

Inside...

Fight NHS privatisation
See Page 7

Printers call for action

● Sogat vote
3-2 NO

● NGA vote
4-1 NO

● AEU vote
2-1 NO

STRIKING PRINT workers have left Murdoch in no doubt what they think of his 'final' offer. They have voted overwhelmingly to reject it. This must be seen as a vote to step up action and win the strike.

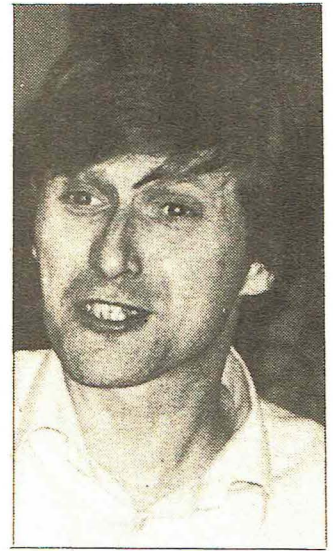
The print workers have been on strike for nearly five months. They want their jobs and union rights back at Wapping, not a cash bribe and Murdoch's cast-off premises.

The print boss got a double blow when *Sun* journalists voted to quit working at Wapping. A thousand workers at a rally in London welcomed the SOGAT, NGA and AEU votes and demanded that it should lead to action.

The leaderships' 'softly, softly' tactics have not worked, and activists are already discussing how to spread the action to Fleet Street, starting with a 24 hour stoppage. National print union leaders should make this their central call.

Sacked print workers should take 'combat groups' of strikers to Fleet Street to convince the workers there of the need for solidarity action. Every employer on the Street has started to follow Murdoch's example, every employee needs to be involved in the fight-back.

This must be coupled with a call by the print unions and the TUC for the biggest turnout yet



By Peter Jarvis
(London Region NGA)

at Wapping.

Murdoch should be hit through the profitable colour supplements. The unions must get the backing of workers in these firms by guaranteeing to support those who take action. Fleet Street printers should also refuse to handle the supplements.

The unions must hit hard at distribution. Rail workers have already shown solidarity in refusing to handle News International material, but the TGWU must also show the same determination to ensure road haulage firms do not scab. It is in the TGWU's own interest, as the strike-breaking drivers are sapping the organised strength of workers generally.

Murdoch has been taken aback by the determination of his ex-employees, and the strikers have been given new heart by the ballot results. A clear strategy from the leadership can give a new direction to the dispute and scupper Murdoch's plans to destroy the print unions.

Overthrow apartheid

HORRIFYING SCENES of bloodshed continued in Crossroads and KTC camps near Cape Town, as police-backed 'vigilantes' looted and razed whole areas that had been strongholds of struggle against the regime.

The young 'comrades' fought back like lions, but could not halt the combined onslaught of the reactionary 'Fathers' and the police. Tens of thousands of working people were forced to flee their shanty homes and watch their belongings go up in flames, bringing the number of homeless to 50,000 in two weeks of gun battles and hand-to-hand fighting.

To a country on edge as Soweto Day (16 June) approaches, these ruthless police methods are a warning of the lengths the regime will go to in its efforts to bring the mass movement under control.

The regime is probing the weaknesses of the movement. But a massive mobilisation of the black working people, and the building of a mass socialist ANC, could seize the initiative, to crush the bosses' counter-revolution and prepare for the armed conquest of power by the mass of working people.

SA workers prepare for confrontation

MONDAY 16 June, the tenth anniversary of the Soweto youth revolt in 1976, is set to become a day of major confrontation between the South African regime and the mass movement.

A one-day national strike has been called by the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), reflecting the militancy of the black youth, the United Democratic front (UDF) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

Building on the hugely successful national strike on May Day, this prepares the ground for a united mobilisation of the workers, the youth and the community organisations.

The revolutionary youth have been the driving force behind this day of action, originally called for as a three-day strike by the NECC at Easter. Now it has been echoed by the ANC leaders in exile.

The regime has reacted by banning all meetings to commemorate 16 June as well as Freedom Day on 26 June. It then tried to introduce an element of division by allowing church services on 16 June, called by the clergy under enormous mass pressure, to go ahead.

Trigger-happy

The hard-line reaction by the regime will encourage the trigger-happy police, and confronts the movement with a challenge that can only be met through massive and determined mobilisation.

Church leaders and liberals are trying to defuse the crisis by organising the delivery of masses of flowers to Soweto on the 16th. But this cannot extinguish the fires of struggle that will flare up around the country fuelled by mass unemployment, poverty wages, lack of housing and intolerable racial oppression continuing in spite of Botha's superficial reforms.

16 June will only be the second effective national strike in the history of South Africa. It will demonstrate to the black workers more clearly their decisive class power within the mass movement, and help to identify the problems that need to be solved in mobilising that power for the armed overthrow of the regime.

Organised on a clear programme for democracy and socialist transformation, the workers' movement will be

invincible. The struggles of 16 June will be significant as a step forward in this process, providing a basis for greater and even more conscious political struggles by the working class in the next period.

By George Collins

16 JUNE will be commemorated by millions of workers, youth and students, in countries around the world, to show solidarity with the black oppressed in South Africa.

Over the past two years, almost 2,000 blacks have been killed and tens of thousands arrested, tortured and maimed. 70 per cent of these were under 25 years old.

Youth in Britain must build fraternal links with the South African youth in the forefront of the struggle against apartheid and cheap labour.

In South London, LPYS branches have organised a solidarity rally on **Saturday 21 June** under the slogan "Support the struggle against apartheid". **Time: 2 to 5pm. Venue: Brixton Recreation Centre.** Nearest tube: Brixton.

Speakers have been invited from the NUM, Lambeth Anti-Apartheid Movement, Southern African Labour Education Project. **Linda Douglas** will speak on behalf of the LPYS NC.

LPYS branches in London should now work flat-out to build support for the rally and make sure there is a clear message of solidarity on 21 June with the struggle for a free, socialist South Africa.

By Mark Newman
(Rally Organiser)

PREPARE NOW FOR THE NATIONAL ANTI-APARTHEID DEMO ON SATURDAY 28 JUNE! Assemble at Hyde Park 11 am

Book places now on the AAM coach to London from your area!

Organise a follow-up meeting on South Africa in your area to make sure the spirit of 28 June is turned into new recruits for the LPYS and the Labour Party!

US telecoms strike

240,000 MEMBERS of the Communication Workers of America and the Electrical Workers are on strike against the attempts by the American Telephone and Telegraph Co, which is trying to inflict wage and benefit cuts, writes Marjorie Clouser.

Messages of support to: 1. Communication Workers of America, 1925K Street NW, Washington DC 20006. 2. CWA Local 9410, 2nd Street, San Francisco, Ca 94105. 3. Marjorie Clouser, 354 Horizon Way, Pacifica, Ca 94044.



Alliance's nuclear splits

THE PUBLIC split between the Liberals and the SDP over nuclear arms, has exposed the tensions that in the longer term will blow the Alliance apart.

A special defence commission was set up to paper over the nuclear cracks between the two. Its report took a carefully neutral stance on whether or not to replace the ageing Polaris missiles. But an enraged David Owen launched into the fudged report, firing the standard Tory arguments about Britain's need for an independent nuclear deterrent.

David Steel's personal differences with the Owen line may not be that great. After all when the 1983 Liberal

Assembly opposed nuclear weapons, he defiantly declared he was not bound by it. But it is precisely the unilateralist sentiments and radical tinge within the Liberal Party, that have forced him to take a stand.

Williams

Ironically it was Labour's commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament that was one of the issues on which the original SDP traitors split away. Now even Shirley Williams, alarmed at the electoral damage of Alliance disunity, and no doubt personally peeved by Owen's arrogance, is criticising him. But a suitably comic note is struck by former Communist Party member

Sue Slipman fawning before Owen's words in a rambling letter to the *Guardian* (10 June 1986).

While the Liberal leaders appear somewhat akin to the Tory wets, Owen on every issue is virtually indistinguishable from the hardline Tories. As the nuclear argument illustrates, in the event of a hung parliament Owen would happily provide the Tories with a new majority. Whereas Steel could only do so on pain of destroying his party.

For workers of course neither of these two big-business financed parties can be trusted. Only a majority socialist Labour government will do.

By Jeremy Birch

NF beaten off in Liverpool

OVER 800 people came out on the streets of Liverpool to oppose a planned National Front demonstration to make sure that the fascists were kept off the streets. Only 30 to 50 fascists turned up, and managed to march a couple of hundred yards.

Tony Mulhearn, addressing the anti-NF rally said: "The aim of the fascist organisations, like the NF, is to weaken the labour movement by setting worker against worker, and ultimately to completely

smash the labour and trade union movement."

Robby Owens, LPYS national committee for Merseyside appealed to black and Asian youth.

"The LPYS holds out its hands to black and Asian and other ethnic minority youth. We say don't stand aside—only the organised labour and trade union movement can defeat the racists and fascists."

After the speakers had finished, the rally marched off to the Town Hall where the fascists were reported to be attempting to gather.

As the mass of the

demonstrators marched down Dale Street the fascists were attempting to march down a parallel street. A small group of *Militant* supporters who were separated from the main body of the march encountered them as they came near to Moorfield station. One member of the BNP threatened them with a knife. The police arrested two members, including Joe Owens, a well-known fascist, who was arrested for the third time in three months for offences involving either offensive weapons or violent attacks on socialists.

Paying the penalty

WORLD CUP commentators have been struck mercifully dumb by another appalling performance by our team, writes our man in the Mexico stadium.

The manager, known to the locals, as "El Kinnochio" has dropped all left wingers and taken to a 11-00-00 formation with no attack and a "sensible commitment to defence". They will concentrate on playing on the right and centre of the pitch to try and confuse the opposition.

A few years back the manager, a master tactician, kept ace striker Scargill isolated with no service, on the grounds that he kept on knocking down the opposition goal posts and getting bad write-ups in the *Daily Telegraph*.

Followers of the team were sick as parrots when they found out that left winger Tony Mulhearn had not been sent off by the referee, but by the manager. He was accused of running down the left flank and taking on opponents.

Usually unreliable sources in the dug-out believe the manager originally tried to base his style on Alf Ramsey but had imitated Ramsey MacDonald by mistake.

Kremlin welcomes Waldheim victory

THE ELECTION victory of Dr Kurt Waldheim as President of Austria for the next six years has sent shockwaves through Jewish organisations and the international labour movement.

Waldheim managed to win 53.9 per cent of the vote, despite the discovery by an Austrian journalist that he had served the Nazi regime as an intelligence officer in Yugoslavia and Greece between 1941 and 1944.

At the very least Waldheim is known to have served with the German army during its reign of terror in the Balkans. But prior to these revelations Waldheim covered up his past completely, claiming to have spent those years studying.

Scandalously, however, the Soviet Union's news agency TASS has praised Waldheim's record at the United Nations and stated that Washington and 'Zionist circles' had mounted an 'unseemly' campaign against him to try and influence the presidential election!

This statement comes from a country which lost almost 20 million people fighting the Nazis in the Second World War.

The main factor in Waldheim's election is the record of the present socialist government and its attacks on workers.

The socialist chancellor has since resigned, after the poor showing of the socialist presidential candidate.

By Anne McKay

Edinburgh's soft lefts turned sour

FOUR OUT of the six Edinburgh Constituency Labour Parties have passed resolutions condemning the Labour Group's move to oust left-winger Alex Wood against the district party's recommendations.

Labour Party members feel that some councillors wish the group to become an autonomous, unaccountable body but it is clear that they will not have it all their own way.

Edinburgh District Labour Party suffered a similar move in 1981 when

right wingers in the Labour Group ignored a DLP recommendation. It was only after pressure from rank and file members from below, and in the movement generally, that they backed down. Ironically it was the then left-wing Labour Coordinating Committee, and its main spokesman Mark Lazarowicz, now elected as the group's leader, who were most prominent in the campaign against the group's decision then. At the time they argued that the group should adhere to DLP

decisions.

Now however, in line with the LCC nationally which is veering to the right, it is their leading representatives like Lazarowicz who are trying to turn their backs on the DLP and make the Labour Group unaccountable.

The first act of the new leadership was to meet Tory Scottish Secretary of State, Malcolm Rifkind to reassure him that the group was not seeking confrontation. Not surprisingly Rifkind seems likely to give short shrift to such approaches and the

council's financial difficulties will remain. Many Labour Party members will remember the fiery speeches made at Scottish Labour Party conference by prominent LCC members like Lazarowicz on the need to fight Tory attacks on local government. It was only as recently as March 1985 that an article was written in the *Scottish Labour Activist* publication on the need to "stand firm against government attacks". Now Lazarowicz and the LCC are backtracking and this whole

episode confirms the suspicions of many rank and file members towards the LCC—fine speeches but either no action or about-turns when in positions of influence.

It will also bring home the need for a fighting socialist programme involving all party members, with democratic control over the Labour Group to ensure that the continued attacks on jobs and services in local government are defeated.

By Eddie Donaghy

Hatton hounded

DEREK HATTON could be forced out of his job by council officials in right wing Labour controlled Knowsley Council.

He has sent in his resignation because the existing agreement allowing him sufficient time off for his responsibilities as deputy leader of Liverpool city council has been torn up. Now he would be compelled to clock on and off.

"I am disappointed," Derek said "that the Knowsley group have allowed such a maverick chief officer to get away with what he has got away with. Nevertheless I feel it is far more important that I spend the time in Liverpool ensuring jobs and services for the people of the city".

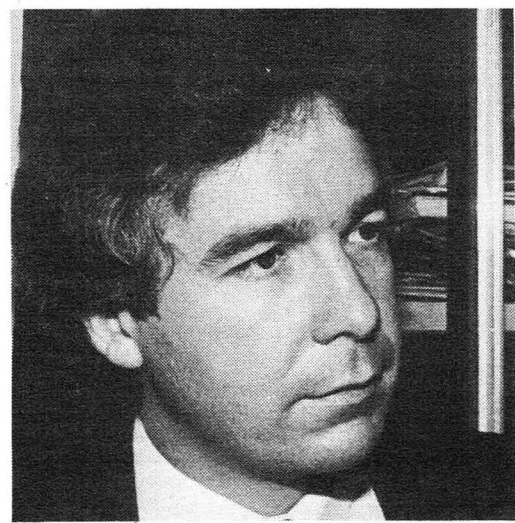
Hundreds of Labour councillors throughout the country are employed by nearby Labour councils, with amicable arrangements for fulfilling their council duties. Indeed seven other Liverpool City Councillors have jobs with Knowsley, and their working practices are not apparently being altered.

For the crime of fighting for socialism and defending Liverpool workers, Derek Hatton could be punished three times—losing his job, being surcharged and removed from office by the High Court, and then expelled from the Labour Party. The right and soft left on Labour's NEC really should be proud of themselves!

By a Militant reporter



Labour Party Young Socialists marched seven miles from health minister Norman Fowler's Sutton Coldfield constituency to Birmingham city centre, protesting about cuts in social security benefits. They were addressed at a rally by Kevin McHugh, a leading member of the CPSA broad left, and John Ellen, LPYS national committee chair.



PHIL HOLT, the National Communications Union broad left candidate in the elections for general secretary, has been nominated at his union's conference as the candidate for Labour's NEC, beating the right wing candidate. The place was previously held by right wing witch-hunter John Golding, who is now NCU general secretary. (See page 14).

Militant gets cash from meetings

AN ANTI-witch-hunt meeting organised by *Militant* supporters in Ellesmere Port raised £66 for the fighting fund. It was addressed by expelled Liverpool councillor Tony Mulhearn and Richard Venton, also threatened with expulsion. When an appeal for £1 from the unwaged was made two pensioners got up and gave £5 and £3.

A *Militant* public meeting in Stirling raised £46 for the paper's funds. Tricia Moore from Motherwell LPYS graphically described life for young people in Thatcher's Britain and it was mainly young people who came to the meeting, wanting to do something about it.

Pat Wall endorsed by NEC

LONGSTANDING Marxist Pat Wall has been endorsed by Labour's national executive as prospective parliamentary candidate for Bradford North.

The vote was carried by 24 to nil, with only two abstentions: Ken Cure and Gwyneth Dunwoody.

Pat Wall would already be MP for Bradford North had it not been for Labour renegade MP Ben Ford, who stood as an independent candidate in the last general election and split the Labour vote. He refused to renounce his support for the fundamental ideas of *Militant* as expressed by Clause IV of the party constitution.

This is a victory for the left and all those who oppose the witch-hunt in the party. Unfortunately the NEC then went on to expel three party members from Roy Hattersley's Sparkbrook constituency. They were charged with organising a black section and accusing the right wing of committing irregularities in recruiting large numbers of members.

Meanwhile ex-left David Blunkett seems eager to see the expulsion of *Militant* supporters from the party. He is urging the NEC to push on with the expulsion of Derek Hatton and Felicity Dowling in their absence. He suggests the NEC should write to them saying that the excuses they have given for not being able to attend are insufficient. So much for a fair hearing.

By Soraya Lawrence



LAST WEEK British workers saw the true face of the Tory party's respect for parliamentary democracy.

Tam Dalyell, a member of the Campaign Group of Labour MPs had won the ballot for the private member's motion to be put on Friday morning. Dalyell had let it known that this motion was to be a vigorous condemnation of the policies of Thatcher and the Tories over the past seven years. In particular, he was intent on exposing Thatcher's secretive and deceitful conduct in the course of the Falklands War, the Westlands affair and the bombing of Libya.

The Tories were intent on protecting Thatcher and the government as a whole from these attacks.

However, they were unwilling to debate the issues and so protected her by rambling on about the Channel Tunnel. This ensured that Dalyell's motion was abandoned through lack of time.

It is ironic that the government, who were promoting "freedom of speech in the universities" earlier in the week, were, only a few days later, obstructing the rights of MPs to do likewise in the House of Commons. Parliamentary democracy is obviously an expendable concept when the Tories are threatened by it.

Let us hope that the Parliamentary Labour Party will take up Dalyell's motion themselves and that the exposure of the Tories and the calling for Thatcher's resignation is not just left up to the left wing members of the Campaign Group but becomes the clear purpose of the Labour leadership as well.

By Terry Fields MP

For sixty years, a Marxist and activist

TYNESIDE MILITANT supporter Jack Rawling is 80 years old this week. Ed Waugh spoke to Jack about his political experiences:

I'VE BEEN a conscious socialist and class fighter since 1934 when as a young unemployed man on Tyneside I was forced to "get on my bike" and travel south to get a job.

It was while working on building sites in Hastings that I was given a copy of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* and on the basis of the Marxist arguments contained in the book I decided to get active and joined the ILP.

I returned to Tyneside just as war was looming. The ILP took a pacifist stance but I opposed this. War is a class question so my attitude was if I was called up I

would go to the front and agitate for socialism. On the other side of the coin I was appalled at the nationalistic stance of the Labour Party.

In 1941 I read *Socialist Appeal*, the paper of the Revolutionary Communist Party, for the first time. It was the comrades around *Socialist Appeal* who organised the apprentices' strike in 1944 against the conscription of apprentices into the mines as "Bevin Boys". For two weeks we intervened, advising the apprentices and selling *Socialist Appeal*. The strike, which was based on the Tyne around Swan Hunters' shipyard, spread as far as Glasgow. The bosses were worried...so they had four leading RCP members arrested. Three were sentenced for 12 months, 6 months and 3 months on 'conspiracy'

charges but were released from prison after 3 months. As you can imagine there was a terrible witch-hunt in the press at that time who launched a vitriolic attack on "unpatriotic Marxists".

After the war we saw the return of a Labour government. We expected socialism, I joined the Labour Party in 1948. After 17 years of post-war Labour governments we are back to the bad old days. I've carried the banner of Marxism in the Labour Party for almost 40 years.

First meeting

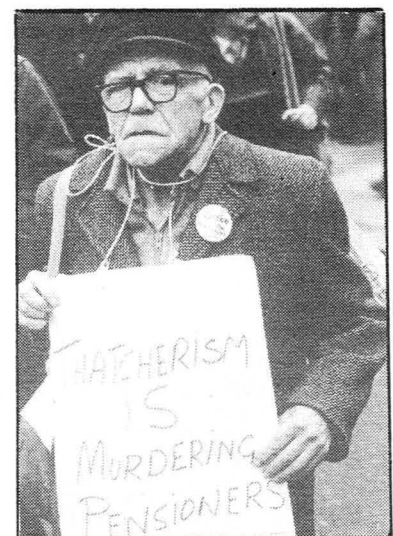
I remember the first issue of the *Militant* in 1964. It was four pages of inspiring content. In 1965 we held our first *Militant* readers' meeting in Gateshead. A young Peter Taaffe spoke and eight at-

tended. We've come a long way since then, and 1,000 attended a *Militant* rally at the Newcastle City Hall recently when an older Peter Taaffe and Derek Hatton spoke. I was proud that night.

You know, even the old inter-war Labour Party would have welcomed the events in Liverpool. Kinnock failed to support the miners and Liverpool and is now trying to get rid of the Red Flag. He won't get away with it. The witch-hunt is a disgrace. It's totally against the socialist foundations of the early Labour Party.

On reflection my 60 years as an activist have been frustrated many times by the right wing who are only interested in their own office and prepared to sell workers down the river.

We need more Marxists in the



Jack Rawling, a Labour Party member for 40 years.

Labour Party. The future of the labour movement is in the hands of the youth. They must inspire all workers in their efforts to create a socialist society.

Militant

Editor: Peter Taaffe
Militant, 3-13 Hepscoth Road London E9 5HB.
Phone: 01-533 3311.

Socialism relevant to unions now

THE VOTE by the print workers to reject Murdoch's offer was a crushing answer to those who have written premature obituaries for the fighting spirit of the trade union movement. Against all expectations, the activists took the campaign to the members and proved that when the issues are made clear and a lead given, workers can be persuaded to resist the temptation to sell their jobs.

The combativity of the Wapping pickets contrasts with the defeatism of the higher layers of the union leadership, typified in two recent publications by the general secretary of the General, Municipal and Boilermakers' Union, John Edmonds, and the industrial organiser of the Communist Party, Pete Carter.

Carter's pamphlet, *Trade unions: the new reality*, opens with a gloom-laden view of the unions today—“major blows... serious setbacks and defeats”. Edmonds' article, “Uniting the fragments”, in *New Socialist* points to the decline in union membership as a result of high unemployment and a shift to part-time employment, mainly of women, in low-paid jobs: “Unions—let's face it—haven't been able to stop poverty pay and appalling conditions in these areas”. “At the moment”, says Edmonds, “trade unions are in danger of finding themselves utterly irrelevant to the needs of workers in that changing society”. “The trade union movement” says Carter, “has too limited a vision. It has no long-term strategy which enables it to fit into the '80s”.

But if, as they both argue, unions lack relevance amongst part-timers, women, ethnic minorities and workers in new technology, the fault lies with trade union leaders who have not recruited them. Edmonds says “that unions should put themselves forward as the champions of the new exploited workers”. But his proposals do not go beyond words about “rights”—to fair wages, secure employment, equal pay and free association. These will only ever be won through struggle, as the print workers are bitterly learning. When union leaders are seen to be leading such struggles, unorganised workers will move into action.

Both Carter and Edmonds advocate unions getting involved in the community, “from sports centres to rock concerts”. This is their strategy to win the popularity they believe unions have lost, rather than leading struggles in defence of jobs and wages.

Carter attacks the ‘new realism’ of the right wing but reserves his main fire for “the hard left grouping”, defined as “the alliance between the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, the Communist Campaign Group and the *Morning Star* and which on some issues lines up with the *Militant* Tendency”. Ignoring the major differences between the groups within this “alliance”, Carter accuses them all over operating on four rigid principles: “no compromise, no retreats, no sacrifice and socialism as the immediate answer to the pressing problems which the labour movement has to tackle here and now”.

Despite his crude over-simplification, union militants will applaud the principles he is condemning. The defeats which Carter and Edmonds bemoan have come about precisely because too many union leaders have been willing to “sacrifice” their members' jobs by “retreats” and “compromise” and for whom socialism is never an answer to workers' problems.

Carter explicitly rejects socialist policies: “Any manifesto which calls for the nationalisation of 200 companies and the banks, or the removal of Britain from NATO in its first year of office and that the socialist state must be achieved in the first five years, will play right into the hands of the Tories”.

Carter sees no possibility of convincing workers of the need for socialism. He argues that unions should restrict their demands to “practical proposals”, by building up “a bloc of social forces united by common interests and concerns, and thus begin to isolate the government and deprive it of its allies”.

His idea of an “anti-Thatcher alliance” implies that it is the ideology of one individual which is responsible for the new wave of attacks on trade unionism rather than the class she represents. But the capitalist class will continue to dictate such policies to any future Tory leader and to a Labour government which is not prepared to challenge its power and wealth. Without the socialist transformation of society there can be no prospect of Carter's ‘popular’ and ‘practical’ policies ever being carried out.

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Labour's purge handbook

LABOUR'S RIGHT in its frenzy to expel Marxists, has ignored all restraints, like natural justice, fair hearings and the party rule book. Party members under threat have even been forced to defend their rights in the courts. Now the NEC is drawing up new procedures to try to avoid these pitfalls. MIKE WADDINGTON examines their proposals.

ANYONE FACING disciplinary charges should note that the NEC is recommending that local parties take no action before the annual conference, where the NEC “will lay down a new much simplified (disciplinary) process”.

“A further complication”, the proposals continue, “is a possible demand for retrospective action for cases heard prior to this procedure being arrived at”. This admission totally vindicates the seven cases that had to go to the High Court to find “freedom and fairness”, at a cost of £30,000! There have been 38

expulsions (not including the three from Liverpool DLP) under the now admitted unfair procedures. They must all be reinstated immediately.

The new procedure finally concedes that local party Executive Committees cannot initiate disciplinary action. The General Committee has to first instruct the EC to consider any evidence. This will stop right wing ECs railroading expulsions through.

From now it will take a minimum of eight weeks to expel an individual. One week's notice will be required for the GC to con-

sider action. If it considers there is a case to answer, another week is needed to convene an EC. Then a further three weeks' notice must be given for a special hearing, and three more for the calling of a GC to decide on action. In Sheffield Attercliffe six were precipitately expelled after an EC held one hour before the GC!

Attend hearings

The procedure also recommends that EC members who attend hearings should not attend the subsequent full GC meeting. Cases like those of four Isle of Wight

party members expelled with a majority provided by EC members participating, could not have gone ahead.

These basic restatements of the democratic rights of members under natural justice, have been forced on a reluctant right-wing NEC, but it has dashed the right's hopes for ‘midnight raids’.

“It is clear”, says the document, “that parties are going to need a great deal of advice in how to carry out this difficult and tortuous process”. Perhaps the NEC would be better served encouraging parties to get on with the ‘easier’ job of fighting the Tories instead.



Party members protesting outside the NEC's expulsion hearings.

Party officials call halt

LABOUR GENERAL Secretary Larry Whitty has finally recognised that it is foolish to pretend that concentration on “the internal affairs of the party have not been a major diversion from achieving some of our aims.”

Just as the NEC limbered up to expel more Liverpool socialists, he told the *Guardian* it would have been better to have reformed the local party before prosecuting individuals. But he admitted there is a “near obsession with Liverpool.”

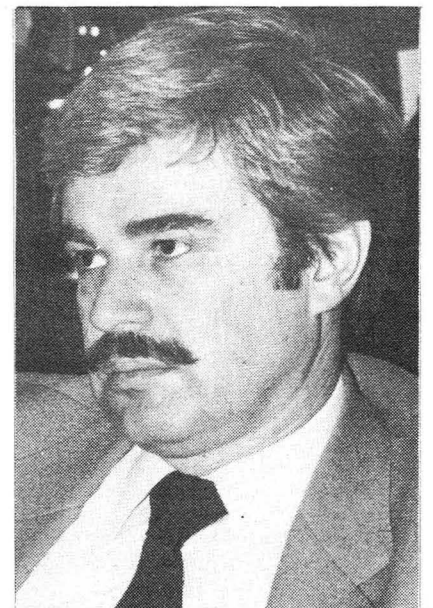
Ironically printed above the interview is a photograph of Neil Kinnock with Whitty. It is the party leader who is obsessed with Liverpool and *Militant*, and the General Secretary is going as far as he can publicly to rebuke this purge mentality.

Whitty believes the new disciplinary

rules are necessary because the present set are not “adequate to restrain authoritarian moves by sections of the party who happen to be in control at any particular time”. The ‘section’ currently ‘in control’ is the party leadership, intent on purging socialist policy commitments, and those party members who will resist most fiercely.

Whitty's public weariness with expulsions reflects the exasperation of the regional organisers, who complained to the NEC about the large amount of time they were having to devote to disciplinary appeals.

But perhaps Larry Whitty, with a little more foresight than others, does not want to finish up occupying a place of dishonour in Labour's history books, for having presided over the party's most damaging internal war.



A tired looking Larry Whitty, fed with with the witch-hunting atmosphere.

Executive's appealing procedures?

ALSO UNDER scrutiny is the appeals procedure for party members who have been expelled. This year's NUPE conference passed a resolution demanding that the party adopt an appeals' procedure “which is socialist and operates in line with the principles of natural justice”, and will be pushing this at the party conference.

Significantly the NUPE proposition came from Sheffield, where David Blunkett is a NUPE member. He wrote to the NEC in January when the majority of Sheffield Labour Parties were opposing the Attercliffe expulsions, expressing concern at the way the appeals were being handled.

Blunkett and the other ex-lefts are showing considerable discomfort over their role as expellers, and are trying to find a procedural way out. If there is to be a witch-hunt, let it be done painlessly, without any blood on their hands. The

Tribunal

NEC decided in February to set up a panel to hear appeals, where the NEC itself would not be involved at all. Regional executives were requested to provide nominees.

The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, in a model resolution they are circulating for annual conference, call for a national appeals tribunal to be elected by conference, with representatives from each of the NEC's own electoral divisions. Provided there was the maximum openness

of this body, with regular reports and accountability to the rank and file, it could be supported.

But the main point is being missed. The objection to expulsions has not just been that the procedures have run foul of the requirements of natural justice, but that they are trying to deal with political ideas and differences by administrative decree.

The NEC are also trying to simplify the charges and lower the burden of proof required, inventing a new charge along the lines of

“bringing the party into disrepute”. Would disagreeing with a Labour government's policies be considered disreputable?

Anyone who considers themselves on the left should be more concerned with fighting the right's political witch-hunts, than trying to smooth its procedures. But whatever procedural changes are made to ‘deodorise’ political attacks, they will not work. The resistance of the rank and file generated during the current attacks will increase.

MIDLANDS/SOUTH WEST Birmingham 14-15 June 1986
Courses on: Marxism and the trade unions, Theory of Marxism, Russian Revolution, Colonial Revolution and Imperialism, Women and the struggle for socialism, Ireland.
Speakers include: Ted Grant and Jeremy Birch.
Film: To Die in Madrid (Spain 1936), rally, disco, bar, crêche.
Cost £6 (£4 unwaged), weekend, £3 (£2 unwaged) one day
Summerfield Community Centre, Dudley Rd/Winson Green Rd, Winson Green, Birmingham. Starts 10am Sat, ends 4.30pm Sunday.

Double standard in Kinnock's court

PETER HAIN, figurehead of the once left-wing Labour Co-ordinating Committee (LCC) never misses the opportunity to attack the policies of this paper, or of the Liverpool Labour Party.

Recently he has claimed to want to improve links at local level between the Labour Party and the trade unions.

His audacity is startling since in Liverpool the LCC's 'concern' was to object to trade unions affiliating directly to the District Labour Party, complaining they had a 'disproportionate influence'. But in Liverpool trade union delegates with those from the local Labour Parties determined the programme of the city council Labour Group and backed up the council's stand

against the Tory government. This rank-and-file control over the councillors, is now being demanded by rank and file members in many parts of the country.

Putney is the stronghold of the LCC and Hain is the prospective parliamentary candidate. But here, the local party, in the only ward which elected Labour councillors in May, has complained about the undemocratic practices of the local government committee, the body which in London is supposed to play the same role as District Labour Parties elsewhere. The ward party calls upon the Putney constituency Party: "to give a higher priority to local government matters in general".

Putney is in the London Borough of Wandsworth which, against all the forecasts, Labour failed to win in the local elections.

The Wandsworth election agent, in a serious attempt to be positive about the defeat, says in his report: "A well-run and visually exciting campaign... yet we lost both the council and ILEA elections... campaign material was bountiful and beautiful, but lacking in clearly establishing what the Labour Party stands for in local politics beyond generally 'caring'."

Resolution

Perhaps we can understand why this is the case if we look at the Putney Labour Party's decisions of 8 April. A Young Socialists' resolution which called on "This party to condemn the decision of the manifesto priorities conference not to freeze council rents for at least one year" was defeated.

Yet a resolution was carried

which called on the Labour Party "to reaffirm its opposition to buying your own council property at up to 60 per cent discount, when there is a desperate shortage of decent property to rent in the public sector". Any socialist would support this. But in Thatcher's 'model' borough of privatisation and rent increases it became cheaper to pay off a mortgage than pay rent. To cut that option off and then threaten another rent increase in the first year of Labour control is not a welcome prospect.

The Wandsworth agent relates: "Our greatest achievement was to regain our lost 1983 votes. But this was proved to be not enough when the Liberal/SDP voters switched to the Conservatives. The main reason for this—as in 1982—the rates". This relates to the concessions given by the Tory government to Wandsworth and their cuts in services which has enabled them to keep the rates down.

In their propaganda the Tories compared this to the neighbouring Lambeth, where previous Labour administrations had seen the solution to their financial problems in large rate increases. In one road on the border this led to people paying £200 more rates on the Lambeth side than the Wandsworth side.

High rate rises would also have been the solution of Kinnock, Hain and the LCC's house journal *Tribune* for Liverpool, if the electorate had allowed them.

Labour members will be justified in drawing the conclusion that there is something to hide, when Kinnock's entourage with maximum publicity can 'research' statistics to discredit the Labour victory in Liverpool while Labour's failure in Wandsworth is swept under the carpet.

Maybe they would have discovered why the second best chance of a Labour gain was lost by 50 votes by Mike Gapes, former student bureaucrat and campaigner against the LPYS and *Militant*.

Hain needs to look again at some of his own words in 1980, a couple of years after he had joined Labour

from the Liberals quoted here from *Rank and file* by Hugh Jenkins (the MP for Putney until 1979):

"There is a certain amount of what you might call symbolic posturing; for example, if you want to be respectable in the Labour Party you virtually have to say you are 'of the left'; those are the opening few words to your sentence before you expound your view. It becomes a cloak behind which all sorts of confusions and problems have to be sorted out".

Putney history

Jenkins himself draws some lessons about the history of the Putney Party in the book, concerning NEC inquiries, the censuring of the party, and disbanding of the YS in the early '60s. When the right wing complained that CND had taken it over, he says:

"We took the view that provided we avoided going for the middle of the road and presented ourselves at the full pitch of our socialist beliefs, we had a chance of winning. This conviction was, and is, against the whole tide of political wisdom inside and outside the Labour Party. But the evidence suggests that we were correct and that those who go for the safe centre impress no one..."

"... Only a politician who is being attacked by the enemy can generate support among his own people. Support in the national newspapers or locally is therefore to be avoided since the press and the media are generally classified by Labour voters as belonging to the establishment. By this means a good turn-out of workers may be assured and since they are the opinion-formers in the community, they will see to it that the non-politicals get to the polls."

Peter Hain and his acolytes as well as their mentor Neil Kinnock will ignore these lessons at their peril.

By Keith Dickinson



Tories humiliate young people

THE FOLLOWING letter was sent to Dave Nellist MP, by a YTS trainee.

"THE 1980s would seem to be the decade of 'Let's humiliate young people'."

"What with student grants being cut all the time, the legislation which forces unemployed young people to change accommodation every two weeks, they now want to abolish wage councils as well. Are we worth nothing at all? In case anyone has forgotten, we are tomorrow's leaders."

"Even without the abolition of wage councils, a 16 year old is expected to work for as little as £32 a week. This is virtually forcing youngsters to live at home until—and if—they can afford to move away."

"I intend to leave home at 18 but perhaps I won't be able to. If I manage to get a place at university or college, I will have to survive on a small grant—my parents certainly can't afford to give me much. If I get a job, it would seem doubtful that I will earn enough to live away from home."

"This is grossly unfair. Jobs don't come knocking on the door, especially not under the present government. The only job opportunities—and little

enough at that—are in the cities. But how can young people live in the cities if they are not being paid enough to survive?"

"The answer to the problems of young people certainly isn't YTS. YTS does not necessarily pay more than the dole—I know people who would get more on the dole, but can't stand the boredom."

"Neither is the abolition of wage councils the answer. It doesn't mean jobs will be created, but does mean that employers will take on the same number of young people as they normally would, and pay out even less money."

"Everybody has the right to a decent wage, young people included. Just because we are less experienced doesn't mean we are capable of living on a pittance."

"Between 1906 and 1914 the government introduced reforms like the minimum wage. This reform, along with others are being slashed by the Tories who seem intent on taking us back to the Victorian period. Now I know what they mean by 'one step forward, and two steps back'."

Universities under threat from Tories

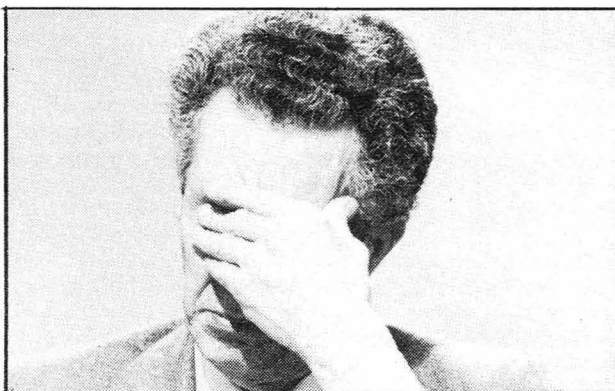
SIR KEITH Joseph, prophet, genius, the brains behind the Tory government.

This is how the serious press have variously seen the previous minister of education. A man frustrated that his innovations couldn't be fully realised because of lack of resources.

In reality Sir Keith's brief was to 'rationalise' and 'restructure' education to tailor it to the pay-your-way philosophy of the Tories.

The result has been huge cuts in education spending—a 20 per cent drop in spending since 1980. In the same period 20,000 university places have been lost. 9,500 places in polytechnics are threatened unless £23 million is found, says a government body.

Spending is now being cut at the rate of two per cent a year. Next year will see the biggest round of cuts since 1981 and 18 universities will receive less money than last year. Eleven will get the university grants commission's minimum, a cut of 0.5 per cent. Even those which get an increase, such as Warwick with 4.03 per cent more, will have to make cuts because the increase fails to keep pace with rising costs.



Joseph may well hold his head, after the damage he has done to education.

Grants will now be provided not according to educational needs but on the performance of research done by university departments. These will be graded as outstanding, above average, average, and below average. Those with the best grade will receive more grant. Those with a low grade will be threatened with 'rationalisation'—the coded word for closure.

Reduce courses

Hull and Lancaster for example have been advised to concentrate their resources on their 'strengths' and reduce the number of courses available. Keele fairs badly all over. It has no 'outstanding' areas and 13 areas are 'below average'—it gets the maximum cut of 0.5 per cent.

Before his departure Sir Keith dangled the carrot of more money if rationalisation went ahead. But the leaked figure of £180 million was dismissed by the chairman of the university grants commission as "too little too late". The idea of cuts now for more tomorrow is not acceptable.

Significantly Salford has been congratulated and urged to "keep along your different path". In 1981 Salford suffered a 40 per cent cut in resources, and as a result turned towards alternative methods of funding. Now 35 per cent of its funding comes from private sector sources—in other words big business. This is undoubtedly the pattern that the Tories would like to see throughout higher education.

More disturbing is the

possibility of a whole university closing down. The chairman of the UGC has said: "The government must either provide more money or decide which institutions are to be struck from the grants list". According to the *Observer* (1 June) Bristol University is about to go bankrupt. It is estimated that at least half the universities will have bank overdrafts by the end of the decade. Although the government may not be keen to directly close a university, there is no indication that it will intervene to save one from bankruptcy. Cardiff University for example, which is about to merge with The University of Wales Institute of Science and Technology, will have a deficit of £8 million by 1989/90. It has been reported that the UGC has threatened to withhold funding which would result in the closure of the college.

The Tories view higher education not in terms of its value to society and educational needs, but in terms of the contribution to the profits of big business. Only those courses, and those universities which are most beneficial to these interests will be supported. Any extraneous facilities will be allowed to rot away.

By John Jennings

Tories whip up convoy fear

"WAR ON smellies", was the Daily Star's 'final solution' to the hippy convoy. Fleet Street has been demanding the toughening up of public order and trespass laws and social security checks.

By Jeremy Birch

While many workers will be dubious of the hippies' life-style, they should beware of Tory hypocrisy. Minor government minister Selwyn Gummer went to lecture the convoy about finding a job. Perhaps some would if the same government had not destroyed 2 million jobs.

The Tories are persecuting the young unemployed, forcing those in bed and breakfast accommodation to move on every few weeks. Some of them, seeing no future and without hope, could end up on this convoy.

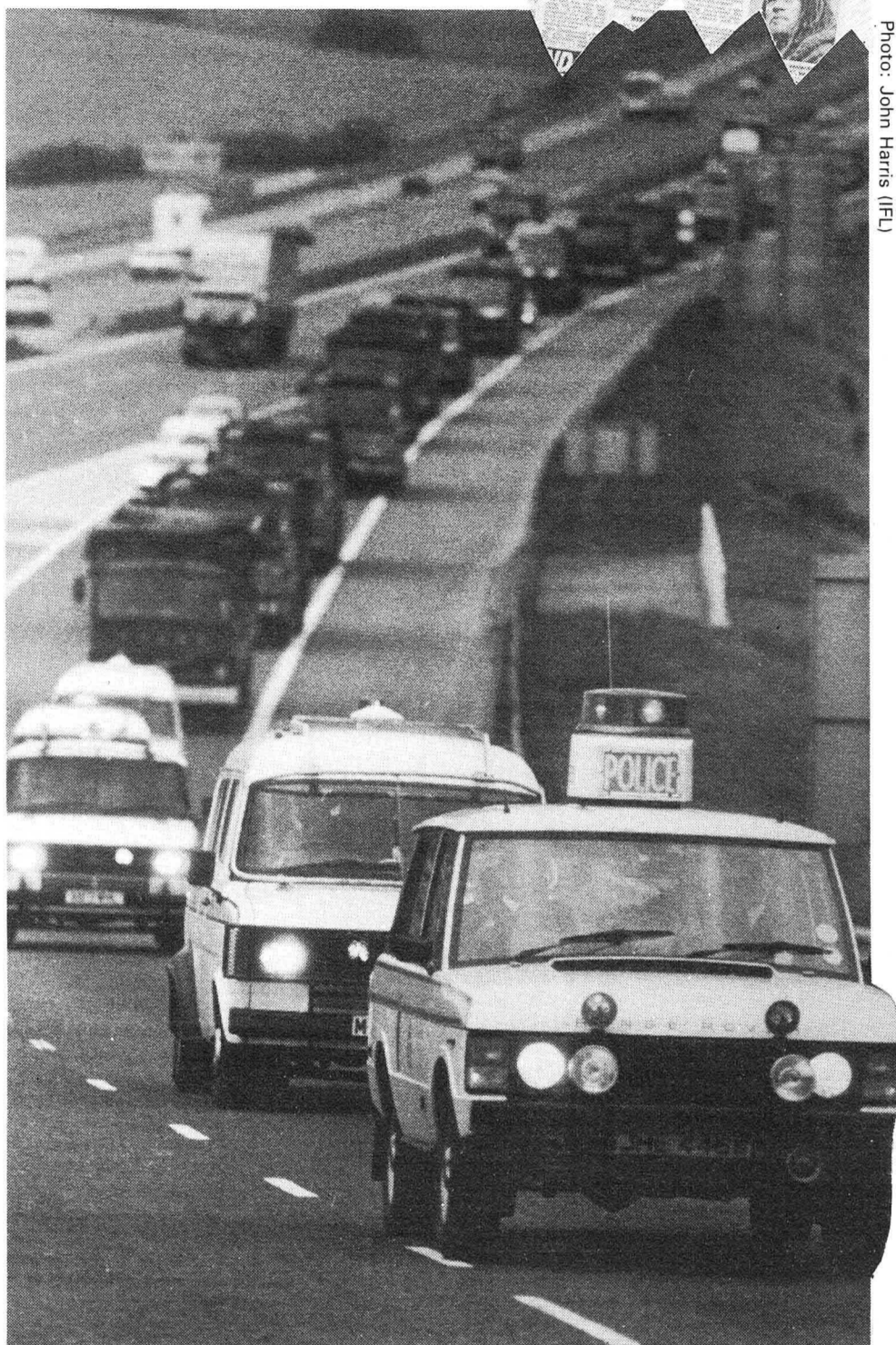
The police who have chased it from one county to another, complain that the convoy is a hazard on the roads. But what about the convoys being escorted by the police out of Fort Wapping each night, reportedly breaking speed limits and bearing no number plates.

Weren't the daily convoys of hundreds of lorries at a time, carrying scab coal to Llanwern steel works, a threat to motorway safety? Were the police interested in checking the roadworthiness and overloading of those vehicles, or was defying the miners' pickets more important?

Some rural Tory MPs and police officers believe that there can be open season to attack anyone with an unconventional way of life. Grouse in August, hippies now. Last year police ran riot attacking the hippies' festival, smashing vehicle windscreens, etc. When members of the convoy were brought to court several cases were thrown out.

Now the Tories may try to use lack of public sympathy for the hippies to introduce strict new legislation which could then be used against the labour movement or anyone else they believe steps out of line.

Thatcher has called for a review of the laws of



An earlier convoy the Tories approved of, taking coke to Scunthorpe in the coal strike. The cabinet discussed how to make life difficult for the hippy convoy for half an hour.

trespass. It has been suggested that it could be made a criminal and not a civil offence, which could be used, for example, against factory occupations.

Apparently a social security officer is in tow to check the convoy's claims. But Tory ministers will be happy to use it as an excuse to beef up the fraud investigators and the harassment of ordinary claimants, especially young people, many of

whom do move around. Local authorities provide sites for more traditional gypsy travellers. Why cannot a site be provided for the convoy's annual gathering? Local farmers are understandably incensed, but the hippies have rights too. After all if the government's new superstar Richard Branson was organising a commercial pop festival, would the road blocks still go up?

When the bucks ran out in Bucks

TORY CONTROLLED Buckinghamshire council plans to abolish school meals for most of the county's 90,000 school children. Those entitled to free meals will get sandwiches. 1,500 kitchen staff and dinner ladies will be sacked.

Norman Miles the secretary of Buckinghamshire NUT commented: "There will be serious social and nutritional effects... for many of the poorer children a school dinner represents the only serious meal of the day".

The proposals, already approved by a sub-committee, will be finalised on 24 June. The council with a Tory majority of 27 blames its actions on cuts in rate support grant. Its response is a far cry from the firm refusal of Liverpool City Council to take similar action.

By Neelam de Freitas

Murdoch's nerve

THE FIRE at Rupert Murdoch's Convoy Wharf in Deptford last week gave rise to a furious campaign of slander against the print unions.

A Sun editorial virtually accused print workers of starting the blaze. "Who else has reason to harm us—The Flat Earth Society?", and practically ignored denials by printworkers.

Pickets are obviously angry at Murdoch's sackings. But print workers who had picketed the Deptford plant in the weeks before commented that active pickets gained nothing from such a fire. Murdoch's News International (NI) were the only beneficiaries, getting free publicity in favour of accepting Murdoch's offer.

Criminal accusations from Murdoch show what a nerve the man's got. Journalists and printers sacked by NI recently gave evidence of links between mafia gangsters and the strike breaking TNT lorry firm used and partly owned by Murdoch.

TNT admit to paying \$50,000 a year between 1975 and 1980 to hitmen Venero "Benny Eggs" Mangano and Lawrence "Buddy" Garaventi for 'consulting fees' when they started trucking operations in the USA. The *Wapping Post*, produced by sacked NI staff believe the money may have 'smoothed things over' after

arson attacks and acts of sabotage against TNT. These methods are often associated with certain leaders of the Teamsters' Union.

This union's leaders have since the war been found guilty of mobsterism, and even murder. The present president Jackie Presser is being indicted for fraud. In Britain EETPU leaders are often quoted as being admirers of "American-style unionism". We hope that isn't what they mean.

Another unsavoury character Jimmy 'the Weasel' Frattiano has alleged that Mangano had done a favour for TNT boss Sir Peter Abeles at the docks.

TNT also transported clothes for 'the Weasel' himself—from New York to his store in San Francisco. Experts on the Mafia think these goods may have been "either stolen or hijacked from hoods in New York". They also allege that loads would get "lost" while he claimed insurance for stolen goods, though Abeles may have been unaware of this.

Murdoch has a nearly 15 per cent share in this company which he uses for picket busting. Bear that in mind the next time the Scabby Sun or its posher imitator the Top Scabs Times has an editorial alleging criminal violence by pickets.

By Roger Shriver

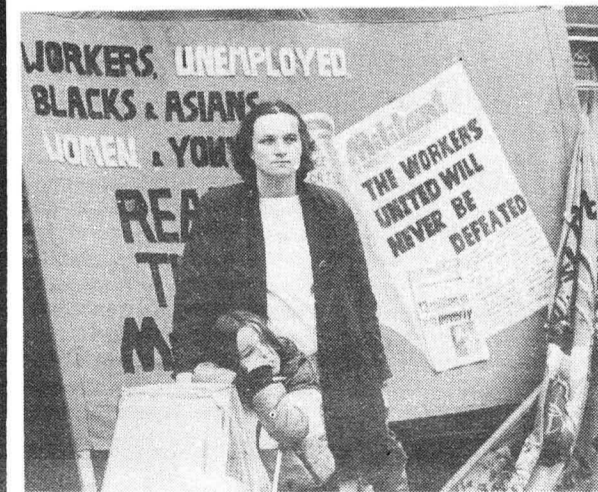
AN ARTICLE in *The Guardian* on 6 June makes you wonder whether News International has a dirty tricks department (other than the Sun's editors that is).

A Glasgow-based security expert, Frank Machon, claimed that he had been tricked into spying on demonstrators outside Murdoch's Wapping plant.

He has refused to hand over video tapes commissioned by the company on the grounds that he had been misled. NI gave him photos of individuals to look out for while filming because they had "terrorist links". "It quickly became apparent that this was a load of nonsense" he says. NI's head of security Stewart Edwards admitted that Machon had been hired to film the protestors.

Machon said there were two other surveillance firms on the picket lines—and a third group of agents provocateurs! News International deny that they are connected with this.

Sell Militant



On the Manchester low pay demonstration.

SELLING *Militant* is easier than ever these days. Even long established sales pitches have had a new lease of life.

BL at Cowley, Fords at Southampton, Eastleigh BR workshop—sellers at workplaces nationwide are finding renewed interest in *Militant*. Supporters in Southampton have been so inspired by this that they have started a new sale outside the sorting office at 5am. Good luck!

In John Golding's constituency of Newcastle-under-Lyme, *Militant* sellers were hardly on the street for an hour when

they sold 30 papers, raised over £5 fighting fund and collected dozens of signatures on the petition. In Southampton, the only day the paper isn't sold is on Sunday! The rest of the week can see sales of up to 20 a day rising even higher on a Saturday.

A hundred papers were sold at the NCU conference. This week the NEC meeting has brought us even more publicity—so don't miss out! Step up the sales activity this week—and every week. There's never been a better time to sell *Militant*!

Left and Right

One party quango

REMEMBER HOW the Tories always used to be scathing in their attacks on those semi-official public bodies known as Quangos. They've kept quiet lately. Partly this is because they had to create scores of them to take over from disbanded councils like the GLC. Secondly, because they are stuffed full of their friends.

Labour Research found that the chairmen of 13 out of 22 quangos they surveyed had Tory party connections. None had connections with the Labour Party—or even with those dangerous Liberals! Four chairs were also directors of companies donating

to the Tories. It all ensures that they don't question Tory cutbacks.

All in a week's work

A FEW weeks ago Australian tycoon Alan Bond bought the Screen Entertainment division of Thorn EMI for £125 million. He sold it again just a week later for £175 million to the fast growing US Cannon group.

But Bond also only owns a TV channel in Australia, so on top of the £50 million profit he has insisted on Australian rights to 2,000 films in the old Thorn EMI library, which should do his TV station viewing figures no harm. He also got a seat on the Cannon board. Not bad for one week.

Victory against the leeches

Unhealthy competition

WHEN VICTOR Paige resigned as chairman of the National Health Service Management Board, he gave up a £70,000 a year job cutting and privatising the NHS.

The new managerial approach to health put Paige, formerly with Boots and National Freight, on to urgent tasks like selling off nurses' homes.

The successful turning back of this reactionary move, reported in the article below, may have been a factor in his leaving.

Between now and the BLOC special conference in July we will have regular coverage of the fight against privatisation and health cuts.

THE PRIVATISATION of the NHS goes far deeper than most people imagine.

Even if you are lucky enough to retain your job amid the sell-offs, cutbacks and hospital closures, until very recently your house may have been taken from you.

In August 1984 the government released a report, the Rayner Scrutiny on NHS property, including land and houses, which spread fear and panic in health workers' minds.

The brief of Rayner's committee was to look at NHS property as a businessman would. Not surprisingly the report found that NHS properties, housing estates etc were "badly managed". They found 20 per cent of buildings were unoccupied, so they concluded that the NHS was holding property it did not need and should sell it off.

Almost a year later (a surprisingly speedy reaction from the DHSS) a circular was sent to all Regional Health authorities, asking them to review all properties

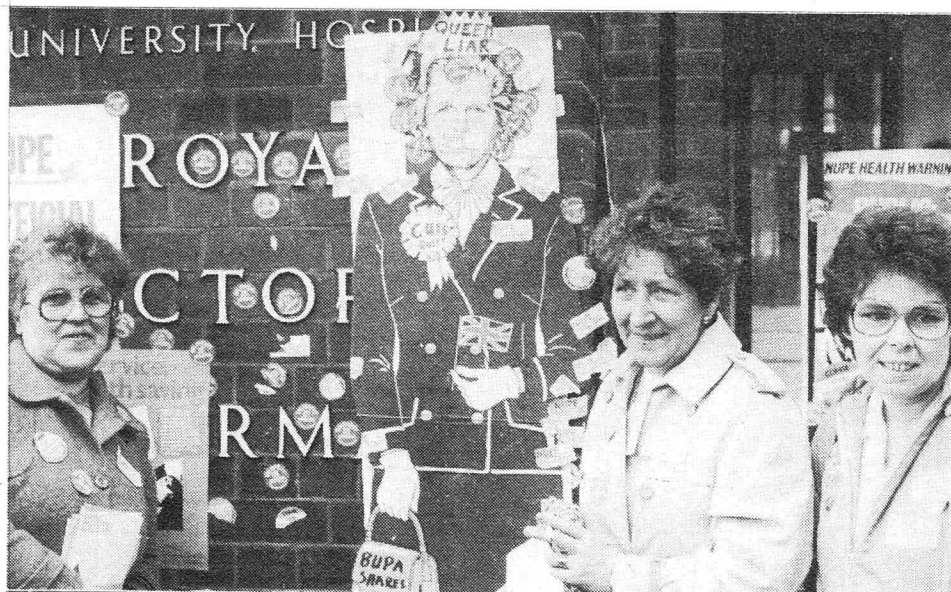
By Bernard Matthews

and to prepare action plans to dispose of any properties they decided were surplus to requirements.

All empty housing was to immediately be declared surplus and sold at the full market value by the end of 1986. Occupied properties were also to be put under close scrutiny. If a health authority found that occupied housing could also be declared surplus then that should also be sold off, this time by the end of 1987.

The proviso was given that houses or flats occupied by NHS staff (nurses in the main) should be offered for sale with reductions according to the length of occupation. If however (as is the case for most NHS workers including most nurses) they could not afford to buy the house then they had one year to get out.

My parents, after 45 years of service between them were at home when a letter arrived, telling them that much to



NHS workers in Newcastle protest against privatisation. Nursing staff have shown that a campaign can stop the leeches in the Tory Cabinet.

the "distress" of the District Health Authority, many properties were going to have to be sold off.

Although it was not specific, the implied threat was that your house was certainly one of them. It even advised people to contact the council. The only thing the letter did not contain was any mention of the right to buy. Letters like this were sent out by many District Health Authorities.

You can just imagine the new general managers of the health service, picked from industry to run the NHS as a business, thinking how they could raise as much money as possible. They are all paid by 'results' and worries about scaring NHS workers were far from their minds as they sanctioned these cruel Rachman type letters. Their eyes were obscured by pound signs and

obviously this led to them leaving out important bits of information.

Nurses frequently take orders. Some responded to these letters much as they would to an instruction to prepare a bed for a very sick patient. Many gave up their homes in the mistaken belief that they had to.

Nurses action committees

But nursing staff were angry. In many areas action committees were set up. They crossed all union boundaries and were far quicker than the unions in their response. Many people never political before were forced into taking on the management. Every possible arena was used for this contest including the courts, where in order to quell the revolt, the Tories even tried to institute

crown immunity.

All this hard work has brought victory. The government has been forced to retreat. They have now declared that no NHS tenant can be evicted or will be evicted and they are even thinking of removing the special privileges they enjoy under crown immunity.

This victory will not be widely reported in the media. But health service workers in every area of the country have now had experience of fighting management, many for the first time. It will have changed their way of thinking for good.

Privatisation must be fought and can be defeated, NHS housing estates and properties could well prove to be successful ground for finding delegates for the July anti-privatisation conference.

I AM a student psychiatric nurse. In the hospital where I work in the East Midlands privatisation has not been carried through yet but it is threatened.

It would mean the loss of about 20 ancillary jobs. Most of the domestics are women whose husbands are out of work or low paid.

Psychiatric hospitals already feel the most pressure from government cuts. Getting the patients better is non profit making because even when discharged they stand little chance of getting a job.

Putting out ancillary services would mean a decrease in hygiene standards. Three years ago there was an outbreak of salmonella. Three wards had to be isolated and about ten staff kept off sick for about two months to get clear of the virus.

Low pay in the NHS

An enquiry found one cause was reduced hygiene standards in the kitchens. Privatised services are notorious for slack standards, they would make things worse still.

Fighting privatisation must be a priority for unions like NUPE. So must low pay. I'm a third year student nurse and my pay is about £260 a month. Last year's pay rise was labelled a wonderful 12 per cent for nurses by the media. In reality as a third year student I got 4.8 per cent after covering my increased rent etc. The difference the rise made was about an extra pair of tights a month!

A friend was a staff nurse earning around £5,000 per annum. She is a single parent and wanted to return to work after she had her baby, but after paying out child minding fees she would be worse off.

A comparable job to mine is perhaps a police constable, they earn after two years about £12,000 per annum, whereas I earn £4,000. Is my job three times less important? I sure they don't work three times as hard as I do!

BLOC

BROAD LEFT ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Fight privatisation

Saturday, 12 July
Digbeth Civic Hall
Birmingham
Speakers include
Dave Nellist MP

Only bona-fide trade union delegates accepted. £3 per delegate. Apply to BLOC, PO Box 464, London E5 8PT. Coaches from London: advance booking only. Fare £6 return. Contact: J Griekas, 25 Stirling House, Simmonds Roads, London SE18 6UP.

Lobby to stop Maudsley cuts

MAUDSLEY HOSPITAL in London is one of the country's leading psychiatric hospitals with a highly specialised neuro surgical unit (NSU) which treats children from under one year to adulthood and the only psychiatric emergency unit in Britain.

Last month it was threatened with a £¼ million cut from both the Institute of Psychiatry and the Special Health Authority (SHA). This would mean the closure of the NSU for six weeks in summer and two in winter.

A minimum of 16 nurses are to go, ten beds are to be taken off one of the few

alcohol units in the country, one ward is to be closed and emergency units are only to open from 9 to 5. The unions have threatened non co-operation if ward C closes.

Pressure from Bethlem and Maudsley Action Committee has forced the SHA to withdraw proposals time and time again. Join the picket against the next Health Authority meeting on 14 June at 4.30pm at Bethlem Hospital, Monks Orchard Road, Beckenham.

By Frank Wood
(Peckham LPYS)

Special offer

World Socialist Books

○ Militant pamphlet on the general strike—articles by Trotsky, Grant and Taaffe. Special anniversary offer. Single copies £1 post free. Five for £4. From: World Socialist Books, 3-13 Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB.



○ Divide and Rule: Labour and the partition of Ireland. Special offer £1.50 post free. From World Socialist Books, 3-13 Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB.

Dedication will build Militant

"THIS £46.80 is supplementary benefit arrears paid because the DHSS forgot to increase my benefit on my 21st birthday. The best 21st birthday present that I could receive would be a daily Militant. That's why I have donated the money to the fighting fund."—Andreana Forgiore (Maidstone LPYS).

We need a daily paper, and we will get it through sacrifices like Andreana's and with every supporter finding ways to raise cash each week. Hull Militant supporters organised a rally to celebrate the 800th issue of the paper and raised £650.

In Fife a week-long campaign to expand the regular sales boosted funds by £170 through using collecting tins and petitions, and from a

collection at a public meeting.

To put us back on target we need to raise £7,000 each week. Make sure you go equipped with tins and petitions to take advantage of the mood of opposition to the witch-hunt.

Follow Glasgow's example; they raised £89 at a disco at Jordanhill College. The same comrades then organised a fighting fund disco which raised £212. If each area holds a big social before the end of the quarter we can meet our targets.

A magnificent £1,420 was collected at the NCU conference, which shows the real bedrock for our ideas in the union. No wonder the right wing fear for their position and call for a witch-hunt.

Also this week £40 was donated by Kevin Dale of

Fighting Fund

This week £3867

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 Humberside	695		2300
2 East Midlands	545		3050
3 London South West	234		1500
4 South East	395		2400
5 London North East	494		3550
6 Scotland West	541		3850
7 Merseyside	812		7000
8 Wales West	400		3350
9 London North West	327		2900
10 Eastern	336		3450
11 West Midlands	436		4500
12 Scotland East	295		3200
13 Southern	213		3100
14 Manchester/Lancs	264		4150
15 London South East	118		2250
16 Northern	203		4550
17 South West	79		2150
18 Wales East	58		2150
19 Yorkshire	173		5600
Others	5081		5000
Total	11697		70000

Newton Abbot saved from a week's training course, and £71 was raised in Sussex with a sponsored "no smoke".

By Ruth Campbell

OTHER DONATIONS include: £5 J Redmond Poplar UCATT, J Havant, Knowsley, £5, I Raknit, Oldham £20; L George, Rochdale £4; from Skipton, D Osselton FTAT £2, and M Lockwood NUPE £2; Jim Bailey NUR, Black Coun-

try £4; Colin Jones, Blackwood AUEW £10; £16, Birmingham TGWU & NUPE members; £49, Ware public meeting; £36, East Ham readers' meeting, £68, Westminster meeting, £303, Welsh LP conference.

Election will n end Spain's cri

Anti-NATO demonstration in Madrid. Photo: Julio Etchart (Report).



AT THE very moment when all eyes are turned on the World Cup in Mexico, Spain has just witnessed the 'kick-off' of its general election campaign.

The calling of a snap election, almost immediately after the controversial referendum on Spanish membership of NATO, was in open contradiction to the repeated declarations of premier Felipe Gonzalez. He had boasted that his would be the first government after Franco which would run to the end of its four year mandate.

On the face of it, there was more than one reason why Gonzalez should *not* have called the election at this time. On the parliamentary level, the Socialists' crushing majority meant that there was no pressing need to go to the polls.

Gonzalez had just won the NATO referendum and was set for a comfortable win in the regional elections in Andalusia, also in June. This would have provided sufficient momentum to build up for a convincing win in the Autumn.

But the extreme right wing Economics Minister, Carlos Solchaga and his supporters insisted on an immediate general election for two reasons. Firstly, they feared an explosive situation on the labour front in the Autumn. Secondly, government spokesmen pointed to the need for a "government strong enough to face up to the economic problems posed by membership of the EEC".

Spanish capitalism is basically weak and stands little chance of competing successfully with the industrialised giants of Western Europe. The warning signs were already beginning to show in the first two months of this year, with an avalanche of cheap imported products from other EEC countries, notably textiles and steel, which caused a wave of panic in the regions affected. Between 1 January and 10 February, no less than 261,000 tonnes of European steel were dumped on the Spanish market, two or three times more than the monthly average for 1985.

All the signposts are pointing in the direction of a catastrophe. The reduction of tariff barriers will proceed apace during the next few years. And every step in this direction will be the signal for social convulsions.

AT THE last general election, in October 1982, the Socialist Party (PSOE) got 10 million votes and secured an unprecedented landslide victory, with 202 seats out of 350. The right wing 'Democratic Coalition' (CD) led by former Franco minister, Manuel Fraga, was hammered, ending up with a mere 26 per cent of votes.

The Socialists had fought the

By Alan Woods

campaign under the slogan 'for change'. Their programme promised such reforms, as the creation of 800,000 new jobs—similar to what is now being put forward by the leaders of the Labour Party in Britain.

The right wing leadership of the PSOE had no idea how these jobs were to be created. The only thing which they, like Kinnock and Hattersley, were perfectly clear about was that they rejected the socialist transformation of society. As good 'realists', they were going to work 'within the system'.

Gonzalez had earlier succeeded in ditching Marxism, pushing and prodding the PSOE to the right and expelling the Marxists from the party. Nevertheless many Spanish workers still had some hope that the election of Gonzalez, with such a huge majority, must mean a change for the better.

Once in power, however, Gonzalez' main concern was to 'prove himself'—not to the millions of workers, unemployed, housewives and small farmers who had elected him—but to the handful of bankers, monopolists, landowners and army generals who are the real rulers of Spain.

Hunger and poverty

The results can be briefly stated. Instead of the promised creation of 800,000 jobs, unemployment in Spain has risen inexorably from 1.8 million when Gonzalez came to power to nearly 3 million at present. Put in its context, this means that 22.15 per cent of the active population are out of work—the highest of any of the advanced capitalist countries of the OECD.

The problems of unemployment are particularly serious in the south, in Andalusia and Extremadura, where the spectre of hunger once more stalks through the villages. Of those officially unemployed, after nearly four years of the Gonzalez government, only 31 per cent receive some kind of unemployment benefit.

High unemployment in Western Europe means that the safety valve of emigration is now firmly closed. The young men are compelled to eke out a miserable existence begging for work in the village, while in the towns the wholesale closure of factories has reduced a considerable layer of the youth to conditions of pauperisation, beggary and crime.

Poverty and unemployment are not new phenomena in the deprived south. But formerly prosperous

industrial areas such as Catalonia, the Basque Country and Madrid are now in a similar predicament. This means that the possibility of 'internal emigration' which offered a way out to unemployed Andalusians and Galicians in the past has now been closed.

Living standards have fallen. The total lack of lead from the trade unions has led to a disastrous drop in union membership. Some calculations would put the level of union organisation in Spain at no more than five per cent. Ten per cent would be a generous estimate.

Yet some sections have done quite well out of the PSOE government. Profits are booming, especially in the powerful banking sector. The profits of the banks actually doubled between 1984 and 1985. Last year alone, the banks and saving institutions got a record £1,500m in profits.

The right wing leaders of the PSOE have swallowed hook-line-and-sinker the arguments of the economic witch-doctors of the bourgeoisie. *Their policies are practically identical to the policies of Thatcherism in Britain.*

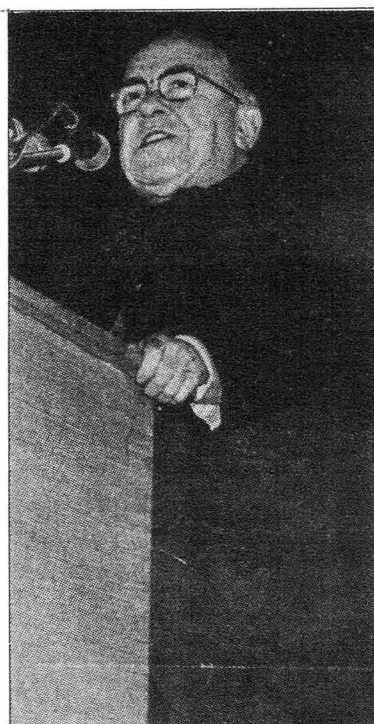


Socialist Prime Minister, Felipe Gonzalez

Right wing leaders like the former Economics Minister Miguel Boyer argued, like Thatcher, that the best way to solve unemployment, was to encourage the employers to invest in the private sector. The state should limit its role to "re-modelling" industry, mainly in the public sector, to make it competitive, and then sell off whole areas to the private sector, while keeping down state expenditure and avoiding a big deficit.

Inevitably, the right wing Socialists have achieved the opposite of everything they intended. The policy of austerity and wage restraint on the one hand, and the wholesale shutting down of industries under the pretext of 'slimming down' and 'restructuring' has undermined the home market. Faced with huge excess capacity and the destruction of the protected domestic market which they had hitherto relied upon, the Spanish capitalists have sent large amounts of capital abroad. Private investment (with the exception of some of the multinationals which in-

not - sis



Breakaway CP leader, Santiago Carrillo

vested in Spain last year in order to get a foothold in the EEC) has stagnated or fallen. Unemployment has soared.

The public deficit grew by no less than 29 per cent in 1985. A large part of this can be accounted for by the interest repayments to the big banks. The budget deficit now stands at 5.8 per cent of the gross national product.

The one area where the government claims success is inflation, which has fallen by about half, to 8 per cent. Such a fall, however, is common to all the developed capitalist nations, caused by the collapse in demand, and above all by the falling price of raw materials in the third world, particularly oil, in the recent period.

When inflation in most other European countries has fallen far more, however, inflation of 8 per cent is a disaster for Spain. The European average is about half that of Spain even now. This means that the competitiveness of Spanish goods will progressively decline vis a vis her European competitors, causing the ruin of whole sectors of Spanish industry as the tariff barriers are progressively removed.

These facts partly explain the indecent haste with which the Gonzalez administration has called the election. But even this is only half the story.

Magnificent struggles

THE PAST three and a half years have seen a series of battles between the government and different sections of the working class, fighting to defend its jobs and living standards. Particularly important was the magnificent struggle of the steelworkers of Sagunto in Valencia and the strike of the shipbuilding workers, both of which led to violent battles with the police, but went down to defeat.

The potential of the Spanish working class was seen in the one-day general strike of 20 June last year, when four million workers responded to the call. This action could have been a springboard for a general mobilisation of the class, to force concessions from the employers, compel the government to change course and transform the PSOE from top to bottom, kicking out the right wing and beginning the fight for the socialist transformation of society.

But this was not to be. The leaders of the two main unions, the UGT and the CCOO had called the strike reluctantly, under the pressure of the working class. Now they saw the abyss open up at their feet, and ran for cover.

The result has been already referred to—a collapse in trade union membership, not only in the Socialist UGT but also in the 'Communist' CCOO—at least for a temporary period.

The centre of gravity has moved to the factory committees and the

shop floor, where the workers' mass meetings have an increasingly important role in strikes.

In the months leading up to the general election, new layers of the class have been involved in struggle for the first time. The telephone workers, a privileged section with high wages and good conditions, organised a mass demonstration of 50,000 in Madrid. For the first time, the Spanish Marxists sold 400 copies of their paper *Nuevo Claridad* at such a demonstration.

Even more significantly, the messenger boys, young kids with scooters who earn a dangerous and ill-paid living with no insurance, not only organised a national strike, but set up their own union with 20,000 members.

Most important of all potentially is the ferment in the mining industry, where prime time working conditions have meant an appalling record of accidents, with 67 deaths last year alone. This led to two protest strikes last year, the second of which lasted 48 hours.

Though feelings run high on the question of pit accidents, it is clear that there was something else behind the movement in the mines. Here we have the real heavy battalions of the Spanish proletariat with a long and honourable tradition of revolutionary struggle, symbolised by the heroic Asturian Commune of 1934.

Right-wingers like Solchaga, egged on by the capitalists, are determined to close 'inefficient' parts of the economy. The closure of the steelworks in Sagunto, which spelt death to a whole community, was only a trial run. After the next election, Asturian steel and coal will find themselves in the firing line. The government's 'economic experts' have already drawn up plans for after the election: 4,000 workers are to be sacked from the metal mines, a further 10-14,000 from the state-owned coal mines of Hunosa (out of a total of 24,000); 15,000 from the motor car industry; 10,000 (out of 15,000) in the Bazan shipyards, and so on.

Fearful of tackling the miners of Asturias, the government first tried to take on what seemed to be a weak link—the 4-5,000 miners split up into different pits in the relatively backward area of Teruel.

The attempt to carry out sackings in Teruel led to an explosion just before Christmas. The position of the workers was a refusal to admit any sackings. They occupied the mines, forced the UGT and CCOO to support them and got the support of the local PSOE MP (a left winger) who joined the sit-in along with other Socialist MPs from the regional parliament.

The Teruel miners descended on Madrid in their coaches to lobby the government. Mindful of the events two years earlier, when armed police brutally dispersed the demonstration of the Sagunto workers, a reporter from *Nuevo*



Demonstration of building trade unionists

Claridad, the journal of the Marxist tendency of PSOE, asked the miners what would they do in such a case. A miner answered without turning a hair: "If the police charge us, we'll just use the dynamite and pick-axe handles we've got hidden in the coaches".

In the event, the police decided that discretion was the better part of valour. So did the government. The workers won. Significantly, 800 joined the UGT after the strike, which shows exactly the way things will develop in the future.

ON THE surface of things, it seems that the PSOE right wing, to use Franco's phrase, have got things 'tied up, and nicely tied up'. Their victory in the NATO referendum, when all the polls had pointed to a 'no' vote, has confirmed their feeling of smug self-assuredness.

The PSOE leaders celebrated that victory with champagne, but in reality they had precious little to celebrate. The referendum campaign revealed the enormous reserves of support which the PSOE has among the masses, but the anti-NATO demonstration of 750,000 mainly young people in Madrid indicated a powerful groundswell against the reactionary policies of the government.

Confrontation inevitable

In spite of this, there is no doubt that the PSOE will win the election hands down. The main bourgeois electoral grouping, Fraga's CD, is in a mess. The opinion polls predict that they will not even get the 26 per cent vote they received last time.

Fraga's problem is that Gonzalez has 'stolen his clothes'. Were the PSOE programme carried out by a right wing government, it would have led to a social explosion. But the instinctive loyalty of the working class to the Socialist Party has meant that a major confrontation between the classes has been avoided.

This explains the policy of the Spanish ruling class, which, for the time being is prepared to tolerate the Gonzalez government. In the middle of the NATO campaign, when Fraga, in a desperate attempt to distance himself from the government, called for a boycott of the referendum, the seven big banks publicly announced their support for a 'yes' vote.

Vast sums of money have been handed over to all parties—including the PSOE—by the banks in the form of credits. The PSOE got £7.7m, Fraga got £5.5m, the 'liberal' PRD, £3.6m, ex-president Adolfo Suarez, mistrusted by the bankers for his 'left' demagogic leanings picked up only £680,000, having asked for £4.5m.

The 'United Left'—a rag-tag-and-bobtail coalition of pacifists, pro-Moscow Stalinists, ecologists, ex-Socialists, and assorted intellectuals organised by the 'official' CP of Gerardo Iglesias got £86,000. Even Carrillo's split off 'Communist Unity Movement' got £45,000.

The campaign itself promises to be dull. This suits the PSOE right wing leaders, who do not want an active campaign where expectations would be raised and awkward questions asked. This was

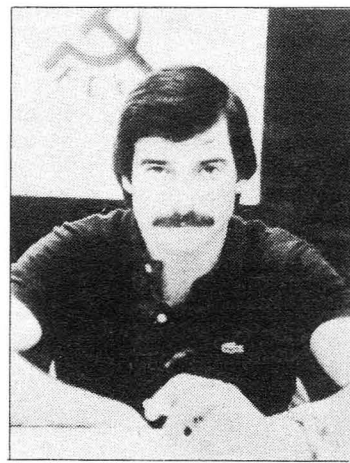
undoubtedly a factor in the decision to hold the campaign in the heat of June and in the middle of the World Cup. The party managers even decided to place large screens in the election meetings to carry coverage of the football!

The right wing of the Socialist Party has drawn the conclusion that their main mistake last time was to 'promise too much'. Now they intend to promise nothing! There is not a word about socialism, nor any indication of how to solve unemployment and homelessness. The main slogan is 'modernisation'. They stand for "increasing business confidence", a "thriving private sector", "reducing the (tax and social security) burdens on companies", and even the right of employers to sack workers without restriction, under the slogan "flexibility of labour".

With unconscious irony, the *Financial Times* commented: "Taken as a whole, the Socialists' electoral offer has little to distinguish it from that of the conservative opposition Coalición Democrática" (21 May, 1986).

NO THANKS to the PSOE right wing but in spite of them, the Socialists will win once more with a big majority, for the simple reason that *there is no alternative*. The 'Communist' Party, once a powerful force, has paid the price for decades of opportunism. Split at least four ways, it has been reduced to a series of squabbling regional-based parties, which are really sects. The 'official' PCE of Iglesias does not even dare to put up as an independent force, preferring to hide itself in the 'United Left' coalition.

Amusingly, the pro-Moscow Stalinist CP of Ignacio Gallego, prodded from behind by its 'rich uncle' in Moscow, has joined the coalition, in company with the ultra-right 'Euro communists', their irreconcilable enemies of yesterday.



'Official' CP leader Gerardo Iglesias

Naturally, this has caused convulsions inside Gallego's party, with the Madrid organisation rejecting this move out of hand and refusing to participate in the election campaign! Meanwhile, Carrillo, under the banner of "Communist Unity" calls a curse down upon all their houses, and will stand (and fall) on his own.

The 'United Left' may pick up a few seats, but the polls only give it a pathetic six, compared to 15-19 for Suarez's bourgeois

splinter group, the CDS. After the election, the main bourgeois party, the right wing CD, will undoubtedly split, with Fraga probably going out of politics altogether.

The policy of the ruling class is to "use and discredit" the PSOE. Up till now, Gonzalez and co have faithfully carried out the dictates of big business. But after the elections the class struggle in Spain will reach a new and higher stage.

The patience of working people is not unlimited. The attempts of the right to make the workers and peasants pay for the crisis of capitalism will provoke furious resistance. Already on the eve of the election campaign, *El Pais* carried an article headlined: "Tidal wave of strikes", referring particularly to the strikes of the dockers which have reached threatening proportions. This will be as nothing, compared to the upheavals which will follow in the months and years after the election.

The union and party organisations will be transformed from top to bottom.

Significantly, the general secretary of the miners' section of the Socialist UGT, when recently asked by a Spanish Marxist what they would do if the government tried to close the mines, replied: "In that case, we would just have to take a year's holiday", referring to the British miners' strike.

Once the movement of the workers threatened to escape the control of Gonzalez, the ruling class would no longer have any use for him. The sycophantic attitude of the press and TV would change. There would be a campaign of slander; all sorts of scandals would be raked up (not a difficult task) to discredit "socialism".

Given the extreme weakness of the right wing parties, it is likely, under such conditions, that the bourgeois would attempt to split the Socialist Party. A large number of middle-class careerists in the leadership, especially the parliamentary group, who joined the PSOE as a vehicle for their personal careers, would go over to the enemy as easily as crossing the street.

Coalition

A split in the PSOE would mean a defeat in Parliament, and the formation of some sort of 'national' coalition. The removal of Fraga and the dropping of the most compromised ex-Franco men from the leadership of CD would facilitate a coalition with the right wing traitors from PSOE, possibly together with Suarez and others.

It would cause a wave of revolution in the rank-and-file. The majority of workers would remain loyal to the Socialist Party, which, in opposition, would quickly regroup. On a left wing programme, the renovated PSOE would quickly get a mass base. Similar processes would take place in the unions, preparing the way for big industrial battles not excluding the possibility of a general strike and factory occupations.

This in turn would prepare the way for a left Socialist government at the following elections, would really bring to the fore all the central contradictions in society, as with Allende's government in Chile.

Only a strong Marxist tendency in the PSOE and the unions can equip the Spanish workers for this stormy period. Not accidentally, Gonzalez in the election campaign, in an attempt to frighten the workers, has made references to the Spanish Civil War, which began exactly 50 years ago.

The ghosts of the Spanish revolution of 1931-37 have not been laid to rest. The crying social contradictions which brought about that conflagration have not been removed, despite all Gonzalez' wishful thinking.

Armed with the ideas of genuine Marxism defended by the supporters of *Nuevo Claridad*, the Spanish working class will fight their new battles to a victorious conclusion.

French Popular Front government 1936

Power slipped from workers' hands

LAST WEEK, in the first of two articles, written in 1978, re-published to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the French Popular Front government, PETER TAAFFE described the events of 1936, when a coalition government was elected, in which the workers' parties participated.

He referred to the attempts of the Communist Party leaders today to justify the part played by the French CP, contrasted this with the implacable hostility of Lenin towards such alliances with the parties of big business and demonstrated the correctness of Lenin's position in the successful Russian Revolution of 1917.

He concluded that, contrary to the view of the CP, the massive wave of sit-in strikes and demonstrations by the working class after the victory of the Popular Front was a unique opportunity for the French workers to have taken power peacefully.

THE RULING class of France, of Europe, together with their shadows within the labour movement, were paralysed by fear, some of them believing that the hour of their downfall had arrived. For instance Leon Blum remarked: "I am being spoken of as a Kerensky who is preparing the way for a Lenin". But there was no Lenin to be found in the ranks of the French Communist Party leaders.

The method, the programme and the tactics of Lenin were a book sealed with seven seals so far as the French CP leaders were concerned. They bent every effort to derail the movement of the masses. In the process enormous suspicion and hostility towards these leaders developed, at least amongst the advanced workers.

Thus over a headline which said: "Revolutionary Temper of Men in the Engineering Works", the *Manchester Guardian* reported: "The revolutionary temper... is undeniable as may be seen by the extraordinary incident that occurred at Renaults yesterday. The local Communist deputy who urged the strikers to resume work on the basis of Monday's agreement... was howled down and driven out of the works. There is no doubt that not only the CGT but even the Communist leaders have no control and no authority over the strikers of several engineering concerns. (12 June 1936).

Seeing power slip from the hands of his class and no doubt gnashing his teeth one worker commented: "It is strange to think that in a few days everything may go back to 'normal' and Renault will come into their own again; and the posters and drawings and flags and wireless set and everything will be gone. Foremen will be able to order you about and glare". (*Manchester Guardian* 3 June).

The French capitalists were forced to give wage increases and concede the 40-hour week, at least in words, as the price of getting the strike called off. The CP leader Thorez declared: "One must know how to stop a strike—that is, as soon as the essential demands have been satisfied." (*Manchester Guardian*, 13 June).

But what the capitalists gave with the left hand they took back with the right later on. The wage

increases were gradually cancelled out through inflation. No sooner was the ink dry on the agreement than the individual employers began to resist the implementation of the reforms. But *The Times* urged the French capitalists to bide their time: "The general terms of Monday's settlement are being resisted in detail, with the risk that disappointment following apparent victory may produce a fiercer temper in the working class than a period of waiting would have done." (June 1936)

Power for the French working class was there for the taking in 1936, but for the treacherous role of the workers' leaders, particularly the Communist Party leaders. Hiding behind the Popular Front, the French capitalists prepared their revenge. Later thousands of militants were victimised. In October 1936 further sit-ins took place and this time the police were used to evict the strikers.

Socialists excluded

The French capitalists moreover, heaped on the shoulders of the working class the responsibility for inflation, thereby alienating the middle class from the workers. Trotsky had warned of such developments in June 1936. This shows the futility of attempting to win the middle class on a programme which does not go beyond the framework of capitalism. By taking power, by taking over the assets of the 200 families and establishing a planned economy, the French working class would have shown in action that it was the only force capable of solving the problems of the middle layers.

A planned economy would have allowed for cancellation of the debts of the small men in town and country and the extension of cheap credit and aid. The social reserves of reaction would have been completely undermined. Instead Leon Blum was forced out of the premiership of the Popular Front government in 1937 and the Socialists were completely excluded in 1938. The French working class, as with their Spanish brothers and sisters, were thus delivered into the arms of Fascism. The French Popular Front prepared the way for the enslavement of the working



Workers dancing the Farandole during the occupation of their factory.

class by the Nazis and their French collaborators in the Vichy regime.

In the immediate post-war period, the European capitalists used the Communist and Socialist party leaders through the medium of coalition government to save themselves from the wrath of the masses. When the danger had passed, however, the CP and socialist leaders were unceremoniously booted out.

Even Eric Hobsbawm admits "the governments of anti-fascist unity in Western Europe could get rid of their Communists whenever they wished, and in any case kept them in subordinate positions, where they took the blame for unpopular government policies, eg as ministers of labour." But Hobsbawm is incapable of drawing the necessary conclusions from this.

The legacy of the Popular Front is one of defeats—sometimes bloody and terrible, as in Chile. Monty Johnstone tries to refute this by pointing to the elimination of landlordism and capitalism in Eastern Europe in the aftermath of war. Here there was a 'striking success' for the Popular Front! In reality, it was nothing of the kind. The Stalinists formed a coalition, not with the liberal capitalists, but with the 'shadow of the capitalists.' The quisling capitalists had fled with the advance of the Red army. Real power—the army and the police—were in the hands of the Stalinists. These 'Popular Fronts' or 'National Fronts' were merely a screen to make this. When the 'shadow' began to take on some substance, the Stalinists leaned on the working class and completely eliminated the last vestiges of capitalism. (See Ted Grant's *The*

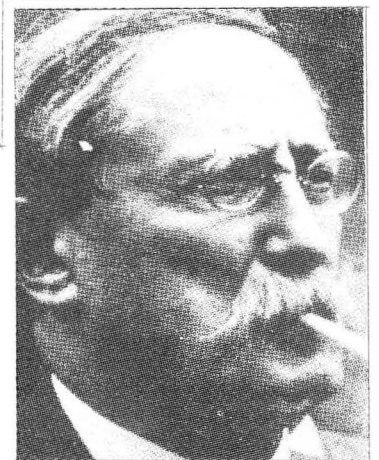
Marxist Theory of the State).

New and even viler versions of the Popular Front are taking shape in Europe in the period into which we are moving. In Italy for instance, the Communist Party even abandoned the Popular Front in favour of a 'National Front'. It has proposed a 'historic compromise' with a party to the right of the Tory party in Britain. The right wing Christian Democratic Party has been linked to a number of military plots and fascist conspiracies in the past ten years. Yet the PCI leaders have recently expressed their preparedness to serve in a government even with Fanfani.

None so blind

This vicious reactionary, when he was Prime Minister, used the divorce referendum to prepare a shift to the right and link up with the Neo-Fascists! They justify this by pointing to the defeat in Chile! Allende was overthrown, it seems, because he failed to link up with the Christian Democratic Party, thereby alienating the middle class! There are none so blind as those who refuse to see:

Not in alliance with the 'political exploiters' of the middle class stratum, but only by linking the struggles of the urban and rural middle class together in action could the middle layers have been won to the side of the working class in Chile. In turn this would have meant the carrying through of the socialist revolution. Half measures and prevarication gave reaction the opportunity of ensnaring the support of at least a section of the middle class and preparing the way for a bloody retribution against the Chilean workers and peasants.



Socialist leader Leon Blum.

But the 1970s are not the 1930s or 1940s. The Italian, French and Spanish working class are immeasurably stronger than in the past. Stalinism no longer exercises a mesmeric effect on the rank and file of the Communist Parties. Once a Popular Front comes to power there will be enormous repercussions within the ranks of these organisations. The CP leaders will inevitably attempt to apply the brake on the movement of the masses, as the early period of the Portuguese revolution demonstrated. They proclaimed their faith in the 'socialist revolution' only after the masses had themselves compelled the government to nationalise most industry.

On the basis of the great events which impend in Europe, the rank and file of the Communist and Socialist Parties will see that only disaster lies at the end of the road of the 'Popular' or 'National' Fronts. The workers in these organisations will seek a return to a programme capable of giving them victory in the struggle to eliminate capitalism. As a step towards this, the advanced workers must absorb the lessons of past popular fronts in order to prevent catastrophe in the struggles which are now opening up.



Trade unionists marching through Paris.



Even these singers joined in the strike at L'Opéra Comique.

Chile, Africa

Pinochet's dying days

EVERY MAY DAY in Chile since the mid-1970s has been marked by demonstrations and street fighting against Pinochet's brutal dictatorship. However, May Day 1986 had a special character which illustrated the advanced stage that the Chilean revolution has reached.

For the first time since the military coup in September 1973 armed soldiers confronted the masses on the streets in daylight. The results were very interesting from the point of view of socialists fighting against the dictatorship.

There had been a call on the radio and through left-wing magazines for a rally in the centre of Santiago. The opposition leaders had not organised the demonstration to any great extent, and it was left to the grapevine to pass the word around of when and where to meet.

As people began to arrive in the city centre, they found it under siege—taken over by soldiers with their faces painted black, in full battle gear to intimidate the workers.

Disperse

Behind every tree stood a soldier. As workers began to congregate in the appointed place, the troops were ordered to disperse the crowd.

A curious scene then took place. A few soldiers went into the crowd, kicking, hitting with their rifle butts and swearing. At one point an officer knocked down a pregnant woman. An older woman began to talk to him, saying in a very soft tone:

"My son, what are you doing, hitting this pregnant lady? How could you do such a thing?"

This had a disconcerting effect on him, and he pulled back. Some of the other soldiers looked almost embarrassed, not knowing how to act.

Similar encounters took

From a correspondent in Chile

place to a greater or lesser extent in other parts of the city centre. On many street corners, groups of youth simply stood without saying a word, staring at the soldiers who looked slightly ridiculous in their "war paint".

This reaction of the workers and soldiers was one of the most significant features of the day.

When the soldiers first appeared at evening protests with their faces painted black, the people's reaction was one of fright. However, on May Day this had disappeared. Many workers and youth made a conscious effort to get near the soldiers, and even to strike up conversations with them.

One incident demonstrated this graphically. On a street corner some youth and workers began to congregate. A van with about five soldiers arrived. The group began to sing and shout slogans against the regime. They sang: "soldier, friend, you have two roads to choose, one is with the people and the other is to turn into an assassin".

This type of slogan they were chanting only a few feet from the armed soldiers.

The soldiers were obviously nervous and uncomfortable. One of them reacted aggressively, swearing at the people. A couple smiled, not knowing what to do.

The officer in charge gave an order to shoot into the air. A deafening volley of live ammo was fired into the



May Day 1986 on the streets of Santiago. (Above right): Manuel Plaza holds up a picture of his son, shot by the military. He said: "Sergeant Cardenas, one of those who shot him, approached me in the cemetery one day. He was crying and asking for forgiveness."

air. But instead of running away, the crowd took a step back and raised their hands to show they were "clean" of arms.

Soon the chanting resumed. Some of the youth began to crack jokes at the soldiers, such as "who forgot to put their rouge on today?"

Riot police

Soon another group of soldiers arrived, who were more aggressive. But still the crowd was reluctant to move. Only when a bus full of the hated riot police arrived did they run away.

The attitude towards the riot police is different. They have sticks, tear gas and guns which they are prone to use.

But people instinctively know that the soldiers are simply workers who are bound by uniform and discipline.

Every little event from the soft words of the older

women to the chanting of the workers must be affecting the consciousness of these soldiers, causing enormous contradictions in their minds.

They are tied to the iron discipline of the army regime, trained to act like robots and fed with propaganda about terrorists and Marxists who want to impose anarchy in the country. And yet, when they are brought out on the streets, they face ordinary working people who demonstrate because they have little or nothing to eat, and cannot take any more.

The regime wanted to intimidate the workers by using the troops, and also to accustom the troops to dealing with the people. But instead of the workers being intimidated, they are becoming accustomed to the sight of armed soldiers—and more importantly, the soldiers are being exposed to the hot breath of revolution.

May Day 1986 demonstrated that the revolution has advanced from simple protests against the regime, and has begun to acquire insurrectionary characteristics which, although not yet generalised, are beginning to enter the consciousness of the advanced workers and youth.

Leadership

The Chilean revolution is reaching a critical stage. The movement has surged forward again and again after the terrible repression it has suffered. What has been lacking is a leadership that can unify and lead the masses with the same dedication as the youth who daily battle with the state.

This is the crucial factor that has held back the movement from success. A leadership that can appeal boldly to the conscripts to join the movement, offering the perspective of a new society

with democratic rights for all, could break the weakening authority of the officers.

In spite of the terrible lack of direction from the top, there is one message that comes loudly from the workers: "we can't take any more". Conditions are miserable, with more than 70 per cent of the people earning less than 20,000 pesos (£80) per month.

If the present leadership cannot find the way forward, then younger and more audacious leaders will come through whom the masses can trust and who will not betray the movement.

The regime is in its dying days. It has used up virtually all its cards. The masses learn quickly in revolution and when they begin to see the struggle moving forward in earnest, the thousands of activists will be transformed into millions. Against that the regime will be powerless.



UN's hot air for Africa

THE 20 million who took part in *Sports Aid* last month reflected the revulsion of the world's workers at the horrendous problems of the African continent.

As well as raising millions of pounds for famine relief, the event was timed to coincide with a United Nations debate on Africa, in the hope that it would inspire some concerted action. Predicably the UN General Assembly produced nothing better than hot air.

The General Assembly endorsed the \$128 billion 'recovery' plan but forward by African states—but none of the big powers were prepared to contribute to it! \$46 billion is supposed to be raised from donors abroad.

At best were a few token gestures

from Canada, the Netherlands and Denmark, at worst sermons about 'self-help' from the representatives of the USA and Britain, which is now contributing its lowest-ever proportion of gross national product in 'aid' to the poorest countries.

Recession

Meanwhile the continent's problems grow worse. The World Bank estimates that the post-1975 world recession has put back Africa's economic development by 15 years.

Per capita income is lower than in 1970. Food production per head fell by seven per cent during the 1960s and 15 per cent in the 1970s,

according to the UN World Food Council, so that it is now only 80 per cent of the level of 1961.

Thus the famine of last year was not simply a result of drought. That merely aggravated problems which had been building up for two decades.

Much of the 'aid' has been in the form of loans, the interest on which is now double the amount being provided in 'aid'. While Africa struggles to pay off this interest on \$162 billion of old debts, bank lending is now falling, from \$6.5 billion in 1983 to \$4 billion in 1985.

Because so much of it in the form of loans, 'aid' is part of the means by which the imperialist powers maintain their economic domination. It does nothing to

solve the problems of poverty and starvation.

Most 'aid' in any case never reaches those who need it, but remains in the hands of corrupt politicians, generals, bureaucrats and middlemen. This is piously denounced by the leaders of the western imperialist powers and used as an excuse for doing so little. But they are backing most of Africa's corrupt dictatorships and helping them to crush movements to change society.

Commodity prices

Capitalist 'experts' also argue that 'aid' is counter-productive as it leads to falling food prices for the peasant farmers who then lose their incentive to produce. In fact 'aid' is far too little to have any such effect. At the heart of Africa's problems is a world wide fall in the price of raw materials relative to

manufactured goods. Over the last few years alone, the poorest countries have in effect handed the wealthiest countries \$79 billion as a result of the most recent falls in commodity prices, further cancelling out the pitiful benefits of 'aid'.

The big multinational monopolies, through the exploitation of the terms of trade, exercise a form of imperialism no less devastating than the old direct colonial domination.

The only way out for African workers and peasants is to overthrow their corrupt capitalist regimes, and bring the fragmented countries of the continent together in a socialist federation to plan the development of its immense natural resources for the benefit of the mass of the population.

By Norma Craven

Letters

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

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

Return to Victorian inequalities

Dear Comrades,

All cynics and moaning minnies should take note that Mrs Thatcher's job-creating policies are paying off at last. It seems there has been a 50 per cent increase in the number of young unemployed from the North finding jobs as domestics 'below stairs' in parts of London and the South, such as Knightsbridge.

Such is the demand for cheap domestic labour that agency representatives tour the North to try and recruit more candidates off the dole queues.

One young chauffeur explained he has to work a 60-hour week, and sometimes thought of chucking it in. But the idea of going back on the dole in Liverpool is enough to make

him stay.

Just think—if Thatcher's tax reforms hadn't taken all those millions from the pockets of workers and transferred it to the rich, these new jobs might never have been created.

Yours fraternally
S. Gonzalez
Hackney



Photo: Militant

Demonstrating against unemployment in 1981.

Classified ads

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 first post on Friday, the week before publication.

For a national minimum wage. New sticker out soon. Order now for low pay demo in Manchester and low pay rallies. Cost £1 per 100 + 50p p&p from fighting fund department, 3-13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

Perspectives for the United States of America by Rob O'Neil and Tom Williams. £1 each or 10 for £8 (plus 20p p&p per copy). Available from LM Publications, 3-13 Hepscoot Rd, London E9 5HB.

Vauxhall LPYS Disco "Bop Against Botha". Sat 14 June 8pm til late. At "The Florence Nightingale". Westminster Bridge Rd SE1 (Waterloo tube). Admission £2 (£1 unemployed).

Conference Against the Witch-hunt. A national conference called by Hackney North, Hackney South and Vauxhall CLPs. Speakers include Audrey Wise, Tony Mulhearn, Linda Bellos and Pat Wall.

Saturday 21 June. Regents College, Regents Park, London NW1. Delegates are invited from all bodies affiliated to the Labour Party; 2 per organisation, £3 per delegate; observers welcome. A crêche will be available.

Details: CAW c/o Hackney North and Stoke Newington LP, 96a, Stoke Newington High Street, London N16.

Militant Meetings

Slough 18 June 7.45pm. Slough public hall, 55 Hersehel St. Speaker Ken Smith.

Bermondsey Monday 23 June 7.30pm. Spa Road Library Hall, Spa Rd, SE16. Speakers: Peter Taaffe (Militant Editorial Board), Dave Nellist MP, Ruth Hirdman (Guys Hospital) and Barry McCarthy (Bermondsey LPYS).

Plumstead "What we stand for" public meeting. Wed 18 June 7.45pm. Speakers include Jeremy Birch. Glyndon Community Centre, Raglan Rd, London SE18.

Wroxhall Marxist discussion group. 2 Mountfield Rd, Wroxhall, Isle of Wight. Every Sunday. Phone Vic Dale on 10W 854759 for details.

Hidden poverty in Lancashire

Dear Comrades,

On a recent visit to the north west Lancashire resort Morecambe, a semi-rural area with expensive houses and large hotels, on the surface everything looks rosy. But in the outlying areas there is very bad council housing, vandalism and glue sniffing.

In a local free paper I read that at Heysham power station the largest employer in the district 6,000 workers are to be made redundant. This will raise the already high unemployment figure from 15.2 per cent to 17.6 per cent.

Nationally 29 per cent are employed in manufacturing but locally it is down to 17 per cent. It is little wonder that the area has the highest rate of suicide in Lancashire, 43 per cent higher than the national average.

Yours fraternally
Jimmy Hall
South Ribble

Award for boot-licker



Photo: Militant

Gerald Kaufmann

Dear Comrades,

It seems that Kinnock and Co. will go to any lengths in their attempts to get rid of Militant. I was reading the Liverpool Echo on Friday when I saw a picture of Gerald Kaufmann presenting Peter Phelps with his Journalist of the Year award.

Peter Phelps is the Echo's gutter journalist who spews out lies and filth against Militant and the City Council on a regular basis. Apparently Neil Kinnock was supposed to make the presentation but was too busy expelling Militant supporters at the NEC meeting.

Ray Murray
Liverpool 6

Support for Wendy Savage

Dear Militant,

I read your article (Militant 799) and I write to urge all working class women to support Dr Wendy Savage because it is every woman's right to give birth in the way she chooses. If Dr Savage is defeated there will be serious effects on the treatment of women in labour.

I had a breech baby (bottom first) last August completely naturally in 25 minutes after a two hour labour which is very quick, especially for a breech baby. In my case a caesarean would have been totally unnecessary. It would have meant a much longer recovery period.

I am lucky because women are not forced to have caesarean where I live but many

women are not as fortunate. In many places where "production line" labours are favoured, doctors refuse to do home deliveries and will not allow a woman with a breech baby to give birth normally if they are in hospital. The woman is effectively forced into the operation.

I am not against medical intervention in child birth when the woman requests it or it becomes necessary to save life. However, it needs to be emphasised that this sort of intervention is for her safety and convenience not that of the doctor.

Yours fraternally
Mara Dale
Isle of Wight

Driven to demonstration



Photo: Militant

On the march in Manchester to demonstrate against privatisation and low pay.

Dear Comrades,

Returning home from the successful demonstration and rally against low pay and privatisation, the need to step up the campaign was impressed upon me.

In a conversation with the coach driver I asked if he had to work every weekend, "Not if the company can help it" he replied, "on Saturdays and Sundays they have to pay me £1.85 an hour, on weekdays I only get

£1.50!"

Although they are unionised, he explained it was very difficult to organise action amongst the drivers since they rarely see each other, arriving at the depot at different times and allowed only 15 minutes to check the coach for safety, fuel and cleanliness.

This 53 seater coach cost us £210 from Newcastle to Manchester and the driver would have put in a 14 or 15 hour day. After taking

the wages of driver, cleaner and maintenance crew, the cost of diesel etc. into account, it still means someone somewhere made a handsome profit.

The conclusion this particular driver came to as a result of our conversation was that the next time we have a Low Pay demo he won't be driving us there but will be marching with us!

Yours fraternally
Jen Pickard
Gateshead

Strange procedures

Dear Comrades,

One of the 'charges' against the Liverpool Labour Party members currently facing disciplinary action by the NEC is that they encouraged Liverpool DLP to hold 'aggregate' meetings where, along with delegates, all party members were invited, even though they had no vote.

I would like to know why the NEC, if it is so shocked by the holding of aggregate meetings, has never investigated the activities of the Sutton Coldfield CLP?

I was a member of that Labour Party which had no ward organisations and all party members were welcomed to the GMC meetings where they had a vote. When it came to the nomination of prospective councillors and the MP, the four 'wards' met in the four corners of the same room! Furthermore the regional officials were well aware of this taking place.

I understand from Labour Party members in Sutton Coldfield that there have been moves, since the Liverpool inquiry, to reorganise the CLP so that it does not cause embarrassment.

Yours fraternally
Jane Nellist
Coventry South East Labour Party

Praise for Kinnock

Dear Comrades,

The right wing of the Labour Party say that the militants are an electoral liability and that is why they are being expelled from the party.

At the recent Tory Party conference in Perth, motion 265 stated: "This conference congratulates Mr Neil Kinnock on his stand against the Militant Tendency. It looks forward to mass expulsions of extremists from the Labour Party".

Does this mean that the Tories don't want to win the next election?

Yours fraternally
Cathy Cutting
Perth Labour Party

Industrial Reports

News in Brief

Wool Textiles

TGWU PLACARDS wedged in the entry gates to Firth's Mill in Heckmondwike showed the wool textile strike was solidly backed in West Yorkshire.

Firth's 700 workforce were almost 100 per cent out. Stuart Madden and Brian Sykes—two shop stewards at Firth's—explained the reasons behind the one-day strike on 21 May. Wage levels for many workers are around £70 per week. The union are demanding £12 extra per week, two days more holiday per annum and improved overtime rates. Some victories had already been scored with some firms already having agreed to settle.

"We started our indefinite overtime ban on Monday (19 May)". "The Federation offered 5¼ per cent which we re-

jected", said Stuart Madden. A handful crossed the picket line, but they are in different unions to the TGWU.

But whilst we were there a van arrived to deliver some gloves. The stewards put their case to the driver, he showed his TGWU card and turned back.

Also, at Newsom's Mill in Battley Carr, the strike was strongly supported. This mass picket was on the day of torrential rain and hailstone. But Wool Textile workers have been forced to work excessive overtime just to make ends meet. So they were tough enough to withstand the bad weather.

The overtime ban and the one-day strike were successful, but the workers deserve active support of members of every trade union.

J Vasey, M Lyons and P Vasey visited Firth's and Newsome's picket lines

British Aerospace

WORKERS ON strike at British Aerospace for over three weeks over pay negotiations held a march and rally in Preston.

It was attended by over 2,500 strikers and supporters, which included, in a marvellous show of solidarity, a contingent of Silentnight workers in dispute with management for over 12 months.

The morale of the strikers was very high. They are determined to see this struggle out to the end, because if the management break the AEU which has a very strong reputation in Preston, they will go on to take on the rest of the movement in the North West.

One striker said "the attitude of management just shows their contempt for the people who create the wealth of this country". How ironic the workforce have been offered only a flat rate of 5.17 per cent when the chairman has just awarded himself 20 per cent!

Len Brindle AEU District Secretary told *Militant*: "We have received tremendous support from rank and file members of other trade unions locally, including shop floor collections of which Leyland vehicles is just one."

The political awareness of workers in struggle sharpens very quickly, as shown when one BAE worker on strike gave a donation to *Militant* "to build a real workers' paper."

Sue Porter

Absolutely mental hospital management

HAVE THE patients taken over the mental hospital? That is the question that many staff at Rainhill Hospital, Prescott, Merseyside, are asking.

Hospital management have certainly not been acting in a sane and balanced way. They have presided over the running down of staffing levels to danger point. Now the administrator, Mr Williams, nicknamed the mad axeman, wants a further 25 reduction in manpower.

Staff and patients are already at serious risk. Some wards have been left without qualified staff. Often only one female nurse is left in charge of a ward with 23 men, some of whom are dangerously violent.

A number of incidents over the last three to four weeks have highlighted the dangers our staff face. One student nurse was

nearly strangled. A staff nurse in a separate incident was also strangled so badly she had to be taken to hospital.

There have been two fires recently, small ones luckily for all concerned. You can imagine the problem in a fire of one nurse trying to evacuate a ward of 25 to 30 mental patients at night off the first floor.

Staff shortages already mean that we have to work through our lunchtimes. On one ward, two nurses had to do 12 hour shifts, one after the other. Now they want a further 25 per cent cut on top of this. We are saying enough is enough.

We are waiting for the District Health Authority's response. If we get no joy we will be looking at strike action to end the crisis.

By Dave Mower

Bank union conference

THE BANK workers' union (BIFU) took a major step forward on the international level.

It welcomed the formation of COSATU, affiliated to the Anti-Apartheid Movement and agreed to dispose of its shares in companies operating in or with interests in South Africa.

The composite carried against NEC amendments was a major advance for this supposedly non-political union.

Unfortunately composite H calling for a political fund ballot was defeated in a debate guillotined by the president.

General Secretary Leif Mills spoke incessantly. Four times on Monday alone he used his authority to defend the executive positions.

He successfully dangled the

carrot of a future Labour government establishing a statutory minimum wage as a reason for rejecting resolution five opposing all incomes policies until salaries reached their 1980 level in real terms.

As time went on the NEC found it more difficult to control the conference which is probably they the pay and political fund debates were on Monday.

Lloyds and Barclays banks have set up subsidiaries that do not recognise BIFU. Midland have called for closures and staff cuts and Lloyds Bowmarker Finance Group declared 500 redundancies with only 17 hours notice to the union.

The Broad Left AGM in June must now involve the youth, low paid bankworkers in fighting back. It must establish itself as an open body campaigning on democratically agreed policies.

By a Militant reporter

John Golding's job sale

National Communications Union conference



Delegates clap Alan Tuffin UCW general secretary handing over a cheque in support of the POEU's (now NCU) 1983 fight against privatisation. The left executive collapse under the threat of legal action has led to the victory of the right wing and sabotage of the merger plans with the UCW.

"I WOULD rather sell jobs than give them away". This was newly elected National Communications Union general secretary John Golding's reply to criticism at the union's annual conference that he had opposed the union's policy against voluntary redundancies in the press.

By Roy Wenborne
(London Postal Engineering Branch, personal capacity)

This gives an indication of the nature of the new right wing leadership of the NCU. It was also a sideswipe at the outgoing soft left Engineering Group Executive Committee (EGEC) who allowed jobs to go without mounting a national fight for shorter hours in line with the union's Broad Strategy.

However the Engineering Group Conference reaffirmed its commitment to the defence of jobs in opposing voluntary redundancies and in calling for industrial action and the withdrawal of co-operation with the introduction of new

technology if the union's claim for a 32 hour four day week is not achieved by April 1987.

This restatement of Broad Left policy adopted at previous conferences reflects the real aspirations of the membership when measured against the results of the Engineering Executive Committee (EGEC) election results. Conducted for the first time under the Tory trade union laws by a workplace ballot only one Broad Left supporter was returned to the Executive.

Although the right wing ran an expensive campaign, with a glossy leaflet containing an emotive plea by the president about the state of the union and its finances, the real reason for the defeat of the left was its failure to give a lead on a number of issues—from the Mercury injunction during the anti-privatisation campaign to the Broad Strategy. The rank and file are less forgiving than the activists.

Despite the setback on the EGEC elections conference supported left candidates for the Labour Party delegation (although with over half the

delegation being appointed by the EGEC the right will be in a majority).

Massive abstentions in president and vice president elections because of the absence of a left candidate meant the vice-president being elected with a minority vote.

The defeat of a resolution opposing expulsions in the Labour Party demonstrated the majority of delegates did not understand the link between the witch-hunt and the retreat from socialist policies. This was shown in re-nationalisation of BT being given a lower priority.

However, Broad Left general secretary candidate Phil Holt defeated the right wing deputy general secretary in the election for the NCU nominee to the Labour Party NEC.

Clerical

In the Clerical Group conference the same mood and determination to defend jobs was seen in the strong opposition to voluntary redundancy and a special conference being called by the Clerical Group so that the rank and file can have an input to the Broad Strategy.

The Broad Left Clerical Group Executive Council was returned with a leading right winger being replaced by a Broad Left candidate. *Militant* supporter Anne Jones was re-elected as an Assistant Secretary.

The leftward shift and hostility to the Tories was shown in the Main Conference by its opposition to accepting government money for ballots. Left majorities were returned for the Women's Advisory Committee, Appeal Committee and the elected delegate to the TUC.

Conference also overwhelmingly passed a resolution instructing John Golding to resign his parliamentary seat despite pleas from Bryan Stanley,

retiring General Secretary, that the union would be in serious trouble with the House of Commons Parliamentary Privileges Committee.

Conference fell about laughing when told that John is not now accepting his MP's salary but is giving it to his wife Lynne who is the Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Newcastle-under-Lyme and who is doing all the work!

A big disappointment of the main conference was the defeat by only 462 votes (out of 152,326) of a resolution which would have meant a step towards an historic link with the Union of Communication Workers. At 'invitation only' fringe meetings held in the evenings John Golding was reported to have been inviting the right wing to reject the NCU/UCW merger.

The scene is now set for an attempt to return to the old right wing methods of plots and manoeuvres, with the Executive Council acting as voting fodder for the decisions of the full time officers.

The right will not succeed. The Broad-Left will be taking its campaign to the membership. The lid was lifted long ago on the methods of the right wing. The members are now involved in the debate.

The 1986 pay claim is still to be resolved. British Telecom is giving ultimatums on grade restructuring and major changes in conditions. Jobs are threatened in every section of the industry.

A fighting leadership becomes more and more necessary. If the Broad Left takes up the challenge it will be returned to office sooner rather than later. A successful lunchtime *Militant* readers' meeting addressed by expelled Liverpool Labour Party member Tony Aitman was held and £1,420 was collected for the fighting fund.

Southern WATER PRIVATISATION NEWS

Issue No. 5
DO YOU WANT TO BUY SHARES IN SOUTHERN WATER
Read on and learn all about it.

If we are privatised it is likely employees will be offered shares at lower prices than everybody else has to pay for them. It is up to you to decide if you want to buy them.

For those who do, we are setting up a special savings scheme with the Abbey National Building Society under which you can save regular amounts which will be deducted from your earnings. The scheme will give you a higher rate of interest than is generally available.

There are no hidden snags. Even if you join the savings scheme you may still change your mind about buying shares with your savings.

How about this? Management of a public sector firm acting as touts for private sector profiteers even before the necessary legislation has been passed. What better evidence for workers control and management in the nationalised industries.

Industrial Reports

British Rail Engineering redundancies ballot vital to future of railway industry

45,000 employees of British Rail Engineering Limited (Brel) main works and British Rail regional loco, carriage and wagon shops are to be balloted over action against management plans for closures, and redundancies of up to 7,000 workers. The ballot will be held at workplaces on 30/31 July. Militant talks to a worker at the Eastleigh Brel works near Southampton.

IT'S ABOUT five months since the British Rail Board announced that Brel would be restructured. What this really means is getting it ready for privatisation.

It's generally recognised at the Eastleigh works that management is pushing its plans into operation and is keep-

ing us in the dark about what's going on. They want to keep us dangling in order to avoid the work rate falling like it did before Swindon closed.

The Works Manager has even sent around a circular telling us about extra work. It was met with derision. He's talking about C3 carriage repair work which would only take a few months to clear up.

We believe that the real work is trundling towards Derby, which has taken on 80 more apprentices. The Eastleigh apprentice school has closed.

Stainthorpe, the Works Manager, closed the Swindon and Shildon works. His strategy now is to try to impose work flexibility, making electricians and crane drivers etc do lower grade jobs like labouring.

He aims to cut costs through redundancies, keep a tighter

rein on whoever is left and divide the workforce by offering £8 a week for skilled workers accepting lower grade work.

We must learn the lessons of past closures. Divisions must be overcome and preparations made for action. About six weeks ago shop labourers walked out, refusing to sweep up asbestos. But other labourers agreed to do it.

The NUR has most members at the works, followed by the TGWU, EETPU, AUEW, Tass, and TSSA. Not long ago the TGWU called its members out on strike while the NUR left it to individual choice. This led to the bizarre situation of a foreman telling an NUR labourer to join the strike.

A massive national campaign to explain the necessity of a yes vote in the ballot, and preparations for national industrial action must be launched immediately.

GMB right wing back witch-hunt

GENERAL, MUNICIPAL, Boilermakers and Allied Trade Union (GMBATU) congress backed the witch-hunt despite calls from lobbying Liverpool members to back the reinstatement of expelled Liverpool council GMB convenor Ian Lowes.

This and other right wing decisions came as little surprise, however. GMBATU congress has traditionally been a bastion of the right wing.

It is little more than a rubber stamp for the earlier regional mandating meetings held to tie the hands of delegates.

Delegates are elected by a regional vote, not by branches, which ensures that minority representation is kept to a bare minimum.

Congress' main themes were the need to return a Labour government and the need for the trade union movement to campaign more in the interests of the ordinary members and be less inward looking.

The latter, in particular, was prominent in the

keynote speech by new general secretary, John Edmonds, introducing the Fair Laws and Rights in Employment Campaign.

He said: "The trade unions are regarded as defensive, inward looking, self-seeking and selfish" and "even people who look to us for a lead have complained that we seem obsessed with our internal constitutional problems."

Hypocrisy

But actions speak louder than words! Next day he spear-headed the witch-hunt against *Militant* with a particularly vicious attack on Liverpool City Council.

It is rich for Edmonds and the rest of the GMB leaders to talk on the one hand about the need to pay attention to the wishes of the ordinary members whilst at the same time blatantly ignoring the wishes of GMB members in Liverpool who have voted time and time again to support the campaign of the city council.

On nuclear power, an



Manchester grave diggers' dispute earlier this year—GMB members will be forced into struggle.

emergency motion from the London Region on the Chernobyl disaster calling for the phasing out of nuclear power stations was shelved following tremendous pressure from the leadership.

A decision of two years ago to allow recruitment of the unemployed was overturned by accepting an addendum to John Edmonds report. It claimed it was im-

practical and also unfair to those members who had been made redundant and who had to pay full subscriptions to maintain their union rights.

Amazingly John Edmonds recommended this on the same day as he made a speech saying: "We have spoken too eagerly for people at work and too little for the unemployed."

As GMB members face increasing attacks on their wages and conditions a gulf is opening up between the leadership and the rank and file. The lessons of this congress for the left must be the need to get organised and fight back through the building the Broad Left.

By Nick Toms

Stormy scenes at seafarers conference

THE NATIONAL Union of Seamen's conference in Liverpool witnessed angry and bitter confrontation between delegates and platform.

Time and again the executive were overturned. But the frustration of the delegates, knowing that the executive will mainly ignore their decisions erupted into constant shouting, at times almost into physical conflict.

One decision they cannot ignore was conference's rejection of an executive rule change to stop election of officials. A new life presidency was created to see existing general secretary Jim Slater into retirement.

Massive redundancies are on the horizon for NUS members—there are likely to be less than 300 British ships by 1990. With these kind of prospects the delegates weren't in any mood for the platform's platitudes.

Split

At the last biennial conference it was agreed to hold this one in Liverpool in support of the council's stand against Tory cuts. Times have changed.

But despite the pre-arranged media coverage of the attack on Liverpool council and *Militant* by assistant general secretary Sam McCluskie, conference voted £1,000 to the Liverpool council defence fund and only just passed the right wing's witch-hunt resolution by two votes—29 to 31.

Even right wing delegates opposed this motion. And by far the majority were incensed at the executive's boycott of the reception organised by the city council, with vigorous protests and accusations of bringing the union into disrepute the following morning.

If the left organises effectively it can sweep away the bankrupt right wing leadership represented so crudely in the intimidating figure of union boss McCluskie.

By Julie Harris

Balance sheet of NALGO's year

THE ANNUAL conference of Nalگو takes place in Bournemouth from 16 to 20 June.

Delegates will review a year in which the Tories abolished the Metropolitan Counties, continued their cutbacks elsewhere in local government and the health service, and set about the task of privatising the bus and water industries in earnest.

In the face of these attacks on the jobs and services of Nalگو members, the response of the union leadership has been poor.

The campaign to save the Metropolitan County Councils was scarcely raised above the level of a public relations exercise.

Though such tactics are an important part of the initial stages of any campaign, it rapidly became apparent that public opinion was overwhelmingly opposed to abolition, but the Tory government pressed on regardless.

Nalگو's leaders hid behind their 'No Co-operation' policy instead of moving for

By a Nalگو member

escalation. The net result was an unseemly scramble to save jobs after abolition.

Throughout the union there is evidence that the credibility of the leadership is extremely low. In a recent Gas Group ballot less than 50 per cent of the membership voted on the issue of industrial action against privatisation.

Liverpool

Clearly, large sections of the rank and file membership have no confidence in the leadership of the union to lead a successful struggle at all.

Ironically, when faced with the opportunity to fight with the opportunity to fight with the Tory government in order to defend Nalگو members' jobs in Liverpool, the NEC joined with the rest of the trade union and Labour leaders, and attack-



ed the city council instead.

Turning their back on conference policies, the NEC urged the city council to implement the package of cuts and increases in charges contained in the 'Stonefrost Report', and embarked on a major propaganda campaign

to defend their disgraceful behaviour in the union.

The message from the NEC appears to be that fighting the Tories in earnest must be stamped out, and they set about this task with a zeal that could be impressive were it directed

Industrial Reports

Libyan threat to British Caledonian

REAGAN'S BOMBING of Libya has had a sharp effect on workers in Britain's major airlines. British Caledonian has already announced 1,100 redundancies as a result of the slump in transatlantic traffic and as a first measure British Airways has announced that it will not be taking on thousands of temporary staff it normally employs during the summer months.

By a B Cal worker

These already drastic measures represent only the first tangible effects of the raids, on British jobs. In one of the most bizarre examples of the contradictions of capitalism, whilst British workers are paying the price of the raids on Libya, the American capitalists are reaping some of the benefits from the same industry.

In an attempt to stem the haemorrhage of cancelled bookings and changed plans British Airways is offering a host of goodies to Americans in an attempt to woo them into flying to Britain with the world's favourite airline. Amongst the offers are 5,600 free transatlantic air tickets. And for those who actually pay for their tickets—lottery prizes of Rolls Royce cars and flats in London with all expenses paid for five years.

Inducements

The airline claims that without these inducements its business will not recover. It is believed that if no recovery takes place the management are looking at plans for another 9,000 redundancies on top of the 24,000 which have already taken place to pave the way for privatisation.

Ironically that privatisation now looks in serious jeopardy because of Reagan's activities. The sharks in the City of London see the airlines' profits tumbling as a result of the slump in transatlantic traffic

and now say openly that the £1 billion the government hoped to gain from privatisation is 25 per cent or more too high.

Whilst Lord King, the Thatcherite chairman of British Airways, still talks of privatisation taking place between November and February, it is precisely in this period of time that the government intends to sell off British Gas. There are real worries amongst the financiers that there will not be enough money left, after they have digested that, to allow privatisation of British Airways. Therefore British Airways, the first target for the Tories' privatisation campaign, may still be in public hands at the next general election.

The solution does not lie in the introduction of more privatisation, competition and de-regulation, as the Tories believe. In America de-regulation currently means the loss of thousands of jobs and flight attendants at TWA, for example, on strike against a management demand for a 44 per cent pay cut.

The solution to the attacks on jobs and the threat to peace lies in the return of a Labour government committed to socialist policies. Only then can we start to put behind us the horrors of capitalism and work towards a more secure and productive future.



Photo: John Harris (FL)

Sogat members heckle executive members at their Scarborough conference.

Printers say no thanks Brenda

THE REJECTION of Murdoch's "final offer" by the union rank and file membership appears to have been a surprise to everyone except ourselves. There was never any doubt in our minds that we would reject the deal despite the pressures from our own leadership.

The offer from Murdoch was made even more insulting by the fact that it was being sold to the membership by Brenda Dean and Norman Willis. Both of them were guilty of performing Murdoch's dirty work for him when, following yet another secret meeting, they announced that this was his 'final offer'.

The leadership then refused to make a recommendation on the offer in the vain hope that it would be accepted and blame could be delegated to the members.

The ballot itself was con-

ducted against the rules laid down in the rule book. Ballot forms were sent to people's homes direct, a tactic originally employed by Michael Edwardes in BL, instead of through the branches.

The London Machine Branch took the national union to court to prevent the ballot being carried out in this fashion, but the judge ruled in favour of the national union... and the Tory anti-union laws.

Ballot

When the ballot forms went out to those who were lucky enough to receive them (some received two or three) it failed to state all the facts about the deal. It was omitted that no disciplinary action would be taken against those who did not take part in the strike.

In other words the only ones who would be recognis-

ed by the union at Wapping would be the 'scabs'. Some of the scabs also received ballot forms to vote on our future!

The leadership has been using Murdoch-style tactics to try and demoralise the membership and walk away from the dispute. An example of this is the yet-to-be denied accusation that the letter explaining why the union was going to purge its contempt to lift sequestration was already written and ready to send to the members before the decision was ever taken!

The letter stated that we would step up the dispute and yet in court whilst purging the contempt the union gave an undertaking to no longer interfere with the running of News International business. This included the ending of all flying pickets—some way to step up the dispute!

The rank and file have

been faced with a leadership who just want to negotiate at any price. They have had no consultation about their views and have witnessed continuous secret meetings. Because of this attitude the labour movement has found it increasingly difficult to obtain a feeling for the dispute.

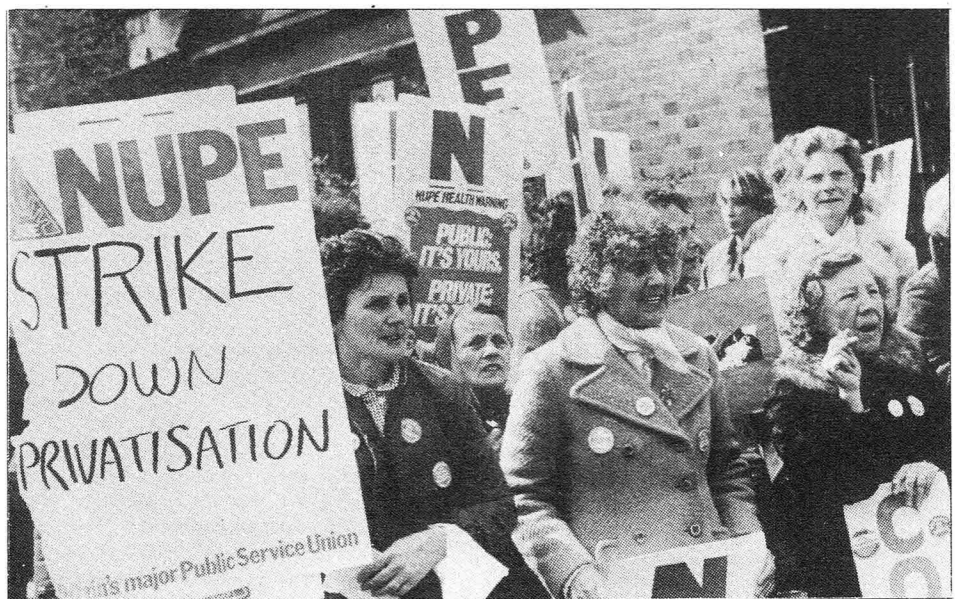
Hopefully the overwhelming rejection of this offer will change this attitude.

The TUC must come off the fence and deal properly with the EETPU and call for the rest of the movement to mobilise support.

Confidence must be built amongst the rest of Fleet Street for the full backing of our struggle.

This dispute is now in the hands of the people who matter—the members. We will go on to victory with or without the leadership.

By John Lang
(Sogat '82 London Clerical Branch)



North East rally against privatisation of Newcastle hospital contracts last year.

Northumberland health workers strike

NORTHUMBERLAND health unions struck for three days in support of Prudhoe hospital domestic staff who face the threat of privatisation. It would mean a cut of staff levels from 100 to 45, also drastic cuts in hours and conditions.

At a stormy meeting of Northumberland Health Authority on 5 June, the unions' case for a 12 month freeze was ignored and the health authority voted for the 'in-house' tender—the cheapest option.

The trade unions called a meeting of all ancillary workers in Northumberland the following day to discuss the next step in their fight against the Health Authority's decision.

At the meeting in Morpeth of 250 ancillary workers from seven hospitals a Joint Action Committee was elected to co-ordinate guerrilla strike action at selected hospitals. The workers also voted to stay out on strike until the following Monday night.

June Muckle, a laundry worker at St George's hospital, Morpeth said: "The Joint Action Committee was a good idea but wildcat strikes will not be enough, what is needed is a national campaign to see off privatisation and the Tory government".

Messages of support to: The Treasurer, Tim Baker, Villa 5, Northgate, Morpeth.

By Julie Shepherd, Northumberland East Health Service Branch NUPE

Parsons jobs going in Newcastle

SIX HUNDRED redundancies have been sprung on over 4,000 workers at NEI Parsons in Heaton, Newcastle. This follows the redundancies announced at British Shipbuilders and has since been followed by 825 at Swan Hunters shipyard. This is in an area with over one in five unemployed.

The announcement at Parsons was made on the Friday afternoon before the week's break at the end of May. Some of the workforce hadn't even heard the 'rumours' when confronted by TV cameras outside the gate.

There is a great deal of worry and confusion in the workforce. Why have management chosen to make yet more redundancies on top of almost 250 since the beginning of last winter? 200 are to be lost on the shopfloor and 400 in the office (despite a no-redundancy clause in the pay deal).

NEI can well afford to save these jobs. In 1985 they made a pre-tax profit of £40.5 million officially—that excludes fiddles and hidden profits.

Every production worker last year donated at least £1,750 each to the company in profits. The dividends paid to shareholders were

successful. NEI are pouring in investment. The 1985 company report boasts the quality and performance of Parsons turbines. Sir Duncan Macdonald (CBE), NEI's chairman clearly highlights Parsons for development and expansion.

NEI can't have their cake and eat it. They're pocketing record operating profits and amassing new highly productive plant. And they're trying to balance the dividends by cutting the wage bill.

We must demand they open the books, the North East can't afford more job losses. If there's any cutting to be done let's look at the £11.6 million dividends first.

By Fred Gent
(Vice-chair, Northern Region LPYS)

£11.6 million.

The company also burnt their fingers in South Africa with the fall of the rand. In other words, £4 million of wealth created by NEI workers was swallowed up by apartheid!

Parsons is extremely suc-

BLOC
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Fight privatisation

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Only bona-fide trade union delegates accepted. £3 per delegate. Apply to BLOC, PO Box 464, London E5 8PT. Coaches from London: advance booking only. Fare £6 return. Contact: J Griekas, 25 Stirling House, Simmonds Roads, London SE18 6UP.

Militant

Expulsions must stop

Lobby Labour NEC

No expulsions
General election now
Thursday and Friday 12-13 June
8 am onwards—all day
150 Walworth Road, London SE17

**Fight the
real enemy**

AS LABOUR's National Executive Committee yet again spends two days trying to expel Liverpool members, even the general secretary Larry Whitty has spoken of the NEC's "near-obsession" with Liverpool. He has referred to members who fear—"unnecessarily"—that it is their turn next: "We ought to protect the legitimate left in the party from that kind of anxiety".

Yet on Monday the NEC endorsed the expulsion of three members from deputy leader Roy Hattersley's constituency party who have never been associated with *Militant*. Kevin Scally describes himself as "just a mainstream Bennite left-winger". So much for the NEC's protection!

The NEC have demanded that Liverpool City Council leaders who are in the midst of crucial meetings over the city's budget crisis must return to face hours of inquisition by the NEC's kangaroo court. When informed that deputy council Derek Hatton would be unable to attend the NEC hearing, former left-winger and 'opponent of purges' David Blunkett moved that the NEC write to say that his excuse was not good enough and that they would proceed in his absence! Apparently attending a finance committee to try to protect Liverpool workers' jobs, is not good enough.

Party members nationally must now rally behind the Liverpool labour movement in its fight to resist the assaults on their comrades.

At a meeting convened by the Liverpool City Council Labour Group, 150 delegates of the disbanded District Labour Party (DLP) voted unanimously to condemn the expulsion of three of their

members, Tony Mulhearn, Ian Lowes and Tony Aitman. The meeting also ratified a decision to recognise Tony Mulhearn as a party member and Labour councillor.

It was revealed that last Thursday afternoon a meeting was held by Labour Party regional and national officials to plan the takeover of the reconstituted DLP at its AGM and the councillors' panel for future elections. This secret caucus took place at the USDAW headquarters in Edge Lane, Liverpool.

Secret caucus

Trade union district committee secretaries were invited to the meeting, but an AEU delegate to the DLP, who was authorised by his district committee to attend, was told by Peter Kilfoyle, the Labour Party's full-time agent/policeman in Liverpool that only full-time district secretaries would be allowed in.

It is common knowledge that some district secretaries—for example the FBU—are lay union members. The AEU delegate was clearly excluded because of his support for the DLP.

Even Larry Whitty now accepts the futility of hounding "18-year-old newspaper sellers". Labour should be concentrating its fire on the Tories.



It is a disgrace that Walworth Road officials, in this case Joyce Gould, should be allowed to organise secret caucuses, with exclusively right wing officials, some of whom may not even be Liverpool Labour Party members, to steal the DLP from the bona-fide Liverpool Labour Party membership.

It is clear from the DLP delegates' meeting that the overwhelmingly majority of the rank and file have confidence in the policies and

leadership of the last few years.

The council's finance chairman, Tony Byrne, summed up the mood of the meeting when he said: "The national leadership of the party have given up any idea of controlling the major institutions of this country when they come to power. Officers of the Labour Party and the trade unions, paid by us, are trying to steal the party away from its members. It is up to us to make sure that they don't."



★ Aigburth ward Labour Party have voted 23-0 to refuse to recognise the expulsion of Ian Lowes and demanded that he is given the right to speak at the Mossley Hill Constituency General Management Committee. The Tuebrook ward party, where Tony Aitman is a member, has voted 15-3 not to accept his expulsion.

150 ATTENDED a meeting of the Labour Steering Committee Against the Witch-hunt in St Mary's Ward, Liverpool addressed by expelled local councillor Tony Mulhearn. 15 people joined the Labour Party.

TONY MULHEARN has applied to the High Court for an interim injunction to restrain the NEC from implementing its decision to expel him. He is claiming that the NEC heard evidence from Neil Kinnock after he had left the meeting and to which he could not reply. This new 'evidence' was drawn from the majority report of the NEC's inquiry, which a judge had already ruled was inadmissible. The case was adjourned until 27 June.

Militant Public Meetings Stop expulsions!

Lamb Hotel
(Opposite the Picton Clock)
High Street, Wavertree,
16 June, 7.30pm.
Speaker:
Tony Mulhearn
Labour Councillor,
expelled socialist

Monday 16 June 7pm
Wellington Road
School, Dingle,
Liverpool 8
Speakers: Richard
Venton and Cheryl
Varley (threatened with
expulsion)

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