"Some youngsters who knew me from the YCL put

my name forward. There were 26 speeches in my favour. Many people knew me, I had lived in Óbuda for 25 years. Later I was accused of having organised and stage managed the whole affair.

"I was elected in the first round with an overall majority of 56.1 per cent. There was an election, not just voting, in Óbuda in 1971. Many people went to vote in groups, some were singing and all had flowers in their buttonholes.

"The party did not give me any special brief. I looked for jobs for myself. I considered my membership of the National Assembly as political work and the Parliament building as my place of work. The air of respectful deference common at meetings of the Assembly was alien to me.

"I kept very close contact with my electors. Apart from the usual monthly surgery I met people in cafés, restaurants and even in my own flat. I always strove to acquaint people with the workings of the Assembly. At each session I took 10-12 of them to the public galleries to watch the proceedings."

Stabilisation

"Eventually, as the next elections were approaching I was told that some sections of the authorities would be displeased if I stood again. After four years of strenuous work I felt I had to withdraw from active politics."

There have been a number of discussions about election shake-ups; about moves away from traditional constituency-based elections towards guaranteed places in



Photo: Miroslav Milivojevic (Reflex)

A shoe factory worker works under a portrait of Lenin. But the state and industry are run by a bloated bureaucracy, not as Lenin insisted, by the working class.

Parliament for various regional, occupational and social interests, as expressed in present day 'social conflict'. Those proposals were rejected, but their very existence highlights the regime's desperate search to stabilise its political hierarchy.

Will these efforts succeed? Or is there a gathering storm that the bureaucracy is trying to forestall as they did in 1980. When the Polish workers gained their five-day working week, the authorities granted the same to Hungarian workers within a few months to pre-empt a similar movement.

The memory of Óbuda 1971 burns in the consciousness of every Hungarian bureaucrat. An "over-enthusiastic" blind history professor could be intimidated into withdrawal after four years. But who

knows what other proletarian district will find a new champion in the future. Hence electoral reforms by dictats from above to forestall genuine movement from below which could replace the role of the privileged bureaucracy with workers' democracy.

Day of reckoning

June the eighth will probably see little of the excitement of Óbuda 1971. Few will sing or put flowers in their buttonholes for two official candidates instead of one. The day of reckoning is still to come, but the Hungarian workers—like workers in Poland—will rise one day to take political power into their own hands. Then the bureaucracy will have more than just a few unofficial candidates to worry about.



What the Hungarian bureaucracy fear most—a workers revolution. In 1956, Stalin's statue in Budapest was smashed to the ground while workers demanded power in "their own" state.

Chilean workers appeal for support

THE CHILEAN President, General Pinochet has renewed his "state of siege" for another three months, giving a legal gloss to the dictatorship's repression and torture.

Since November 1984, no fewer than 15,000 people have been rounded up from working class "poblaciones" and "compamentos". Most have been beaten and then released after a few days. Many however have been sent into internal exile in special camps in the northern desert plains.

Side by side with this have been a series of deaths and disappearances probably undertaken by fascist groups working in the secret police (CNI) and repressive apparatus. The most brutal was the murder of three known trade union and community leaders, members of the Communist Party, found with their throats cut in a ditch in Santiago.

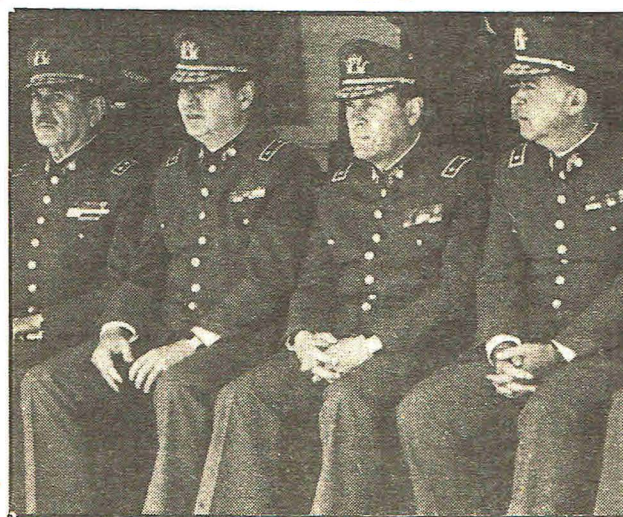
But this blood-thirsty repression does not show Pinochet's strength. On the contrary, seeing their days are numbered, the junta and

their torturers are trying desperately to intimidate the workers and middle class for as long as possible. They fear for their own lives after 12 years of brutality. They can see the current trials of Argentinian generals and ex-presidents in Buenos Aires.

Every month for two years there have been massive protests during which over 2,000 have died, now the youth in particular want to take the struggle to a higher level. It is during a pause in this movement that the regime has gone on the offensive.

Chileans' bitterness at repression is deepened by the economic crisis. Four-fifths of Chile's people live in households on under £150 per month. This is a formula for an explosion. A Marxist programme for the Socialist and Communist Parties is now of over-riding importance.

The international working class has a responsibility to support those fighting in such difficult conditions in the Chilean underground. Militant has been approach-



The junta are hitting out desperately hoping to postpone their collapse. Photo: Jacob Sutton.

ed by Chilean workers for solidarity.

We are calling on all supporters to organise collections throughout the labour movement around the first weekend of June (1/2 June) to give material aid to the Chilean workers' struggle.

- ★ Down with Pinochet!
- ★ For a socialist Chile!

CHILE SOLIDARITY Night. Southampton Labour Club, Queensway, Southampton. Thursday 30 May 7.30pm Food and Music £1.50 (waged), £1.00 (unwaged)

ALL LONDON social for Chilean workers. Saturday 1 June, 7.30 pm until late. "Florance Nightengale", Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 (near Waterloo Station). Entrance £1 (75p UB 40). Disco and late bar.

"Safeguard the revolution" rally

THE NEW military rulers of Sudan, under General Swaral-Dahab are coming under contradictory class pressures.

Sudan is not only the largest state in Africa, it is vital to western capitalist plans. Bourgeois politicians are putting pressure on for a new deal with the IMF, to maintain relations with the USA, to oppose the Stalinist regime in Ethiopia and the unpredictable dictatorship of Gaddafi while supporting other pro-Western despots.

On the other hand the people who really overthrew the Numeiri regime, the slum dwellers and workers, are becoming restive. Colonel Garang of the Southern rebels, the SPLA, has broken off the ceasefire they announced when the military rulers took power, as the government had failed to hand over power to civilians. Garang described the government as "the Numeiri

regime without Numeiri".

Militant predicted that the attitude of the working class would decide the fate of the revolution. Already some of the professional unions deeply involved in Numeiri's downfall have held a rally calling for more strikes and demonstrations to "safeguard the revolution".

They demanded the end of martial law, emergency legislation and "Islamic justice". As one of the leaders said: "The popular risings of March and April have been deviated from their course. What we have now is effectively another military coup... the revolution has been aborted".

How far the military leaders and capitalists can achieve their aim depends on the working class taking an independent class position over the next few months to prevent a repeat of Numeiri's coup in 1969.

LETTERS

Militant welcomes letters from readers. Send us your views, comments or criticisms. Write to *Militant*, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London, E9 5HB

'Murder' sentence—a threat to strikers

Dear *Militant*,
On the Wilkie incident, I thought that there was no way that the Tories were going to let this one get by without it being a murder charge. They should have been charged with manslaughter at most. By reading their reaction to the decision of the court anyone could tell that they had no intention of killing anybody and that their only aim was to keep the strike solid in their area. We have to remember that in S. Wales they were playing for high stakes, the whole of the coal field is faced with closure. Those lads were faced with the threat of a life on the dole.

Obviously it was a tragic incident and we must feel sorry for the loss the dead man's family must be feel-

ing, but locking away two young men who were only fighting for their futures, for the rest of their lives, is not going to change anything.

I believe that this incident has been used as a warning to others in future strikes/disputes, get too involved and we can jail you for life. As someone who was actively involved in the strike, out every day picketing etc. It is easy to imagine yourself in the situation that those young miners in S. Wales found themselves in. The frustration caused by the police not allowing you to speak to the strike breakers caused actions like that to happen. The style of policing forced miners to begin taking action away from the pit gates. It could have been anyone out of thousands of young activists sitting in that dock.

Richard Clarkson
Prince of Wales Colliery
(Personal capacity)

Photo: Martin Shakeshaft



The massive police presence during the miners' strike.

Bradford disaster

Dear Comrades,
Bradford people have been stunned by the fire at the City's football ground. Every day the flowers behind the burnt-out stand mount higher and every day passers by add to the hundreds of thousands of pounds already collected for the disaster appeal, people who can ill afford it. People on the dole or in low paid jobs give what they can to help the victims. Working class people look after their own.

But it needn't have been. Every Saturday or Wednesday fans across the country

give a few quid to see their favourite team. Added up that's a lot of money. We pay for the game but what do we get in return? Crumbling concrete steps, old stands and stinking toilets. The comfort and safety of the fans are bottom of the list for the football profiteers.

Recently, one of Bradford City's spotlight pylons fell over—fortunately no one was around at the time. And what happens at City isn't unusual. Football isn't a game to the big shareholders, it's big business.

Yours fraternally
Pete Watson
Bradford 5

UB 40? That'll do nicely

Dear Comrades,
There is some consolation for the 5,000 workers whose jobs are to disappear on British Rail.

It was reported in *Railnews* (May 85) that business travellers using London's Kings Cross now have somewhere to relax with a drink or even do some work before joining their Inter-City trains, the new £100,000 Pullman Lounge.

The lounge is restricted for First Class passengers who have either a BR Travel Card and lots of money, or an American Express Card and lots more money.

There is one drawback however, Dole Card holders are not allowed entry even if they are first class passengers and also, somehow have lots of money.

Yours fraternally
Andy Bentley
Newcastle-under-Lyme
NUR
(personal capacity)

The American nightmare

Dear Comrades,
I was listening to the American ambassador on TV AM on Sunday morning. I'm amazed at the arrogant attitude of the American rulers, towards countries they consider in their "front garden". He was talking primarily about Nicaragua of course. He was saying the Nicaraguans should do what

the American President 'advised', that is get rid of Soviet and Cuban advisers and hold democratic elections.

Is it not correct to say the indigenous Indian people in America are not permitted to vote, even though they have fought in the second world war and Vietnam? Is that democratic?

Yours Ian Manson
Eastbourne

A first-rate candidate?

Dear Comrades,
During a May Day rally in Wrexham, one of the guest speakers was George Wright, candidate for the position of General Secretary of the TGWU.

Wright was asking for 'unity' within the ranks of the labour movement. Part of his contribution was about the Falklands War, and he expressed the view that 'Our lads' should not have been sent to the Falklands with 'Old, out-

dated equipment'. This puzzled me somewhat and as there was no facility for questions from the floor I asked Bro. Wright if what he said meant that British soldiers should have better guns etc. he replied "Oh yes, then they would have a better chance wouldn't they?"

Clearly a first rate candidate for the working-class and members of the TGWU. Nevertheless our conversation didn't stop there, Bro. Wright exclaimed that although he was against witch-hunts in the Labour Party of *Militant* supporters,

he blamed the *Militant* for labelling him a 'right-winger' and said this wasn't true. He said "I have every copy of the *Militant* in which I suffer a character assassination. I've got the evidence!"

Who says Marxism isn't growing? All TGWU members should vote for Ron Todd to return a left-wing General Secretary and ensure a fighting socialist leadership for the union.

Yours fraternally
Martin Booth
Eddisbury CLP
Cheshire

A brilliant future?

Dear Comrades,
The Samaritans in Basildon received 8,000 calls of despair last year. It is estimated that someone tries to commit suicide every 2½ minutes of the day, and suicide is now the second biggest cause of death among the under 21s.

Local newspapers in Basildon have carried some horrific stories of suicides among young people. Graeme Walker of Basildon threw himself off Waterloo Bridge. He had studied for eight years to achieve a Bachelor of Science and later a Master of Science degree in Toxicology. He had applied unsuccessfully for 150 jobs. The headline in the local newspaper read "Brilliant future ends in suicide". But what future did he have under a system that cannot grant the right to work?

Yours fraternally
John McKay
Basildon LPYS

Gas next for profits grab

Dear Comrades,
Recently announced plans to privatise British Gas in the next session of Parliament must be fought by all trade unions in the gas industry. The handing over of a nationalised industry that looks after the energy needs of the country to the capitalists in the City is yet another attempt by the Tories to help their class and at the same time get a cash influx to try

and prop up their system. Any privatisation will inevitably lead to job cuts, reduction in service, higher gas prices and a reduction in safety standards.

A campaign must be built by all trade unions amongst the workers in the gas industry to stop this (yet another) attack on the working class. The success of the one day strike over the closure of gas showrooms a

few years ago gives a pointer to the power that workers in the industry hold. This power needs to be used to defend jobs and services in a united campaign.

Yours Fraternally
Robert John
British Gas Research
(NALGO, Personal capacity)

Fighting Franco

Dear Comrades,
We've heard a great deal lately about the defeat of fascism 40 years ago, about the heroism and so on. But how are those who really did the fighting being treated now?

I met a bloke recently who was in the British armed forces before World War Two. When the fight against fascism began in Spain, being a socialist, he joined the International Brigade, and fought against Franco. Nothing too remarkable about that. But now he's 73, ill and with a sick wife. He desperately needs a phone in his home to contact a doctor in emergencies. The local Social Services won't help unless both of the couple are housebound, which they aren't. There is another way of getting the phone installed, through a charity. But if the charity organisers check this man's military records they will apparently be told that he should not get any help, as the men who joined the International



October 1936, European workers join the International Brigade to fight fascism in Spain.

Brigade were not given an honourable discharge from the British armed forces. So for really fighting fascism this old man and his wife are to be discriminated against

in this disgusting and spiteful way.

When the working class achieve a socialist society in Britain we have many debts to repay, especially to people

like this old comrade. We have some debts to repay to the people responsible for this disgusting two-faced hypocrisy as well.

(Name supplied)

LEFT and RIGHT

Cheap at half the price

WE NEED to spend millions on defence to save us from the red peril. At the same time, this being a Tory government, we must be cost effective. Instead of giving the task of producing artillery shells to Royal Ordnance Factories, we look abroad for cheaper tenders and find the Belgium firm TRB. However, TRB get their TNT supplies from Poland. So now the Royal Artillery has 11,000 shells filled with Eastern Bloc high explosive. You know it all makes sense.

Own goal!

IT WAS only a matter of time. When Roy Hattersley said: "I call the rich those who earn £20,000 a year" (*Tribune* 10 May) someone was bound to point out that Roy himself was on a nice little earner. The *Daily Express* (May 23) has pointed out that Roy Hattersley earns "in the region of £70,000" from his parliamentary salary and his journalism. He is also writing a history of the Labour Party which "could gross him upwards of £40,000". He has a house in an exclusive area where properties fetch between "£350,000-£400,000". His wife earns about £24,000 working for ILEA.

The price of patriotism

MEDIA MILLIONAIRE Rupert Murdoch indignantly told his fellow Australians six years ago: "Who in this room can say that I am not a good Australian or a patriotic one?" Last week he became a US citizen. US law requires it if you want to own a television network, and seeing Murdoch has just bought seven American television stations in a \$2 billion deal, it was the least he could do.

Industrial feature

New technology and ^{British} TELECOM

PHIL HOLT, National Communications Union executive member, and Broad Left candidate for NCU general secretary, writes on the way British capitalism is failing to match its international competition in the field of Hi-tech and Information Technology, and the role of the privatised British Telecom.

NEW TECHNOLOGY is making such advances that the potential to eradicate poverty and illiteracy and to offer humanity a brilliant and secure future knows no bounds.

However, the social system we live in is incapable of using this technology for the common good of maximising its potential (eg. with the rest of the industry).

On the contrary, the anarchy of capitalism is preventing the fruitful development of all aspects of technique and science other than in the concentrated mass effort on weapons of destruction.

This is particularly true in Information Technology (IT). Contrary to the wishful hopes of the Tories, the so-called "sunrise, high tech" industries under private ownership offer no way out of the crisis. In fact the policies of privatisation and nil government planning are wrecking the prospects of even establishing a partial stable base in this field.

The *Guardian* financial section has recently pointed out that: "British Telecom, now probably the most important single influence, outside government, on the future of Information Technology has gone about £100 million deeper into buying foreign."

The POEU (now NCU) warned that this process would accelerate with denationalisation and further undermine British industry.

The latest decision of BT is to shift its computer contracts decisively to the non-union American IBM from the British ICL.

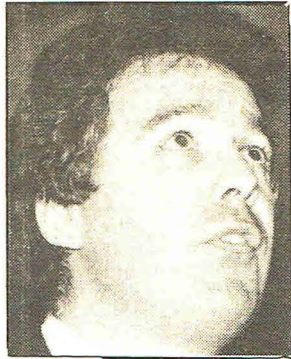
As *The Guardian* continues: "Until the slump Britain was the only industrial nation in which IBM was not the dominant computer influence. Now IBM has pushed ICL out of its top UK influence".

"Silicon Glen"

The picture in the rest of the IT industry is equally bleak for firms in Britain. An EEC-backed study of Scotland's computer industry compared it to that of a third world country misused by multinational corporations wanting a cheap manufacturing base. Only 16 per cent of the workforce is employed by Scottish firms. Most are non-union.

The Scottish Development Agency's attack on the report is, however, equally illuminating. The SDA points out that £1.2 billion has been invested in the past four years establishing the country as the most significant computer centre in the world. Yet in the 300 companies in so-called "Silicon Glen" only 42,000 are employed. This is heralded as a major achievement by the SDA.

But it is the global picture which really highlights the problems. From being one of the early pioneers in what is now called IT the balance of trade in this field is £2 billion in deficit. This is expected to rise by 1993.



Phil Holt

No so long ago the selling of "our" brain power was also hailed as a vital part in Britain's drive into the hi-tech age. TV programmes were made on successes in selling software (the information that runs computers) particularly in America.

Now analysts are predicting a "bloodbath" in the US software retail sector—with only two key firms remaining by 1990. UK firms, it is predicted, will have little chance of gaining penetration due to this shrinking market!

Further warnings also predict that US firms will be forced to turn their attention more to the European market bringing about cut-throat competition in Britain and the rest of the EEC.

On top of the economics of slump and competition, bosses in the UK's IT have recently been slammed by a leading firm of stockbrokers (Henry, Cooke, Lumsden). The bosses are blamed for the poor IT image, for poor management and bad strategies. They can hardly blame non-existent unions! Undoubtedly it doesn't stop them taking vast profits either!

Recently, firms like Sinclair and Acorn have moved from success to failure, which has resulted in a fall in confidence from potential investors—so much so that Inmos is laying off workers in Wales.

Whilst writing this article news was announced of a plunge in profits of the micro-computer firm Micro Focus—which according to the *Financial Times* has sent "shock waves" through the stock market and undermined confidence in the hi-tech market. This is the bosses' verdict on the "strategy" of the Tories.

The present lack of a government strategy and plan is exacerbating the situation.

In essence any action by the government is only designed to help big business make short-term profits at the expense of even securing the future existence of the

industry.

Even in education, government grants are attacked by the University Grants Committee as inadequate and only meeting a third of the real needs.

The lack of government direction, the crisis in the smaller computer firms and the drive by BT to de-skill and de-man (to cut jobs) is further undermining potential computer resources and possibility of industrial revival. This is especially so in the lack of training of engineers in software. In fact BT is even attempting to cut drastically down on jobs in its software department.

The trend has been to buy from expensive private software houses. As if to emphasise this BT has recently announced that it wants to reduce its central DP staff by 800.

At the same time a delegation from management is going to Canada to interview specialists in network and system software, particularly with IBM skills.

Buying from private UK firms is unnecessarily drawing on the country's limited resources when it could be expanding its own department and amongst the engineering workforce (although the level of expertise between them would be completely different).

System X

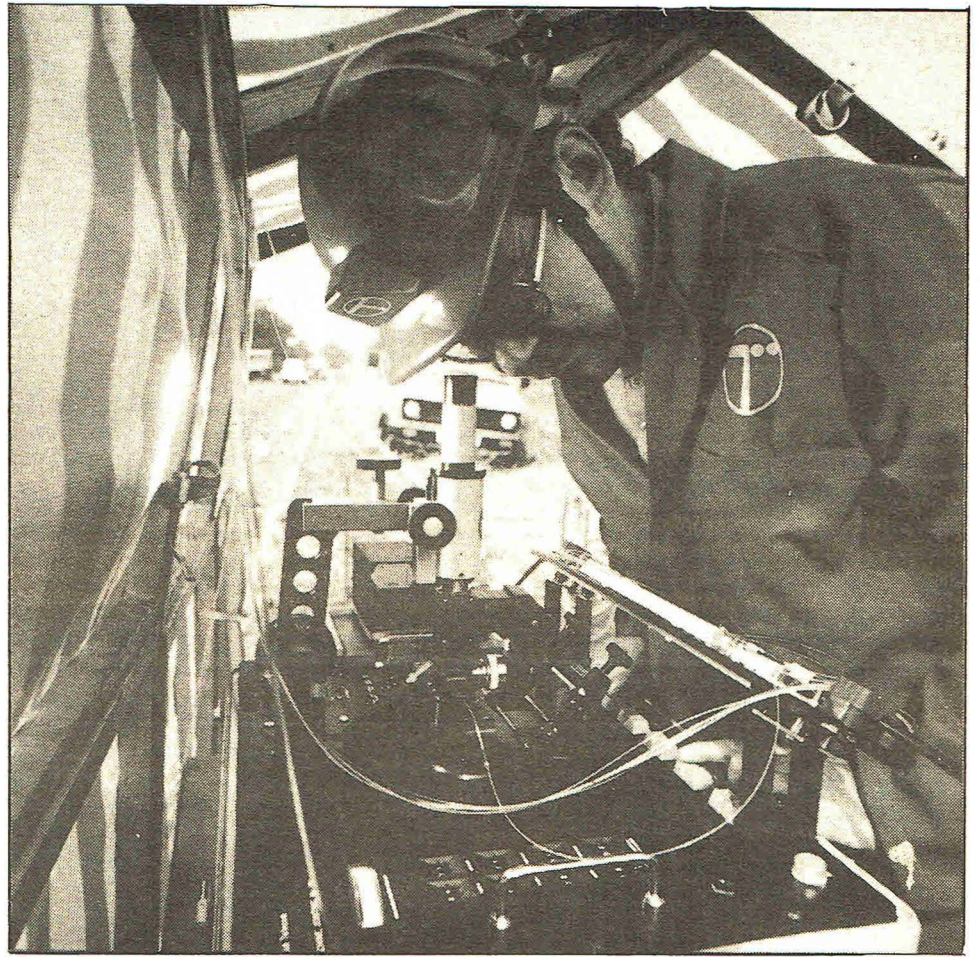
Buying from foreign sources will aid the further penetration of overseas competition in Britain.

As well as this, BT's large-scale modernisation of its cable network (to fibre optics) and its main trunk and business exchanges to the fast and more reliable System X not only threatens many jobs in BT but in industry as well.

This is because computers and automotive processes will be able to interlink on a scale not possible before. It will affect nearly all work processes based on paper which can be eliminated—cutting out many jobs and drastically reducing others. Remote access and control of jobs now requiring journeys and visits will make thousands of workers redundant.

BT's increased willingness to buy foreign threatens jobs in the UK's manufacturing industry. As a result of a "restructuring" of BT's orders printed circuit manufacturers Kam Circuits is laying off workers.

More seriously orders for major new systems (eg. the Digital Derived Services Network, Alternative Digital System, etc) have gone to firms such as Phillips and Ericsons. Even the DHSS and the Job Centres have ordered foreign telecom systems. That is rich in irony.



Optical fibre being "jointed". They are replacing the traditional telephone cables

The main victim of all this is the British-based STC which has survived mainly on orders from BT. It is now in a difficult situation following orders from BT to Northern Telecom (Canada).

To add insult to injury the private competitor to BT (Mercury) which this government brought into being against fierce POEU resistance has ordered its first exchanges from Northern Telecom as well!

Whilst buying abroad and confirming the predictions of the unions BT has undermined the main claim of the Tories that liberalisation and privatisation will increase competition. A recent report shows that BT: "could come close to crowding out the opposition for years to come" (in the private telephone exchange market).

For workers in BT the bad news is that now so many old systems have been replaced by new electronic systems in industry and offices the demand will fall from orders worth £216 million per annum at present to £59 million per annum in three years time. Together with an expected fall in ordinary phones' share of the market from 82 per cent to 59 per cent this spells further job threats for BT workers.

Computerisation and automation of manufacturing processes is now a realisable dream for the employers. It threatens millions of jobs. However, the prospect seems remote in this country.

Catch 22

Commenting on this in their report the Director of Ingersoll Engineers stated: "Too much technology has been placed piecemeal in Victorian environments when an overall plan for the business was needed". Hence the total lack of success so far.

On the other hand countries like Japan are steaming

ahead. With even further reduced labour costs these more competitive productions threaten jobs here in any case. A catch 22 scenario.

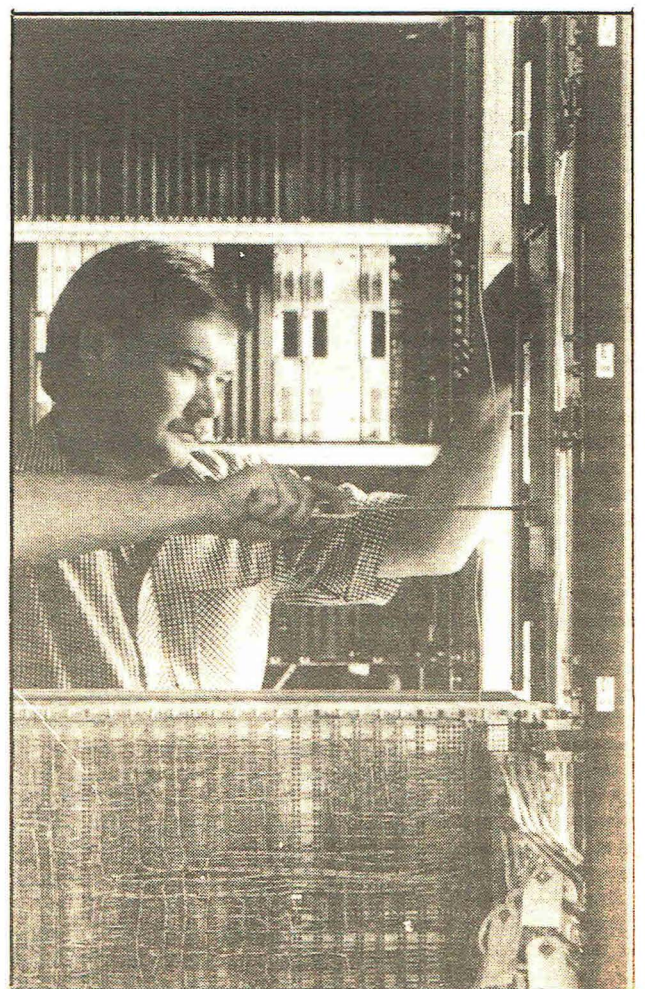
This sums up the situation. The manner in which new technology is being introduced offers no hope for anyone—the workers or society generally. Measures like import controls against hi-tech, given this background, will solve nothing and merely invite retaliation against British products from much more powerful forces.

New technology needs an overall plan for its introduction for industry generally not just for the individual segments. The needs of the workforce and society could

be fully satisfied and work created. It can easily cut out the need for long hours. A systematic plan could lower the working week, year and lifetime drastically. It could be introduced involving all the ideas and imagination of the workforce.

Under capitalism all the reports for Information Technology show disaster looms ahead. The government's policies, privatisation and the profit motive stand in the way of the full and useful development of technology to solve the problems of our age. Only a socialist plan of production can do that.

By Phil Holt



The system X trunk exchange being installed in Coventry

Communications workers prepare merger



The battle against privatisation of British Telecom was lost but a powerful new union can be built with the merger of the NCU and UCW

Telecom pay and hours - decisive lead needed

THE NATIONAL Communications Union (NCU, formerly POEU) meets in Blackpool on 2 June for its first annual conference as a new union.

The engineering group meets for the first four days amidst growing speculation that with the negotiations on both pay and the 'Broad Strategy' coming up against British Telecom intransigence, the union must prepare for battle.

The latest pay offer failed to meet the rate of inflation. Some of the strings, if agreed, will mean considerable cuts in take-home pay. The engineering executive should come forward with a detailed programme of industrial action to convince the employer to raise the offer closer to the 12% claim.

Our union is faced with major job losses from the introduction of new technology on a capitalist basis. The only way to maintain existing job numbers is by a shorter working week. The NCU claim in the 'Broad Strategy' is for a 32-hour, four day, week. It has been rejected by BT. Not one offer has been made to meet our demands. With negotiations over, the need to prepare for battle is clear.

There should be no separation of our claim on pay and hours. The pay claim is necessary to maintain our living standards and the 32-hour week to maintain jobs.

We have already voted for amalgamation with the Union of Communication Workers. A two stage process is being proposed, with the first step being the joining of the two executives and a joint consultative conference without powers or elections.

Amalgamation

Resolutions on this year's agenda from P.O. Railways, Swansea and Tyburn branches call for a joint conference of delegates from the branches to elect a joint NEC to push an amalgamation forward. They should be supported as part of the campaign up to the Rules Revision conference in November to ensure the maximum democracy and accountability in a new merged union.

A major topic of discussion around the conference will be the imminent election for general secretary. The incumbent, Bryan Stanley, has to retire by May next year. It seems likely he will an-



John Golding MP (left), a likely candidate for NCU general secretary with his old friends Ian Wrigglesworth and Shirley Williams. In the name of unity they led savage attacks on the left and Wrigglesworth and Williams followed the logic of their politics into the SDP.

nounce his retirement soon, possibly during the conference, in order to allow leading right winger John Golding MP (also the union's political officer) to stand before he is excluded by age during the year.

The Broad Left has already selected its candidate, national executive member Phil Holt, an ex-secretary of Liverpool Internal branch and chair of the Merseyside BT Union Committee which led the campaign against privatisation.

Delegates at this conference are faced with two alternatives. Either we organise now to consolidate the position of the Broad

Left as part of the fight to force BT to meet our claim on pay and hours or we risk a slide back to the right with all that means in terms of job losses, attacks on pay and conditions.

Leadership

It is significant that one of the Broad Left members of the national executive responsible for the failure to continue the fight against the private Project Mercury in the face of court action has turned up this year on the right wing slate. We can overcome the setback of that experience—and build a stronger Broad Left—but it

will only be done by forging a programme and leadership which can convince government, management and the members that we are determined to fight.

The engineering executive should come forward with a detailed programme of industrial action. Such industrial action would commence with an overtime ban. Mass meetings would be called immediately after conference to explain to the rank and file the further action that may be necessary.

By Phil Lloyd
(Secretary, Swansea
NCU, personal capacity)

No fun in this 'Sun-rise'

A WORKER in the so-called 'sun-rise' industries, (see Phil Holt's article on page 13) in Scotland's Silicon Glen explains why the sun isn't shining for them, but they are working on it. This is the bosses' vision of the future—be warned.

I work for an American electronics factory in Livingston, Scotland's Silicon Glen. We do not have any union representation and the bosses take full advantage of this situation.

The general safety conditions and medical facilities are extremely poor. There are often pools of water on the floor, boxes are left blocking passages and fire exits and fire extinguishers are sometimes used to hold fire doors open.

Victimisation has been taking place. Some is because some supervisors or managers do not like employees personally or because some employees talk back to them. These workers are generally given the worst kind of jobs or are given higher quotas of work than people doing the same job.

One young girl was not making her higher quota and after being given 'sufficient warnings' she was sacked. Her workmates in that department all downed tools in support.

Even when threatened with the sack they still refused to go back to work. It was only after the girl was forcibly removed from the factory that they went back to work believing they had lost.

Since then the ring-leaders of this 'rebellion' have been split up and put into other departments, with management claiming it is because the area was over staffed.

This is only the tip of the iceberg. But it shows the need for workers to be organised. Indeed, some of the workers here are now so fed up that they are talking about getting organised and starting a union. Unfortunately we are still a minority, as most of the workers are scared because of the high unemployment in this area. But hopefully this situation will change.

Postal workers cornered by Post Office and union leaders

THE POST Office group conference of the UCW down in Bournemouth was dominated by what has been called "the deal of the century". The conference voted to accept all the main aspects of the deal—reversing the decision of a Special Conference held in March. Its implementation will lead to local disputes throughout the country as management put the boot in. The conference voted 7-5 for making the improved working methods (IWM) productivity scheme compulsory. Delegates agreed to the introduction of New Technology and the increase of part-time workers by about 20,000.

The Broad Left National Chairman Billy Hayes from Liverpool Amalgamated Branch moved rejection of the deal, pointing out that security of employment promises

were not worth the paper they were printed on. He said: "When are we going to start fighting?... The only time the Post Office listens to us is when we have them by the throat."

Decisions taken showed delegates to be in a sombre mood. Many could only see a way forward by accepting Post Office dictates. The executive committee and national officials argued the Post Office management's case, saying the only alternative was "All-out confrontation, not only with the post office, but with the Tory government." The answer they offered was "wait for a Labour government".

Eddie Thorpe from Oldham Indoor Branch speaking for rejection of increased part-timers and casualisation pointed out: "No

fundamental changes have taken place since the Special Conference in March, except that management have said "NO". All we have had is a barrage of propaganda from the Post Office and from the UCW to be 'realistic'. How can we be 'realistic' about destroying full-time jobs?"

"The General Secretary said in his opening speech": "We are here to fight attacks" but you know, Alan, it's easy for top management and others on £30,000 per annum, to tell us of the evils of overtime without having to live on our wage. A postman on flat rate will earn in a year as much as some of those in this hall earn in two months." The General Secretary of the UCW, gets about £30,000 a year.

The conference voted, however, to accept the deal and members

must now prepare for the battles this will bring. The only time conference voted against platform on the major questions was that the members had been paid £100 on account before conference. The General Secretary apologised for this and agreed it would not be done again.

The first issue to win now is that of the political ballot. Branch voting will occur on June 6, the union has a strong Labour tradition. In 1920 the union voted 49,559 to just 5,772. In 1946 it voted 42,729 to 13,611 in favor of the political levy. Today, with the threats from the Tory government the membership can be mobilised for an even better result than in SOGAT or ISTC. The Broad Left must now lead the campaign for a 'yes' vote.

The second campaign that has to be waged is on the question of amalgamation between the UCW and the NCU. The conference discussion on amalgamation accepted the proposals, which after a transitional period will lead to an amalgamated union.

The Broad Left of the UCW and the Broad Left of the NCU must fight to ensure the transition period is short and the new communications union be a democratic union fully accountable to its members—with the election of officials and officers who are paid the same as the members.

By Brian Beckingham

TASS - growing union on the left

THE MOOD at TASS conference was very confident. The establishment of a viable craft sector last year with the sheet metal workers, has been followed by the pattern-makers, and in the autumn the metal mechanics.

Membership is up to 230,000. The Metal Mechanics and later possibly the Tobacco Workers will take it up towards 300,000.

The main debate for the first two days was around the anti-trade union legislation and about how far the union should go in defying the law. A strong resolution moved by Dick Jones from No. 16 Division, Coventry was passed despite attempts to water it down.

It called, amongst other things, for TASS to ignore the ballots for closed shops, defend the '82 Wembley conference decisions, and to use our industrial strength to defend the movement. It proposed that not only the Employment Acts, but also the 1913 Trade Union Act which started the separation of industrial and political funds should be repealed.

An emergency resolution was unanimously passed against the 4,500 redundancies at BREL workshops. Gary Guy from No. 3 District Doncaster, explained how jobs had declined from approximately 37,000 in 1976 to approximately 25,000 today by the back



Ken Gill.

door implementation of the Serpell Report.

On the Wednesday a very successful fringe meeting was held by YTURC (Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign). The meeting was well attended and delegates spoke of the need for the union to defend existing apprentice schemes and to ensure that proper training was given to young workers.

On the split between the AUEW Engineering, Foundry and Construction section and TASS, Ken Gill's position was that while they regretted the decision by the

AUEW National Committee to split they were not going to try to stop it at this stage. The possibilities of talks in the future with the AUEW, however, would not be ruled out.

The reason why the right wing in the AUEW moved for a split at this stage is because they are afraid of the left getting a majority on the AUEW National Committee if a full amalgamation went ahead. But that does not excuse the TASS leadership's refusal to accept election of officials as part of a merger deal giving the AUEW right wing a powerful argument against merger.

The only way the split could have been defeated and will be overcome in the future is by campaigning among the rank and file in the factories where both TASS and AUEW work together, and the building of an open and democratic broad left to ensure the union has an accountable leadership, elected and answerable to the rank and file.

By Jane Hartley
(Visitor, TASS Sheffield Branch, personal capacity)

Guards and shunters

AS THE NUR Guards and Shunters Grades Conference meets this weekend the BRB are preparing to implement extensive Driver Only Operation DOO of trains.

Eastern Region General Manager Patterson has told Sectional Council representatives that diagrams are already prepared for introduction in October.

On the Eastern Region alone there are to be 76 Driver Only Operated non passenger diagrams, plus DOO on Kings Cross suburban services. The depots affected will include Shirebrook, Worksop, Immingham, Doncaster and Kings Cross.

The Federation of Rail Unions must prepare a fight back now.

Don't hold back and allow an air of inevitability to develop. Explain the issues, prepare the membership and ensure that they have the confidence to fight back.

DOO is not an isolated issue of importance only to guards, it will affect every grade. The guard's job will disappear of course. But it will also mean fundamental changes in the duties of drivers and signal staff who will suffer consequent increase in stress and strain.

The Federation should call an immediate delegate conference to discuss the situation and prepare for united industrial action. A 24-hour stoppage now by guards would put the pressure on for national action.

NACODS action

THE OVERTIME ban by the pit deputies union NACODS is still firm. In fact members are getting even more angry. NACODS can not back down now.

The coal board are not only tearing up the so called agreement our threat of strike action got last October, they are making a mockery of all of our previous agreements too. The threatened closure in Yorkshire show the attitude

they are adopting.

Here in Scotland we are operating safety cover only and NUM members are respecting our ban and only doing safety work. There are notices to that effect at pits. All workers have to show a united face to the Board and show them they can't trample over our jobs, our industry and our unions.

By a NACODS member

GMB privatisation fight

THIS YEAR'S Annual Congress of the GMBATU meets against a backdrop of continuing attacks on our job security, working conditions and living standards. This will be a critical year for our members and the delegates to this congress has a responsibility to formulate policies that will counteract these attacks.

Besides all the motions from the branches, congress will be taking time to discuss the involvement of the women members in the union affairs and the Central Executive proposals on union reorganisation.

Any reorganisation should be geared to providing real positive support for those at the sharp end of the class struggle.

The Executive proposals

appear to be based on "economic considerations". Given the busy calendar of events over the next period (political fund ballot, general secretary election) the CEC now propose that there will be meaningful consultations with the membership before a special conference in September.

Privatisation is the biggest single issue facing the union at present. The GMW section originated out of the organisation of gas workers. The Tories' proposed privatisation of British Gas must be treated as an attack on part of the very foundation of the union.

By Dennis English
(Delegate, Wandsworth GMBATU)

NUR busworkers

THE 42nd NUR busworkers conference took place recently in London. There were 52 delegates representing over 6,000 NUR busmen.

Conference reports were mainly taken up with two subjects, the 'bus bill' which is presently going through Parliament, and the political fund.

Exeter No 2's resolution calling upon the NEC to support any branch or group of branches in any attack by a constituent company of the

NBC on our members' national conditions or rates of pay, was carried unanimously. Torquay No 1's resolution urged the NEC to do the utmost to retain the NCOI (National Council of Omnibus Industry), or a like body, to negotiate nationally for those employees within the bus industry. This too was carried unanimously.

By W Heley and K Cocker
(Mansfield No 2, personal capacity)

Exclusive Cleaners

CHRISTINE HUNTER shop steward at the UKAE, Risley spoke to Ann Bannister and Lesley Holt about the latest developments in their dispute with Exclusive Cleaners:

"Either the Atomic Energy Authority or Exclusive are lying.

We went to demonstrate outside the Atomic HQ last week, where Exclusive was on the agenda. They told Jack Dromey they had removed some obstacles to talking, but now management have said they would only meet us on the same terms and conditions.

We're supposed to meet at the end of this month—now we're waiting to hear.

We went to Coventry to meet the stewards at Rolls Royce, Massey Ferguson, Talbot and some others. They've promised financial support, and are putting out a statement that no-one should employ Exclusive.

How can Exclusive say they can't afford to pay us, when the Chairman of Bren Green, the parent company had just got a pay rise from £57,000 to £75,000?

We appeal to all trade-



Christine Hunter.

unionists, we need more support, physical as well as financial. We picket every Wednesday morning from 9am-11am at Exclusive House, Liverpool Road, Manchester, and most evenings at 5.30 pm.

We'd also like to see more than a one-day strike from the TGWU members inside, and the 3,900 CPSA members—a few days industrial action from them would put pressure on management."

Speakers, resolutions of support and donations to 6/304 Exclusive Strike Fund c/o Mrs C Hunter, 50 Wilkinson Street, Warrington, or phone (0925) 30233 for the union office.

Open up Society

THE SCPS Conference saw a more questioning attitude to the union leadership than in previous years.

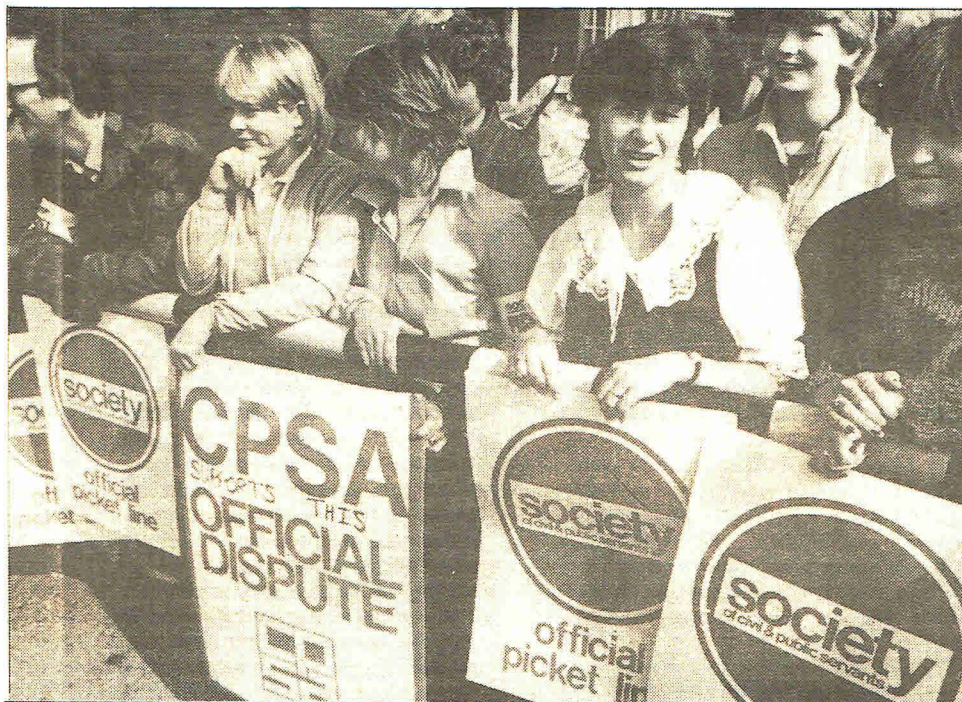
The Executive has been controlled by the "lefts" for a number of years, but they have often failed to campaign to build support for left-wing politics amongst the membership.

This was reflected at the Conference where many of the defeats of the executive were on issues relating to union democracy. Conference overwhelmingly endorsed proposals for a merger with CPSA, although around 25 percent of delegates supported a resolution calling for the first election of a General Secretary of the new union to be open to any candidates.

It must be recognised that for SCPS members, the bureaucratic merger proposal involved some democratic gains!

However, the condescending attitude of the platform towards CPSA bore out Militant supporters' fears about the future of a merged union. It was hinted that the election of the General Secretary could be challenged in the future. A merger will come, but it must be on a democratic basis to build a strong union.

A resolution calling for workplace ballots and election addresses for national union elections was defeated by 2,524 to 4,224 on a card vote. Many delegates saw



SCPS and CPSA members picketing together. CPSA conference rejected a bureaucratic merger. A democratic union is vital to build a united union

this as a democratic proposal, as the present system does not allow for election addresses. The NEC opposed this, despite accusations from one delegate that the present system leads to deals being made in bars. One NEC member was heard to remark after this debate that "the cancer is spreading".

The NEC was censured for their insistence on readmitting to union membership two notorious scabs whom the Birmingham DHSS branch had refused to accept back after they had resigned

during the 1982 DHSS staffing dispute.

Resolutions criticising the NEC for their lack of activity in support of the miners' strike were excluded from the agenda by the Standing Orders Committee. But a resolution was passed criticising the NEC for failing to tell the membership of their £5,000 donation to the NUM, after the mover made it clear that he supported the strike, and believed that the union's support should not be hidden.

The Conference agenda is

ruthlessly controlled by the Standing Orders Committee, often resulting in discussion of non-controversial resolutions for long periods.

This Conference marks a turning point in the development of SCPS. The support shown for the Broad Left, if built on over the next year, gives an open and democratic Broad Left the opportunity for the first time to become a real force in the union.

By an SCPS conference delegate

Militant

New technology and Telecom Page 13

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Unity against pit closures

'PUT YOUR faith in Barnsley coal—we have', shouted the Coal Board advertisement in a glossy special supplement in the *Barnsley Chronicle*.

The Coal Board boasted of a secure future for pits "well into the next century".

This advert appeared a week after the shock announcement that Darfield Main pit was to be closed in September. Altogether the NCB wanted to shed 3,000 jobs by closing another pit, Emley Moor and merging a number of other collieries. Unemployment in the Barnsley area is already around 17% and the effect of these job losses will be to raise the figure to a horrifying 21.5%.

Coal Board promises

In July last year McGregor assured us the pit had a safe future. In a letter to local Labour MP Terry Patchett he also said that output from Darfield Main would produce a low cost product suitable for both industry and power stations. Ironically during the same week the Yorkshire Coal Board boasted they had recovered every customer lost during the strike.

The following week it was announced that once the new Drax B power station becomes fully operational its demand for coal would be greater than expected.

Over £20 million has been invested over the last few years to sink a new shaft to reserves in the Silkstone seam. The NCB now say that Houghton Main pit can exploit these reserves, but that at the moment they are unnecessary.

At the same time the NCB have announced that the Dunsil seam at Houghton Main is to close. They are trying to divide miners at Houghton and Darfield, two pits with a history of fighting

By a Darfield Main miner

as one. Even without Silkstone, reserves at Darfield Main are estimated at nearly 1 million tonnes.

With the development of the new seam, the machine availability time (MAT) i.e. the length of time a coalface machine can be run per shift would rise at Darfield Main to 400 minutes, making this one of the most productive pits in Yorkshire.

There seems no justification for closure. Is it coincidence that this was the most solid pit during the strike in the Barnsley area?

All unions at Darfield (NUM, COSA, NACODS and BACM) are united in fighting the closure. Unfortunately the Yorkshire area have not provided a lead other than promising a protest march in Barnsley. *Militant* supporters in the coalfield believe that this closure has to be fought by the whole Yorkshire NUM.

On 7 June the annual colliery review meeting takes place for South Yorkshire. Cortonwood's future will be discussed. Rumours have also begun in the local press over the future of Kilnhurst, Manvers, Cadeby, Wath, Dinnington and Brookhouse.

Mass campaign

We need to show the Coal Board we are still united in opposition to closures by organising a 24 hour strike on 7 June and lobbying the review meeting. This would unite the unions and bring the activists together in solidarity with all pits faced with closure or redundancies.

A campaign of public meetings, demonstrations, lobbies of parliament etc must be launched. Along with the mining unions and the womens' support groups local unions, Labour Parties, YS branches and community groups need to mobilise support to ensure the survival of these pits and our communities.



Miners at Horden Colliery, Durham, threatened with closure.

Photo: Jacob Sutton (Reflex)

THERE IS hatred and bitterness building up in both the North East coalfields, almost reaching explosion point, with the threatened closure of Bates and Horden collieries.

"If any of the Bates or Horden lads come here and throw a line across the gates I'll just go straight back home", said a Wearmouth miner.

In the town of Blyth (Northumberland) where Bates pit is situated almost the whole community are still seething about a particular in-

cident which happened during the national strike.

An older miner, who only had a few years to go before retiring, was persuaded by some youths to keep a look out whilst they collected some shingle off a slag heap to warm their homes. When the police came the youths escaped but the miner was not so lucky. After a lifetime down the pits and with no previous trouble whatsoever the NCB sacked him on the spot, thus losing all his retirement money. The old miner just broke down and cried.

This and other incidents have got whole communities boiling up in anger. As the Wearmouth miner said: "There's a fuse burning and someday that fuse is going to strike the gunpowder and when it does the whole of the North East is going to explode".

By Bob Harker
(Gateshead East Labour Party)

USDAW victory

THE HEADQUARTERS branch of the Union of Shop Distributive and Allied Workers Union (USDAW) has voted for Bill Connor, the Broad Left candidate for USDAW general secretary. This is a major victory for the Broad Left and will send shock waves throughout the union bureaucracy.

The branch is composed of national officials who negotiate for the membership at national level and the central office

clerical staff. Originally the branch nominated one of the right wing candidates, Garfield Davies, by a comfortable majority. He has used the central office vote widely in his propaganda.

This victory is an indication of the gathering momentum of Connor's campaign. All trade union activists are urged to step up their efforts to ensure a historic victory for the Broad Left in the country's sixth biggest union.

WORKERS IN Chile have approached *Militant* for solidarity with their struggle. We are asking all supporters to organise collections around the labour movement this weekend (1/2 June). For details see page 11

Militant Readers' Meeting for GMBATU and NCU delegates.
Speaker: Liverpool City Councillor at the Kings Arms, Talbot Road (opposite rail station), Blackpool, 8.00 pm, Tuesday 4 June.



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