

Militant

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25p

INSIDE

Save the
National
Health
Service
pages 7
to 10



Arrogant Thatcher: workers hit back

● GLASGOW:
Huge overflow
meeting.

● MANCHESTER:
Railways
brought to a
halt.

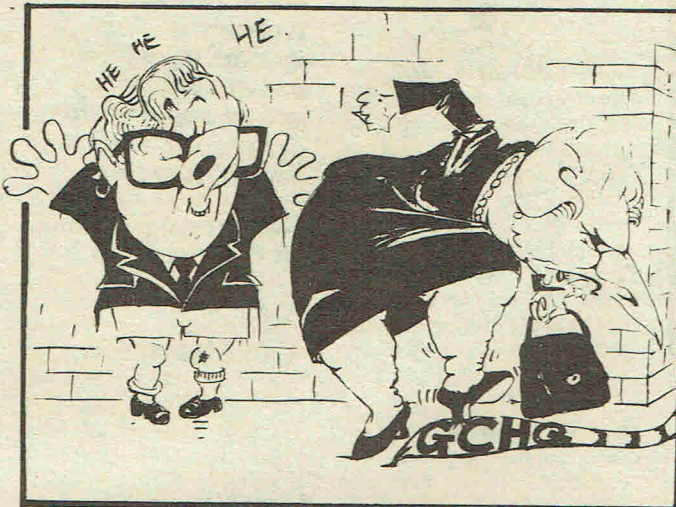
Mass walkout rocks Tories

● LONDON:
20,000 on
march.

● LIVERPOOL:
Over 40,000
workers strike

● COVENTRY:
Mass support
from industrial
unions.

EDITORIAL
Tories' contempt for
workers returned
with interest.
page 2.



In towns and cities from Derry to Dover, from the North of Scotland to Cornwall, workers have spontaneously shown their anger at Thatcher's arrogant banning of unions at GCHQ Cheltenham.

This injury to one set of workers is clearly understood. It is the thin end of a very dangerous wedge and civil servants were joined by trade unionists from other public services and from industry

as a whole on demonstrations and rallies which far exceeded the expectations of the organisers.

In town after town, meeting places were too small for the huge demonstrations, and

overflow meetings had to be organised.

The strike by AUEW members in Fleet Street brought down threats from the Newspaper Publishers Association to sue the unions.

Anti-union laws ignored

But the engineering workers' actions typified the feelings of trade unionists. They were according to the Tories, illegal but one

lady in pearls and a twin set in Newcastle summed up the mood of the demonstrators. "The jails won't be big enough to hold us all"

The successful day of action, responding to a very weak call from the TUC, should be built on to stop the Tory attacks on union rights and bury their vicious anti-union laws along with them.

More reports page 2.

Marxist Daily Building Fund Now's the time to donate

What a magnificent amount we have raised in our Building Fund. Money is pouring in with every post, and we now have about £100,000.

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Speed up time scale

The whole labour movement will benefit when we are able to produce a daily Marxist paper. You can speed up the time scale by sending off your donations—now!

GCHQ: The campaign is just starting

CIVIL SERVANTS
and workers generally
now see what Tory
freedom and
democracy really
means.

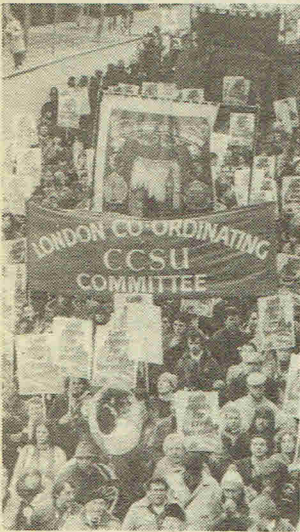
If workers protest against the government scrapping their pay agreement, they must lose their trade union and democratic rights.

By Kevin Roddy,
Broad Left candidate for
president, CPSA, 1984

If the Metropolitan Councils are held by Labour and don't pursue Tory cuts policies, the Councils must be abolished.

Continued on page two.

Photo: Andrew Ward (Report)



Militant

Tory contempt for workers— returned with interest

THE STRIKES and rallies around the country on Tuesday were a magnificent show of solidarity in support of the unions of GCHQ.

Hundreds of thousands attended rallies and millions took some form of protest action. Moreover, all this was achieved with hardly any prior notice or organisation by the tops of the trade unions, apart from vague calls—some of them half-hearted—for support for GCHQ.

That such a magnificent demonstration could take place in such a short time speaks volumes about the underlying hostility of workers towards the Tory government. But it is also an indication of the great authority of the TUC leadership—an authority they have stubbornly refused to deploy against the Tories to date.

Pressure on TUC leaders

Even without adequate planning, it has only been necessary for the TUC to "lift its little finger" to obtain a widespread protest. What, therefore, could be achieved with proper organisation?

If the TUC leaders were to give a clear, decisive call for a 24-hour general strike to protest against government policies—as they should have done at the time of the NGA dispute—if they take the issues to the membership and take time to mobilise support, there would be an overwhelming response.

The rallies, protests and demonstrations on such a prepared 'Day of Action' would rock the Tory government to its foundations, rendering impotent all the pieces of legislation that declare sympathy strikes and secondary pickets illegal.

That Tuesday's marvellous protest took place at all also shows the pressure now on the leadership of the TUC. The Tories have treated even the right wing union tops with such contempt—for example, Thatcher allowed only an eight minute interview with leading General Council members over GCHQ—that they must feel that their own role and purpose is under threat. How can the right

wing justify 'dialogue' with the Tories when Thatcher so clearly and publicly uses them as a doormat?

The rank and file of the trade unions are also applying their own pressure to the leadership to conduct a more serious fight over such fundamental issues.

No talks with Tories

Ironically, Alistair Graham, the standard-bearer of the TUC right wing, arch-opponent of any 'illegal' action over the NGA, found himself leading a union that in effect called its membership out in 'illegal' sympathy action. The pressure of events is more decisive than the prejudices of individual union leaders.

The TUC have now been forced to consider a boycott of the NEDC and all other bodies on which they sit with government representatives: "not before time", most workers would add.

The government's hatred of trade unionism and its disregard for the interests of working people is becoming increasingly evident, but it has been compounded in the case of GCHQ by almost unbelievable arrogance, especially from Thatcher herself. Clearly, the decision to ban the unions was taken without any reference not only to the unions but to Parliament, to Tory MPs, or even to all of the Tory Cabinet. "She decides everything", as one Tory MP put it bluntly.

No compromises

It was disgraceful that union leaders should offer a no-strike deal to the government at all, throwing away virtually all union rights except actual membership, but even Tory MPs must have been staggered at Thatcher's refusal to accept this surrender dressed up as a "compromise". The government even tried to stifle the day of protest, on 28 February, by yet more autocratic measures—sending out circulars forbidding staff any holidays or flexi-time to cover the protest meetings.

The Tories' dictatorial methods have not gone unnoticed among ordinary workers. It is no accident

that at the present time the Labour Party has crept ahead of the Tories according to the recent Marplan national poll and Labour support in Chesterfield has been rock-solid.

This week, after the Chesterfield by-election and the massive protests over GCHQ, may prove to have been a water-shed for the Tory government and the labour movement. The election result of 9 June was never any more than a 'snapshot' of the mood of the working class at one particular time. It in no way reflects the mood of workers today, or the direction in which events are taking the mood.

Millions of workers, still influenced by the 'Falklands' and other factors last June, are now thoroughly embittered by the policies of the Tories.

Why Tories attack unions

Thatcher's contemptuous hatred of the trade unions does not arise by accident, but from the standpoint of the capitalist class which she represents it is a necessary corollary to the policy of slashing living standards. Trade unions are the only line of defence for working people facing economic collapse and an assault on their livelihoods; to the Tories they are a road block that they must dismantle or trample over.

The TUC leadership, for their part, must take the huge groundswell of opposition to the government as the starting point of a serious campaign. In conjunction with the Labour Party, there must begin a serious fight back, including industrial action, against government policies to ensure that workers are not subjected to another four and a half years of hopelessness and frustration.

GCHQ and Chesterfield must signal the start of a determined campaign for the return of a Labour government committed to policies in the interests of working people, to socialist policies that will end the nightmare of mass unemployment, massive taxation, cuts and Tory dictatorship.

amendment moved by John Macreadie to stiffen up the union's campaign.

The amendment called for an early meeting of the executives of Council of Civil Service union affiliated unions "to discuss further action after 28 February including the possibility of an all out civil service strike."

One day general strike

It also demanded that the TUC "call a one day general strike, the right of access to Industrial Tribunals and for GCHQ staff to be able to play a full and free part in the CPSA and trade union movement."

Unfortunately a golden opportunity to force home to the Tories the determination of the trade unions was lost. The amendment was defeated and other resolu-

tions from branches calling for further action were not taken.

But the membership of the civil service unions do not want the campaign to just fizzle out. Our union freedoms are put in danger by the Tories, and we must oppose the government resolutely and effectively. Civil servants and workers in general must call for action of the type set out in the amendment at the CPSA executive meeting.

At the same time, the pressure must be on the Labour Party to give an unequivocal guarantee that on returning to power it will repeal all anti-union legislation including the Cheltenham ban if it is still operative, and the political restrictions on civil servants.

This is a struggle we have to win.



On the London demonstration, 28 February.

Photo: Andrew Ward (Report)

Round the country

AS THE Central London demonstration wound its way through Fleet Street, little groups of journalists watched from outside their offices to get a flavour of the mood.

The street of lies didn't realise that their editors' creative interpretation of what was going on would not reach the public in the South of England due to the AUEW action.

A helicopter hovered overhead, reminding marchers of the work GCHQ does and why they are scared of trade unionism there. At a "feeder" march from Hackney local authority manual staff said Thatcher had united them. They voted 1000 to 1 to strike in support of civil servants.

In Glasgow 3,000 people crammed into a meeting and more than 3,000 had to go to an impromptu rally at a park bandstand. The audience which contained many older women workers applauded mentions of Tony Benn's campaign in Chesterfield, cheered the unfurling of the Scott Lithgow banner and calls to change society.

At least 5,000 demonstrated in Liverpool, at least 40,000 took strike action including Vauxhall Ellesmere Port, Cammell Laird, bus workers, dockers, Pilkingtons and Plessey's. John West workers recently victorious in their own dispute supported the civil servants as did a big delegation from USDAW.

The Liverpool Echo made great play of four busmen who broke the strike with the headline "Lone Bus at Pier Head". The bosses have little else to cheer at on Merseyside.

In Birmingham, 5,000 rallied, again forcing an overflow meeting. BL Longbridge stopped work. In Coventry well over 15,000 struck with a good turnout from civil servants and an excellent response from factories such as Rolls Royce, Jaguar, Massey Ferguson, Self Changing Gears and Alvis.

"I couldn't be anywhere else today. In Southwark everything is at a standstill. NUPE is out, dustmen and cleaners and meals on wheels. NALGO said that's good enough for us—they're out as well."

—Harry Brown, ex-docker, now Southwark council worker

"This is government bribery to turn workers against worker. I just said to our people we've got to support this action, off you go—and here we are."

—Woman steward from St Peters, London.

In Manchester a rally at Free Trade Hall was packed solid with doors closed a quarter of an hour before the start. Hundreds were left outside. Railways have been brought to a standstill, the airport closed in the afternoon, and firemen answered only emergency calls.

Piccadilly Radio in Manchester interviewed three people at random waiting to catch trains. The first said he had no objection to the disruption caused by the strike, the second thought the strike was a good idea and the third said "well, action has to be taken on this issue."

In Newcastle, civil servants at DHSS HQ and local offices were out and two marches were organised by NUPE and TGWU. As they did throughout the country, shipyard workers gave marvellous support together with NEI Parsons and local authority workers.

Dundee's rally was supported by strikes at Kestrel Marine shipyard, Timex, the docks and a number of other industries. Workers applauded calls for a TUC led 24-hour general strike.

A 3,000-strong rally in Edinburgh cheered the news that Torness power station workers were on 24-hour strike. A Civil Service Union member Tam Burke warned that the attacks on Cheltenham were the union legislation of the future.

Wales came out strongly. In Cardiff 1,500 joined a demo and buses and trains were disrupted. In Swansea a demonstration organised at short notice attracted 1,000 workers, TGWU dockers came out in support. One speaker, Phil Lloyd of the POEU, stressed the need for a strong union lead and workers showed enthusiasm for the BLOC conference.

Workers went on strike at Rolls Royce and British Aerospace in Bristol. No newspapers could reach the town due to railworkers' action. Militant special bulletins filled the gap very well. Rallies in Leeds and Hull were well attended.

Smaller towns were not left out. In Cheltenham itself, the mass meeting addressed by Len Murray was subdued but the audience felt the demonstrations were just a start of the battle. Cheltenham and Gloucester both had to have overflow meetings as did Weymouth where the pickets were on for 24-hours at the docks. In Bournemouth a lively demo was organised at very short notice.

In Bracknell 450 attended a rally in a room which held 100. Terry Pearce, for the local Labour party, was cheered when he attacked the idea of a compromise "no disruption" clause.

Dover had seen a big meeting on 26 February with Arthur Scargill, Ron Todd and other union leaders which attracted about 1,000 in what was described as an electric atmosphere. In Bath, a Tory area, 1,000 workers held a meeting with another 300 outside, mainly MOD staff who probably voted Tory—at the last election.

GCHQ campaign

Continued from
front page

If electors in Liverpool are likely to re-elect Labour in the local Council elections in May, the election must be postponed. That's Tory freedom and democracy, 1984 style.

The successful action by civil servants on 28 February shows the deep seated anger against the government's actions of many civil servants, at the attacks on their pay system, living standards and jobs.

The mood of opposition must not be left to evaporate. At the recent National Executive of the Civil and Public Servants Association, (CPSA) the largest civil service union, I seconded an



Derek Hatton, Deputy Leader and John Hamilton, the Leader of Liverpool City Council at a press conference after meeting Jenkin last week.

Councils - stand and fight!

THE STAND being taken by the Liverpool council is acting as a beacon to all workers in struggle against the Tory government, especially those involved in local authorities.

It is also an embarrassment to those right wing Labour councils keen to do the Tories' dirty work for them.

In Newcastle, the right wing Labour council are carrying out big cuts rather than face up to Thatcher.

Kinnock caution

It is all the more ironic, therefore, that Newcastle was the venue last weekend for Labour leader Neil Kinnock to issue a caution to Liverpool council to stay within the law and try "to protect the people they were elected to serve".

Kinnock's warning follows closely that of Labour's front-bench spokesman on the Environment, Jack Cunningham, that Labour councils should obey the law "even if it means cutting services."

But it is precisely in order to "protect the people they

were elected to serve" that Liverpool council are unable to carry out cuts in services.

The charge that Liverpool is pursuing a "kamikaze" policy—deliberately courting confrontation with the government—is absolutely false, and is being used as a cover for those Labour right wingers and 'lefts' who would themselves dispense redundancy notices and cuts, but do not have the courage to admit it, or the arguments to justify it.

Liverpool have no option but to put up a fight. The Tories have taken £120 million away from the city's rate support in the last five years. The council are only asking for a fraction of their money back, not much more than the amount the Tories want to spend to buy out trade union rights at GCHQ.

The Liberal/Tory regime that was thrown out last May was responsible for the loss of 4,000 jobs, for the house-building programme coming to a complete dead-stop and for the city's rents rising from being the country's lowest outside London to being the highest.

The city was already vir-

tually bankrupt when these political vandals were thrown out on their ear.

Tory alternative

If the Liverpool council were to acquiesce to Tory demands, it would mean 5,000 workers on the dole or a 70% rate rise, or some such similar combination. But no Labour council can run away from its responsibilities to the people it represents.

One right wing Liverpool councillor, who for personal reasons has not been able to attend council meetings for months and is unlikely to attend the crucial meeting on 29 March, has nevertheless said out loud what many

right wing Labour councillors up and down the country are thinking:

"We should put the City through what the government is telling us to do", she said, "and let the wounds bleed. It is not until the people of the city have been put through mass redundancies and forced to pay high rates that they will realise what the government is doing." (*The Times*, 27 February).

This shocking statement (which by the way gives the lie to the constant refrain from Labour's right wing that the left of the party somehow 'rejoice' in the suffering of workers) shows a scandalous disregard of the conditions faced by working people.

Liverpool model

Liverpool has already "bled" enough; it has already faced "mass redundancies", the population already "realise what the government is doing"—that is precisely why they voted for a council to put up a fight for them.

Liverpool's stand is a model for the labour movement and deserves the same support from Labour's leadership as it has already from its rank and file.

Photo: Militant



Neil Kinnock should criticise Newcastle not Liverpool.

By John Pickard

MacGregor - the truth

OVER 1,000 miners refused to go down the pit at Ellington last Wednesday when Coal Board chairman Ian MacGregor visited the colliery.

Not one shovelful of coal was extracted over the 24 hours of the protest against MacGregor's contemptuous attitude towards the union and the industry.

To our anger, after standing hours in the rain and freezing cold, the Coal Board chairman sneaked in through a side entrance and holed up in the colliery offices. The men then moved onto the premises and surrounded the office block, thus cutting off MacGregor's access to the pit. Even though it was at a standstill we were determined that he would not go down.

MacGregor refused to come out and address the men but instead volunteered to talk to the two Area Officials and one man from each colliery in Northumberland. This proposal was shouted down.

MacGregor finally realised that his visit had been a waste of time and decided to leave via a side door in the office block. Up until that time there were only four local policemen on duty and the atmosphere had been friendly. However two vanloads of 'heavies' turned up and formed a wall between the miners and MacGregor's exit route.

Comments from this new lot of police, like "it's great this, it's just like Warrington," provoked the men. When MacGregor eventually showed his face for the first time, the men pushed forward and MacGregor and several policemen were knocked down.

There was no deliberate attempt to injure MacGregor and when he hit the floor the men pulled back.

As expected, the Tory press went berserk. But there were two incidents they conveniently forgot to report. The following day the colliery manager sacked two men and fined

several others for coming out of the pit early. Also one of the pickets had his car smashed up in the car park.

More than anything else the 24-hour shutdown at Ellington shows the anger of the rank and file miners against the NCB and the Tory government's policies. During the last month in Northumberland alone two pits have been threatened with large scale redundancies.

At Ashington up to 100 jobs are threatened with the proposed closure of the coal prep plant, the coal depot and part of the internal railway system. At Bates colliery in Blyth the NCB have stated that they want 600 redundancies. Now is not the time for cosy chats and pleasantries. The miners have had enough.

By John Cunningham
(Ellington NUM Committee)

Tory lies answered

The Environment secretary Patrick Jenkin has accused myself and other members of the Liverpool delegation who met him last week, of threatening him with violence. His comments are a pack of lies.

His allegations are no more than a piece of electioneering for the Chesterfield by-election, and an attempt to detract attention from the very real threat facing Liverpool from the Tory government.

Indeed, our solicitors have been contacted over the hysterical 'reports' that appeared in some newspapers.

The reality

In reality it is the Tories who are using violence—the violence of the dole against workers on Merseyside. Since the Tories came to power over 33,000 workers have been made redundant here—and that figure does not include jobs lost through natural wastage; jobs that, as far as local youth are concerned, are lost forever.

This onslaught has impoverished whole areas of the city. By last year 83% of all council tenants were receiving financial assistance towards their rent payments.

What these figures don't get across is the intolerable social pressures that come with them—the indignities of once proud, independent workers now reduced to living from day to day on

By Derek Hatton
(Deputy Leader, Liverpool City Council)

government handouts; the divorces; the alcoholism; the mental breakdowns; the suicides. This violence is very real—unlike that in the imagination of Jenkin and the Fleet Street press.

It was these intolerable conditions that led to the fearful riots of 1981 in Toxteth. Then, as now, the Tories and the press tried to present the conflict as purely the result of 'conspiracies' by the 'Liverpool Militants'. Yet it was members of the Labour Party like myself who were out on the streets explaining that, while we understood why the youth had reached breaking point, rioting would solve nothing. The Tories response was to use tear gas and baton charges. Our response was to put forward socialist policies, on which we were subsequently elected, to ease the burden of Liverpool workers.

Jenkin has even accused us of threatening his home and family. Again, a blatant lie, but this is ironic coming from him. It is the Liverpool councillors who face the real threats to their homes and families. The Tories have said they will implement surcharges and bankruptcy proceedings on the councillors if they dare to fightback.

The only crime we are guilty of is standing by the pledge we made to the electorate. What has infuriated the Tories is that we are not prepared to cow to their dictates, but to stand up and defend the democratic decisions of the Liverpool workers.



Fleet Street hysteria

FLEET STREET have turned the bilge pump fully on to let loose a tidal wave of abuse, half truths and barefaced lies over Liverpool.

The *Sun* (February 28) was its usual abusive self. It sneered: "The loonies are loose in the city bent on turning it into a huge civic asylum for the deranged."

The rest of Fleet Street fared little better; top marks on the 'hysteria-ometer' must go to the *Sunday Express* (February 26). Its front page screamed: "Militants threat to Tory minister".

It took Jenkin's allegations, added the McGregor incident, took two anti-Tory protests from Warwick and Essex universities, mixed them all together and 'hey presto', served up a violent conspiracy theory.

This was a classic example of how the Tory rags con-

By Bob Wade
(North London NUJ)

struct propaganda out of the flimsiest of facts. The Liverpool allegations are of course fictitious, and the McGregor incident blown up out of all proportion, as the articles on this page show.

At Warwick there was a noisy mass protest but only a few eggs were thrown (which is hardly new to British politics) and there was only one arrest. Similarly at Essex, there was only one arrest (the student was not charged). All this hardly corresponds with the *Express's* wild fantasies of mass violence.

The hysteria of the press however is significant. It reflects the increasing trepidation with which the Tory government view the resolute stand being made by Liverpool.

Mass rally cheers Liverpool

—ON TV—
ITV's *World in Action* will be featuring Liverpool on Monday March 5 at 8.30pm

ROARS OF approval greeted speakers as they spelt out the fight of Liverpool City Council against the Tories at the mass rally of Liverpool trade unionists on Monday.

About 1,700 stewards, trade unionists, Labour activists and youth assembled in the city's St George's hall. If the TV media had dared to broadcast the mood of confidence and determination of the rally, it would have given the government nightmares.

Eddie Loyden, MP and President of the local Trades Council, explained why the Tories are out to attack Liverpool council. They know Liverpool's fightback could lead to victory and open the flood gates for workers' struggles throughout the country.

Full backing

Peter Cresswell of the local authority Joint Shop Stewards' Committee, gave full backing to the city council: "We hear a great deal about the council confronting the government. We

don't hear so much about the alternatives—confronting the ratepayers with massive rate rises or confronting the workforce with 5,500 redundancies.

"The *Daily Mirror* advises Labour councils to make cuts, but to make them humanely, and then to explain it's not the Labour council to blame, but the Tory government. We don't see a great deal of difference between being sacked humanely or sacked inhumanely. And if the Labour Party leadership want to criticise any council it should be Newcastle, who are carrying out redundancies—not Liverpool".

Much has been made in the press about the decisions against strike action on 29 March (the crucial day of the council's budget) by NUPE and the NUT. But the rally heard the other side the story. It was the NUPE District Committee, not the members, that has decided so far. And **Peter Lennard**, GMBATU, chairman of the local authority convenors, and itself directly representing 4,500 G&M members, explained that his branch

unanimously supported the one-day strike as do the local authority shop stewards' committee.

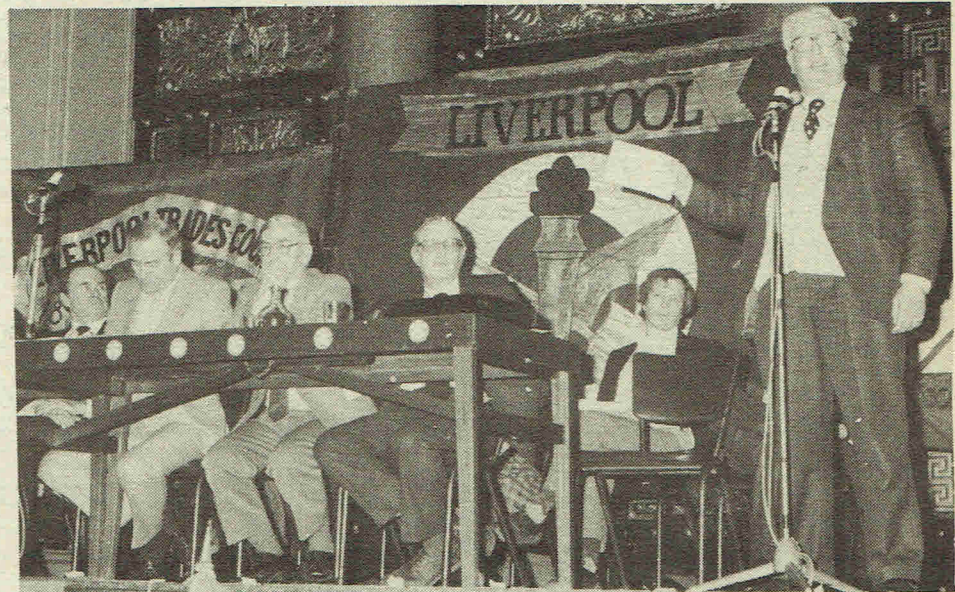
He added: "I'd appeal to NUT members to show solidarity and I guarantee, as spokesman of the caretakers, that there won't be any schools open that day".

Fight for future

Ron Todd, T&GWU candidate for General Secretary was the main guest speaker: "I re-affirm the bond between trade unions and democratically elected representatives. Continue the fight for our future, jobs, houses and social services. The issue is between the working class and the Tory government."

The backing from industrial workers for the council is magnificent. Trade union banners were draped around the hall—busmen, building workers, Vauxhalls, Fords, etc were all represented.

Deputy council leader, **Derek Hatton** took up this theme in one of the best received speeches: "We con-



John Hamilton (Leader Liverpool CC) speaking at the mass meeting last Tuesday.

Photo: John Smith (IFU)

gratulate the TUC on its demonstration and support for the CPSA. But if they can get this response at a few days' notice, why didn't the TUC do the same and ensure an NGA victory?"

Standing ovation

John Hamilton, the leader of the City Council, received a standing ovation for an

impassioned speech against the Tories and their laws against councillors: "If we were to obey the Tories we'd reduce education by 6½%, refuse collection 12%, school meals by 40%. If the Tories say it's wrong to have the poor and needy, aged, sick, helpless, then we don't think we're in the wrong—it's the law that's wrong and the government that's wrong. Theirs is the law of

the unjust, the law of the economic jungle". This mass rally marks a new stage in Liverpool's struggle, with mass meetings in every workplace and estate canvassing led by a socialist Labour council, the people of Merseyside will defeat the Tories' plans to bleed the area of funds.

By Richard Venton

Not so popular front

"IF THEY think it would suit their aims they would put a gun to your head and shoot you." So speaks Liverpool Liberal Sir Trevor Jones on the Labour council (*Sun*, 27 February).

Liberal nonsense

This sort of nonsense is to be expected from the former leader of Liverpool council since he and his Liberal/Tory council were kicked out in elections last year. They had presided over massive cut-

By a Militant reporter

backs in local services. During the election itself they carried out a scurrilous campaign against the Labour Party, even throwing in religious sectarianism.

But while Liverpool's workers have seen through this blatant propaganda, not so the Liverpool 'Communist' Party. The CP have put out a leaflet concerning the current labour and

trade union campaign on the council issue. It urges "... also involved can be other democratic parties, including sections of the Tory party itself." Inviting the Liberals into your camp would be a disaster, but the 'revolutionaries' of the CP want the Tories to come with them as well! Workers in Liverpool will leave it to the so-called Communist Party to rub shoulders with those who have slashed local jobs and services.

Newcastle goes for cuts

ON MARCH 7, the Newcastle City Council will be meeting to approve a proposed budget cut of £4.5 million and a rate increase of 9.7%. They will not be meeting alone—trade unions, tenants associations and community groups have organised a day of action to protest at these proposals.

Over the last few years Newcastle has seen major cuts in the Rate Support Grant. The situation has been made worse by the government setting a penalty target of £122.2 million for Newcastle. To stand still Newcastle needs to spend £133.9 million.

Must take a stand

Newcastle City Council was faced with a choice. Either it carried out the government dictates and destroy services; or take a stand and mobilise a mass campaign of opposition to the Tories. The Labour Group took the former road.

It says it must 'reluctantly' carry out these cuts in order to stay within the law. It has been argued that refusing to make these cuts would only lead to bankruptcy, the council would be unable to pay its workforce, and commissioners would be sent in to carry out the cuts anyway. When making these cuts the council say they will 'put the blame on the Tories'.

Labour gets blame

But what Newcastle is doing is not only giving in to the Tories; it is only postponing the problem. In addition the people of Newcastle will not simply blame the Tories—they will blame the Labour council who are carrying out the cuts.

Cuts will include abolition of free school books for all children over 7, reducing discretionary awards of some further education courses, making council house tenants responsible for less essential repairs, closing

an old people's holiday home, merging schools and making school staff redundant, to name but a few.

Already these proposals have aroused massive opposition.

The mass rally and lobby on 7 March will undoubtedly be well attended, but there is also the possibility of opposition growing in the Labour Group itself, and the city council may be unable to approve its proposed budget.

Defend services

However, this opposition must be channelled—instead of carrying out the Tories' cuts the City Council as a whole should be using its position to lead a campaign against the Tories, linking up with the local trade unions to defend services.

By Dave Archibald
(Newcastle City Councillor, personal capacity)

The challenge facing London

LONDON LABOUR Party conference meets this weekend against the background of a three-pronged onslaught by the Tories on London's jobs, services and democratic rights.

The government's "London Regional Transport bill" is a privatisation charter; 5,400 jobs are estimated to be under threat with bus routes being axed, stations shut and fares rocketing.

The rate-capping legislation would have a devastating effect with 10 out of the 17 councils on Patrick Jenkin's 'hit list' being in London. On top of this there is the abolition of the GLC itself and the emasculation of the Inner London Education Authority.

Severe test for Labour

The London labour movement faces a severe test in defending itself from these attacks. Undoubtedly the arguments against abolition of the GLC have all been won. A Harris opinion poll commissioned by Thames TV (hardly friends of the GLC) found that 59% of Londoners oppose abolition while only 22% support it.

Yet the Tories are not going to be defeated by reasoned argument. They are contemptuous to the democratic wishes of Londoners. They are "cancelling" the GLC elections due in May '85. From then on London will be run by a Tory administration of Borough representatives pending the setting-up of the quangos that will replace the GLC.

The composite resolution to be debated at conference states that "only the full mobilisation of the whole London labour movement,

spearheaded by the GLC unions can successfully resist this onslaught". This resolution must not only be passed, but the implications of it realised.

There can be no doubt that GLC, ILEA and indeed London Transport workers are prepared to fight to defend their jobs and services. The magnificent strike and demonstration of 30,000 on 24 January proved that the nature for this strike came not from the GLC or ILEA leadership nor the regional trade union officials, but the lead came from rank and file trade unionists, in particular the Inner London Teachers Association.

The key question now must be to build on the success of 24 January, by preparing for the further wide-spread industrial action that will be necessary to defeat the government. There is an urgent need for a standing conference of shop stewards and workplace reps in ILEA, GLC and London Transport. A conference that could map out a strategy, unify the struggle and ensure through report-backs at workplace meetings that every section of workers are fully informed and involved at all stages of the campaign.

Lobbying is not enough

Unfortunately many in the GLC and ILEA leadership and some regional union officials are still putting the main emphasis on lobbying and publicity. While this activity is necessary, it cannot be seen as an end in itself. Instead its purpose must not be to create the climate and support necessary amongst Londoners for the struggle the government are imposing on the unions.

The composite also states that the campaign, "cannot be left to the GLC alone and that a positive lead must be taken by the London Labour Party". This point must be seriously taken up. There is a need to rebuild the working class base of the London Labour Party. This can only be done by mass campaigning work around socialist policies.

Need for class campaign

The party in London must link the fight to save the GLC, ILEA and LT with the other basic questions facing working class people. It must launch an energetic campaign of leaflets, posters, meetings and rallies.

In particular, an organised drive to set up workplace branches of the party must be launched.

If the campaign goes forward in this way not only can the labour movement achieve an historic victory in defence of jobs and services but out of the struggle can be built a thriving mass Labour Party firmly based on London's working class.

By John Bulaitis

Militant public meeting
"Support Liverpool
—Defend the GLC"
Speakers:
Terry Fields MP
Bob Labi (London LP
Regional Executive)
at the Euston Tavern
(corner of Euston Road and
Judd Street),
Sunday 4 March,
12.40 - 2pm

Up against the courts

PREDICTABLY THE press and media carried sensational headlines attacking the "mindless violence" at the recent FA Cup tie between West Ham and Birmingham City. Of course we condemn senseless hooliganism at football matches which sours what is for many workers the only entertainment of the week. We recognise soccer hooliganism is a symptom of an increasingly sick society. But the article below shows the other side of the story with the experiences of a black Luton Town FC fan. The police and law courts have more than enough powers; they often cast a net that arrests and sentences innocent people.



WHEN WALKING home from a match at Luton Town's ground last month, a gang of policemen started chasing my friends and myself, and about 50 other people who were just leaving the match.

First the police chased us one way for a while and then another group of them chased us the opposite way, using dogs with some of them with batons drawn. Obviously we ended up facing the other group of police, that's when the arrests started. I was one of them.

Police laughing

I was taken back to the police station in a police van. The police were openly congratulating one another, making jokes about their 'adventure'. The officer driving said while laughing: "We're the ones who should be arrested". Another said: "That one always works". The match had been peaceful, so it seemed to those of us who had been arrested that it was all set up.

When I was at the police station I was charged with breach

of the peace. I was advised to plead guilty to make it "easier on myself" and the court. But I was so angry to see the police in the van gloating about their arrests that I was determined to prove my innocence. I knew it would be really hard because I was young and black.

Legal Aid

I was given a Legal Aid form and told to get a lawyer. I did this. A few days later I was sent a bill for £25; no mention of Legal Aid was made so I assumed I had to pay for it myself.

Even though I'm lucky enough to have a job I'm only an apprentice painter and decorator and £25 would be more than half my wages. I wrote to the lawyer to tell him I couldn't pay till after the court case. I got no reply and when the day of the case came, the lawyer didn't turn up.

I was asked in court where my lawyer was. I explained about the £25. All the prosecutor said was: "Oh that's why he didn't turn up." I've since found out that Legal Aid was supposed to pay the £25 for me, but I never heard another thing about the aid I was entitled to since I filled in the form.

The case was adjourned. The second time I went to court I was told I had to defend myself because I still had no lawyer. They gave me a pen and writing

pad to help prepare my case—that's the only 'legal aid' I received, a pen and paper!

I did the best I could but I knew I was doomed once I started to question the police on their tactics and about what was said in the van. Mind you, the officer that arrested me had only just graduated from a cadet. When I challenged him about what was said in the van he didn't deny anything but just went bright red. In fact everyone in the court looked embarrassed because I don't think people usually question the police like I did that day.

In the end I was fined £113 including costs. I suppose they added costs to make sure that I knew that I should have taken their 'advice' and just pleaded guilty.

Appeal risk

I would have appealed but I have a friend who appealed against the same sort of thing and he was fined another £100. Even though I was innocent I just couldn't risk owing them £213 instead of the £113.

It seems to me that there must be a conscious policy going on in courts to make sure that none of us youth bother to appeal against fines or sentences. All I can say is, it works!

Planning ensures meeting success

LINCOLN LPYS organised a public meeting with Dennis Skinner MP that attracted 200 people and raised £111 for LPYS funds.

The success of the meeting was due to precise planning. We used 5,000 leaflets and 250 posters. Activities like leafletting and canvassing outside all the major factories, colleges and the dole office made sure thousands of workers and youth knew about the meeting.

We used the media to build for the meeting, contacting the local radio and papers. We had reporters at the meeting which means that the LPYS still gets publicity even after the campaign is over.

The meeting started with myself describing the condi-

tions facing workers in Tory Britain, and outlining the YS programme. Dennis Skinner concentrated on the need to right the Tories. He pointed out the crisis facing the capitalists on an international scale, especially the world banking crisis and on the problem of them getting their money back from third world debtor countries.

His speech went down very well and really enthused the large audience. The YS can now go back to the Labour Party with real proof of that campaigning on socialist ideas attracts workers to Labour.

By John Fahey
(LPYS National Committee)

YS around the country



OVER 50 local youth,

including a gang of skinheads, came to the Swansea LPYS debate with the town's Police Inspector. The inspector wasn't too impressed with the LPYS's demand for democratic control of the police, and launched into a tirade against the town's youth, including those present, saying they deserved what they got. He got a blunt reply in one of the first questions of the evening from one of the skinheads: "Is it true policemen don't have fathers?" Insults and abuse aside, the meeting graphically put across the LPYS's position on the state.

up by my bootstraps and now I own my own factory!" You see, its so easy.

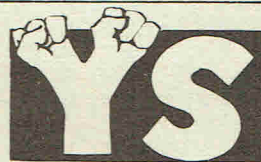
CLEETHORPES AND Grimsby LPYS branches joined forces in a day of action on the Nunsthorpe housing estate recently. They canvassed door to door, getting a long list of names of youth wanting to join the Young Socialists. The day's activities culminated with a street meeting in the afternoon. Response from the local tenants was excellent and many papers were sold.

NEWHAM NORTH East LPYS helped the Labour Party 'ambulance' campaign last week when they took to the streets to build support for the defence of the NHS. One comrade, mummified in bandages with 'horrific injuries' (thanks to a bottle of tomato ketchup) helped draw the attention of local shoppers to the campaign. Numbers were swelled by Young Socialists from Wanstead, who are hoping to reconvene their local LPYS branch.

NEWHAM SOUTH

LPYS in East London held a debate with the Young Tories. Four Tories turned up (two of them from outside the borough) compared to 35 local Young Socialists. The descriptions of life for youth today left the YC's unimpressed. One YC told the meeting: "I was unemployed for three months but I pulled myself

Why I joined the



ONE OF the reasons why I joined the LPYS was because of the type of conditions I found at work.

I managed to get a job in 1979 straight after I left school, as a stock clerk/warehouseman. The firm was a small furniture retailers and the conditions were terrible; a 44-hour week, no heating in the shop, office or warehouse during the winter, no toilet paper for weeks on end—we had to buy our own.

As for joining a union, to quote the boss: "We're all one big happy family here and you

By Simon Lawlor
(North Nottingham LP)

don't need militant trade unionism destroying your jobs." Or: "If I paid you decent wages I would have to make half of you redundant." By the way, half of us were made redundant or sacked but nobody got more than the wage council minimum.

Everytime we had a pay-rise they cut the hours so you never got a rise. We went from a 44-hour week to a 36 hour week in the three years I was there, all for virtually the same money.

For a long time I thought all

politicians were the same—in it for the money—but it was only the activity of local LPYS members, particularly *Militant* supporters who persuaded me to join the LPYS in April 1982.

At the moment in Nottingham North we do not have a branch of the LPYS. We did have a meeting planned for the 23 January but the bad weather put paid to that.

New branch

Even so, we are hoping to call another meeting in a few weeks time and from there it is planned to build a branch of over 30 active members.

Labour Party Young Socialists 22nd annual national conference

at Spa Royal Hall, Bridlington
Easter weekend, April 20 - 23

Debates include YTS, drug abuse, unemployment, racism and nuclear disarmament. Speakers include: Tom Sawyer (NUPE Asst. Gen. Sec.), Dave Nellist MP, and top labour movement figures. Entertainment includes discos, live band, plays and the feature film *Reds*.

Visitors tickets: £6

Details from LPYS, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT.

us?

about

what

Poisoning the world

Ronnie Sookhdeo reviews *No fire—no thunder. The threat of chemical and biological weapons.* By Sean Murphy, Alastair Hay, Seven Rose, Pluto Press £3.95.

“THE RELEASE of mind-bending drugs such as LSD in the drinking water of enemy forces could facilitate a peaceful US take-over.

“The spraying of a pacifying gas will reduce opposing troops into fits of helpless laughter.”

“An epidemic that will weaken and debilitate entire populations.”

These are just a few of the more bizarre examples from *No fire—no thunder*. The book, which includes references sources and tables provides a rare glimpse into the nightmare world of chemical and biological warfare. The race to perfect the most horrendous weapons has now taken on fantastic dimensions that border on science fiction.

Deadly disease

Bombs filled with deadly disease, the release of millions of yellow-fever carrying mosquitoes,

chemicals that can irreversibly alter the environment, incapacitate, kill and mutilate on a massive scale, are all being developed and even tested.

The book correctly opposes the grotesque wastage of resources—\$8 billion is predicted over the next 3 years in America alone.

New techniques

All the major advances in science, especially new techniques in genetic engineering that could be used to eradicate hunger, disease and the terrible misery that afflicts the vast majority of humanity are instead being used to produce weapons for mass destruction. The book also accurately maps the history and use of these weapons and examines their relationship with international law.

It documents all the cases of abuse of such agreements as the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention. Singled out for special treatment are the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935-36 and

Japan's attack on China in 1938.

In both cases, vast quantities of deadly phosgene, mustard and tear gases were sprayed indiscriminately, and resulted in enormous casualties. In more recent times US forces released some 17 million tons of deadly weedkillers and an assortment of chemicals over Vietnam which not only devastated the country's forests but inflicted appalling injuries.

These breaches of various agreements and many more are attributed though, either to imprecise wordings and definitions or to the method of classification of toxic substances. The book also claims that it is precisely the strength of international law and specific conventions which has prevented these weapons being used on a huge scale and thus preserving the peace.

War-free zone

The authors urge all nations to sign a declaration to abstain from first use of



A section of the book's cover showing soldiers in protective suits.

weapons, and call for a war-free zone in Europe. But experience shows such calls are totally inadequate.

The world has not been thrown into the horrors of all out nuclear, chemical or biological war but not because of international agreements. A major reason has been that even the most ruthless ruling class calculate

that a world devastated by plague or permanently contaminated by chemical poisons would be of no economic advantage.

But how long can we rely on such a fragile “balance of terror” to keep peace? The 25 million dead in small wars in the peacetime years since 1945 are a reminder of how tenuous this cynical balance-

ing is.

Socialists will find this book good on the nature and history of the weapons, but less reliable on the cures.

Join the fight to get rid of capitalism worldwide, as the only way to end the horrors of war. Use the facts in this book as ammunition.



Princess and the prayer mats

Following Princess Anne's ‘fact finding’ mission to West Africa, she has finally come up with the solution to the area's problems. Sahel is populated by villagers and Nomads totalling 400,000 people, 4,000 of which are children who are expected to die before the next harvest of millet.

The severe drought has continued since 1968, but according to Princess Anne the solution is to: ‘Go to church, get out the prayer mats, and start praying.’ She goes on to say: ‘Money is not the answer, nor would be sending part of the West's grain surplus—they don't eat that sort of stuff.’

The people of Sahel will not doubt find these Royal words of wisdom a great comfort.

Protecting the fishing rights

When William Coull appeared before Duns Sheriff Court on a first offence charge of poaching, he may have expected to receive at least a ticking off or at the most a small fine. Sheriff James Patterson, however, had other ideas. Not only did he fine Coull £500 but he also confiscated his boat, gave it to the Royal Navy who in turn tugged it out into the North Sea and blasted it to smithereens for target practice.

It was of course, a simple case of applying a “short, sharp, shock” treatment. And had absolutely nothing to do with the fact that the Sheriff in question is a member of a Syndicate with fishing rights on part of the Tweed and is also a member of the Edinburgh Angling Club.

Walter's two heroes...

Walter Goldsmith is director general of the bosses' club the Institute of Directors, which is to the right of the CBI. He has, understandably enough from his angle, much appreciation for the “leadership and courage” of Eddie Shah for taking the NGA to court.

But Goldsmith also found words of encouragement for another man who, he said, had shown great bravery during the NGA dispute bringing trade unionists back from the brink of chaos and destruction. Walter's second hero was Len Murray.

...and thoughts for the future

“If I were asked who were the two front-runners as the next Conservative Prime Minister, I would have to say Norman Tebbit and David Owen” — Walter Goldsmith.

Among the contributors to Left and Right this week are Anne McKay

A shaggy dog story

IT WAS midnight on the picket line at Scotts bakery in Bootle. Around the fire huddled half a dozen hungry pickets, discussing how to stop management lorries taking equipment out of the factory, when, out of the night, came help and comfort.

Not the massed legions of Merseyside Flying Pickets; not the Seventh Cavalry, bugles blowing, just a dog—the dirtiest, hungriest, mangiest Alsatian you have ever seen.

Meagre brazier

Imagine the misery of this animal, forced to seek a night's shelter at the meagre brazier of a lonely group of pickets. What should we do with it, we wondered? Cook it? Throw sticks for it? Suddenly, it spied the factory—the object of the picket's hatred and disgust.

With head thrown back, it showed its solidarity with the actions of the working class as it



On the picket line at Scotts bakery.

howled at the closed gates and the security station. To the pickets' cheers, it stalked towards the security office. As we urged it on, wondering how vicious it really was, it barked and howled at the security officer cowering within.

Gaining nothing there, it returned to the warmth

of our fire for pats and strokes, no thought now of cooking it for sustenance, when, out of the gloom, came the dreaded NIGHT PATROL! To keep workers out of the factory, Scotts management have encircled the plant with lights and cameras—and security

guards with dogs.

With no fear for itself, our canine comrade marched boldly towards the factory—past the security office—under the bars—towards the security dog. “Come on mate” shouted the advance guard of the picket line, “you let your dog fight my dog, and I'll take you on”.

Security guard

The security guard said nothing, but cowered behind his slavering monster. We cheered and yelled, but to no avail. Our rescuer in the night thought better of it, and slowly slunk away from confrontation. “Just like some of the rat bags in our movement”, said a picket.

Ashamed at his cowardice, the pathetic dog crept off into the night from whence it had come, and the lonely band of pickets returned to brazier-boiled tea, throwing pallets on the fire, and hoping the sparks would set fire to the security guard's office.

By Tony Aitman

Secret diary of a young Mole

IF YOU thought children's books were all Enid Blyton and “happy ever after”, think again.

The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole aged 13½ by Sue Townsend (now out in paperback) is about unemployment, family breakdown, glue sniffing, the problems of puberty—in short all the things real children talk about. The book was recommended to me by a 13-year old pupil who said that although very funny it was also close to real life and: “You should see

what it says about Margaret Thatcher”.

It tells the story of the year during which Adrian's parents split up and his father was made redundant. It deals in detail with Adrian's personal problems and events in the wider world. It contains a hilarious account of the royal wedding and ends with the outbreak of the Falklands war.

Like real life it combines comedy and tragedy in about equal proportions. There is an all-too-realistic account

of his visit to hospital to have his tonsils removed which culminates in his father bringing him a bag of crisps—“he might just as well have brought me razor blades”.

Like all school pupils, Adrian is urged to work hard for ‘O’ levels and CSEs and he makes a tremendous effort. Then his teacher mentions the fact that her boyfriend has an MA and is out of work... “So what chance do I stand?” Adrian decides that he is “turning radical” and dedicates

himself to “the destruction of capitalism”.

This book is very popular in secondary schools and has been reprinted three times already. I recommend it for any pupils who are tired of the Famous Five and the tedious antics of Jill's pony. As for what it says about Margaret Thatcher... well I wouldn't like to spoil it for you.

DEREK McMILLAN reviews *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole* by Sue Townsend

Militant**Save
Our
Health
Service**

On other pages
 P 8/9—Tory cuts.
 Socialist alternative
 Democracy in NHS
 Wages and conditions
 P 10—Drug companies.
 Private Medicine.
 Privatisation of services.



Jubilant greeted Labour's 1945 victory. Prime Minister Attlee (Centre)

How we won the Health Service

One of the greatest achievements of the post-war Labour government was the introduction of the National Health Service in 1948.

Labour's commitment to a free and fully comprehensive health service, (first adopted in 1934) was a major reason for its landslide victory after the war.

The success of this reform, and its benefits for working people were plain to see. Within just a year of the NHS's creation 95% of the eligible population, 41 million people, were covered by the service. 8½ million dental patients were treated, and 5¼ million pairs of glasses were dispensed; this especially illustrated the pentup demand for the dental and ophthalmic services, which had never been part of the previous insurance systems. Working people no longer had to test their own eyes at Woolworths.

187 million prescriptions were written out by more than 18,000 General Practitioners. The NHS employed 340,000 people, costing £400 million a year, accounting for 3½% of the GNP, the largest single item in the civilian budget.

Before the NHS

The popularity and demand for the NHS was easy to understand if you consider the health care available before the war.

Before the NHS it was very much a two-tier system, comprising about a thousand voluntary hospitals, and nearly twice as many local authority hospitals. The former were independent of any public control, depending on private donations from rich benefactors.

Senior medical staff gave their part-time services free, for the sake of the prestige, whilst engaging in lucrative private practice the rest of the time. Short stay cases were the rule; on average a stay exceeding 20 days was rare.

On the other hand chronic cases were almost always transferred to the municipal institutions, many of which were the old work-houses, or still acted as poor law infirmaries taking in the poor and the destitute.

A 1938 government report commented: "Many of the buildings are antiquated and unsuitable for hospital accommodation with bare, over-

By Alister Tice
 (NUPE Branch Chairman, Hull
 Royal Infirmary.)

crowded large wards, cheerless, uncomfortable day rooms, and primitive facilities for nursing. We have visited institutions where the ratio of patients to trained nurses is sixty or over."

The best qualified doctors generally shunned the public hospitals, where salaries fell far short of what could be earned in private practice. Specialists were generally in short supply, especially in the unprestigious field covered by public hospitals, and in the poorest areas.

"The chief determining factor" remarked another report in 1938, "is not whether there is enough work to keep a specialist busy, but whether there is enough private practice to make it worth his while to settle in a place." The same was found amongst GPs—for example the wealthy London suburb of Kensington had seven times as many doctors per head of population as South Shields in the depressed North-east.

The outbreak of the war, with the call up of doctors, the bombing of hospitals, and the war-injured and sick, exacerbated all these problems. The government established the Emergency Medical Services, co-ordinating the vast majority of the country's 3,000 hospitals.

By October 1939, they had provided thousands of new beds in hatted annexes, a thousand new operating theatres, millions of bandages, dressings appliances etc, and created a national blood transfusion service. Free treatment was given under the scheme, at first to civilian and military war casualties, and later extended to war workers, evacuees, firemen and so on.

Under conditions of war, the government had been forced to take measures to unify, plan and direct medical resources, massively increase facilities, and provide free treatment to an increasing section of the population.

"Each individual citizen is more likely to concentrate upon his war effort if he feels that his government will be more ready in time with plans for that better world; that if these plans are to be ready in time, they must be made now."

—Beveridge Report (1942) explaining to capitalists how some health reforms were useful.

Whilst there remained glaring inequalities and abuses under the EMS, it became generally accepted that health care could not return to the old system after the war. Even the medical profession itself, through the 1942 report of a Medical Planning Commission, came out in favour of a unified, centrally planned public medical service under state control.

In the same year the Liberal Beveridge made his famous Report including its Assumption "B" that after the war there would be "a national service for prevention and cure of disease and disability." In 1944, Willink, the Tory Health Minister, introduced a White Paper entitled "A National Health Service" which envisaged a service hardly less ambitious than that which Bevan later introduced.

Damaging concessions

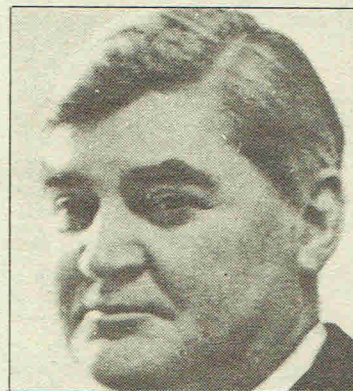
It is however totally improbable that the Conservatives would have implemented these far reaching proposals. The leaders of the British Medical Association had already, through back-room discussions with Willink, gained concessions for the medical profession. In any event, the Tories did not have the opportunity to further back track as Labour won a massive majority in 1945.

When Bevan was made Minister of Health in the Attlee Cabinet he said: "We are going to make the right people squeal for a change". But there followed a three year struggle with the BMA in which Bevan made the concessions; later he was to remark that he had stuffed the doctors' mouths with gold.

On average everyday this year the NHS will;

- care for 289,000 patients
- visit 4,100 elderly at home
- treat 96,500 outpatients
- deliver 1,663 babies

Most doctors had initially supported most of the proposals of the 1944 White Paper. Much to the surprise of the BMA leaders 60% of doctors were in favour of a 100% service covering all the population, and for a Central Medical Board with powers to direct doctors to areas of need. A majority were also in favour of remuneration by salary of GPs in group practice, and the abolition of the sale of practices—later two of the most contentious issues.



Aneurin Bevan, who introduced the NHS.

However, the constitution of the BMA ensured that the wealthier, suburban GPs dominated its leadership to the exclusion of the views of the far more numerous struggling doctors in working class areas, those in public hospitals, and young doctors in the armed forces. Consequently, disregarding the views of their own members, Dr Guy Dain, BMA Chairman, and Dr Charles Hill, BMA Secretary, led the opposition to the NHS Bill. By raising the principle of professional freedom, they whipped up such opposition amongst doctors that it was feared the whole scheme might be sabotaged. One doctor even said: "If the Bill comes into operation in anything like its present form it will represent something very much like that

regime which is now coming to its sorry end at Nuremburg."

One month after the Bill got the Royal Assent at the end of 1946, the BMA leaders informed Bevan that it would refuse to negotiate with him on terms of service. Instead of pressing ahead, resting on the overwhelming support of the labour movement and working class for the NHS, Bevan, in trying to split the specialists from the GPs, began to make concessions.

He agreed to set aside a limited number of paybeds in the State hospitals and put no limit on the fees consultants could charge. The private nursing homes were no longer to be nationalised.

Specialists were to receive very generous remuneration for their services. And the teaching hospitals would remain semi-independent, managed by Boards of Governors, rather than Regional Boards like other hospitals. Faced with continued opposition from the GPs, Bevan agreed not to introduce a full-time salaried service.

Whilst all these concessions eventually bribed the BMA into acquiescence with the Act (which came into force on 5 July, 1948) they have proved to be the thin end of the wedge that is now threatening the very existence of the NHS today:—the growing private medical sector, charges for services, unequal distribution of resources, and the still powerful lobby of doctors and consultants.

Lord Horder, a famous physician of the time, commented, "we have not given up anything. It is the Minister who has given up all the time." It is now up to us in the labour movement to make Horder's ilk, the BMA and their Tory friends, give up their privileges, in order to defend the NHS as originally envisaged in Labour's Manifesto of 1934.

Reverse the cuts

THE FIRST thing the health service needs is more money. Britain spends less on its health care, as a proportion of national income than any other industrialised country.

The Tory government has other priorities. It spends more on the Falklands (population 1,800) than is allocated for the entire health budget of Wales (population 2.5 million).

Since they came into office the Tories have savaged the Health Service. Their boast that they have increased spending is a hollow claim. The rise in nominal expenditure has not kept pace with inflation, the increased cost of new equipment, repairs to hospitals and the rising number of elderly in society.

Publicly the Tories boast they are safely looking after the health service. In private it is a different story. A secret Treasury paper, written last summer, but which only surfaced this month, is revealing reading.

- Over 1,300 doctors and 8,000 qualified nurses on the dole
- More is spent on the Falklands, than on the entire health budget for Wales.
- Health authorities have been ordered this coming year to make hospital cuts of between £270 million to £360 million.
- 780,000 are on the waiting list.
- 1,700 hospital beds are empty because of lack of money to finance staff.

It states that the government's proposed 1% rise in expenditure "would barely maintain existing standards". Even a 1.7% rise would do little to cater for "the pressing need for more resources". Officials concluded that "expenditure would need to rise at 2-3% a year to make significant progress".

A service which was already creaking is now threatening to fall apart. The cost of the Tories' policy of neglect and cutbacks has been paid for in lives.

Tory logic

At Wythenshawe hospital, Manchester, six patients waiting for heart surgery died in the month before Christmas because of a shortage of nurses and beds. The hospital said they were only able to operate on a third of patients at risk.

Incredible though it may seem, there are now fewer beds available in the NHS than there were when it began; this year 1,700 beds will remain empty because of insufficient finances to employ staff. Moreover, we now have the crazy situation where 780,000 people are

By Steve Morgan
(LPYS representative on the Labour Party NEC)

on hospital waiting lists while 8,140 qualified nurses and midwives and 1,394 doctors are on the dole.

And the Tories have the cheek to claim that they're making the NHS more efficient. They hope to placate people's fears and pull the wool over our eyes by saying they only wish to cut excess bureaucracy in the administrative side of the NHS.

Administrative costs are not massive in the NHS. Only 2½p in the pound is spent on administering the NHS in Britain, compared with 5p in the pound in Germany, 5½p in the USA and 11p in France.

The Tories are not cutting bureaucratic fat, they are cutting into the bone. Thousands more health care jobs are under threat. The British Medical Association, the junior doctors, the Association of Health Service Treasurers, Association of Nursing Management, health service trade unions and the Royal College of Nursing have all warned that standards of care will fall and patients suffer under the Tories' plans.

Immediately after the election, new cuts were proposed in staffing and finance for the health service. These have had a devastating affect.

Devastating result

On 18 January, 1984 *The Guardian* did a survey of all health districts in England and Wales. They got a 36% response rate. That is better information than the government has. Jenkin, the former Social Services Minister has closed down the unit which supplied ministers with such information; so when Fowler imposed his latest cuts, he had no idea what effect they would have.

The Guardian survey made grim reading. Over 50% of those replying said that they had had to close hospitals, wards, or clinics. Worse affected were reports from the inner cities of London, North-West and the Midlands.

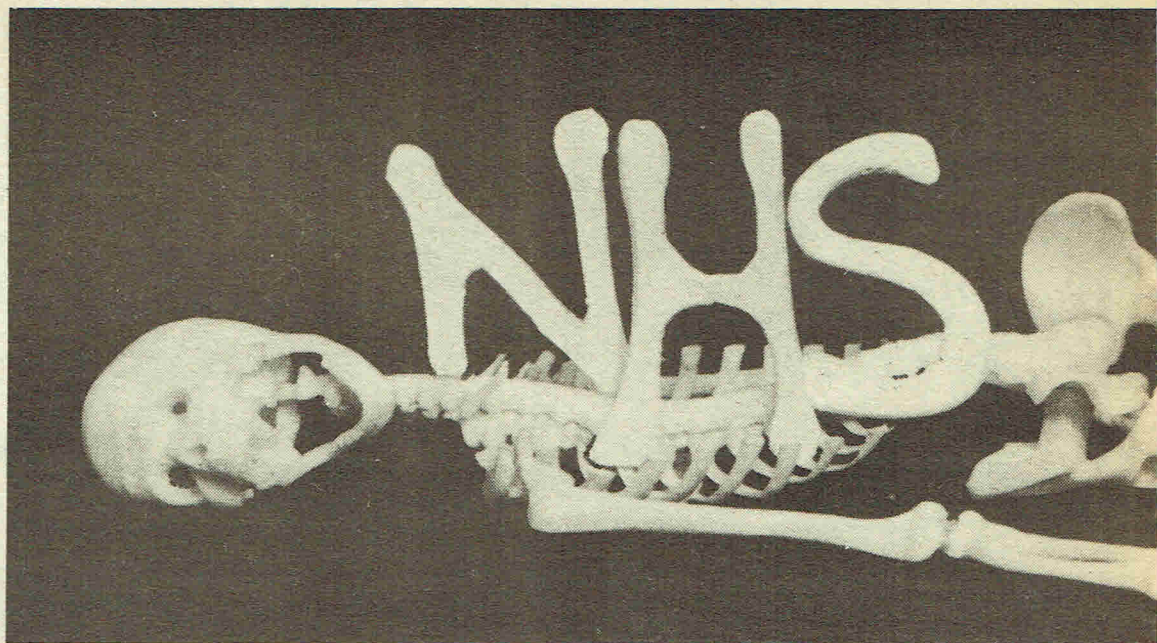
Dying man turned away

A DYING man was turned away from Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading recently because there were not enough nurses to care for him.

He died a week later in a charity hospital.

This horrific incident did not take place in a run-down, inner city area, but in West Berkshire, supposedly the wealthiest area in the country. Even here, such has been the impact of Tory cuts, we face a crisis situation.

By Ben Rayner
(GMBATU, Berkshire Health Authority)



STOP TORY MURDER



1982 NHS Day of Action. Photo: Bill Thorncroft



Members of Southampton Labour Party unveil a 250-yard, 20,000 signature petition against health cuts, presented to a recent meeting of the local Area Health Authority. Photo: Judy Harrison

But even areas 'doing well' were suffering eg West Norfolk were only operating at 78% of their official capacity. They pointed out: "We need additional funds for the elderly, mentally ill, and handicapped". Instead they were ordered to cut £99,000.

Most areas found that they had to make cuts in care for the elderly, and mentally ill and handicapped—the very areas the government tries to claim are priorities for care. *The Guardian* reported that, "nearly all the administrators were vitriolic, and many were apoplectic" about the cuts.

Up and down the country there have been local campaigns to fight these cuts. Emergency committees, consisting of health workers, other trade unionists, Labour councillors and community groups have banded together to resist the attacks on the health service. There have been occupations, mass demonstrations and petitions.

Undoubtedly the response surprised the Tories. Witness Thatcher's attempt to claim the health service was really safe in her hands.

But the current cuts are not the last. In the coming year the Tories have fixed a rigid ceiling on NHS expenditure, and built into that a miserly allowance of just 3% rise for health service workers.

Labour campaign

This month health authorities have been told to make further 3-4% "efficiency savings" in the coming year's budget. They have been ordered to slash hospital costs by between a further £270 million to £360 million. Trade unions in the health service have formed an umbrella organisation to fight further cuts, but this needs to be made a fighting reality at all levels.

It is now vital that the Labour leadership should bring together

the local campaigns in a co-ordinated drive to stop the Tories in their tracks and defend the NHS. It should be launched by a national demonstration.

A campaign based on the trade unions and Labour Party which explained how the labour movement was the force which created the NHS and which provides the only force capable of defending it, would unite millions across the professions behind the Labour Party.

Lost beds

"EACH WORKING day I only have to look out of the window to see two chest wards boarded up. That in real terms means sixty lost beds or even more really, sixty chronic chest patients condemned to suffer at home denied a hospital bed.

Your health service is crying out for help. Must we wait for people to die before we do something?

—Maureen Ranking
(NUPE Fazakerley Hospital, Liverpool)

A real drive could be initiated to establish workplace branches, which together with days of action in town centres and petitioning around local estates could result in tens of thousands of new members for the Labour Party. Moreover, it could spearhead a campaign to bring down the Tory government and return a socialist Labour government to power.

A comprehensive and free NHS is a component part of a socialist society. Perhaps more than any other topic, the campaign on the NHS provides the Labour leadership with an opportunity to raise the sights of the entire labour movement and to get across the ideas of socialism to millions of working people.

We demand pay and c

SOME NURSES have conditions.

Twenty-five nurses have to live in a pre-fab, built in 1948 for temporary use, at All Saints Psychiatric Hospital in Lambeth. They have to share a sitting room and lavatory with patients. Talk about taking your job home with you!

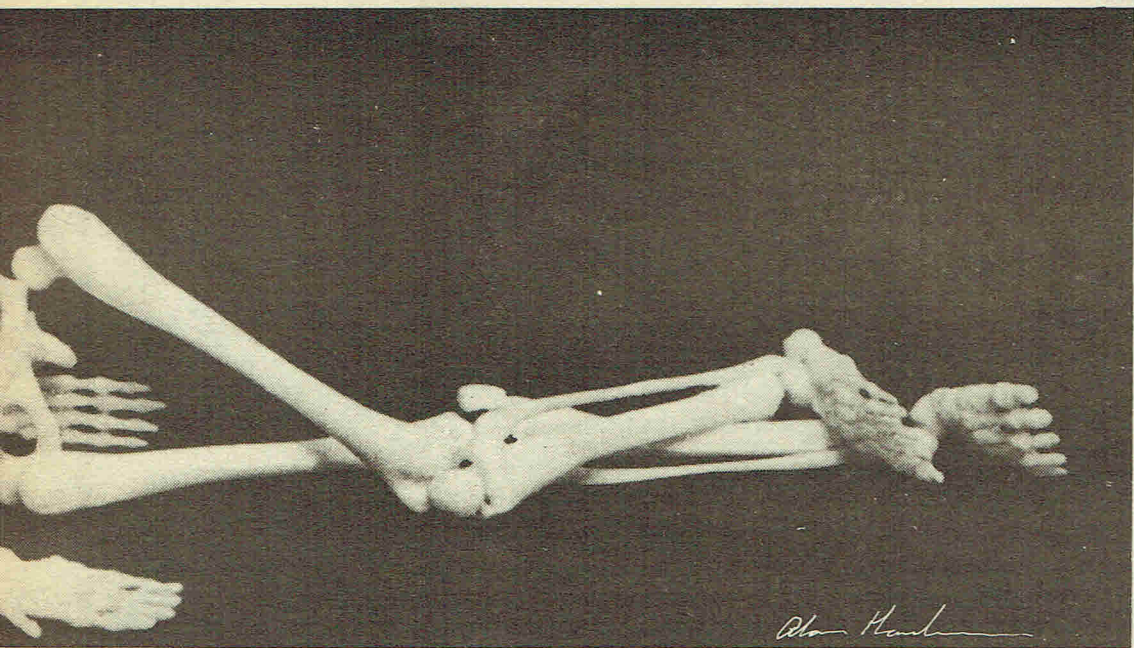
In another home sixty-six nurses have to share one cooker and fridge. Thirty-three of them share three baths, five lavatories and six wash basins.

These homes were mainly old but even new hospitals have poor conditions. At Charing Cross Hospital, London, which is just over ten years old, one block of hospital flats has had to be shored up against subsidence, another has had major repair work carried out and a third has been infested with cockroaches.

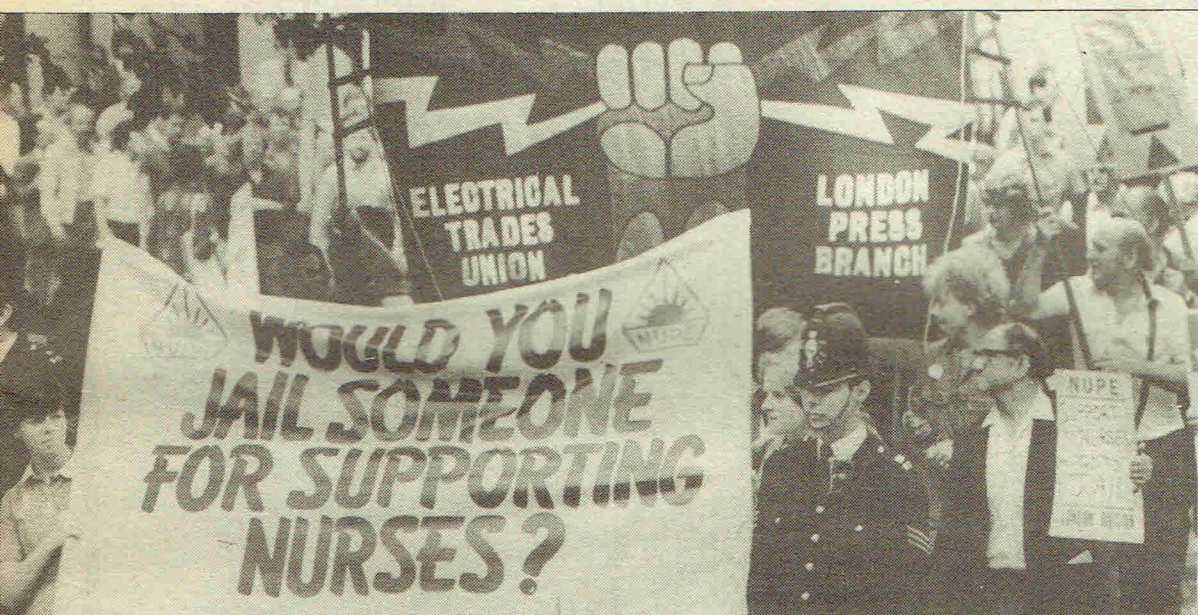
Increasing stress

Security in nurses homes varies dramatically. In some places no male visitors are allowed into nurse's rooms—not even their own fathers! Even female visitors in some of these places have to be out by 'lock-up' time of 10 or 11 pm.

On top of poor conditions, the majority of student nurses and some qualified staff have no security of tenure and can be moved around or even thrown out with virtually no avenue to appeal. Many hospitals do not provide single married or single parent accommodation.



RS-SAVE THE NHS



Demonstration in support of Fleet Street electricians, whose leader was hauled before the courts for backing NHS workers in their 1982 pay campaign. Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (IFL)

and decent conditions

to live in appalling

By Maggie Pountain
(NUPE Shop Steward,
personal capacity)

- ★ 40% of health workers live below the poverty line.
- ★ 35% of nurses get under £100 p.w.
- ★ Health unions are calling for a minimum nurse's wage of £100 p.w. The government says this would mean a 21% rise in the pay bill and they have only allocated 3% for health workers next year.
- ★ Latest recommendation from a Conservative think-tank, Centre for Policy Studies, is to outlaw all strikes in the health service and any workers connected with it.
- ★ One private hospital, Tadworth Court, has withdrawn union recognition from the 100 staff there, immediately after taking the building over from the NHS.

With the physical and emotional stress of working in a hospital, low pay and the prospect of returning to the appalling conditions in some hospital accommodation there is little wonder that suicide is high among nursing staff and alcoholism on the increase.

Make it democratic

An Achilles heel of the NHS has always been its lack of democratic control.

One of the most important groups are the consultants, whose power and influence is quite out of proportion both to their numbers and contribution to health care. They retain a particular strong hold upon junior doctors who are dependent upon them for progression in their career.

Consultants' power

Consultants are very powerful in the day to day running of the NHS. Not only are they a major influence in the hospitals through their various committees, but they comprise one of the largest groups on Regional Health Authorities (the largest group are individual businessmen).

Salaries of consultants are over six times that of ancillary workers. They come from the most privileged sections of society.

The medical skills of the consultants are vital for the NHS. But their administrative hold over it is completely unnecessary.

The day to day running of the health service is now in the hands of professional management teams. The only concession to 'democratic' control is the setting up of Community Health Councils in the Districts. They are a sort of consumers' watchdog, with rights of access to information, but no real power.

District Health Authorities only have a small minority of members nominated by the local authority; others are nominated via Regional

Health Authorities, who in turn are appointed by government ministers.

This has meant that if cuts are opposed, pressure is exerted from the top for people to conform. When Brent District Authority tried to oppose the cuts last year, the Regional Health Authority threatened to remove from the committee any of its nominees who did not accept the cuts.

The latest proposals will make matters worse. The Griffiths report last year proposed the creation of Chief Executives who would exercise considerable power in regions and districts.

New proposals

This would further lessen the influence of the minority of local authority nominees. The proposals have been opposed by many health organisations, including the trade unions.

It is scandalous that our most important social asset is in such undemocratic hands. We must end the present control of professionals, businessmen, consultants, lawyers and Tories. There should be overall control of the service by those who work in it and use it.

By Myrna Shaw

(Chairperson, Tower Hamlets Health District, Joint Shop Stewards' Committee, personal capacity)

A socialist alternative

A comprehensive and free NHS is a component part of a socialist society.

There is no doubt that more money must be spent on health and other essential public services. Where is the money to come from?

In order to provide sufficient funds to run the health service at a standard to meet the needs of the working class, you have to get to the root of the problem:

Firstly end the huge profits and waste of the pharmaceuticals by taking them over;

Secondly attack the social conditions which lead to poor health, implement an emergency housing programme, relieving the terrible housing conditions and all the health problems they create, at the same time providing employment for the half million unemployed builders;

Thirdly ensure the introduction of preventive measures wherever possible, and the use of effective and where appropriate, less costly treatments.

And the money saved should be used to improve the services, to make good the disparities, to ensure the best treatments are available, to fully staff all the services and to eliminate the waiting lists for ever!

More than money

If we want to really improve the health of the population, however we need to look a bit further than just spending more on the NHS even though at the present time more funds are essential to reverse the cuts and bring services up to decent standards to relieve the suffering of the ill.



The NHS operates strictly within the confines of the capitalist system, in isolation from all the agencies responsible for the health hazards in society. Whilst the NHS spends millions on expensive staff and equipment trying to save lung cancer and heart victims, the tobacco monopolies are spending millions on advertising. While thousands are injured or killed through drunken driving millions are spent on advertising alcoholic drinks.

In isolation the NHS will never be able to cope. The NHS has the hopeless task of patching up the victims of capitalist society. It is little more than a repair service. What we must look for are ways and means of creating a safer and healthier society.

Social factors

Only in a truly planned and socialist society could these problems be overcome. With adequate housing, employment for all, de-

cent wages, the social conditions that give rise to the huge demand on the health and social services would disappear.

Gone would be the need for ever increasing consumption of tranquillizers and anti-depressants. With the ending of production for profit, with the development of national and industrial plans, under workers' management, of production for need and with the establishment by the workers of control at the workplace, then it will be possible for work to become more meaningful.

Planning needed

Under these conditions, the whole nature of the NHS would become transformed. More resources would become available for attacking the remaining and unavoidable health problems and developing the services to provide immediate treatment for all those in need, with all the sophisticated equipment and medical treatments that science can provide. Every citizen would look forward to a full, active and long life.

WE MUST campaign for implementation of socialist planning to eliminate the causes of illness, disease and accidents. We demand:

- ★ Reversal of the cuts!
- ★ Abolition of private practice inside and outside the NHS!
- ★ Nationalisation of the pharmaceutical industry!
- ★ Full staffing of all services!
- ★ Decent wages and conditions for health service workers.
- ★ Programme of renovation of all old buildings, and construction of new hospitals!
- ★ Abolition of all charges—For completely free health service!
- ★ Democratic workers' control and management of NHS!

Unfortunately the capitalist class will never give us a decent health service. Neither will they eliminate the social conditions which lead to bad health. If there's no profit to be made, construction companies will not build the homes required.

These demands are unattainable unless control of the economy is wrested from the hands of the capitalist class. They have proved themselves incapable of running an efficient system that can provide for our basic needs of housing, health and education. Labour must take over the commanding heights of the economy to take society forward.

We must take over the banks and insurance companies, and the major monopolies. From there we can set about the socialist transformation of society.

Militant

Save
Our
Health
Service



End the private profiteers

- ★ 110 companies are responsible for 90% world trade in medicines.
- ★ Drugs account for 10% of the NHS budget
- ★ Multi-nationals swindle NHS out of millions by buying at expensive prices from their own subsidiaries and marking the cost up to the government.
- ★ US survey of 2,000 drugs found that 60% of

them lacked any kind of evidence for the claims of the companies.

- ★ Drug companies have one salesperson for every GP in the UK.
- ★ Up to 20% of cost of drug is spent on average on promotion, whilst only 5-10% is spent on research.

By Alan Needham
(Sheffield Hallam LPYS)

'Safety first' not drug firms' motto

DRUGS ARE developed, manufactured and sold to make a profit.

If making money conflicts with making sick people better, there is no guarantee that people's health will come first while the pharmaceutical industry is privately owned. Quite the contrary.

The industry says it spends a lot of money on research. So it does, compared to some industries. But it spends more on advertising!

We do not usually see the advertisements, because they are aimed at doctors. It is the doctors, by prescribing particular drugs, who decide what gets sold. With around 4,000 branded drugs on the market, most of which appeared after most doctors qualified, the information supplied by the industry has a powerful influence on doctors' prescribing.

Misleading adverts

Sometimes it is very misleading, like the ads which described Distavel (thalidomide) as "safe for mother and baby". The US Senate hearings on the drug industry revealed that Upjohn (which sells drugs here, too) used "before" and "after" X-Ray photos to sell one drug. But the X-Ray photos were of different people, neither of whom had ever taken the drug.

According to the drug industry itself, the NHS could save £50m a year by using unbranded medicines.

However, a calculation based on the prices listed in "Chemist and Druggist", and on sales figures circulated by IMS, the market research company, shows that the NHS could, in fact, save £14.5m a year on just one drug, the heart drug propranolol hydrochloride, which ICI sell under their brand name "Inderal".

At that rate, imagine what could be saved on 4,000 branded drugs! And how much more, if production for need, not profit, was introduced by a nationalised industry integrated into the NHS.

Drug companies say that testing is crippling them, in terms of delays to product "launch" and in costs. Certainly, struggles by the labour movement in most advanced countries have succeeded in establishing regulations on the tests firms must do before getting licenses to sell their products.

But many drug companies make up these costs by selling drugs at greater profit in the third world, including the drugs that have been failed by the toxicity tests in the advanced countries.

Since there is such pressure to launch the new drug before a competitor captures the market, that also means pressure to do only the minimum test legally required, rather than follow up all possibilities. Several firms, including the makers of thalidomide, were caught trying to destroy

evidence of side effects once they began to appear.

The thalidomide disaster happened 20 years ago. But the Eraldin (heart drug) disaster happened only in 1975, while the arthritis drug Opren was withdrawn as recently as 1982. There was a delay of 14 months between the report of Opren's side effects and any action by manufacturers.

Fewer diseases easily susceptible to drug treatment remain. Fewer new drugs pass the tests in the advanced countries.

Increasingly, people are beginning to realise that housing conditions, nutrition, working conditions and exercise are at least as important in curing or preventing illness as drugs, which in some cases only temporarily relieve symptoms and sometimes may cause more problems than they solve.

Tuberculosis, for example, was almost eradicated in Britain primarily by improvements in public health and living standards, and only to a lesser extent by drugs. Cholera was eradicated entirely by clean water and proper sewers.

Many of today's illnesses—including the majority of cancers—are preventable or even curable by improving the environment in which we live and work and raising living standards to an extent impossible without changing society.

Some drugs will continue to be useful—up to a point. But while they are made by privately owned firms competing to make ever decreasing profits, high prices will continue to be necessary to make "risk" worthwhile; patents and brand names will be essential to protect profits, and heavy promotion essential to make the products sell.

Close relationship

The present committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM) prides itself on its good relationship with the industry. So much so that the first chairman of a drug safety committee, Sir Derrick Dunlop, became a director of the Stirling Winthrop Drug Co. *New Scientist* (by no means a Marxist journal) blamed the extent of the Eraldin and Opren disasters directly on the cosy relationship between the CSM and the manufacturers.

The approval and licensing of drugs should come under workers' control. That doesn't mean workers will have to carry out the toxicity tests—the CSM doesn't do its own, either—but will be able to establish the overall priorities of health and safety on the basis of people's needs not private profits.

By Viv Seal
(Gorton CLP)



How nationalisation helps

LABOUR PARTY conferences have repeatedly demanded the nationalisation of the drugs industry. With nationalisation, it would be possible to plan and produce necessary drugs in an efficient manner, and without the waste of resources arising from competing products, and without the waste of the packaging, the market research, and the promotion.

Under nationalisation, properly planned and conducted research could be organised centrally, with

very severe testing of new products. A central information service using the most up to date technology and computer equipment could provide all the necessary reference information in an effective manner for GPs, and hospitals.

It could also process feed-back information from the field, and could keep all interested parties completely up to date with the latest details. Millions of pounds spent by the NHS would be saved in this way.

Destruction from within

THE TORIES want to extend the hold of private profiteers throughout the health service. They have instructed health authorities to put the £900 million laundry service out to contract, which means more money for their business friends.

Privatisation will have a damaging effect upon the health service.

First upon the staff. They will not be covered by Whitley council rates and can find their wages and working conditions will deteriorate.

Secondly, it will further divide hospital staff. Instead of operating as a team, the ancillary staff will be further sectioned off from other sections of the workforce.

Thirdly it will hit NHS finances. Far from being cost-effective—when coupled with the strait-jacket put upon health authorities spending—it can lead to further hardship. For example Newcastle on Tyne Health Authority were not allowed to accept an offer to do the laundry from Darlington Health

Authority which would have saved the health service £100,000 compared to the lowest tender from private contractors. The reason? Darlington would have exceeded their manpower targets.

But that is not the end of the Tories' prejudice of money before health care. They are prepared to hit some of the worst-off in society in their greed for profits.

They have asked mental hospitals to sell off their lavish grounds to private developers. The government has also ordered a survey of all NHS estates; the results will be published in August.

The labour movement must resist all these attempts to privatise health. People before profits.

Bank balance is your most vital asset

PRIVATE medicine is a parasite on the NHS in three major ways:-

1. It coaxes away nurses and doctors trained by the NHS. (The cost of training a doctor is £95,000.)
2. They use NHS facilities that they cannot afford to buy.
3. The private sector does not provide a comprehensive service. High risk patients such as the elderly, those with a history of illness and the mentally ill that require long periods of treatment are turned away. Premiums would be much higher without its exploitation of the NHS. Whereas 92% of ophthalmic (eyes) surgeons are in private practice the number is only 8% of consultants dealing with mentally handicapped.



In recent years there has been considerable expansion of the private health market. The number of pay beds in the NHS rose 22% from 1979 to 1983 and from 1978-83 there was a 30% increase in the number of private hospitals and a 37% increase in the number of beds.

New concessions

The Tories have relaxed the restriction on the building of private hospitals. They have given employers tax relief on contributions for private health schemes and relaxed the amount of time consultants can spend on private work without losing any of their NHS salary. There are now 4.2 million people in private health schemes and there are 160 private hospitals.

At present they face problems of escalating premiums. Hospital fees have doubled in the last four years and BUPA's premiums rose 33% last year. This month one private hospital London Diagnostic and Imaging Centre, has been put in the hands of the receivers. They are looking for more concessions from the Tories in the forthcoming Budget.

Yet it is scandalous that some of these private hospitals do have some better facilities than the NHS.

Why should people suffer because they cannot afford to pay? Everyone should be entitled to the same treatment. The only criterion should be need, not the size of your bank balance.

By Graham Robertson
(ASTMS, North London
Medical Branch)
and Kim Waddington

USA, France, Poland, European unions

US boom - give us our share!

LAST WEEK, Rob O'Neill outlined the strike wave in response to Reagan's three years of war on the working class. This week, he looks at the mood building up.

THESE STRIKES represent a real turn-around in the fight against concessions. The flag of opposition raised by the Morenci miners in Arizona is being taken into battle by these workers. The set-backs and the lull of past years is coming to an end.

This fightback will not, of course, be an even process. Workers in some sectors are still being forced to give concessions. However the fights are the shape of things to come. One reason is the increasing anger of US workers as their living standards fall. Another is that there has been an upswing in the economy for the past eleven months. As a result unemployment has been falling, profits rising, workers' confidence is gaining.

Over the past nine months, unemployment has fallen from over 10% to over 8%. In the third quarter of 1983 after tax profits of 506 major corporations rose 29% from a year earlier (*Wall Street Journal*).

Profits are rising

In the auto industry the three major producers, GM, Ford and Chrysler recorded a loss of \$186 million in the third quarter of 1982. In the third quarter of 1983 they made \$1.17 billion profit and their fourth quarter profits are expected to total \$2.3 billion. GM increased its third quarter dividend from 60¢ per share to \$1 a share. The source of these super-profits can be traced to the estimated \$2 to \$3 billion worth of concessions made by auto workers over the past two to three years!

As the US economy and corporate profits continue to grow over the coming six to twelve months, and as unemployment at worst does not rise and at best falls, many other sections of the US working class will move into struggle to demand their share of the benefits of the upswing.

In *Business Week* of 31 October the editors worried "that workers will demand higher wages as employment grows and labor markets tighten". Another commentator in the same issue of this magazine of US big business stated: "Wages will not sit still in 1984. September may have provided the first hint of wage escalation across a broad sweep of industries, as hourly earnings of production workers in manufacturing, construction, trade and services rose significantly faster than they have over the past year".

US labour's tradition

The same magazine on 29 August in an article entitled, "No more Mr Nice Guy" said "strike activity is on the rise. Nationwide, worktime lost in strikes involving more than 1,000 or more workers is running about 10% ahead of one year ago". This was before the strikes of Chrysler, McDonnell Douglas and Greyhound.

In the same article Herbert R. Northrup, director of the Wharton School's industrial research unit predicted, "We will see more strikes. Union people feel like they were mistreated in the recession".

There is a law of history which is demonstrated time after time and in country after country. What the working class win in struggle they will not give up without a fight. The USA is living up to this law.

The American labor movement needs a lead from the union leadership to match the fighting spirit in the ranks of labour. The AFL-CIO leadership should launch a campaign against any further concessions or cut backs. They should demand across the board increases

for all workers organised or unorganised to make up the losses of the past four years.

They should fight for a realistic minimum wage sufficient to keep a family in decent conditions for all workers, male and female. They should take up the struggle for a shorter working week with no loss of pay and at the same time campaign for a useful programme of public works to build houses, schools, hospitals and facilities for the old, the sick and the young. They should campaign for a free health service for all.

Fighting on these demands, they should seek to mobilise the union membership and at the same time launch a major recruiting drive to draw the unorganised into the ranks of organised labour. Such a lead now from the tops of the AFL-CIO would evoke a tremendous response from the working people of the United States. The task for the activists and the rank and file of labour is to move through their locals and labour councils and demand that their leaders take such action.

In 1983 the state of Arizona threw its forces behind the giant Phelps Dodge corporation in that corporation's attempt to bust the unions of the copper workers who went on strike in July. The town of Morenci was invaded by police carrying rifles, machine guns and gas, backed up by hundreds of armed National Guards. The entire operation was co-ordinated by two helicopters which circled overhead.

This invasion took place before the invasion of Grenada. Yet in spite of this massive intimidation the copper workers fought on. This is the tradition of US labour, a



Greyhound workers dispute Boston. Pickets try to stop scab drivers leaving a terminal.

tradition which will come to the fore in the period ahead. A lead from the top of the unions would mobilise the mighty power of the 100 million strong American working class in a struggle against the huge corporations.

And clearly, a major part of this struggle would have to be the establishment of a US Labour Party based on the trade union movement which would fight for the interests of the working class of the US as the Republicans and Democrats now fight for the interests of big business.

OUT SOON

Militant International Review

Articles on Russia, Lenin's fight against Stalinism, and the 1983 Belgian general strike.

Mitterrand's road blocked

FRENCH lorry drivers who stopped work and parked their juggernauts across the roads brought the whole of France to a halt last week.

The blockades are a telling comment on the bleeding away of authority and support for the Mitterrand government since the honeymoon days of 1981.

The actions started because a work to rule by both French and Italian customs officers was causing long delays in freezing cold weather. In fact, despite the EEC's supposed free movement of trade, bureaucratic hold ups at the Italian border are common place at any time.

Right take advantage

But the movement developed from this initial mood of annoyance, and demands were made by both employee drivers and "independents", tens of thousands of one or two man operations existing on a

shoestring. The employees work long hours for quite low pay. The so called independents work even longer, ground down like most small businesses by the weight of the big monopolies.

The small employers have dominated the dispute, with their calls for lower VAT on diesel fuel and attacks on the government's alleged "favouritism" towards the publicly owned rail system. Some drivers have even burned tyres on railway lines in protest.

Even the demands stressed by the worker drivers are contradictory, complaints against police harassment have mainly been directed against safety restrictions on hours worked and rest breaks. Workers complain they can not fulfil the safety obligations without working over the weekends.

The disputes stem largely from the failure of the Socialist Party-led government to improve wages, maintain jobs and decrease working hours as their election campaign promised. The craven capitulation to the needs of French

capitalism has eaten away at support and given a field day for the right, who have, without doubt, taken advantage of the dispute.

But workers are learning lessons about the disruption they can cause the economy, and not just the lorry drivers. Steel workers protesting at layoffs have blockaded the roads at Metz. Other workers have been in action, civil servants have held protests and significantly the biggest miners' strike for 20 years took place on 20/21 February.

Socialist alternative

Half the 56,000 mining workforce in France could be at risk from new closure plans. The CFDT union federation, associated with the Socialist Party, is backing the miners' protest.

A clear trade union, working class based focus for opposition to the Mitterrand government's right-wing policies is essential. It could transform the situation, hastening the inevitable pressure for alternative socialist policies to escape the capitalist crisis.

Poland's "new" unions—No Solidarity

THE EXPORT of coal from Poland through the port of Gdansk to try to break the British miners' overtime ban gives an idea of the completeness of Stalinist state control in the Polish unions since Jaruzelski's military takeover.

It is not the only sign. Management at Hutmen copper goods plant in Wroclaw have sacked five workers and fined 67 others for stopping work for under an hour in protest at food

price rises of about 20% introduced on 30 January.

There will now be enormous pressure for pay rises. The government plan to stop it by harsh action against the banned *Solidarnosc* union which called the strike, and by encouraging the stooge official unions which oppose action.

Military rule has taken its toll even in the lower reaches of the bureaucracy. In the recent elections within the Polish United Workers Par-

ty (Poland's "Communist" Party) 30% of the officials lost their posts, mostly "liberals" who had given some support for *Solidarnosc*.

Not only is the "United Workers Party" disunited, it is also clearly not a workers party in composition. It has lost 950,000 members since *Solidarnosc* appeared in 1980 and only one in eight of the present two million membership are industrial workers.

European workers build unity

OFFICIAL unemployment in the EEC area reached a record 12.8 million last month. This is a rate of 11.5%. Nearly half of unemployed women and a third of unemployed men are under 25.

This figure is five times as high as it was ten years ago, and these figures, it should be remembered, exclude workers on short time or on bogus training schemes. The percentages out of work are Ireland 17.0%, Netherlands 15.4%, Belgium 14.7%, Italy 12.7%, Britain 12.3%, Denmark 11.0%, France 9.9%, West Germany 9.4%. Only Luxembourg with 1.9% has escaped the worst

ravages of redundancies.

The worst sufferers are youth and women, but workers throughout Europe have seen jobs disappear. Multinationals have caused much of the devastation, closing industry worldwide. International co-operation between workers is essential. In the long run, the only answer to the dole will be a socialist plan of production worked out and coordinated by the working class throughout the world.

Two local authorities, the Greater London Council and the regional government of Val de Marne in France have given assistance to British and French Kodak workers

in convening a joint meeting. They are fighting plans by the US based photographic monopoly to cut jobs. Last year Kodak shed 7500 workers in the United States alone, and plan to close a factory in Vincennes and cut staff at Hemel Hemstead near London.

The European Standing Committee of Kodak Trade Unions has now held two conferences, and on 24 February organised a lobby of the company's UK headquarters with workers from Italy and Ireland joining the British and French contingents.

Letters

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

Oxford's blues turn red

Dear Comrades,
Oxford may not seem to be great socialist country, you may even think socialism only exists as a game for certain middle class intellectuals. If you are at Ruskin College, as I am, it's a forgivable mistake.
The lecturers at Ruskin are full of pessimism, often led by the small selection of self-styled 'Marxists'. "People don't want socialism", they say, "because they like the present bosses too much. You just can't reason with people. They'll never change society, never."
Meanwhile, outside the ancient walls of Ruskin College—reality! On a recent paper sale outside Tesco's, we sold a dozen

papers in an hour. In that hour we heard the real feeling, and real reasons why people are turning towards socialism.

One example was a woman in her seventies, who told me how she had been brought up in a Conservative household and had always voted Tory. But since this government had been in her pension had become a pittance. Now, her fifty year old son is unemployed with little hope of employment now at his age. And because he is living with her, the social security expect her to keep him!

Now she says she wants to see the Tories out for good, because they only want to "take from the poor to give to the rich."

Derek Marsden
Oxford East LPYS

Andropov's funeral

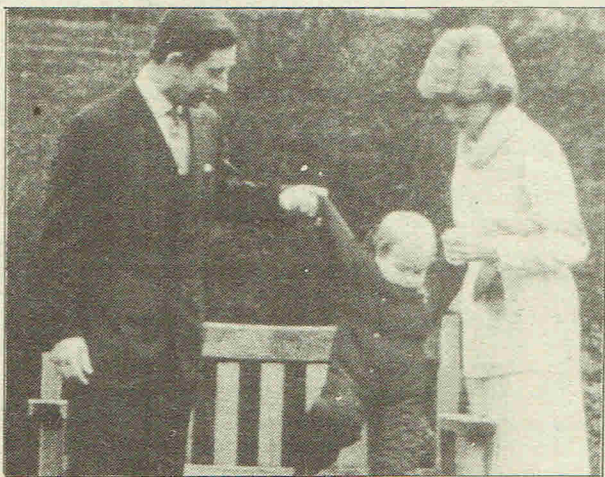
Comrades,
The funeral of Andropov exposes many contradictions and hypocrisies. Thatcher, Healey and Arafat are a strange mixture, but who better to represent the USA than George Bush, ex-head of the CIA at the funeral of a former KGB chief? I expect the *Morning Star* will be producing its usual editorial about what a great fighter for peace Andropov was.
Perhaps they should be reminded that Andropov, like Brezhnev and the rest of the Politbureau, rose to power wading through the

blood of the Hungarian, Czechoslovakian and Polish workers.

Similarly, to invite Reagan, Bush and for that matter Thatcher, after the recent shelling of the Chouf mountains in Lebanon, indicates how much concern the ruling caste in the Kremlin has for the lives of Lebanese workers.

Seeing these characters at the funeral of Andropov will remind many workers of the old gangster movies, where all the mafia bosses in Chicago went to the funeral of a rival after having shot him themselves!

Yours fraternally
Laurence D Church
Hastings LPYS



Young William enjoys his elevated position.

Rosy future for William Mk II

Comrades,
Princess Di is expecting another baby and "both families are delighted". Hardly surprising really, she can look forward to excellent ante-natal care, lots of pretty, new maternity clothes and a nanny to look after Willie.
Unfortunately this is not the case for my sister and other working class women in the same position. She also discovered that she is pregnant again. Living in a one-bedroomed council flat with her unemployed husband and fourteen month

old son.
Not for her the pretty clothes, excellent health care and nannies. She will be traipsing down to the ante-natal clinic with her toddler in tow whilst her husband searches in vain for a job. Endless trips to the council to ask for a bigger flat, or even a house!
What future under capitalism? No job, unsuitable accommodation, a further cut in living standards in order to accommodate another hungry mouth. As she quite rightly says: "If we pull our belts in any further it'll choke us!"

Yours fraternally
Anne Howard
Brighton

No tears Tebbit

Dear Comrades,
Norman Tebbit suggested we should get on our bikes and look for work. I wonder if he would shed any tears for a 19 year old girl killed at 6.0 O'clock in the morning on a main road near Poole recently.

At the time she was hitchhiking from her home in Mid-Wales to Portsmouth, a distance of 150 miles, for a job interview for a waitress. This should not be taken as another road accident statistic but an indictment of five years of Tory rule.

Fraternally
Andrew Dinkenor
Bournemouth

Slave labour

Dear Comrades,
I have a friend who has been working in a Butchers shop for the last two years. She works on average a 45 hour week and is paid £40 a week. No one working in the shop gets overtime pay but they are forced to work overtime under the threat of losing their jobs. Over the Christmas period they had to work a seven day week, with sometimes a 14 hour day. They were paid no overtime at all and didn't even receive a Christmas bonus.

Despite the minimal wage they receive and the long hours they put in, the owner has started closing down the shops and dismissing the staff (they receive no redundancy money). They are already so short staffed that the workers go up to eight hours without a break, but the owner says he can't afford to keep the shops open and pay the wages. Could this be something to do with the fact that he has just bought himself a country mansion with 25 acres of land attached to it?

Fraternally
Alison Costello
Brighton LPYS

Blood money

Dear Comrades,
While reading a review for a Latin American film *To the last Drop*, I discovered that it is not just a metaphor that the West bleeds the Third World.

Latin America currently exports about 3 million litres of blood each year. Unemployment and poverty mean that selling blood is often done, irrespective of health, and more regularly than is allowed here.

Yours fraternally
J Slattery
Nottingham North
Labour Party

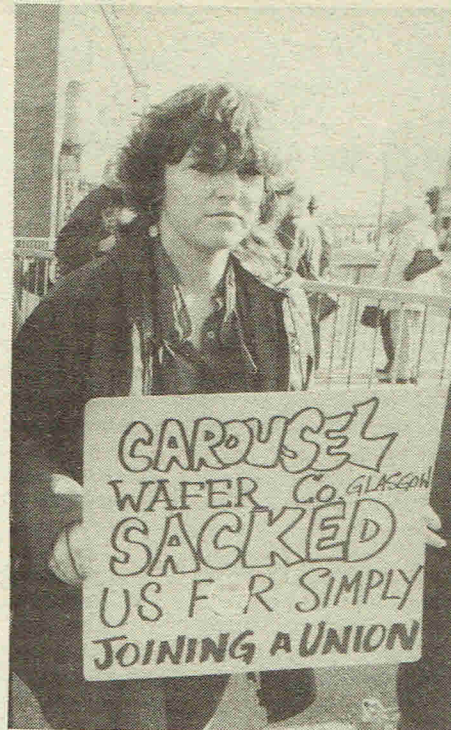
General strike

Dear Comrades,
I most strongly object to the latest move by the Tory government of forcing people to give up their rights to belong to a trade union.

It is quite correct when I hear people say that we are living in a police state.

I think it is not before time that the TUC called on all unions to make one day a general strike against this government and let Thatcher see that she cannot bully the working class with her policies.

Yours fraternally
Joe Griffiths
Branch 5 GMBATU



Carousel striker



. . . . and Princess Anne on another tough mission.

Princess Anne's tough tour

Dear Comrades,
I am writing to show the disgusting contempt in which the British media and the Royal Family hold the British workers. The *Evening Times* 1 Feb said: "Princess Anne is about to embark on perhaps the toughest Foreign Tour undertaken by a member of the Royal Family. . . . A palace spokesman said: "The Princess very much

wanted to see for herself the appalling conditions facing relief workers."

Maybe she should come up to Glasgow and see the "appalling conditions" the Carousel Biscuit factory workers faced before they went on strike. The toilet in winter constituted of a "really luxurious" bucket. And rats regularly passed through the place, but left due to the terrible conditions.

And if she would like to come up, she could always leave a contribution for the Strike Fund, if she is so concerned about the conditions of workers. Maybe this is what the Queen meant in her Xmas speech about the lack of communication. Though I doubt it.

Yours,
Mark O'Donnell
Glasgow

Third World Britain?

Dear Comrades,
In the same week that the "official" unemployment figure rose, yet again, over 3,000,000, the charity Oxfam (dedicated to aiding the Third World) announced founding projects in the poorer regions of Britain.

Oxfam will be giving aid to areas where unemployment is high such as Edinburgh's Graigmillar Estate.

The Rev. Dr. John Atherton secretary of "Church

Action on Poverty" commented in the *Observer* (5.2.84): "One notices remarkable convergences with the Third World. The nature of poverty can be very similar to that in Britain."

In contrast to Oxfam's announcement and rising unemployment, capitalists still enjoy the luxury of leaving vast sums of money after their deaths as did Mr. J Wine when his will was published in the same week He left £2,351,740.

Yours fraternally
R. Bishop

Not so comic candidate

Dear Comrades,
Will Bill Maynard get expelled for standing against the official Labour Party candidate in Chesterfield? Or is it OK to stand against the Labour Party and split its voters just for a publicity stunt, using the Tories' press and the media as a reactionary platform to oppose our official candidate

Right-wingers would be screaming for our expulsion if *Militant* did a Bill Maynard, even if it is OK for their opportunist friends to use the Labour Party for a careerist ride in politics, like Woodrow Wyatt, Harold Wilson and the rest of Labour's opportunists and renegades have done over the years.

Yours fraternally
Stephen C Draper
Grimsby CLP

'Childish demos'

Dear Comrades,
On the 15 February my local Labour Party held its AGM. To my astonishment and disbelief a local right-winger when talking about public meetings had the audacity to say: "Public meetings and demonstrations are childish." He then referred to a demonstration against unemployment, stating that it was a waste of time due to the lack of support and that on the day the bus "had to be filled with communists."

Despite this outburst, the YS appealed for a donation to help pay for a bus to transport unemployed youth to the LPYS Scottish Conference. After some fuss from various right-wingers the sum of £50 was pledged.

This victory for the Motherwell South LPYS shows that the local right-winger are being 'smashed' and our support is strengthening.

Yours fraternally
Patricia Reid
Motherwell South LPYS

Orwell and imperialism—reply

Dear Comrades,
Ciaran O'Laoghaire raises important points in relation to George Orwell—his attitude to Imperialism in general and to India and Ireland in particular.

Comrade O'Laoghaire distorts Orwell's views on India. For a start, it may well have been true that Indian people were well fed before British Imperialism arrived in the eighteenth century (though I doubt it). Orwell's point was that 200 years of Imperial rule had produced an army and state apparatus completely formed in the interests of British Imperialism. A simple immediate pull-out of the British officer caste and upper civil servants would have produced chaos, and at that time would have merely replaced the rule of British

Imperialism by that of Japanese Imperialism (which happened in Burma, Malaya etc.), leaving the Indian peoples equally exploited.

Orwell saw 'Dominion Status' as a step by which a British socialist government could work with the Indian peoples to build a new India and stand up to the threat of Japanese Imperialism. It had nothing in common with the ideas Comrade O'Laoghaire attributes to him.

Comrades should read the whole article (reprinted in Volume 2 of Orwell's collected journalism) which describes his programme for a socialist revolution, to quote the summary: "...Dominion status offered to India by a Socialist government is an offer of partnership on equal terms until such time as the world

has ceased to be ruled by bombing planes. But we must add to it the unconditional right to secede. It is the only way of proving that we mean what we say."

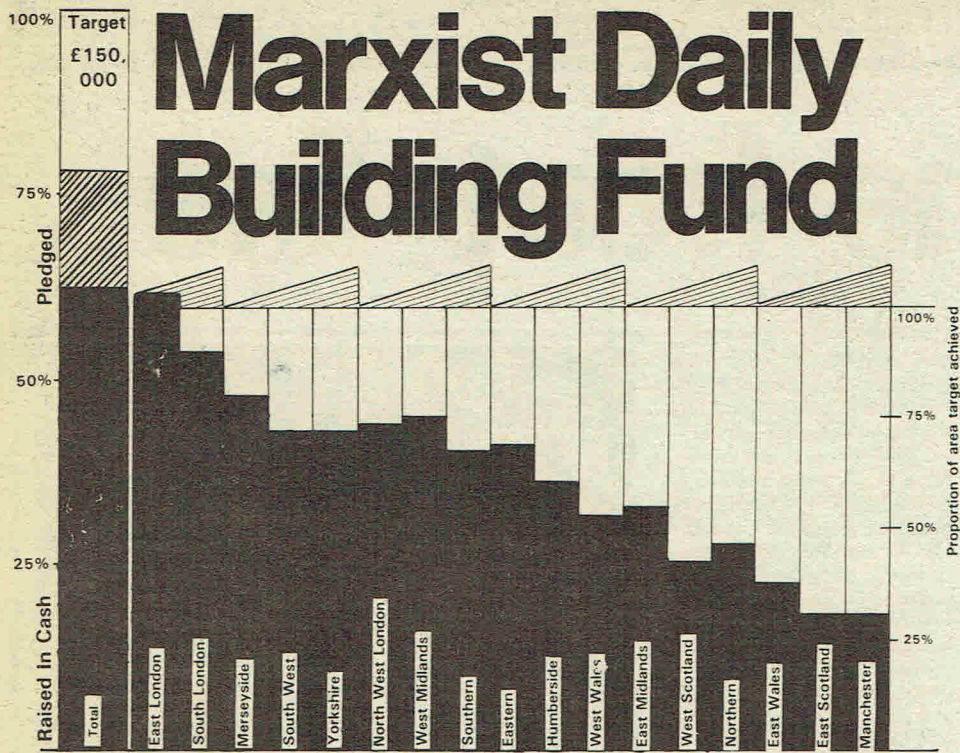
On Ireland, Orwell apparently had very little to say. Unfortunately Comrade O'Laoghaire distorts what he did say (I assume by accident). The piece quoted by the Irish Times is not Orwell's, but his quote from a book by Sebastian Haffner. If you look in the original, the sentence does not start: "The spectacle of our allowing. . ." but, "He says the spectacle. . ." (my emphasis). Orwell was making the point that European intellectuals like Haffner could not understand that the British Government could not invade Ireland in 1941 because of the repugnance

the British working class would feel for such an invasion.

Orwell's only other recorded view on Ireland was his hatred for bourgeois nationalism, whether English, Irish or any other. As far as he was concerned, such nationalism with its emphasis, in the final analysis, on some form of racial superiority was first cousin to fascism.

George Orwell was no 'perfect socialist'. As the articles in *Militant* have shown, he was no Marxist. But he was an exceptionally honest, clear-seeing writer who struggled for socialism through the majority of his life. Discussion of his ideas can help Marxists today, but it must be honest discussion based on Orwell's views, not on distortions.

Yours fraternally
Geoff Jones
Brighton



Once more there has been a landslide of post into our office bringing thousands of pounds more for the Building Fund. Altogether £7,347 was received this week bringing the total to £92,209.

We will announce the end of February total next week. But don't stop sending in the donations. We still need every penny and pound you can afford to help us get the premises we want.

Extra money

Some readers who had previously sent in money have now sent in extra amounts. K Blake, Folkestone LPYS, who had given £20 has now written again saying "as I'm unemployed I can see all too well exactly what the Militant is fighting for. Here's another £20 closer to a new building for our paper."

Dave Gartrell, Battersea, has given £250. Frank Clayton, a worker at British Aerospace, Woodford, has sent in £200 as have EM

By Nick Wrack

Bullingham, Coventry, Ken Gilmour and Moira and K Cunningham and A Campbell, Chester. Supporters in West London collected over a thousand pounds from a meeting of only fifty people, most of whom had already made a donation!

Some areas are obviously having a last minute push. Supporters in South Yorkshire have sent in another £680 and from Watford we received £400. East London have gone way over their target amount but the money keeps coming in. They hope to have doubled their target when the final figures are announced. £135 was given by Dave Cartwright and Linda Clark and J McGuinness sent £50.

All of these amounts and

the many others we have no room to mention represent a tremendous sacrifice on the part of working class socialists with little or no money to spare. Not least of which is the commitment of a young school student in Dorset who decided to sell her watch and necklace to make sure she could participate in our appeal.

Genuine support

This shows the genuine support for the ideas of Marxism and must put the cold wind of fear into the ruling class and their allies. They might have all the money in the world but they cannot hold back the desire of workers to see an end to their system and the misery it inflicts. With the support we have so far and with confidence in our ideas there is no doubt that we shall be able to obtain the premises we need and move towards daily Marxist paper.

ADS

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

For Sale

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

"Militant Turn left for workers unity and socialism"

T-shirts—£3.50-white, yellow, navy black. Sweatshirts—£6.75—grey, pale-blue, navy, dark green.

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

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

YOUTH PEACE vigil at Llanishen ROF. Saturday 10 March. Youth groups and youth, join us. Contact: Kay Higgs, Caerffili 861423.

FOLKSTONE LPYS Public Debate—Nuclear Disarmament. Speakers from: CND, Tory, Liberal and Labour parties, LPYS speaker—Willie Griffin. Venue—Channel Bar, Leascliffe Hall, Folkestone. Contact: M Cock 42072.

Militant

MEETINGS

For events in your area contact your local Militant seller.

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

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

BLACKBURN: Thursday 15 March at 7.30 pm, at King George's Hall. Speakers: Peter Taaffe (Editor, Militant), Terry Fields MP.

MILITANT READERS' meeting "No to council cuts. Save jobs. Save services." Wednesday 14 March at 7.30 pm. Speakers: Nick Brooks (Southampton Labour Party Personal Capacity). At Ryde Labour Hall, Star Street, Ryde, IOW.

SOUTHWARK: "No to council cuts. Save jobs. Save services." Tuesday 6 March at 7.30 pm. Speakers: Peter Taaffe (Editor, Militant), Derek Hatton (Deputy Leader, Liverpool Council). Chair: Brian Kelly (Southwark Councillor). At North Peckham Civic Centre (corner Old Kent Road/Peckham Park Road).

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

Free!

HUNDREDS OF BOOKS and pamphlets available by Marx, Lenin, Engels, Trotsky, Luxemburg, Connolly, Plekhanov, Grant, Cannon, Gramsci and many others. Writings on economics, philosophy, politics, science, war and peace, nuclear weapons, socialism, women, international developments, etc.

Send for your copy of our new booklist. Available (free) from: World Socialist Books, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN.

BIRMINGHAM AUEW Broad Left meeting at 12.00 prompt. Saturday, 3 March at White Lion, Queensway, Horsefair. All members welcome.

FOR HANDICAPPED READERS

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

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

STRATHCLYDE MILITANT supporters would like to wish Jim and Heather all the best on their engagement.

Price rise

FOR THE first time for three years we are having to increase the price of Militant from 20p to 25p. Costs of materials and paper have gone up 38% over the last three years—far higher than general price inflation. Postal rates will also rise in April so therefore we have also had to increase our postal subscriptions.

If you compare it with the price of a pint or a packet of cigarettes we are sure you can see what a bargain a fighting Marxist paper is. Our rivals in the Labour Party all cost as much or more than our paper and we aim with the extra resources to be able to produce an even more up to date and informative paper. We understand that finance is a vital question for a Marxist paper and are confident, that you, our readership will understand that this rise can facilitate the building of a more frequent paper.

Donations include:

Darryl Cozens Coventry SE CLP £20, Liverpool University Labour Club £15, Connie Thorpe Birmingham £10, Mark Hosgood NUJ Daily Express Manchester £5, Tony Taylor CWU Leicester £2.40, Norman Ingram Derby North Labour Party £2, Southampton Labour Party Young Socialists £2.50, Steve Korke Leeds £1.80, Gwent Labour Club £1.66, Helen George Brighton £1, Sam Mukwhana London Hospital ASTMS £1, Sheila Rouse Kent £1, Mark Royston Leeds POEU £1, A Clark Bishop Auckland 80p, K Stewart NOLS Loughborough 80p, rattling tin dole queue sale Leicester 65p, Jack Pickard age 8 from Newham gives 20p each week, and Ian Bowerman Bracknell 10p.



Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign demo, Birmingham, February '84. Militant supporters and sellers were prominent on the successful march. Photo: John Harris (IFL)

FIGHTING FUND

This Week: £1,648

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target 7 April
Eastern	514		2500
East Midlands	596		2900
Humberside	318		1500
London East	1056		3250
London West	282		2050
London South	615		2650
Manchester & Lancs	402		3520
Merseyside	784		4000
Northern	594		3350
Scotland East	338		2150
Scotland West	385		3000
Southern	935		4300
South West	354		2000
Wales East	594		1880
Wales West	412		1650
West Midlands	581		3500
Yorkshire	933		4100
Others	438		2000
Total received	10131		50,000

WHY DO people donate money to Militant? The following example gives one answer.

The father of one of our supporters has just completed 25 years service with the same company. To reward him for his long-standing loyalty the company have given him a tie and £250! (£10 a year!) However on receiving his first pay packet following the presentation of the cheque he discovered that he has

been docked 15p an hour from his wages—which over the course of the year equals...£250!

This experience of how the bosses repay "their" staff is showing workers up and down the country that their future can only be guaranteed under socialism. For many people now Militant is the only answer—it is the only Marxist paper to fight and campaign on all the issues. So fight with us for a socialist future by making a donation NOW!

Rattling tins are once again proving a success.

Hamid from Bradford: "We had a street meeting to campaign for the young workers' conference. I managed to raise £5 selling stickers and just asking people for money. I think every comrade should be carrying a rattling tin on every paper sale." Make sure you've got a rattling tin on your next sale.

However we need all the initiatives we can get now to keep the fighting fund on target—so get fund raising NOW!

By Kim Waddington

Workers in the front line

How we built our organisation

THE JOINT Shop Stewards' Committee was set up in late 1979 after the Tory government was elected.

Recognising their policies were to cut public services and public spending we felt it was necessary to set up some organisation to defend the interests of council workers.

We'd been able to organise the manual unions during the 'winter of discontent' but we didn't have any contact with staff unions or with the teaching unions or the craft unions. We had my own union organised, the GMBATU, the largest, with 8,000 members, but we didn't have contact beyond our own spheres.

A group of convenors and senior stewards who knew each other personally decided to try and organise a JSSC. We called a meeting one evening. About a dozen people turned up. We elected a steering committee to organise another meeting and sent out invitations to all trade union reps that we knew within the council. The second meeting got about thirty or forty in attendance. That was the take-off point.

The first real test came within a few months. We had a Liberal/Tory council and 2,000 redundancies were announced. The JSSC called a mass meeting which

thousands attended. From that we threatened an all-out strike in the event of any redundancies. This was in 1980.

We called an all-out strike on the date the council was meeting to put through the redundancies and demonstrated outside the town hall. The response was about 15,000 out on strike and 10,000 lobbying the council meeting. We obtained a no-redundancy agreement with the council of the time.

The biggest and most successful battle we have fought was last year over privatisation. In November 1982 the Liberal administration announced the privatisation of the cleansing services. They sought tenders from private firms. The General and Municipal convenors committee organised opposition. We took the arguments into the JSSC and managed to convince it to take on the fight.

In the build up to a strike in April we held meetings in every workplace. We produced leaflets, campaigned on the housing estates, leading to an all-out strike on the day the Liberals considered the tenders.

They had arranged the meeting days before the elections in May. If at that time the tenders had been accepted it would have been

very difficult to reverse, even if Labour had got a majority the following week, because of legal problems. So we knew that everything was at stake and we had to make sure the resolution to privatise wasn't passed.

We called the all-out strike and said that if the resolution was passed we would stay out indefinitely until the plans were withdrawn. On that day 20,000 came out on strike and we had a mass lobby of the meeting. The Liberals didn't support the Tories and as a consequence the resolution fell. That was a major victory.

We realised the only way to guarantee privatisation wasn't raised in the future was to make sure Labour won the May election. It had to be a political solution. So we put out a call for as many council workers as possible to turn out and campaign for Labour. We also put out a call for all council employees, their relatives and friends, to turn out and vote Labour.

I feel that was a major factor in Labour's victory in the May election. So in one sense the JSSC was able to turn an industrial campaign and link it up to a political campaign. And we saw for the first time in ten years a Labour majority on the council.

trade unions have been given nomination rights for jobs within the council. Also we have been given the right to be present at interviews.

In the past, in the few departments which took people on, management were deliberately recruiting workers with anti-trade union attitudes. At least 50% of new starters now have to come from the trade union nomination list.

We have managed to get unemployed trade union activists employment with the city council. That means people who have been blacklisted throughout the city have finally been brought back into work.

One question we put to everyone wanting to get on to the unemployed list is whether they have ever taken voluntary redundancy. Our policy is that anybody who has sold a job should not be allowed on to the nomination list.

We are also able to ensure that no discrimination takes place on racial or other grounds.

IAN LOWES is vice-chair of Liverpool City Council Joint Shop Stewards Committee which represents 30,000 council workers from every trade union within the City council except the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers.

It holds monthly meetings which any shop steward of an affiliated union can attend. Average attendance is forty to fifty but on important issues, such as the recent vote to support the City council's stand against Tory cuts with a one-day stoppage on budget day, 29 March, hundreds turn out.

Ian is 32 and has worked fourteen years for the council. A GMBATU steward in the forestry section he was elected full-time convenor for parks and sanitariums in 1978. He helped establish the Joint Shop Stewards Committee, which as he explains, has played a major role in shaping the face of Liverpool's politics today.



Ian Lowes, vice-chair of Liverpool City Council JSSC.

Photo: Tommy Carroll

Uniting staff and manual

WHEN THE JSSC was originally formed it was made up entirely of manual and craft unions.

There was an argument that raged within the JSSC that NALGO should not be involved because of its past role—a lot of manual workers felt bitter about things which had happened in the past.

Some of us argued that to be successful we had to involve every trade union and every section. We also pointed out that NALGO

possesses more potential power than even the manual unions. We won the argument and NALGO affiliated.

It was unfortunate that the first strike the JSSC ever called (over redundancies in 1980) was not supported by NALGO as the ballot held for joint action was lost. That almost caused a split in the JSSC. People who had argued in the first place that NALGO shouldn't have been allowed to affiliate wanted them expelled.

We replied that the leadership of NALGO had fought a campaign amongst their own membership and the ballot was only lost by a narrow majority; if we built on the work that had been done we would secure their support in the future.

That was borne out. When we had the strike over privatisation a few years later NALGO supported the stoppage and for the first time ever their members took strike action.

Official change

IN THE first couple of months some of the officers of the council hadn't got over the shock that there was a Labour council and were conducting themselves in the old way.

When they made attacks on the unions or the workforce in the past they always got full support from

the Liberals and Tories.

They either didn't realise that there was a Labour council in power or that it was of a different complexion to Labour councils of ten years ago.

After we'd raised issues with certain comrades on the council and officers were straightened out their at-

titude improved. Whilst I'm not saying it's perfect—we've still got a long way to go—there's certainly been an improvement.

Whereas in the past they've deliberately deprived people of what they were entitled to and forced us into going through all sorts of appeals procedures its a bit easier now. People aren't getting sacked, as in the past, for the most ridiculous things.

Confrontation—where we stand

The Joint Shop Stewards Committee full supports the political position that the council has taken in terms of no rate rises, no cuts in services, no redundancies. The constitution of the JSSC is that it was set up to defend direct labour, to oppose cuts and privatisation. In that sense the policies of the JSSC are exactly the same as the policies of the Labour Party in the city.

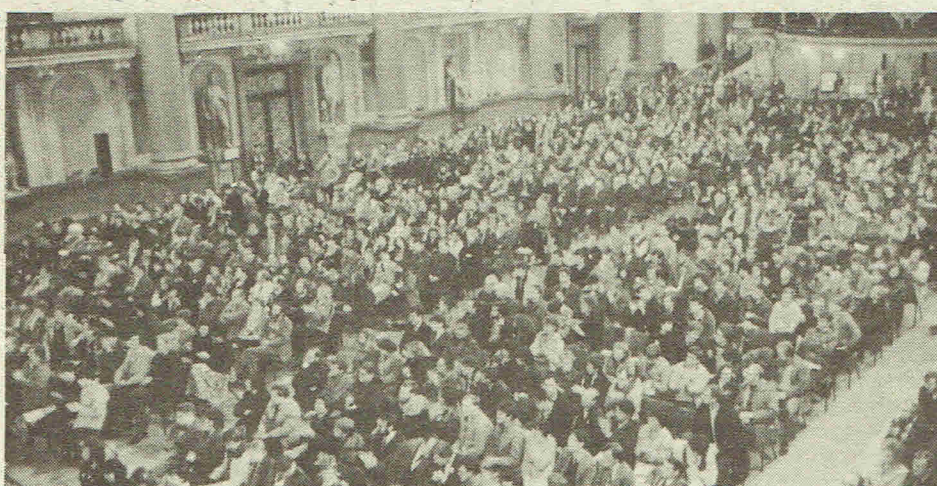
I think, generally speaking, our members understand the situation the council is in and that for us there really is no choice. If the Labour Group doesn't carry out

the policies they were elected on then our jobs are on the line. If the Labour Group attempt to carry out the policies they were elected on our jobs are still on the line.

So we've got no choice. We've got to stand and fight. And most of us are prepared to stand alongside a Labour council and fight the Tory government to save our jobs.

We know at the end of the day we'll have to fight somebody, because for us there really is no alternative.

Photo: John Smith (JFL)



Mass meeting of Liverpool trade unionists last Tuesday.

Liberal to Labour

THE PREVIOUS Liberal administration was one of the most anti-union you could find.

The Liberal Party is more reactionary in its attitude to trade unions than the Tory Party. The Tories accept that you've got trade unions, the Liberals try and get workers councils set up and things like that to by-pass the unions. At least the Tories know we're not going to go away.

There was an attempt by the Liberals to smash local authority union organisation. The Leader of the Council out of the blue jumped up and moved a resolution that effectively prevented any shop steward within the council taking time off for trade union duties.

Myself and other full-time convenors found ourselves off the pay roll for ten weeks

because we carried on doing the union duties. In the end the council was forced to withdraw the resolution and restore the money we had lost.

Since Labour took control they have given full recognition to the Joint Shop Stewards Committee, including the right of the JSSC Executive to meet in works time with pay.

They have co-opted the JSSC Exec on to the Personnel Committee in an advisory capacity.

They have set up a new disputes panel which involves Labour Councillors and union representatives from the JSSC who are there in an advisory capacity.

A new appeals procedure has been set up which involves trade union representatives.

I think one of the biggest single gains is the fact that

INDUSTRIAL REPORTS

Ford foundry leader speaks out

DENNIS O'FLYNN is the south-east divisional organiser of the AUEW Foundry section, and covers the Thames Foundry, Dagenham. He was a shop steward in the Dagenham foundry for over twenty years and president of the local Foundry Branch for nineteen years. Here he talks to Sue Norris about the closure threat.

What is the present situation?

The last meeting we had with Ford Motor Company was last week, 22 February. The company made a presentation to the union of comparisons between the British, Saarlouie, Cologne and Spain plants and in each and every comparison Ford of Britain were miserably behind.

The attitude of management was that they want Ford of Britain to remain a productive and competitive unit. Our reply was that if you talk to us Ford—we want to discuss the Foundry. Their reply was that they didn't want to discuss the foundry, that they had given us a closing date and that the foundry was finished.

When will that be?

It is to be dragged out over

a period of time. Some men are going in April some in a shut down period (August), and it will cease to operate by spring next year. We think that the foundry is too sophisticated to be put on the scrap heap like that plus the fact that we are talking about the jobs of 2,000 people. There is a need for investment but the GLC has already shown willingness to fund.

Out of Europe?

The local Euro MP, Alan Tirrol (Tory) says that in discussions Ford have said that what applies to Britain will also apply to Europe.

It is Ford's intention, in his opinion, to remove all their interests in the whole of Europe. He is seeking a

meeting with the Common Market Commission to try and prevent that.

The statements Ford have made to him make it seem that they intend to develop their interests in Mexico and Brazil.

What is the general mood in the Foundry?

The present situation is one of total discontent. The men in the Foundry feel that we should have decided to fight the company three years ago when management made their first move. That has been made very clear to national officials when they came down. Secondly, we have a strike date set now for Ford of Dagenham to commence on 5 March and I have no doubt that the Foundry men will respond in total. I have no doubt that it has to be a total stoppage,

because if the Foundry men come out on their own and watch shiploads of castings coming up the Thames and into the machine shops then their backs will be broken before they even organise their picket.

Solidarity vital

There has also got to be a response from the dockers and from the railway men to ensure that Ford don't get their castings in either by Rail or by sea till they come back to the negotiating table and talk about the job security of British workers. Do you think that the strike will be solid all over the plant?

Dagenham will be out solid. It might get off to a slow start, but once going will be difficult to stop. We

have done it three times already.

In the last ten years strikes have gone on contrary to all expectations for as long as ten weeks.

So you think it will be a long dispute?

I have no doubt about that—long and bitter. Those men are not only fighting for their jobs but they're fighting for the whole community. The spending power of Ford workers collectively in this area is enormous and if that goes unemployment in other industries will follow.

What about the other plants?

Once we are out I have no doubt that Halewood, Bridge End, Swansea and Belfast will follow. Rather ironically it was Belfast that put forward the strongest case for the Foundry being

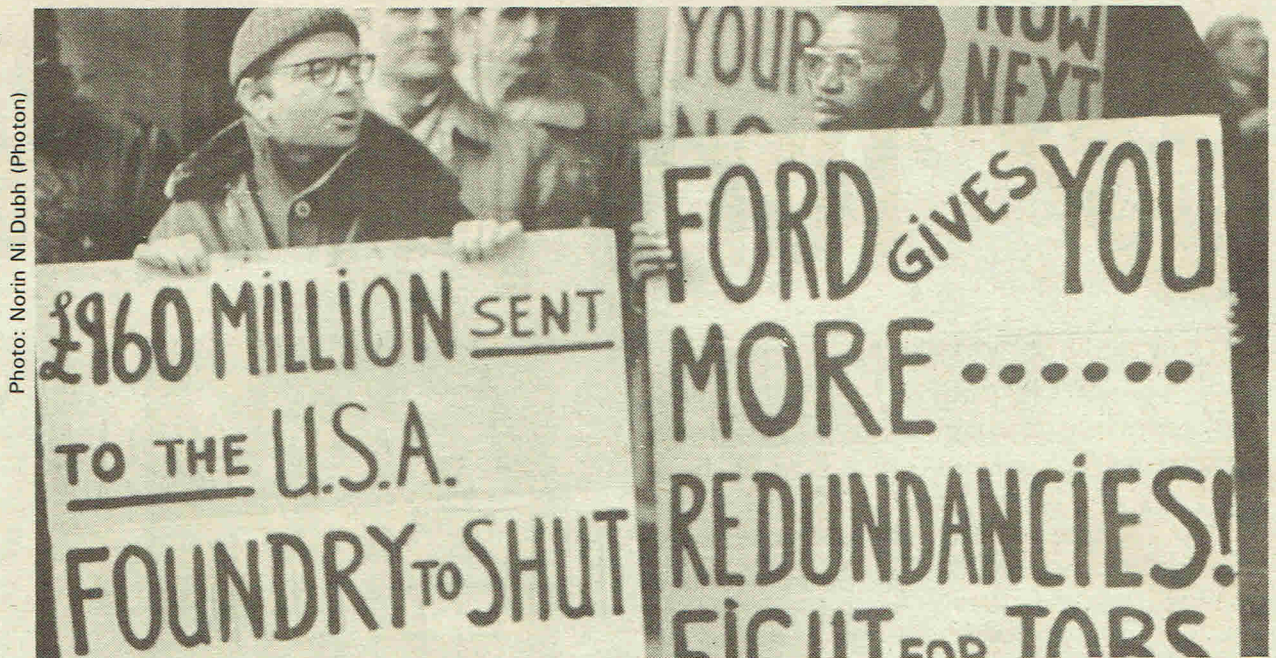
put back on the Agenda for discussion. They stand to lose a lot in Belfast.

I have read about an international Ford's convenors' meeting where they agreed that if one plant was attacked they would all help out, what do you think about this?

It would be an ideal situation. It would be the most convincing argument that Ford have ever faced and that would be an international lining up of trade unionists. But whatever the dream might be the reality has to be examined in depth.

Finally, if what the Euro MP says is right we are not only fighting for our jobs but for the jobs of all Ford European workers.

Militant exclusive on Sun Ford report plus strategy to fight back—back page.



This lobby of negotiations between Ford management and unions on 22 February did not succeed in getting Ford to even discuss the future of the Foundry, as Dennis O'Flynn explains below.

Scotts Bakery workers thank Welsh Militant

A GROUP of ten workers from Scotts went down to Wales to help gain support for their fight, and to picket a local bakery. While selling the paper at a meeting of the strikers in Bootle, workers insisted that their comments be put in *Militant*.

MICK TOWNSEND told us that it had been one of the most incredible experiences of his life. He had been given the phone number of *Militant* supporters, Dave Reid and Andy Price, and phoned only two hours before arriving. They were taken to the home of another supporter, Dave Jones, who with no hesitation, moved out of his flat, and left it to be used by the ten pickets—leaving his radio, TV, bed, personal gear, food, etc for their use.

DAVE STEWART, another Scotts worker said, "We would have starved without them". Another

worker said that if the support they had got from Welsh *Militant* supporters was mirrored by the support they got from other ABF factories, they would get a lot nearer winning their dispute.

Dave Jones returned with a £1.49 donation from Cardiff Central LPYS—with a note saying they were sorry it wasn't more, but many of their members were unemployed. MICK TOWNSEND now carries the note around in his pocket showing it to anyone he can, saying that they were nearly in tears when they read it.

The most telling comment came from PETE PATTERSON, "We went down to Wales two hardened, active trade unionists and eight card holders. We have come back ten hardened active trade unionists".

(Article on strike ballot and Scotts closure, next week)

Ealing cuts campaign

EALING NUT, NUPE and GMBATU have called a one-day strike in protest at the local Tory Council's proposal to cut £1 million from the Education Budget.

The cuts mean a loss of 48 middle school teachers jobs and privatisation of the school meals service which would mean hundreds of dinner ladies thrown out of work.

A mass meeting of school meals staff called for a one day strike in conjunction with Ealing NUT members to protect local service and jobs. Special schools and meals on wheels will be exempted from the action. On the 1 March when the Tories meet to set the Rate, a planned 10% increase for '84/85, the Ealing workforce plan to march through the shopping centre to

lay a wreath in memory of lost jobs and services at the Education Office.

Also the Ealing campaign in defence of public services is organising a mass lobby of the council meeting that night. The campaign led by local trade unions and Labour Party activists will be presenting a petition with over 7,000 signatures against the cuts. Twenty school meals staff are to be guests of the Labour Group at the Council Meeting that night and they will see the Tories' attempt to sell off their jobs to private enterprise.

By John Johnson
(Ealing campaign in defence of public services)

Volvo closed shop threatened

"You're the only paper that will get a report today" said pickets from TGWU Branch 11/20 at Volvo UK Distribution centre in Ipswich.

They were bitter about local and national media and the way in which even written statements were twisted and distorted to put them in a bad light.

One hundred workers at the plant, mainly pre-sale preparers of Volvo cars imported from Sweden have been striking for a week to protect the closed shop agreements with the TGWU.

Volvo UK propose opening a new distribution centre at Immingham and have made a separate agreement with the GMBATU.

Apart from fear of business falling off in Ipswich as a

result of the new plant opening, the implications of a separate agreement with another union are clear—Ipswich workers know that their working conditions, wages and jobs will soon be at stake if the Immingham Centre opens.

The strikers are angry that there was no consultation with TGWU. The strike has been declared official by the TGWU, is supported 100% by other Volvo workers in Harwich and drivers of the Tolemann group that takes cars to the salesrooms. Ipswich TUC have given their backing and dockers are refusing to handle Volvos.

By Roger Mackay
(Ipswich Labour Party)

Glaxo getting heavy

FRANK CRANE, vice-chair of USDAW No.1 Drugs Division talked to Dave Reid about a strike at the Glaxo factory on the Speke industrial estate, Liverpool.

Over the past few weeks shop stewards have been victimised and yesterday a warning was issued to a shop

steward for gross mispractise. His crime was weighing himself on the firm's scales.

Everybody felt it was heavy handed and the night shift walked out. We held a meeting which over 400 of the 800 workers attended and voted to strike until the warning is withdrawn.



National Delegate Conference

IT IS reported that delegations to the BLOC conference in Sheffield on March 24 are really beginning to pile up.

Below is a sample of delegations received over the last week. But the organisers say time is getting short if you want your union branch to send delegates. Don't delay.

NUR Manchester No.1 branch; TGWU 6/389 branch (Manchester); AUEW Construction (Hull); AUEW Engineers Leicester 16 branch; NSMM Nelson (Lancs); NGA Hull; COHSE Nether Edge branch (Sheffield); COHSE High Royds Hospital (Leeds); AUEW Construction Rotherham; AUEW Engineers Derby; NUM Chesterfield (Derbyshire Area); NUPE Bollingbroke Hospital; ASLE&F Waterloo Station; ISTC MM branch (Scunthorpe); NSMM Doncaster; T&GWU 5/706 branch (Stoke on Trent); NUPE Nurses branch (Bury); AUEW Engineers (Stockport); T&GWU West Bromwich District Committee; USDAW Grattan's Warehouses (Bradford); BF&AWU (Manchester); N. Greening J.S.S.C. (Warrington); Greenwich Trades Council; Mid-Cheshire Trades Council; NUPE Wakefield No.1 branch; AUEW Engineers (Bradford); J. Parkinson & Son Ltd. J.S.S.C. (Shipley); AUEW-Constructors (Middlesbrough); AUEW Engi-

neers Keighley No.1; T&GWU 3/194 Marine Projects (Plymouth); AUEW Engineers Shop Stewards Committee Mono Equipment (Swansea); SOGAT '82 LCA & EP Chapel (The Observer); NGA London Region (Junius Publications); CPSA Registers of Scotland branch; GMBATU Addspace Shop Stewards Committee (Rotherham); NUPE Coventry Health branch; AUEW Engineers (Sheffield 9 branch); AUEW Engineers Shop Stewards Committee Colman Fasteners (Manchester); AUEW Engineers Longbridge 2 (171 LE) Assembly Rooms; AUEW Engineers (Northfield, Birmingham); NALGO Harlow District Council UCATT Luton UF 074 branch; UCATT Basildon; NUM Pontefract; BF&AWU Gwent; ASTMS NE London Medical branch; NUPE Battersea (Wandsworth Health branch); NUR Neasdon No.1; COHSE Murray Royal Hospital, Perth; COHSE Oxford 643 branch; T&GWU 1/2214 branch (Kings Lynn); ASLE&F (Buxton branch); GMBATU (Boilermakers' Section) Sunderland No.1 branch; Harlow Trades Council; AUEW Kilnhurst branch (Mexborough, S. Yorks); AUEW Engineers Newton 28NE branch (Newton-le-Willows); USDAW Capital Holdings; USDAW London Metropolitan.

FIIGHTING FUND

WORKERS UP and down the country and particularly in Merseyside are showing their willingness to fight the Tories by donating their money to the struggle for socialism.

The following donations have been received: GMBATU Local Authority workers in Liverpool £30 including a donation from Tony Mulligan; Knowsley NALGO £10 in-

cluding a donation from Maureen Brown; Liverpool NGA £5; Hull AUEW No.12 branch members £4.10; British Gas workers Easington £4.90; AUEW Liverpool £3; NUM Epplerton Sunderland £2; and 46p 'extras' from a factory sale in Leicester.

Has your trade union branch or shop stewards committee made a donation yet?

**Militant
Exclusive**

Tory press exposed

MILITANT'S COLOGNE correspondent (West Germany) has unearthed the scandalous story behind the Sun's attack on British Ford workers in their 6 February issue.

Unfortunately for the Sun but fortunately for the truth, the three students they hired as interpreters to dig some dirt, want British workers to know what really happened.

"We were asked to speak only to those workers who said they would never go on strike." "They told us not to speak to immigrant workers but to look out for 'Aryans'. They believed the German workers were more disciplined than others, including the British. It was clear that the aim of the interviews was to show that the German workers work harder than in England."

It wasn't so easy though. You may have wondered why an expensive trip to Germany produced quotes from only two German Ford workers. The answer is that after being refused entry to the plant they didn't get much joy hanging around the gates.

Most of the workers approached wanted to know what kind of paper they represented. "Extremely right wing" was the reply, honest for once. Three workers in a row refused to speak to a "Boulevard Blatt"—gutter press.

Objective reporting

In the end our admirer of Prussian virtues had to resort to the comments of a 'non-Aryan'. But as it was a right wing Polish exile willing to rant against the "Communist East", that was OK.

There it was then: hard work, discipline, order. The last person here who peddled such terms wore a funny little moustache.

Then it was time to clock off for the day. A very successful sixty minutes, it was explained—enough material in one hour for the whole article. In Britain, apparently it's harder work on such interviews because workers are even less keen to speak to the Sun and "we need more time to find the right people."

But before writing up the article it was back to the Intercontinental, the best hotel in Cologne (rooms £70 a night). Only the best for these lovers of hard work of course: into the top restaurant to unwind after a

gruelling day on the production line (well, near the production line). A bill for drinks of DM 130 (£33)—no problem. Then £25 each for the three interpreters. All on expenses, like everything else.

Let's put an end to these lies about the British and German workers. It's true that the German workers put in long hours—41.6 a week on average, compared to Sweden (35.6) and Austria (33.7), where unemployment is lower and living standards higher. But British workers put in even more—43.2 hours.

German realities

Unemployment in Germany is now 2.5 million and living standards have fallen for three years. That was due to a decline in the market and investment—new investment in the car industry is an exception to the trend—not because of any strikes.

But if anyone thinks the German workers are daft enough to accept this without complaint they're wrong—right now the unions are fighting for a 35 hour week with no loss of pay.

And do you know the main argument of the bosses here against the 35 hour week? That's right—"It will reduce the competitiveness of German industry." Will we soon be reading articles here showing how much harder the British work than Germans?

For those who are asking the question "How can we combat this stream of bosses' propaganda, some comments of the Sun reporter say a lot more than intended.

Maddening

The interpreter told me "The political views of the reporter became clear from the questions he asked us... He was all for Thatcher and her policies. He also warned us about the 'dangerous' work of Militant and said that the people who worked for it were 'all mad'."

We're mad all right. We're mad that thousands of Ford workers and their families face a future on the dole, that Thatcher can deprive workers of trade union rights. Millions of workers are getting mad too. Join us now and put that anger to work.



All out strike - the only way

THE STRIKE call by the Ford National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) will be met with enthusiasm and hope by Dagenham estate workers.

At stake is not just the closure of the foundry, but the fight to stop Ford running down its British manufacturing base and moving operations, to such spots as the planned \$500 million plant in Mexico. That project was announced the same day as the closure of the foundry.

Company strategy

Bill Hayden (Vice president of Ford Europe) has said they have a long-term commitment to Britain. But he also said that car manufacturing was no longer a mass employer and that Ford needed to cut its workforce. Since 1979 the workforce has been cut from 76,000 to 57,000. Hayden also expects an 8% to 9% per year cut in the workforce.

Ford have continuously lied about the future of the Foundry—the survival of which they guaranteed just two years ago.

Ford management are not amateurs, they make decisions ten years in advance but only tell the workers five minutes before the decision is implemented.

Ford say that workers can be redeployed but this doesn't mean in the same grade. Workers will be paid a lump sum to drop a grade. But many, especially the skilled,

know there will be no hope of regaining their previous grade. Therefore in the long term they will be losing money.

No trade-off

Dagenham has already lost 10,000 jobs since 1979 in Fords bid to stream-line the Dagenham complex. Many are still unemployed, so Ford workers look apprehensively

By Colin Adams
(AUEW Ford's Foundry Dagenham)

(interview with foundry leader on page 15)

at taking pay cuts only to find themselves worse off in the future. That's why we have no choice but to fight to prevent any kind of closures or redundancies.

No retreat

There must be a determined campaign from the leadership so as to rally other Ford workers nationally to support Dagenham.

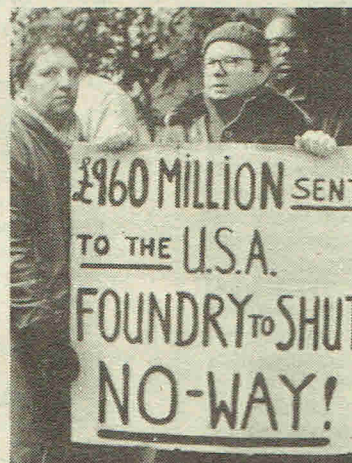
The unions' suggestions to management about setting up sub-committees to discuss the future of Ford in Dagenham can only be seen as a cop-out of the fight for jobs.

Ford workers must be prepared for all out action to defend jobs. The decision of the Dagenham mass meeting to give our leaders a mandate for all-out action shows the mood to fight is there.

A strategy must be drawn up nationally including:

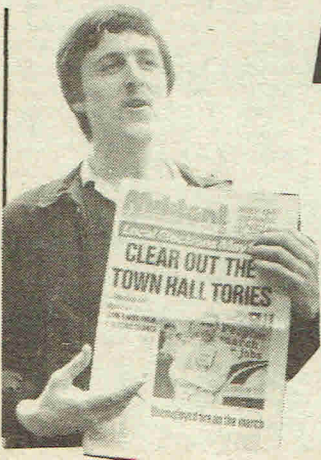
- ★ All-out strike
- ★ Occupation of the Foundry if necessary.
- ★ Solidarity and support from other trade unionists.
- ★ International backing through blacking of Ford cars and materials.

This is make or break time. We must win, not just for our jobs, but for the jobs of generations after us.



Ford workers lobby negotiations with management.

Photo: Norrin Ni Dubh (Photon)



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