

DON'T LET TORIES KILL THE NHS

Health cuts put children at risk — Dave Nellist MP

AFTER HEARING of the tragic death of hole-in-the-heart child, Mathew Collier, Dave Nellist MP said this week: "Only a health worker could say with certainty whether the repeated delays in Matthew's operation caused his death. But everybody connected with the families desperately waiting for heart operations at Birmingham Children's Hospital knows that each cancellation lessens the chances for success.

The solution is more money and over 100 families with children on that waiting list will hold Mrs Thatcher responsible if she continues to deny that the NHS is in crisis. All trades unionists must support a one day general strike on 14 March in memory of Matthew and all the other Matthews about whom Thatcher doesn't care."

"I CALL upon all of you to tell the TUC to call for a one day general strike in support of the health workers," says Jenny Hannon, from Telford Labour Party. She has recently been a patient in the NHS and has suffered first hand the effects of Tory cuts and underfunding.

"HAVING suffered with a spinal disorder for 23 years, I was eventually referred to a consultant at the orthopaedic hospital at Oswestry, Shropshire. This hospital is famous, among many things, for the frame that gave PC Olds (the policeman who was shot and crippled a few years ago) the chance to walk again. But it had to go to the USA to be fully marketed due to lack of government funding here.

I was admitted in September 1986 but the operation proved more complicated than first thought. Due to the lack of theatre time and staff, I had to wait in terrible pain until April 1987. Then I went

back in and due to their fantastic skill had the operation.

No funds

Talking to the student nurses, who had just been taking their finals, I found out that in one set alone 13 sat and passed but only two had been given jobs—in Manchester and Liverpool. The remainder were told it was no good applying in Shropshire, there were no funds to pay them.

Last October I was readmitted for minor surgery. Again from one set fifteen had sat and passed but only three been given jobs. But there were 38—yes 38—vacancies at this hos-

pital, but as you will have guessed no money to pay them.

They are due to have another operating theatre built, they only have two in working order in this vast hospital. But even if built (and the date for construction keeps receding) they cannot staff it. People I met have had their operations cancelled at the last minute due to illness of trained staff.

These nurses and the doctors are the best, I could not fault them in any way. But they are on their knees.

So get on your picket line yourself, show them we support them. And show Thatcher and Currie that to go on strike for better pay and conditions and for a better service is for the public, and that they will not lose public support by doing the only thing left to them—to strike."

Mersey health demo
—page 3



Militant

Give us one day's pay

"I'M A health worker and am making this donation in support of the one-day general strike." Enclosed was £30 from a psychiatric nurse. £1,000 was raised for *Militant* at the Newcastle launch of the book *Liverpool—A City that dared to fight*. What a marvellous response to our campaign! We appeal to every reader to donate at least one day's pay to assist our campaign for a one-day general strike. (continued page 13)

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One day general strike 14 March

Militant

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Benn must stand

THERE HAS not been a Labour leadership election since Kinnock and Hattersley were elected in 1983. Now, when the union struggle is on the upbeat, a leadership contest is vital.

John Prescott's challenge heightened expectations in the party, but it was not based on any serious criticism of the programme of the leadership.

A challenge by Tony Benn would be a far more serious and principled affair. He must stand and be assured of the unstinting support of all party members who want to reverse the drift to the right which has seized the parliamentary and union leadership over the last five years. Support for a Benn candidature is a touchstone for every Campaign Group MP.

A leadership election would help to lift the heavy hand which is stifling debate in the Party, and reinstate socialism at the centre of debate in the labour movement.

It would force a debate on Labour's future outside of the narrow limits set on discussion by the pollsters and pragmatists, who have been mesmerised by Thatcher's success and who believe that recapturing the middle layers requires concessions to Thatcherism.

If properly conducted by the Campaign Group, a real campaign for the leadership would raise the morale of thousands of Labour activists and potential Party members in the unions who feel they have been declared surplus to requirements by the marketing and media approach of the present leadership.

Thousands of new members, especially in the unions, could be attracted into the Labour Party, redressing the balance in the constituencies where many workers have lapsed into inactivity or even resigned.

Of course the mass media will try to rubbish any attempt to portray socialism as a rational and humane necessity. They will strive to personalise any challenge and will egg Kinnock on to ridicule or 'crush' the challenge, rather than engage in any serious, fraternal debate.

But the kind of leadership contest that is needed will not be won or lost in the media. Starting with the active workers it must spread out through mass meetings, regional rallies, meetings at every union conference, to workers who are not currently in the party.

Kinnock's supporters say that a contest will undermine Labour's popular support. But it is their shift to the right and the disillusioning of thousands of activists that is jeopardising a Labour victory at the next election.

It is their refusal to speak out clearly in support of workers in struggle that is damaging the Party's fortunes. Kinnock has failed to back the nurses' strikes. Michael Meacher even said in Parliament that a Labour government, by avoiding a second ballot of Ford workers, could have averted a strike.

The theme of a leadership contest has to be that Labour cannot recover by trying to accommodate itself to the centre or to Thatcherism. The 'middle layers' in society are not independent. They have to choose between the programme of big business and its only real counterweight—the organised labour movement.

Only when the working class is on the offensive, industrially and politically, will they come over to the side of labour.

But while health workers and car workers are taking action, looking for support and a set of clear policies for their areas of work, Labour Party HQ claims to be busy 'listening'. Actually it is busy expelling socialists from the Party, even branding former General Secretary, Jim Mortimer, as a *Militant* 'fellow traveller' in the process.

The way it is behaving, Labour's HQ will be peripheral to the outcome of the next election. Regeneration of Labour's fortunes depends on the re-emphasis of Labour's socialist commitment and the recovery of industrial militancy.

Militant supporters will play their full part in the leadership election campaign. They will welcome any strengthening of the genuine left within the Labour Party.

The Campaign Group challenge should not just be for leader and deputy leader, but for the whole National Executive Committee—constituency, trade union and women's sections—with the objective of regaining a left majority, and creating a left leadership for the Labour Party.

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Kinnock glares at John Prescott whose deputy leadership challenge petered out quietly. A leadership challenge by Benn would be more serious and principled.

Kinnock in the spotlight...

QUESTION: "When are you going to have a policy on poll tax?"

ANSWER: "It did not make any difference in Scotland the fact that we did not have a policy on it, people voted for us because they were against poll tax."

This was just part of the dialogue with Neil Kinnock at a regional forum with the Party leader organised for the East Midlands. He said the Party would develop an alternative to poll tax when the time is right.

Although the meeting was an all-ticket affair, restricted to MPs, regional committee members, constituency Labour Party officers, paid Party officials and a few trade union representatives, it was still a rough ride for Kinnock and showed the scepticism that exists towards the policy review even at the regional and local leadership level.

The first half was devoted to Kinnock visiting every table for a chat. I was

By an East Midlands correspondent

sitting with two miners who had been active during the strike. One had seen Kinnock on the television that day and was not very happy about his answers on the issue of the UDM. When Kinnock got round to us he asked him what he thought about the UDM.

Kinnock said he did not support the UDM, but things would not change until there was a change of leadership in the NUM. "Thatcher would have voted for Scargill if she had a vote. She wanted him to win. Who do you think she frightens the little girls and boys with before they go to bed?"

When it came to the full question and answer session, a number of those present put him on the spot. He was asked why there was not a three line whip for Labour MPs on the Alton Bill. His answer was that the conscience of those who oppose abortion must be accepted.

Witch-hunt

When asked about the Labour Party Young Socialists' age limit being cut to 23 and their conference cancelled, Kinnock was absolutely brazen. The age limit was cut because the LPYS is controlled by *Militant*. The conference was closed because it is dominated by *Militant*. In other words it was an act of pure political spite.

Then another questioner, again on the right of the Party, demanded: "Why don't we give more support to workers in strug-

gle." "What workers have I not supported," retorted Kinnock. Immediately the shouts went up: "The health workers...the scafarers...the miners." "I supported the miners," he insisted, "but I would not support the actions of the leadership." "Shame! Shame!" shouted a sacked miner from the back. "You should be ashamed of yourself."

Kinnock continued, attacking the "bloody incompetence and the taste for gestures of one or two trade union leaders."

Throughout the discussion he was continually interrupted by people asking for policies to fight the Tories and a commitment that a future Labour government would change things. If this is the reception he gets from the regional and constituency Labour Party officers, what would be the reception from the rank and file?

...while his supporters manoeuvre

THE GOVERNMENT has threatened Scottish students especially: refuse to pay your poll tax and you could be barred from entry into college.

Scottish students urgently need a fighting leadership to organise the resistance to the growing list of Tory attacks. The Scottish Labour Students (SLS) day school on 13 February to select the Labour candidates for NUS Scotland's leading positions, could have marked the beginning of the building of that leadership.

Those attending faced a clear choice: either a new leadership committed to linking workers and students struggles through strike action if necessary to defend the public sector and drive the Tories from office; or the Kinnockite 'Democratic Left', the budding new realists of the student movement, could be given a further lease of life.

But the true wishes of the membership were buried

under a completely manipulated selection procedure.

Instead of a delegate meeting which could ensure representation of the entire organisation, an aggregate of the membership was held to select the candidates. No other region of the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) uses this method.

8% vote

Despite claims that it was the most democratic method only 8 per cent of the membership participated in the final vote! This is not surprising since Scotland covers 80,000 square kilometres and the lack of resources of FE colleges would prevent their attendance.

Even though the majority of the membership and 18 out of the 30 Labour clubs are in the West of Scotland, the meeting was held in the East. The reason—this area contains the residue of 'Democratic Left' support in Scotland.

40 per cent of those attending came from Edinburgh.

The selection meeting was held on a Saturday night which prevented many FE students who have Saturday jobs from participating. The lack of a creche prevented many single parent families from taking part.

Registration was monitored in the morning but when inconsistencies were pointed out it was moved into a closed room with three bouncers on the door. Individuals could make block registrations in advance. So the voting fodder which the DL brought to the meeting did not even have to attend the day school in order to vote.

Then 24 hours before the meeting took place a decision was made that unprecedentedly the meeting would also select candidates for the area convenors of NUS for the different parts of Scotland. Last year the left won a separate selection meeting held in the West of Scotland. But this time students

from Aberdeen voted for a candidate for a position which covers Glasgow!

The refusal of the leadership to allow West of Scotland students to select their own convenor together with all the other irregularities led to a walk out by seventy students.

Elections

The DL leadership are losing support and are turning increasingly to manoeuvres. Two recent elections show the difference between the DL and real socialist Labour candidates.

At Strathclyde University, *Militant* supporter Frank Hotchkiss stood for president against three other candidates. At the university of East Anglia, a DL candidate stood against a gerbil. As a result of a bold campaign in Strathclyde, Frank won with 45 per cent of the first preference votes. In the other contest, the gerbil won!

By Simon Kaplan

Merseyside rallies to defend NHS



Photos: Dave Sinclair.

3,000 MERSEYSIDE health workers and other trade unionists responded magnificently to the north west TUC's call for a demonstration against cuts in the National Health Service on 10 February.

Outside the Royal Liverpool Hospital, students and pupil nurses, SCNs and staff nurses, sisters and nursing officers and a large contingent of nurse tutors and other NHS staff from Cohse, Nupe, GMBATU, MSF, Nalگو and the RCN showed their determination to defeat the Tory cuts.

Vauxhall car workers struck in support and large contingents were present from Liverpool Corporation, the electricity board, the Fire Brigade, Ford's and students from the local colleges.

Starvation

Even patients in dressing gowns came out on this bitterly cold day to show their support.

The hour-long protest was followed by a march through Liverpool city centre to a mass meeting on St George's plateau.

There Tony Mulhearn, disqualified councillor and expelled president of the district Labour Party said: "It is despicable to see the Tory government give tax handouts to the rich while nurses live on starvation wages."

"At the general council of the TUC, the deputy general secretary of the CPSA, John Macreadie, called for a general strike in

By Terry Harrison

support of health service workers. I believe that call should be fully supported by the leadership of this movement.

"We can talk to Mrs Thatcher until we are blue in the face; the U-turn on special duty payments was forced on her by the action of the nurses in Manchester taking strike action."

Cathy Wilson, secretary of Liverpool Labour women's council outlined the extent of the cuts in the services in Liverpool, but also warned of the massive cuts to come, which will include extensive hospital closures and bed losses.

The day's action concluded with a rally organised by the NWTUC. On the platform was Joan Foster, the assistant secretary of Nupe's North Manchester nurses' branch, one of the leaders of the Manchester strike.

She was applauded when she said: "I want to get rid of some of the rumours that the papers have been putting out. First of all, it was not a recruitment drive for Nupe, or a party political broadcast for the Labour Party, because national leaders of neither the Labour Party nor Nupe knew what was taking place



in Manchester until after the strike.

"This was for one good reason—we didn't want to be told that we couldn't go out on strike".

Terry Fields, MP for Liverpool Broadgreen, drew parallels between the 1978 firemen's strike and the present dispute in the NHS. Firemen had public support, but they had to go on strike to get their demands.

"In my short time in Parliament", he said: "I have seen thousands and thousands of workers lobby Parliament, going on delegations to the highest

offices of the land, but this government is not prepared to listen to any exhortations from workers.

"All they understand is the mass movement of our class against them. Manchester proved this! If we are going to maintain a health service in this country, we have seriously got to consider taking industrial action outside the health service through our trade unions".

He was applauded as he concluded by calling for a 24-hour general strike in support of the NHS on 14 March arising from the call by Cohse.



Why we are protesting

"I am here to provide a balance to the glowing portrayal of the National Health Service on the BBC's Hospital Watch and an antidote to the sort of success story we have seen on this programme."

"I am here to support those people who are at home who are in pain or waiting for

cataract surgery and going blind and to demonstrate on their behalf the extent of the cuts." —Nicola Lovell, a Royal Liverpool Hospital staff nurse.

"I remember the bad old days when you suffered because you couldn't afford to pay so you just didn't go. Many people died prematurely because they couldn't afford to pay. We don't want those days again." —Frank Degan, an Old age pensioner activist.

"I have just been in hospital for

a minor operation and have witnessed first-hand the very serious decline taking place in the NHS. It has become more like a factory; nurses are doing more labouring than patient care. Patients are obviously being affected by it, not because the nurses are not making an effort, but because they are tackling an impossible problem in the hospitals." —Eddie Loyden MP for Liverpool Garston.

"After being a nurse myself, I understand the problems they are demonstrating about. I think

they have massive public support, and I feel that they should be out on strike, not just demonstrating." —Sylvia Sharpey-Shaaffer, city councillor and member of Liverpool area health authority.

"The NHS is one of the best things a Labour government has done. This is the line we have to draw and say 'thus far and no further'. We stand shoulder by shoulder with the health service workers." —Billy Hayes, branch secretary, Liverpool UCW.

MILITANT MEETINGS

Defend the NHS One-day general strike

OLDHAM St Andrew's Church Hall, off Middleton Road 7.30pm, 24 February.

BRIXTON St Matthew's meeting Place, Brixton SW2. 7.30pm Thursday 18 February.

PETERBOROUGH Great Northern Hotel. Tuesday 1 March 7.30pm. Speaker: Ron Craven, Nupe. Nimrod Sejake (Salep).

ILKESTON, Derbyshire. 29th Feb. 7.30pm. New Inn, Ilkeston.

CARMARTHEN, West Wales. NHS crisis. 24 Feb. 7.30pm, Carmarthen Library.

PAISLEY Town Hall 7.30pm. 25 February.

HILLINGDON Pomeroy Hall, Royal Lane. 7.30pm, 22 February.

NOTTINGHAM International Community Centre, Mansfield Road, 7.30pm 29 February.

'The power of love' 24hr strike call

200 PEOPLE braved the elements to attend a demonstration called by Nupe in Llanelli.

The main speaker was Tom Sawyer, deputy general secretary of Nupe, who said that the union had received many messages of solidarity from around the world: "Portuguese, Greek and Australian trade unions and Los Angeles nurses have sent support."

"After nine years of Thatcher," he continued: "We have to make a stand. We have to make a fight." This got the best round of applause of the afternoon.

What was he going to call for? A general strike, solidarity strikes by other trade unions? But the audience waited in vain for a fighting lead, as he con-

tinued:

"In the NHS unions we have got the power of patient care, the power of love and the power of compassion. This power is bigger than the power of force."

"The people selling papers on the demo who were calling for a one-day general strike are wrong," he said, referring to *Militant*: "There are many ways to win. The power of restraint is better than the power of force. With the power of restraint we will win."

"We will look to the future for different methods of struggle, not to the past. A one-day general strike would lose support. It is a battle between the forces of good—the health workers and the public, and

the forces of evil—Moore, Currie and Thatcher."

A Llanelli Labour Party member at the rally commented: "He never once referred to the working class in his contribution. It was all about the British people. This is a class issue."

"The only way to defeat the Tories and their plans is to turn public opinion into action. 87 per cent, according to Sawyer, support the NHS struggle. The mass support is there for a one-day general strike."

The mood of the rally was somewhat subdued, because no lead was given. For many it was their first action, but as the action develops, their consciousness will develop rapidly and support for a one-day general strike will grow.

MANCHESTER DISTRICT Labour Party has become the latest body to support the call for a 24-hour general strike in defence of the NHS on 14 March. The city is to hold a demonstration on 19 February, called by the area health authority shop stewards committee. The Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering

THOUSANDS OF workers took action outside all the hospitals on the Wirral after Nupe nurses voted to strike. A resolution from the trades council demanding a 24-hour general strike in support of the health service has gone to the TUC.

The same demand has been made by the Nottingham EETPU branch.

unions has urged its members to attend and the city council has given its employees time off work.

The city council direct works department has agreed to participate and the Nalگو branch has voted for strike action from 10 am. Salford Quays UCATT and Massey Ferguson workers have balloted in favour of striking.

In Stevenage the Workers' Council of shop stewards, convenors and local TUC delegates has unanimously passed the BLOC model resolution for a 24-hour general strike on 14 March and has called on every trade unionist to write to their general secretary to support John Macreadie's resolution.

BLOC

Conference '88

Reports and interviews by
Tim Harris and Roger Shrives.

THE BROAD Left Organising Committee conference on 13 February was the most confident and determined since the miners' strike.

When the conference was first planned last September, the organisers did not realise the explosive mood which would be seen, with health workers, car workers and many others on strike or in dispute.

There were 1200 delegates and visitors, including many from the health service unions, the car industry and other sections in struggle. The most important decision of the conference was the call for delegates to campaign in their workplaces and union branches for the TUC to call a one day general strike on 14 March.

Supporters of Bloc in London have organised an action meeting for 22 February to start the mobilisation. Health workers met in the lunch break and agreed to organise a health workers' broad left whose first aim would be to campaign for a national shop stewards' combine in the industry.

A meeting of local government workers also called for a steering committee to draw together local authority JSSCs nationally.

Delegates were enthusiastic about the conference. But they understood it was not an end in itself, only the start of a campaign to create a leadership worthy of the militancy of the trade union rank and file.

LONDON BROAD LEFT ORGANISING COMMITTEE Action Meeting.

One day general strike. Defend NHS.

Speakers. Dennis Skinner MP and Fords and NHS workers. Monday 22 February 7.00pm. Hampstead Town Hall, Haverstock Hill, London NW3. Nearest tube Belsize Park.

Benn speaks

TONY BENN MP attacked the labour movement's leaders for the drift to the right. He warned that if Labour accepted the laws of the market, it would be the end to the prospect of full employment and essential services.

He said there was probably a strain of 'new

realist' after the deportation of the Tolpuddle martyrs who said trade unionism was dead. When Keir Hardie, then a Scottish miner, called on the 1883 TUC conference to fight for labour movement representatives in Parliament, the TUC report condemned it as 'divisive'!

No slave labour

CONFERENCE PASSED a resolution from Astms Broad Left opposing compulsory YTS and JTS schemes which have reduced living standards for young people, and threatened all workers.

Delegates cheered Andy Duncan, a CPSA member from Sheffield who was striking against the introduction of YTS into the civil service in the Manpower Services Commission HQ. "The scheme would attack employee

status, union rights and national pay rates for young workers which would undermine all pay levels. In 1988 the scheme is spreading into the DHSS, all other departments and the NHS.

"The strike forced management to withdraw the trainee six weeks earlier than they planned. I support the YTURC campaign to organise trainees and fight compulsory training schemes."

"THIS WAS my first big conference. It cost half a week's wages to come but it was well worth it. I met other members of my union and it was good to talk to people who'd been involved in victories.

"Where I work in the warehouse at Tesco's, I do a 44 hour week with nine hour shifts, only eight of which I'm paid for. Recently we had to work on a broken ladder which was rocking all over the place.

"We work in the rain without coats and they

don't provide any gloves in the winter. All this for a take home wage of £76.

"The union has 400 members in the store but only one steward. I offered to become a steward but the union said I hadn't been a member for long enough.

"Most people support the health workers. A typical comment is, 'If the nurses are striking, things must be bad.' The call for a one-day general strike is spot on."

Desmond Young, a young Usdaw member, spoke to Militant.

1,200 trade union No more



Photos: Dave Sinclair.

"THIRTY EIGHT Manchester nurses on one night shift brought the issue of nine years of Tory attacks on the NHS into the living rooms of every family.

Mick Barwood
National Organiser
BLOC

"Even two-thirds of Tory supporters backed their action. The Tories were forced to retreat and those in the trade union movement who have argued that strike action no longer works against the 'immovable' Thatcher were shown to be completely wrong. If one night shift can shift the Tories, what could the nine million strong power of the



Mick Barwood.

trade union movement do?

"The demonstration on 5 March is a welcome move forced on the TUC by the

pressure of the health workers. But we have to learn from the 1982 dispute, when an enormous march was organised by the

health unions but then the campaign was scaled down. This time it must be the springboard for strike action.

"The call for a 24 hour general strike must be taken back to the branches and shop stewards' committees throughout the movement. We have to prepare now. A national NHS shop stewards' combine is a necessity. A massive turnout must be built for the Bloc lobby of the TUC on 24 February to pressurise them to back the general strike call.

"The NHS wasn't created out of the goodness of the bosses' hearts. It had to be fought for by our class—it's not ours to give away."

Council workers fight for survival

TONY MULHEARN, surcharged ex Liverpool councillor set the scene for the local government debate by showing the need for militant action.

"Manchester nurses forced a government U-turn with one strike, but the Labour leaders said it was a victory for rational argument. On the poll tax, Labour's leaders claimed that the only thing which would stop us defeating the tax was breaking the law. This is nonsense.

"The labour movement was built by people prepared to break the law. The Rent Act of 1916 was beaten by a Clydeside workers' strike. The Caterpillar workers' strike paved the way for the massive swing to Labour in the 1987 election in Scotland.



Steve McKenzie.

"Labour's leaders are trying to rid Labour of Militant supporters and other class fighters saying we were electorally unpopular. But the swing to Labour in Liverpool showed that ordinary people wanted fighting represen-

tatives."

Tony urged Bloc delegates as the most class conscious section to give a clear lead in policies and strategy to the working class.

"THE NEW pay deal for local government manuals threatens jobs and conditions. A recent report wanted to do away with all national conditions.

"The mood is there to fight on privatisation but the union leaders are not behind us. They even call for eradication of non-productive workers.

"The leaders can only get away with this if we let them, we must build strong Broad Lefts and build for a one day general strike." Steve McKenzie (National secretary Nupe Broad Left)

DANNY PURTON, Nalگو Broad Left, moved the resolution calling for a campaign of industrial action and non-implementation against privatisation.

"The union leaders in local government have given up real opposition to go for a divisive scramble for in-house tenders at the expense of their own members and those of other unions. Nalگو talk of recruiting manual workers and signing single union deals with private companies.

"We have to go on the offensive, form effective joint shop stewards committees, and link them together to fight cuts and privatisation. We must also turn them out towards the Labour parties to light a fire under the councillors."

activists say retreats

Health workers organise to win

"THE NURSES' strikes of 3 February were history in the making. RCN members came out on strike in Sheffield and at the end of the day said 'We'll have to join Cohse now!'"

"The action is not just about low pay—89 per cent of ex-nurses blame unrealistic staffing levels for their leaving the NHS."

"Think what nine million workers could do after last Wednesday! Kinnock doesn't need to organise tea

parties up and down the country to find out the answers—if he visits our picket lines, we'll tell him everything!"

"We have to build now for the TUC lobby and the London demonstration on 5 March. Cohse have called for a day of action on 14 March—we must turn this day into a 24 hour general strike."

Ruth Herdman, a Sheffield nurse.



Ruth Herdman.

Delegates talking

"WE'VE HAD several disputes brewing over Japanese style work practices, for instance. Every worker is supposed to be responsible for their own inspection with no extra money."

"Two years ago, it was only 50 per cent union membership here, now it's over 90 per cent. The workplace is not used to industrial action throughout its 20 years."

"TEACHERS OFTEN feel powerless at the size of the attacks in the Education Bill. But we're not getting any lead. The NUT rally on 26 February has dancing and music but the leaders don't want anything 'party political'."

"IT HAS been an excellent conference. The most pressing question now is the NHS dispute and the speakers like Ruth Herdman were really good. At my pit there are many political views and many UDM

members, but they have no vested interest in the UDM like people like Lynk. If the TUC called for action we would get a good response."

Steve Betts NUM Bilsthorpe, Notts.

"But Ford workers locally are fighting, so are the nurses. A local secondary school is closing and the 12 to 16 year old students want to fight it. So should we."

Liz Filer, an NUT member from Southampton.

the ideas of 'new realism' but not yet smashed them."

Ann Robertson, North Manchester Health joint shop stewards committee.

"THE MANCHESTER strike inspired us all. It annoys me when Robin Cook says he wouldn't take strike action if he was a nurse. He wouldn't even work in the conditions nurses have to."

"In my hospital, the Royal Infirmary in Edinburgh, a union official told us two years ago that the best way to fight private contractors was to accept efficiency savings. They were accepted but now the contractors are moving in anyway. Working for them will mean working for £1.40 an hour or less, with no sick entitlements."

Ian Hamilton, Edinburgh hospital worker.



Winnie Murphy.

we don't our kids will die, our old people will be stuck forever in homes, there'll be no NHS."

Winnie Murphy, health worker from Cheshire.

"THE MANCHESTER nurses' strike tipped the balance from demoralisation and bitterness to fighting anger. It showed the vulnerability of the Tories. Now engineers and council workers have backed us. The strike has cut across



Brian Purkiss and Mark Spagnol.

Standing ovation for Fords workers

MARK SPAGNOL and Brian Purkiss, strikers at Ford Dagenham, got a standing ovation when they appeared on the platform. They had been arrested collecting for the strikers on the train from London. The police confiscated over £70 but the strikers collected another £296 at the conference.

Paul Norris, from Fords Basildon told conference that four months ago, when a local hospital threatened closure, comrades had proposed a strike in support of keeping the hospital open. "The convenors said it would not get support. Now the mood has changed and we're on strike ourselves."

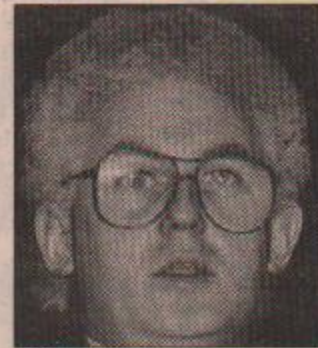


Conference applauds the strikers.

CPSA backs strike call

"ONCE AGAIN the working class are being called upon to solve the problems of the bosses' stinking system," John Macreadie, deputy general secretary of the Civil and Public Services Association warned. He called for support for a one day general strike on 14 March in defence of the health workers and the NHS.

He explained how he and Arthur Scargill were attempting to transform the TUC general council into a campaigning body. "If the TUC with its tremendous



John Macreadie.

authority, gave a lead, it could have an electrifying effect. But so far our appeals have fallen on deaf ears."

In John's own union there is a ballot for all-out strike action amongst DHSS staff and Department of Employment workers are taking action to improve staffing levels. The CPSA is the only union fighting the introduction of slave labour YTS schemes nationally.

Every CPSA member will get a leaflet appealing for support for the 5 March demonstration, and every branch will be asked to hold a meeting with a health worker speaking, and encouraged to agree strike action for 14 March.

Stop Alton's Bill

JENNY COLE (Usdaw Broad Left) moved a resolution calling for trade union opposition to Alton's Abortion Bill.

"Abortion is a class issue and all Labour MPs must oppose Alton's bill. The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (Spuc) leaflet aimed at trade unionists is totally misleading."

"Alton and Spuc say women want abortions because children stop them going down the pub. But in a quarter of all households, a woman is the main or only breadwinner. Local authorities with funds cut provide very few nurseries."

"We want to see the

number of abortions cut, but through better provision of health facilities, not through forcing women into back street abortionists."

Gwynneth Cullen (Cohse) told conference: "NHS cuts mean lack of facilities and late abortions. Fewer than half of all abortions are on the NHS already. There is a shortage of cots and midwives. We need to fight for early abortions and full back up for women who go through with the pregnancy."

Julie Donovan (Newham Nalgo) said the biggest section to suffer from Alton would be the youth, who were most likely to have late abortions because they



Gwynneth Cullen.

were unaware they were pregnant or did not know what to do.

"Capitalist society is irresponsible. Young people need sex education but Clause 28 makes that less likely. Family planning centres are being cut, making free contraception nearly impossible. Labour should fight for nationalisation of the pharmaceutical industry and fight to stop the NHS cuts as well as fighting Alton."



Lyn Martin.

"THATCHER HAS forced us to see ourselves through her eyes—not as angels, but as workers, workers to be exploited. The Manchester strike has shown nurses—don't leave the NHS, stay and fight."

"The leadership of my union, Nupe, has contented itself with protest action, but they are wrong to think strikes lose us support. We don't need lectures about emergency cover—we work on wards with no more all the time."

"We'll not let the mood be dissipated. Our branch will take action on 14 March. Already the response from the pits, GEC and others has been good."

"A union official told me calling for a 24 hour general strike was unrealistic and that we must march with the footsteps of our class. I agreed but told him that surely we should be leading them."

Lyn Martin, nurse, Stafford.

"AREA HEALTH managers are paid £60,000 to cut, cut, cut, while nurses with 30 years experience are paid next to nothing."

"In Mid Cheshire we've had support from ICI workers, TGWU branches, waterworkers and many more. Trades council meetings of three or four have grown to meetings of 90 because of attacks on the health service. Local clothing factories have already organised coaches for the 5 March demonstration."

"If the union leaders don't show a lead, we'll have to move them aside. We have to win this one—if



"Treated like slaves"

THE AQUINO government in the Philippines says it will no longer approve Filipino women going abroad as maids to the rich because they are "treated like slaves, sexually harassed, raped, over-worked, starved and grossly underpaid".

This has caused anguish in the servant employing class in Britain. Lord Weidenfeld who has a Filipino cook said the ban was absolutely disgraceful.

Lady "Bubbles" Rothermere speaks of the Filipino couple she employs as if they were lap dogs: "They don't take up a lot of space—you hardly realise they're there. They're very quiet and they get on with their work." And their Lordships and Ladyships don't have to pay too much for the privilege either.

Royal Relief

THE GRAND old Duchess of York won't be able to march right up to the top of the hill and ski right down again for a few months. Now "Fergy" is pregnant, she will have to give up her hectic royal work. Last year she took over 14 weeks holiday.

To reward the royal couple for hard work, the retailers of baby clothes, prams etc will be deluging them with free gifts. La Cicogna shop in Sloane Street (where else?) sent Princess Diana a £2000 crib for her first child. The royal embryo will need all the help it can get. If it first sees the light of day in a private hospital, it could cost £2500 from the public purse.

Inconvenient picketing

SOME TURKISH trade unionists were put on trial recently for building a toilet. The offending convenience was built for the use of female pickets in a strike. Turkey's repressive labour code makes it illegal for strikers to set up tents or have more than two pickets.

The state prosecutor accused the union of building the toilet to protect pickets from the cold and therefore breaking the law. He claimed they could have used a toilet in a nearby mosque. The union, the petrochemical workers, have called the imam (priest) at the mosque to testify that the mosque was closed.

Choose your own cuts?

THE INNER London Education authority (ILEA) has sent out a questionnaire to parents of nursery age children and to childminders. They want parents to choose the order of priority for nursery admissions, whether it should be on the basis of social need, educational need etc.

This seems to be the ILEA leaders' nearest approach to 'democracy'. Given the Tory attacks on ILEA, wouldn't it be a better form of democracy to build up a campaign round councillors and teachers' unions involving parents in saving jobs and vital services?

Russian leaders admit frame-ups

ONE OF the most famous 'non-persons' of the Russian revolution has been officially readmitted to the pages of soviet history.

By Lynn Walsh

Nikolai Bukharin, prominent Bolshevik leader and friend of Lenin, was not a traitor, spy, or fascist agent. Like twenty other defendants, he was the innocent victim of the third Moscow show-trial, staged by Stalin in 1938 to justify the mass annihilation of all remaining opponents and potential rivals. (Yagoda, the twenty-first, was himself a former witch-hunter.)

Fifty years after these political murders, the Politburo, by ratifying the supreme court's annulment of the sentences, has finally admitted the truth.

The 1938 trial, they said on television and in *Pravda* was accompanied by "gross violations of soviet justice", "falsification", and "admissions obtained by illegal means" (i.e. torture).

Posthumous acquittals do not undo executions. Nevertheless, the exoneration of dedicated revolutionaries like Bukharin, Rykov, and Rakovsky are to be welcomed. Bukharin's widow, Anna Larin, who herself survived twenty years in the Gulag, has waged a courageous and tenacious fight for this vindication.

But how fearful are the bureaucrats of exhuming the truth! As long ago as 1957 Khrushchev proposed rehabilitation, but was held back by cohorts who feared the effects.

Gorbachev now favours "filling in the blank spots". But unravelling the "mons-

trous tangle of crimes" (Bukharin's words) is double-edged for Gorbachev too.

Absolving Stalin's victims helps distance the present leaders from the regime's brutal past. It reinforces the drive to shake up the overweight bureaucracy and renovate the apparatus. But for how long can the violent 'excesses' be divorced from the process of political counter-revolution by which the bureaucracy usurped the power from the working class?

The politburo has concentrated on the third trial. The second, in 1937, based on the frame-up of former members of the Left Opposition, would raise much thornier problems.

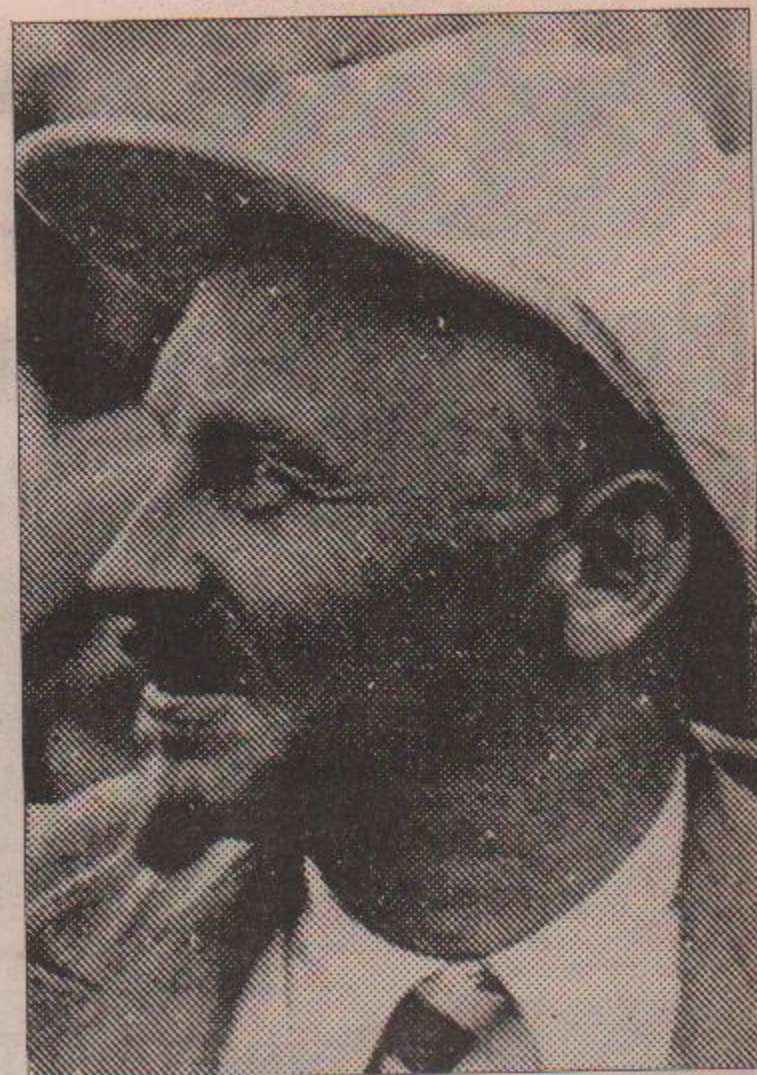
Erratic course

The special focus on Bukharin is also significant. There has long been a Bukharin cult among the bureaucracy's reformist wing. Like most cults, it is based on an idealisation of the prophet.

Bukharin is held up as one of Stalin's outstanding opponents, which is far from the truth. Although Lenin said he was "the favourite of the whole party", his course was erratic.

In the early years of the revolution, Bukharin adopted an ultra-left stance. After the 1923 defeat in Germany and the enforced retreat of the New Economic Policy, he did an about-turn. Disenchanted with the proletariat, he looked towards the peasantry.

Far from opposing Stalin, Bukharin was his stooge. Reflecting an emerging elite, Stalin discovered



Nikolai Bukharin.

"socialism in one country". Bukharin provided the theory: the development of socialism at a snail's pace. At the same time he acted as a hatchet-man, and was the most vituperative opponent of the Left Opposition around Trotsky.

When, in 1928, Stalin turned against the kulaks (richer peasants) and towards forced collectivisation combined with autocratic industrialisation, Bukharin balked.

But he capitulated. Cruelly humiliated, he still served Stalin as a propagandist, never openly opposing him. This abject subservience did not save him.

However, it is Bukharin's economic thinking of 1923-28 which interests the advocates of *perestroika*. He favoured more reliance on the market, with more scope for richer peasants and small businesses. It is also claimed that he favoured democratisation, though this is hardly justified.

In the current struggle within the bureaucracy, rehabilitation of Bukharin is thought to provide 'Bolshevik' legitimacy for *perestroika* and *glasnost*. He symbolises an alternative policy line for the leadership, without challenging the roots of the bureaucracy. It is the illusion of a 'middle way'—between Stalin and Trotsky.

Even though it is being

considered by a politburo committee, the leadership is very hesitant about the political, as opposed to merely legal, rehabilitation of Bukharin. The problem is: where will it end? If Bukharin, why not Trotsky?

There are calls from the top for recognition of Trotsky's role in leading the Petrograd soviet and commanding the Red Army. But in his 70th anniversary speech Gorbachev denounced the "anti-socialist essence" of Trotsky. In spite of Stalin's crimes, "the party's leading nucleus headed by Joseph Stalin safeguarded Leninism in an ideological struggle."

Unwavering

In contrast to Bukharin, from 1923 to his assassination in 1940 Trotsky led an unwavering struggle against Stalinism. He exposed the real character of the privileged caste which seized power.

Above all, Trotsky advanced a programme for the overthrow of the bureaucracy and the restoration of workers' democracy. It remains as valid today as it was under Stalin.

Gorbachev may have to allow partial recognition of Trotsky's role. But the rehabilitation of his revolutionary personality and ideas is a task for the working class.



Lenin speaking, with Trotsky standing to the right of the platform. The Stalinist bureaucracy removed Trotsky from the official photograph.

Sell Militant

THE CENTRE page feature on Bradford Asians has had a great response. 51 were

sold on a door to door canvass on Sunday and many more during the rest of the week. Every shopkeeper in one row of shops bought a copy and a taxi driver sold seven copies to his workmates.

Special mention to Tayub Pasha who sold 61 copies. He said: "Asian and black workers are the worst off in society. All workers are bad-

ly off but when you add up immigration policies, low pay and racism you can see why Asians buy the paper."

Militant sellers in Bradford have thanked the Editorial board for the first foreign language section in the paper.

Sellers in Liverpool were up in arms when we said they sold 100 copies of the

previous issue at the Liverpool teaching hospital. Sorry, comrades, we should have said 177. Since then they have had the NHS day of action where 300 (any advance on 300?) were sold. Well done and keep up the sales.

By Gerry Lerner

Scottish youth strike success

2,000 on Canterbury streets

OVER 2,000 students and university workers marched through Canterbury.

The march was like an ice-cold breeze of reality to some of the well-heeled citizens of Canterbury. But workers' responses were different.

"There's no way I'm crossing this picket line," said an ex-Snowdown miner on a British Coal course when he found student pickets outside Canterbury tech.

And students saw the need to back workers' struggles too. "Students should support nurses and miners," said Estelle Hyde from the tech. "The march has made me aware of my rights as a student."

Despite the authorities intimidating them and locking up the schools, many school students turned out. Militant sellers were approached by tech students they had met during the campaign asking for bundles of the paper to sell.

The highlight of the rally was Terry Fields MP's speech. His demand for a 24 hour general strike on 14 March in defence of the NHS really caught the imagination of the crowd. There is no doubt that the youth would respond to such a call.

Many were also very impressed by Terry Fields staying firm to his principles and living on a worker's wage.

At an LPYS meeting following the rally 40 young people, mostly working class school students, listened to Janice Glennon and Marc Green. Every one of them signed up, particularly after a few choice comments from 'Margaret Thatcher', who made a guest appearance.

By Marc Green
Kent YTURC

joined by tech and school students in strikes and demonstrations. YTURC and the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) were largely responsible for the success of the day there.

Below are reports from the demonstrations that took place on the day:

ON 11 February, the Youth Trades Union Rights Campaign (YTURC) in Scotland called a youth strike against the threat of compulsory YTS and Tory attacks on young people.

Students took action against the Tory Education Bill throughout the country and in Kent they were

"WE ARE striking today because we don't want to go on a compulsory YTS for the crap that Maggie is paying us youth." These were the words of Paddy McGuire a 15 year old striking school student.

800 enthusiastic young people marched through the streets of Edinburgh. The demonstration took place against a background of massive intimidation from school and college authorities.

One school's headmaster announced through the tannoy system that school students would be arrested if they took part in the strike action.

Workers

At one college the police were called to stop pupils going out on strike. Despite this intimidation hundreds of young people marched shouting slogans and singing songs.

At the rally health worker, Norrie Smith, explained that the health workers' action and the action of the youth united together would strike a massive blow at the Tories.

This got a brilliant response from the demonstrators. 124 names were collected on the demonstration from young people who wanted to join YTURC.

They were absolutely



1,000 YOUNG people joined an enthusiastic march in Glasgow. There was singing all the way. 100 came from one school alone. Students from other schools and colleges and YTS trainees joined them.

Photo: Militant.

confident that the Scottish action coupled with the national strike on 14 March will provide the basis for the defeat of this

government over their attacks on youth.

By Veronica Ferguson
East of Scotland YTURC



STRIKE
MON 14 MARCH
NO TO SLAVE LABOUR SCHEMES
SUPPORT THE HEALTH WORKERS

Order posters from:
YTURC, PO Box 390
London SE4 1NS.

Plymouth college 'revolution'

A REVOLUTION is taking place at Plymouth College of Further Education.

When a fellow student was given a final warning for handing out Further Education Labour Students (Fels) leaflets, we decided to call an emergency meeting of the Students' Association to force it to campaign against this victimisation.

By a student who doesn't want a final warning

But the power crazy president declared our motion unconstitutional because it is 'political' and included a matter of college discipline. That's nothing to do with the association, of course!

Posters appeared on notice boards declaring there was no meeting and the only publicity was a leaflet we produced. But 50 students turned up.

The Association officers refused to convene it, making any decisions taken invalid. A kind on-looker provided us with a megaphone and we explained to the students that we had played by the rules but that the executive were throwing them out the window. Nobody present disagreed with our motion.

The Association have started advertising a general meeting at the beginning of March. They are responding to our pressure to do something about the Tory Education Bill.

We pinned up the article in Militant about our fellow student on noticeboards. It mentioned the Association's offices in a portable classroom. Now it turns out that the exec is consider-



Photo: Leith Leader.

'No victimisation' says Rochdale

ROCHDALE DISTRICT Labour party (DLP) has voted to give full support to a youth strike on 14

March. This is an important decision which other DLPs should be committed to follow.

They call on the council to allow YTS trainees they employ to join the strike on full pay and not to victimise school students for participating. No one at the meeting spoke against the resolution.

By Keith Thompson
DLP delegate (personal capacity)

Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign
NATIONAL CONFERENCE
1-3 APRIL. WINTER GARDENS BLACKPOOL

For more information contact: Davie Archibald, YTURC National Secretary, c/o 29 Marlborough Avenue, London E8 4JP.

Will Labour listen?

ON 20 and 21 February the Scottish Labour Party will be exposed to the real demands and aspirations of working class youth.

This is the date of the only 'Labour listens to youth' forum in Britain. LPYS branches have been restricted to only two delegates each. But Labour students and the bureaucratically run Scottish union youth committee are to have any number they want. This is blatant political discrimination!

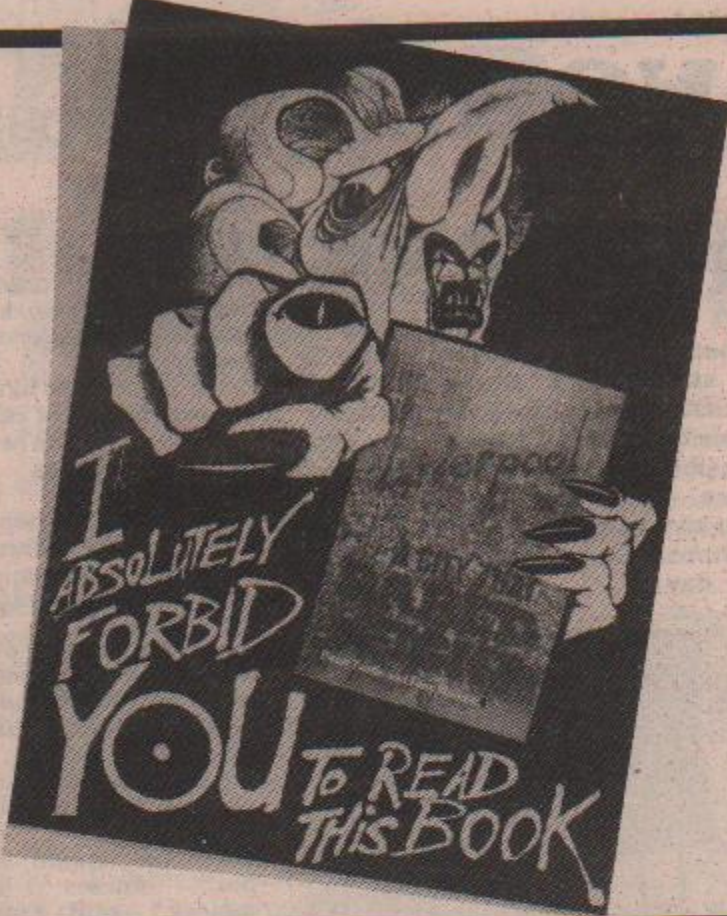
But LPYS members are confident their socialist ideas will make themselves heard. The question is, will Labour's leaders listen?

Meanwhile, in the rest of the country, Red Wedge are being asked to organise a 'Labour Listens' disco tour. It seems doubtful that the party leadership will be able to listen to very much at all at these events. But perhaps that's the idea!

The party leaders don't want to hear the voice of angry working class youth.



Photo: Militant



An inspirational future generation

ERIC HEFFER, Labour MP for Liverpool Walton, reviews *Liverpool—a City that Dared to Fight*, by Peter Taaffe and Tony Mulhearn.

THE STORY of the Liverpool Labour council's struggle against the Thatcher government, as well as its excellent achievements between 1983 and 1987 is one that will be referred to again and again in the history of the British labour movement.

It is bound to act as an inspiration to future generations of socialists and will be studied and followed as was the Poplar struggle of the early 1920s when George Lansbury, one-time Labour leader, was the leader of Poplar council.

The difference in what happened to the two groups is that the Poplar councillors were sent to jail, whilst those in Liverpool have been disqualified from office and surcharged (in one sense a worse fate than jail).

Both groups took on the power of the British government and its state and both were unpopular in the ranks of the right wing of the Labour Party.

The 47 Liverpool Labour councillors are real heroes and heroines of the movement, in the tradition of St Pancras, Clay Cross and others before them.

Despite all the pressures put upon them, they essentially remained united. They only began to show some fissures in their ranks when the leadership of the Labour Party came out strongly against them and attacked the Labour council.

This is a book which I feel should be read by all those who want to know the real story of that struggle.

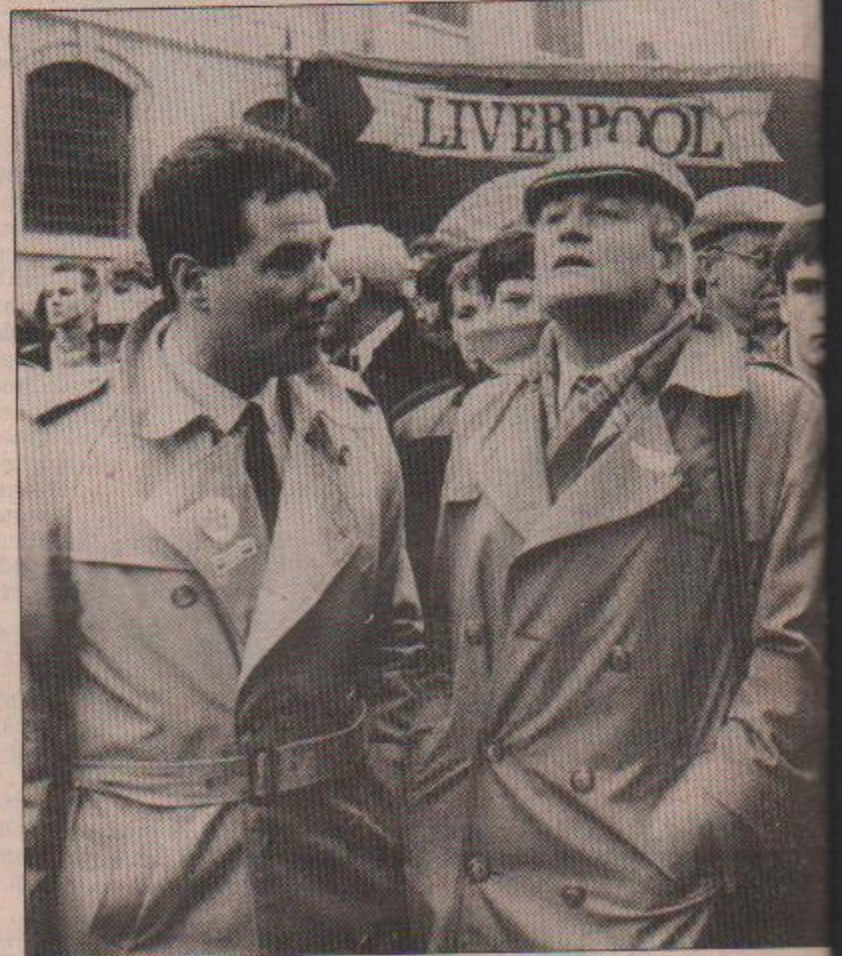
It is a book that merits serious study and to understand the facts it needs reading again and again

Obviously, not being a supporter of *Militant*, I feel that at times the book tends to exaggerate the role its supporters played. The truth of the matter is that *Militant* supporters were always a minority of Labour councillors, and certainly a minority in the Liverpool constituency parties as a whole.

The book does admit this when it says: "It was not just the fighting spirit of the working class which the Liverpool struggle so magnificently displayed, but also the clear perspective, strategy and tactics of the Marxists. Of course they did not have a monopoly of leadership, which also incorporated non-*Militant* supporters."

I have often disagreed with *Militant* supporters over a whole range of policy issues, but Liverpool militants are not imported from outside Liverpool and Merseyside. I have known many *Militant* supporters for 30 or more years.

They are much more a real part of the movement than some 'Johnny come-latelies' who have



Liverpool councillors with Eric Heffer lobby the High Court in January

only joined the Labour party in the past few years, yet who became some of those spearheading the demand for an inquiry into the Liverpool Party as well as calling for expulsions.

What the Labour council did, together with the District Labour Party, was to give a political lead to the people of the city. They, because of their stand and achievements, convinced Liverpool people to support Labour in their thousands.

They kept their promises, something relatively rare amongst politicians. In the 1984 municipal election campaign, it was reported that a voter said to a Liberal canvasser: "I can't stand the *Militant* but at least someone is standing up to the bitch in London".

That was the view I particularly found on the doorsteps and in the streets during the 1987 general election. There is no question that the extra 9,300 votes we got in Walton in 1987 were due to the support the people felt for the Labour council.

They could see with their own eyes what the council had achieved. They could see the slums being pulled down, houses built, sports centres, Everton Park, etc. and had experienced the fact that they had kept down rents and the prices of school meals.

They also knew that the schools had been reorganised and employment had been created.

The councillors obviously made mistakes. They made a serious tactical error when they issued the redundancy notices, but everyone who was honest knew that no-one would be actually made redundant.

What does annoy me is when I read in some papers that the councillors destroyed some services, made cuts, etc. and that they did not have a good record on race and also that they pursued policies which were in line with those advocated by the leaders of the Labour Party.

The truth is the reverse. What the council did was to carry out the policies agreed by the Liverpool District Labour Party and the Labour Party conference in 1984.

That is why I was so angry and walked off the platform when Neil Kinnock attacked the Labour council at the party conference in 1985. It should be remembered he did not mention *Militant*—he attacked the Labour council.

Disgraceful

Some of the things that were said about the Liverpool councillors were disgraceful. Roy Hattersley, for example, stated that there was "political and literal corruption".

Although there has never been a shred of evidence, he has never apologised for that, and during the Old Swan by-election in the city, the press and Labour's political opponents used that phrase over and over again.

It was not true, but it did a certain amount of harm and created some confusion for a period. In the long term however the Liverpool people simply took no notice of such statements and gave unqualified support to the Labour councillors and the Labour Party.

Neil Kinnock's attack on the Liverpool council was resented in particular by Labour councillors in the city. Dominic Brady, chair of the education committee, wrote a letter to *The Guardian*:

"I am not a member of the *Militant* tendency," he said. "Most people are now aware that the vast majority of the members of the Labour Group are not members of *Militant*."

"But on behalf of all the other non-*Militant* members of the Labour group, I will say this to Neil Kinnock: If he continues to use the media to attack life-long socialists, if he continues to attempt to destroy the Liverpool

Review by Eric Heffer



Press launch of the book.

Sales booming

ORDERS FOR *Liverpool—a City that Dared to Fight* are flooding in following coverage in four national dailies, regional papers, TV and radio.

In Liverpool, where 400 copies have been bought already, 200 have been taken by bookshops. Ten were sold on the NHS demonstration.

Militant supporters are organising sales in workplaces, the streets and the movement. In Newcastle sales have passed 100 and

orders for a further 80 have been received.

Bookshops are worth visiting now with all the press coverage—one in central London has ordered 50, while High Street bookshops are taking up to ten copies. If you want more details for visiting shops, please contact us now.

Get your own copy, £6.95 + 90p postage (softback), £14.95 + £1.20 post (hardback) from Fortress Books, PO Box 141, London E2 ORA.

Get your copy of the poster for the book, 18"X14", on gloss paper. 75p plus 25p postage, from Fortress Books, PO Box 141, London E2 ORL.

Special offer to labour movement organisations
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Order four or more copies with payment and get them for £6 each, post included, a saving of £1.85 a copy.

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Please send copies. I enclose £
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on to erations



Photos: Dave Sinclair.

Labour party and its achievements, he will end any possibility of a Labour government."

Unfortunately for the people of Britain Dominic was proved right. The expulsions, the suspensions, the constant attacks on Liverpool and the failure to support the miners, plus the statements about the 'looney left' etc did lead to Labour not winning and it is a tragedy which seems to be being followed again. I fear some people never learn lessons.

Clearly space prevents me in this review from giving the book as full an examination as it deserves. It is a serious, solid work which of course argues from the viewpoint of those who support the *Militant* tendency. Therefore I cannot be expected to go along with every argument or accept every view that is advanced within it.

What is important however is to agree where one can and I can certainly agree with a great deal of what is written.

For example, it is clear that the Liverpool Labour Party would not have got the support they did in 1983 (in the May municipal elections) had they not fought the proposed privatisation of the refuse collecting, etc. and given support to other sections of council workers like Nalco, who had been involved in the struggle against the Liberal/Tory council.

The council workers became activists for the Labour party and helped in both the May municipal and June general elections.

The story also of the suspension of the Liverpool District Party and the expulsion of good socialists like Tony Mulhearn, Felicity Dowling, Terry Harrison and others whom I had known over the years is clearly told in the book.

It is not a happy story and I believe should never have happened. I have always been against witch-hunts and still am.

The book traces what the council did immediately after the 1983 election, the refusal to set a rate and the concessions it wrung out of Jenkin and the Thatcher government, the stand it took with other Labour councils and how only Liverpool and Lambeth in the end stood firm.

Source material

The role of individuals like Derek Hatton, much maligned by the press, is clearly there, as is the argument about the Stonefrost report and its consequences had it been accepted. Labour's 1984 and 1985 conferences are reported and much else.

It is a book that merits serious study and to understand the facts it needs reading again and again.

As I have said earlier, whilst not agreeing with all that is said, I do feel it is an important book. Peter Taaffe and Tony Mulhearn have produced a document that all future writers about the struggle will need to delve into for basic source material.

The Liverpool struggle, like the miners' strike of 1984/85, was an important part of the class struggle taking place against the Thatcher government. It was 'politics put to the test' and contrary to what some would say, it was a test that the Liverpool councillors and party members passed.

Yes, they made mistakes, but only those who do nothing and sit back in their armchairs pontificating about those who do, never make mistakes.

The great demonstrations, the public meetings in the wards called by the party and the response of the Liverpool working class is proof that the workers were involved; they did participate through their unions and through the constituencies and wards and therefore they give the lie to those who say that the Labour party cannot be the party of struggle. It can and we must ensure it is.

Fifth anniversary of editorial board expulsions

Persecuted for their socialism

FIVE YEARS ago on 23 February 1983, the five members of the *Militant* Editorial Board were expelled from the Labour Party. It was a turning point, the beginning of the right-wing counter-revolution in the party.

By Mike Waddington.

After the 1979 election defeat, the party had surged to the left, adopting the most radical policies since the 1920s or 30s. In 1981 Denis Healey beat Tony Benn for deputy leader of the party by less than one per cent.

Part of this swing to the left was the adoption of eight *Militant* supporters as parliamentary candidates. Fleet Street blew a fuse, seriously worried about the role a handful of Marxists could play, a fear reinforced later by the impact of the Marxist-led struggle around Liverpool City Council.

The right began a campaign to turn the tide. The attack on the *Militant* was to be the cutting edge. They were backed by the 'soft left' around the rising Neil Kinnock, who, by abstaining in the deputy leadership election, played the key role in Benn's defeat.

They first proposed, at the 1982 Party Conference, a 'register' of groups compatible with membership of the party, from which *Militant* could be excluded and disciplinary action taken against its supporters.

The vast majority of the rank and file of the Party opposed the expulsions. Over 1,000 resolutions of protest were carried

Roy Grantham from APEX moved it: "*Militants* are a different species... We demand that the editorial board must go, that the paid sellers go and that the *Militant* PPCs be removed".

John Spellar (EETPU) seconded: "*Militant* is killing us with the electorate... Let us rid ourselves of this alien body... and in that way we will... sweep the country at the next general election".

In reply, Brighton delegate, Ray Apps, went to the heart of the matter: "Roy Hattersley said the other day that he would welcome them (the SDP) back, at the same time as he wants to expel socialists from the Party."

"The truth is this. He not only wants to bring them back, he wants to bring back their policies, the policies that lost us the general election. They want to reverse the decision on re-selection, on the election of the leader, on unilateral disarmament."

Martin Flannery MP took up the same theme: "The right wing are going to create a wound in this Party which will take years of struggle for unity to heal... First of all it will be the *Militant* group, then the other groups... then they will attack our policies."

Over the subsequent five years this is precisely what has happened. The right wing have retreated on policy and threaten to abandon socialism as an objective.

Virtually every national executive committee (NEC) meeting after the 1982 Conference was dominated by the register. The right wing proposed the im-



Five expelled members of the *Militant* editorial board. Photo: Militant.

mediate expulsion of the editorial board, but the threat of legal action forced them to delay.

"We have been attacked for going to the courts" said Lynn Walsh in his appeal to conference, "but if we had not taken legal action it is absolutely clear that we would have been expelled forthwith."

But after a hearing in which the leadership's case was so thin that their lawyers advised them to say nothing, the February NEC expelled them.

It was done in the name of electoral popularity, a theory put to the test the very next day in the Bermondsey by-election. Labour was smashed, with the biggest ever swing in history to the Liberals!

The supreme irony is that Jim Mortimer, the then general secretary of the Party and architect of the right's strategy, is now himself under attack. He is a delegate to the general committee of the suspended Bermondsey party, cast as a fellow traveller of *Militant*!

Protest meetings

The vast majority of the rank and file of the Party opposed the expulsions. Over 1,000 resolutions of protest were carried. Thousands attended protest meetings around the country.

After another battle the five were allowed to appeal to the Labour Party Conference—as Peter Taaffe said: "15 seconds for every year of my party membership".

The conference went into closed session, something which had been abolished a couple of years earlier. The atmosphere was electric. The appeals, even according to the official record, were frequently punctuated by applause.

"The right-wing retreat from socialist policies is organised," said Keith Dickinson: "The left-wing campaign to stop this retreat must equally be organised. *Militant's* crime is that it has been the most effective in gaining support of workers and youth for this movement's socialist policies."

"One regional secretary of the GMWU decided to try to remove me from the union," said Clare Doyle: "He ended up in jail along with John Poulson..."

"We are not in the workers' movement for careers or for personal gain but to see the horrors of life under capitalism eliminated. What do our enemies fear most of all? Our success. The ideas of Marxism will not be defeated by methods reminiscent of the 1930s; they have no place in the Labour Party; we do!"

"We will not go out and form a separate Party or any nonsense like that," warned Peter Taaffe: "We will still consider ourselves as members of this party and we will fight to get back in. We will be rehabilitated into this Party when those who are demanding our expulsion are in the rogues' gallery with... the other traitors to this movement."

"There is no way Marxism can be separated from the Labour Party," declared Ted Grant: "There is no way you will succeed with these expulsions. We will be back."

The appeals were block-voted down. But constituency party delegates gave the five a standing ovation and when they appeared in the foyer they were mobbed by supporters and the press.

A marvellous ovation greeted the five at the *Militant* readers' meeting—the biggest ever at that time. Messages of support flooded into *Militant's* headquarters. Support for *Militant* grew as never before! As Peter Taaffe succinctly put it: "We have been expelled INTO the movement!"

Since then a further 46 supporters have been expelled. In every case the 'price' has been growth in support for *Militant*.

Despite constitutional changes to force the pace of expulsions, the right wing can now only succeed by shutting down parties—but even this can only be accomplished at the cost of more support for the Marxists!

These 51 have been proud to be persecuted for their socialism. Five years on *Militant's* support is stronger than ever!

Stirrings of opposition

ON SUNDAY 31 January, a dozen KGB and police officers broke into a conference of 60 "informal groups" in a Moscow flat. On the pretext that neighbours had complained they threatened to arrest everyone, then took down all names. COLIN DAVIDSON looks at the background.

GORBACHEV'S REFORMS have been dictated by the bureaucracy's fear of the growing anger among workers at the waste, corruption and mismanagement of bureaucratic rule (see article below).

But Gorbachev's 'cure' for the problems of the economy seems even worse than the disease: shut down 'uneconomic' factories; end subsidies, especially on food (i.e., increase prices); speed up production lines, and cut workers' bonuses (i.e., cut wages).

According to a survey of 6,000 people in 500 factories by the official Moscow Sociological Research Institute, most people have concluded that *perestroika* (Gorbachev's 'restructuring') has brought harder work but few benefits.

Workers at a bus factory in Moscow recently went on strike because their bonus was reduced. The workers blamed poor equipment and lack of parts for production problems.

This strike was called "extraordinary" by the regime. But strikes are no longer so extraordinary. Bus drivers in Chekhov, glass workers in Vladimiriv, workers at the giant Kamuz truck plant and a Minsk chemical factory, as well as young workers in Moscow have all been on strike recently.

Independent struggle by the workers are the most fundamental threat to Gorbachev and the bureaucratic regime.

The 'informal groups' are reflecting the suppressed opposition among workers and youth to bureaucratic misrule.

In 1980, in response to the rise of Solidarity in Poland, moves were made towards the creation of an independent trade union movement in Russia. It was quickly suppressed but, significantly, one of these groups has re-emerged, claiming membership in six main cities.

In an underground pamphlet it has called on workers to take to the streets against any price rises, and explains: "the money can be found elsewhere, by cutting the huge cost of defence expenditure."

Still, at the present stage, the most significant stirrings of opposition are to be seen in the development of the so-called *niformalny* ('informal' groups) amongst intellectuals and the bureaucracy itself (see *Militant* 876). *Pravda* estimates that thousands now exist.

An estimated 60 per cent of their membership are drawn from the official 'Young Communist League'.

Many of those involved have illusions in Gorbachev's reforms. On the other hand, these groups undoubtedly reflect—and could increasingly become a focus for—the suppressed opposition among the workers and youth.

These contradictions were shown at the first conference of the 'informal' groups last August, held with state approval. Over 600 delegates attended from 50 groups, cultural and environmental as well as socialist.

Rumours that the conference would be banned circulated throughout the proceedings, and the more radical delegates were

heckled and shouted down by supporters of Gorbachev.

The debates were very sharp between liberal dissidents and the youth groping towards Marxism. Two separate umbrella organisations developed out of the conference—the Association of Social Initiative Groups, with an open membership, and a Federation of Socialist Social Clubs.

A programme for the latter was drawn up and circulated by 16 groups, with names ranging from the Young Communist Internationalists to the Ernesto Guevara Brigade. It states:

"As convinced supporters of socialism, we identify with the course proclaimed in October 1917 towards building a classless society in the USSR and the

withering away of the state...

"We see the formation of independent groups and unions ... as one of the roads for building social self-management, which will involve the elimination of bureaucratic and administrative structures ..."

They call for "the right for the social organisations to run representatives for the Soviets of People's Deputies at all levels without any limitation ... and with free access for the candidates to the news media".

They also demand "solid guarantees for maintaining the workers' social gains (and) reduction of spending on the state apparatus..."

"Free access for the population to statistical material and archives, to the stocks of museums and libraries, and an end to the special stocks of reserved books..."

Press freedom

"Elimination of the administrative obstacles that the independent organisations run up against in the exercise of their constitutional rights...freedom of speech, of the press, the right to demonstrate and march..."

"Support for and solidarity with the struggle and activity of the democratic, national liberation and revolutionary movements in the capitalist countries and in the developing countries."

These radical demands are interspersed with confused statements about the importance of *perestroika* and the leading role of the 'Communist Party'—in reality no more than a 'trade union' of the bureaucracy. Nevertheless such a programme, even in its present undeveloped form, would be totally unacceptable to the bureaucracy as it challenges their grip on the economy and the state.

A second conference was held at the end of January, this time attended by 400 and again approved by the regime, whose aims were now becoming clear. Knowing the dangers they are faced with, the bureaucracy are prepared to tolerate and encourage those groups who accept the restrictions of *glasnost*—i.e., who do not challenge the rule of the bureaucracy.

The more radical groups—for example 'Democracy and Humanism', which is linked to the underground trade union groups—were excluded from the conference and have suffered repression.

These groups, reflecting the build-up of discontent and future struggles among the mass of workers, indicate the thirst for Marxist ideas among the youth.

A meeting in Taganrog last August, for example, discussed such questions as "Do the workers in the Soviet Union own the means of production or are they hired labour?" "What is the form of ownership in the USSR, socialist or state capitalist?" "Do opposing classes exist in the USSR and is there a separate class of bureaucrats?"

Gorbachev is following a dangerous road. Struggles within the bureaucracy will push policy left and right in the next period. The regime's balancing act, however, will be brought to an end when the mighty Soviet working class re-enters the stage of history, sweeps the bureaucratic parasites from power, and re-establishes its own democratic rule.



Moscow's famous delicatessen food store, "Gastronom No. 1". The top bureaucrats enjoy every luxury, while workers must queue for basic necessities.

Worlds apart

Lives of the bureaucracy...

THE RUSSIAN magazine, *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, has exposed the despotic rule of a collective farm director in the republic of Uzbekistan—a taste of what life can be like under Stalinism, *glasnost* or no *glasnost*.

Akhmadjan Adilov was a 'Hero of Socialist Labour', in charge of the showpiece Gurumseral agro-industrial complex with 30,000 workers.

His methods were based on terror. He ran his own underground prison, and reportedly made workers kneel in prayer before him. Staff who were late in bringing his meals were sentenced to a year's forced labour.

A worker who escaped explains why he refused to become a brigade leader: "Whoever takes responsibility here, whether as cashier or foreman, inevitably dies in a few years,

from poisoning, a car crash, or just disappearing".

Workers who questioned Adilov's authority would be beaten or slashed with a knife as he held court under a giant statue of Lenin.

This 'Socialist hero' lived in luxury, with a stable of 50 thoroughbred horses, each worth tens of thousands of pounds. Even outside his private kingdom he owned another 15 villas.

He was arrested three years ago in a massive clean-up operation after the death of the local Party chief, Rashidov. *Literaturnaya Gazeta* only revealed the scandal after "constant rumours that Adilov is going to be released without charges".

It said that Adilov's protection

extended right up to Politburo level.

Gorbachev realises that it is necessary to attack the most monstrous cases of corruption:

"We bear quite a lot of damage because some communists (i.e., bureaucrats—*Editor*) behave unworthily or perpetuate discrediting acts."

But every Russian worker knows that cases such as Adilov's are only the tip of a festering mountain of bureaucratic abuse, oppression and privilege, which is not confined to remote Asian republics.

As the editor of *Pravda*, V. Afanasyev, put it:

"Personally, I think there are very many members of the central committee who need to be replaced ... who do no work at all."

By Richard Knights

...and the workers

A DEVASTATING report on the Ivanovo textile complex in the USSR has revealed the conditions suffered by women workers:

"There are no shower rooms, endless queues for the few lavatories. The machines are so noisy that they exceed the legal maximum by dozens of times, hence the occupational disease of chronic hearing loss which affects 80 per cent of the women. The noise affects the women's nervous system and leads to memory loss and insomnia."

Workers don't bother to go to

the factory clinics because they know doctors are under orders to report a regular drop in the number of industrial accidents.

An attack by the capitalist press? No, by the Soviet paper *Sotsialisticheskaya Industriya*—believed to be part of a strategy to prepare the way for mass unemployment among women.

Gorbachev has called for a national debate on "what we should do to make it possible for women to return to their purely womanly mission!"



Women building workers in Moscow.

Arms 'reduced' to record levels!

IN 1987 many people looked to the Reagan-Gorbachev arms reduction deal as a sign of hope in an otherwise troubled world. However, the latest report by World Priorities* shatters any such idea.

The two superpowers actually enlarged their nuclear arsenals in 1987! The year also saw record levels of world military expenditure at \$1.8 million a minute.

More wars were being fought in 1987 than in any previous year on record. Four-fifths of the deaths were civilian.

This inexorable growth in the arms race (\$15 trillion dollars spent since 1960!) has mirrored increasing misery amongst the world's poor.

One hundred and ten million people have no shelter what-

soever; 1,300,000,000 do not have safe water to drink; 14,000,000 children die of hunger-related causes every year.

Yet for \$1,436,000,000—the cost of a Trident class submarine—it would be possible to embark on a five-year programme for universal child immunisation against six deadly diseases, preventing a million deaths a year!

Indictment

Or, for the \$423,000,000 it takes to build a Trafalgar class submarine, the cost to the UK public of the proposed fee of £10 for sight tests and £3 for dental tests (formerly paid for out of National Insurance contributions) could be met.

The information packed into this report constitutes a massive

indictment of capitalism and Stalinism, and cannot help but point the reader towards the need for fundamental social change—switching arms production to spending on human needs.

Yet, curiously, the authors state that the momentum for arms reductions is irreversible—while admitting there is no convincing evidence to support this view!

Looking to the future, however, readers can take heart from the quote by the US Presidential Commission on World Hunger: "The most potentially explosive force in the world today is the frustrated desire of poor people to attain a decent standard of living."

*World Military & Social Expenditure 1987-88 by R.L. Sivard.

By Dave Carr



Military waste: the facts

★ The cost of one Nimitz aircraft carrier is enough to give one solid meal a day for six months to the 20 million Americans who do not get enough to eat.

★ Hunger-related causes kill as many people every two days as the atomic bomb at Hiroshima.

★ The fuel consumed by the US military in one year would run the entire US public transport system for 22 years.



Aynur Karaaslan on the picket line.

THE STRIKE at Migros Stores in Turkey lasted four months and ended in victory (see *Militant* 880). It is part of a whole series of labour disputes in the recent period. TIM WHITE spoke to AYNUR KARAASLAN, Secretary of the Istanbul branch of Tez Koop IS, the Turkish shopworkers' union, and leader of the Migros strike.

How did the strike start?

The cause of the strike was 18 disputed points relating to pay and benefits, job transfers, overtime, disciplinary rules and which workers would be covered by the agreement.

The union position was prepared by the workers in each chain of Migros, and finalised at the main branch. Through meetings and shop stewards the union kept the rank and file informed about the negotiations.

The tactics of other strikes were studied, and the lessons learned by Migros workers.

Management refused to accept our position, and the union imposed a work to rule. When negotiations broke down there was a series of workers' meetings to prepare for a long battle.

Under Turkish law, arbitration is compulsory, we went through with it though we have no illusions in it. In a general meeting the decision to strike was unanimous.

On 20 August the strike began. Migros has 33 shops in Istanbul alone. District committees were set up to run the strike locally, alongside the central coordinating committee.

Unions in Turkey are liable for any damage during picketing, and pickets are limited to two! Picketing was kept up for 24 hours a day, on eight-hour shifts.

Interview with Turkish strike leader

How the Migros workers won



Workers trusted their union officials, because they were drawn from the workers' own ranks, and there was regular contact between them.

There had been several other big strikes in 1987, in the auto, metal, petrochemical and leather industries. All had been successful. Only the railway workers had lost, because the union officials sold out.

The tactics of these strikes were studied, and the lessons learned by the Migros workers. There were weekly meetings of the workers, both to inform the workers of developments and to maintain morale. The union held regular press conferences to refute management slurs.

What attacks did the workers face from the employers and the regime's police?

Migros is part of KOC, a big monopoly. After the failure of legal measures to break the strike, Migros tried other

methods. They set up a strike-breaking depot in a disused factory, with the backing of the Labour Directorate.

Clashes

In reply, the workers occupied the Labour Directorate as well as the factory. There were clashes with the police, but the workers won, and the depot was closed.

As a result, Migros used the forests on the outskirts of Istanbul to transfer products from one scab truck to another. When the workers heard of this there were more pitched battles in the forest with police and scabs.

These militant activities raised the workers' fighting spirit and morale.

There were other small successes. Before the military takeover (in 1980), pickets could be looked after with shelters, vans, etc. After the coup this

right was stamped out.

All unions now see the need to struggle for effective picketing. This right was won during the strike.

The union requested and got medical check-ups for all 1,100 strikers, claiming they were being made ill by the law. They demanded the right to put up tents, and said it was unconstitutional to ban them.

The next day the workers put up shelters again, the police waded in. But the picket lines were outside shopping centres and, needless to say, fighting was bad for business. So the police were forced to give up.

Now every picket line can erect shelters. This is a significant win.

Workers set up solidarity committees to win broad support and money. They also set up political discussion groups and discussed not only the strike but also other strikers and labour movement ac-

There were pitched battles in the forests outside Istanbul with police and scabs.

tivity.

To what extent can this strike and others be seen as a resurgence of the Turkish labour movement?

The military's aim was to crush the unions, which the ruling class blamed for all Turkey's problems. After the coup only one trade union federation, Turk IS, was allowed.

In 1984 a repressive new labour code was passed. DISK (the Communist-led union federation) was banned. A union had to have 10 per cent membership in an industry to be recognised, so many smaller unions either amalgamated or went under.

Under these conditions many smaller unions and DISK members joined Turk IS. Its membership increased to 1.5 million. The period 1984-86 became a preparation for a new surge forward. Despite the repression, workers began to find new confidence.

The 1986-87 metalworkers' strike showed that the regime could be defeated. Then came the other successful strikes. The transport workers' strike is still on.

The working class movement is on the rise to confront the regime and the bosses. It has made many of the labour laws irrelevant!

How do you see the next period for Turkish labour?

The workers are attacking with enthusiasm. The movement is being politicised, seeing the need for the struggle to be widened to include the restoration of democracy.

In Migros there had been no strike for 50 years. Now these workers are prepared to sign petitions for the release of political prisoners.

There is a new generation in the union. This is summed up in one example.

An older union member, on strike for the first time, has two kids. One is in a unionised textile factory, the other in a non-union factory. At a get-together the whole family discussed how to help the non-unionised one get a union. This shows how the strike has changed things for the workers.

Tories spill the beans

Dear Comrades,

I'm sure readers will be delighted to hear that the Tories have discovered the real cause of the growing NHS waiting lists!

The information comes in a glossy leaflet produced by the government's Welsh office, which I read in the dentist's waiting room the other day.

Tucked away in a little corner among all the usual statistics about how much money they've pumped

into the NHS, one paragraph acknowledges "there is a problem with waiting lists". Apparently the NHS is so good we all want to use it so much more these days!

So, next time you read some lousy communist rag pushing a tale of woe about pensioners being denied hip replacements, don't believe it—they're really just trying to sample the NHS cordon bleu cookery!

Brian George Cwmbran

Time to fight

Dear Comrades,

Hooray! That tall fence Nacods have been sitting on for a long time has suddenly collapsed under increasing pressure from British Coal for them to accept a wage rise that actually decreases their basic wage, especially for those not involved in coal or development production.

In the miners' strike Nacods balloted members whether to support us and they voted by a large majority in favour. Then British Coal sent an invitation to Nacods officials for a meeting.

Along they went to meet them, at Downing St no

less! What happened? Surprise, surprise they came out like a pair of kittens and announced their threat of industrial action in support of the NUM was called off.

Well, Mr McNestry and Co, you're going to have to pull your socks up to win this one and realise it's not all tea and crumpets at Downing St.

Come on Nacods let's see your fighting spirit and remember British Coal say they can train UDM members in eight weeks to do your job!

Coventry colliery NUM worker

Classified ads

20p per word, minimum 10 words. Semi-display £3 per column centimetre. Three weeks for the price of two. Militant meeting ads free. All advertisement copy should reach this office by first post on Friday, the week before publication.

□ Congratulations from the South African comrades to Sheila for her pretty girl.

□ New sticker available in rolls of 250. 'One day general strike—Defend the health service'. Other stickers: 'Kick out the Tories', 'No to slave labour on YTS', 'For a socialist South Africa', £2.50 per roll. 'Militant for labour and youth' enamel stud badges £1 each. A3 size posters of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg 50p each. Available from Fighting Fund Dept, 3-13 Hepscoth Rd, London E9 5HB. For all orders add 25 per cent P&P. Cheques payable to Militant.

□ Rachel and Marck announce the birth of a baby girl called Jade. Let's fight for socialism and her future. Thanks to comrades in Birmingham and Bristol for their support.

RALLY '88

Alexandra Palace
Sunday 19 June

Tickets £6

Order your ticket now! From Militant Rally, 3/13 Hepscoth Rd, London E9.

Workers' Education Group

Summer Camp '88.
Saturday 6—13 August

Bracelands Campsite, Gloucestershire.

Cost: £40 approx for the week.

Book your holidays now!

Militant **New** **Out now**
Militant Pamphlet
price 50p
cheques to World Socialist Books
3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9.

ABORTION RIGHTS
A Socialist Approach

Multi-coloured vitamins

Dear Comrades,

After a BBC programme on the effects of vitamins in children's diets, I was seized with fear that my son might lack some of the basic vitamins needed for healthy growth.

After paying £2.45 for a bottle of multi-vitamins I discovered they contain E110, commonly known as

tartrazine—the yellow colourant recently highlighted as a cause of hyperactivity in children and once frequently used in orange juice.

I wonder what the company have in mind. Is it to make us think our kids seem to have energy after taking a tablet, or is it because like most multinationals they will put anything

in their products to make them look attractive and so boost their profits?

What is even more sickening is we are being advised that children's health is suffering due to inadequate diet, yet there are cutbacks in free school milk and school meals.

Jane Harker Wallsend

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

Cop this!

Dear Comrades,

I have been attending a day release course. One of the students held views which could only be described as reactionary. He was an ex-policeman in his 40s, who had retired from the force due to ill health and was now working for Tynes and Wear Passenger Transport Executive.

He had sent his children to private school, was a member of Bupa, had bought shares in privatised industries, believed in management's right to manage and had voted Tory in the election.

He had played an active role on picket lines during the miners' strike (as a policeman), boasted that he had never been in a trade union in his life and believed trade unions had ruined the country.

Imagine our amazement when he came back in January and told us he had joined Nalgot Management had rewarded all this



Red-cars?

loyalty by having him rostered for normal working over Christmas without any extra pay. His only holiday was Christmas Day

itself. He was so incensed he joined a trade union!
Dave Archibald,
Newcastle North

Thanks, Liverpool 47

Dear Comrades,

Our magnificent battling 47 council not only saved my sanity but probably my life too.

I had been out of work for six years, until February 87, when the unbelievable happened, I got a job. It was all down to the brilliant council's policy of refilling vacancies when they became available. Not like the Liberal-Tory alliance before them, who

deliberately let 5,000 council jobs go.

The day they were thrown out of office by an unelected district auditor, appointed by the Thatcher government, was one of the saddest days of my life. What for? Giving people like myself, the chance to regain my self-respect and dignity.

The four years they were in office, council house rents never increased once.

They built 5,000 brand new houses, never made any cuts in any of the major services and took on between 5-8,000 workers. For this they were hounded out of office by the DA, not forgetting Neil Kinnock.

So spread the word about their brilliant fight—the only council who wouldn't lay down to Thatcher and her evil government.

Roy Dixon, Liverpool

Teach yourself A-levels

Dear Comrades,

Tory cuts in education are being felt at Wythenshawe College. A-level Sociology students' lecturer has been off ill for two months and will be off for another two to three months. No replacement will be provided.

They have been given permission to use a classroom and a few books to teach themselves. The students have exams in a few months.

At a college not far away in Arden there is a similar problem with a drama class. Their tutor has had a

nervous breakdown and will not be replaced. So they left college without a fight. It seems this government would like most students to do this.

Lynn Worthington
Wythenshawe

School's ridiculous ban

Dear Comrades,

I am a member of the Bristol West LPYS and still at school. When trying to publicise a meeting on Mr David Alton's Abortion Bill held in Bristol in January, I was not allowed to place notices anywhere

in or around the school site.

I feel this is ridiculous as several girls from my school have had abortions and would probably have gone to this meeting had they known.

The views of my head

and deputy teachers are that young people under the age of voting can't think for themselves. How wrong they are! How must young people show that we can think for ourselves?

Bristol LPYS, member

Super store?

Dear Comrades,

My local Co-op Superstore recently won an award for architecture. It's a pity it doesn't apply to their workers' pay. One of the staff told me she earned £62 a week after tax. And they tell you to be polite and good-humoured! At Christmas she worked the Sunday before and Boxing Day and got £2 extra!

I used to work for the Co-op. In 1968 I was earning £9 19s 6d for a 40 hour week. Since then management have got steadily worse, now they no longer even pay lip service to Labour and trade union ideas. My experience of USDAW in the Co-op was that the union branch officials were puppets of the management. When their policies were challenged over pay and conditions we were accused of challenging the very competitive existence of the Co-op.

My working experience was one of meanness and primitiveness working in a drab warehouse, freezing in winter, poor washing facilities, no canteen, just sitting on boxes.

This girl told me you didn't have to join a union, she hadn't as she felt it was too close to management. With all these Superstores going up there's a great need for unions and it should be easier to organise full and part time workers.

We need accountable full time officials on a worker's wage, who reflect members' wishes and don't want a quiet life.

Ex Co-op worker
Brighton

Barmaid's warning

Dear Comrades,

I have been a barmaid for five years—since I was 18. I'm good at my job and I enjoy it.

Working behind a bar, loyalty isn't towards the brewery or the manager, but the people you work with. I know if I don't turn up my friends must work harder and we're usually understaffed anyway.

When I work full time, I get up, go to work, come home, eat and get ready for work again. Usually I'm home by midnight. If a till is down either the money must be put in or we get a written warning. The tax man assumes that we get £10 every week in tips. For this we are paid £2.05 an hour.

I am now unemployed. I can no longer afford to be a barmaid. I want to buy a house, as I can't get decent rented accommodation and as a barmaid even working full time I couldn't afford a mortgage.

Val O'Flynn

Who's behind the anti-abortionists?

A READER in Dublin, Angie O'Laoghaire, replies to a letter by Vince Crosby (*Militant* 881) in which he claims that a foetus at 18 weeks is "a baby... fully developed in every way", and that Life and Spuc are "caring" organisations.

"Vince seems genuinely deluded about the nature of organisations like Spuc.

"In Ireland we have seen these organisations campaign on a wide range of issues, not just abortion. Many have international links, dual membership, or are set up as front organisations to champion right wing causes.

The Responsible Society was set up in Britain to "respond to the exploitation of children through sex education". Opposition to artificial methods of contraception was also part of its brief.

"Two of the targets of the Irish branch of this group were the Rape Crisis Centre and a group called SPOD (Sexual Problems of the Disabled).

"The Responsible Society's caring attitude was shown in their newsletter: 'SPOD and the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre are examples of how the ultra permissiveness can fasten on to what appears to be a compassionate or charitable cause'. They fought against a government grant to the rape centre in 1981 stating that 'the state is funding and lending respectability to promoters of abortion'.

Campaign

"In 1981 leading spokespersons for the Responsible Society were to the forefront in Plac an umbrella group for all these organisations including Spuc, in a campaign to change the constitution to give equal right to life to the foetus and the mother. A specially tailored organisation called Family Solidarity was set up to organise the troops on the ground, and to involve some of the smaller groups in the country.

"These caring organisations said that the foetus

had equal right to life whatever the circumstances, such as in the case of ectopic pregnancy (with fatal consequences for the mother if the pregnancy continues) or where cancer treatment is needed for the mother.

"In the divorce referendum in 1986 these groups carried out a hysterical campaign of scaremongering and blatant lies.

Blatant lies

"In all these campaigns the Irish groups raised considerable sums of money abroad, in Britain and the

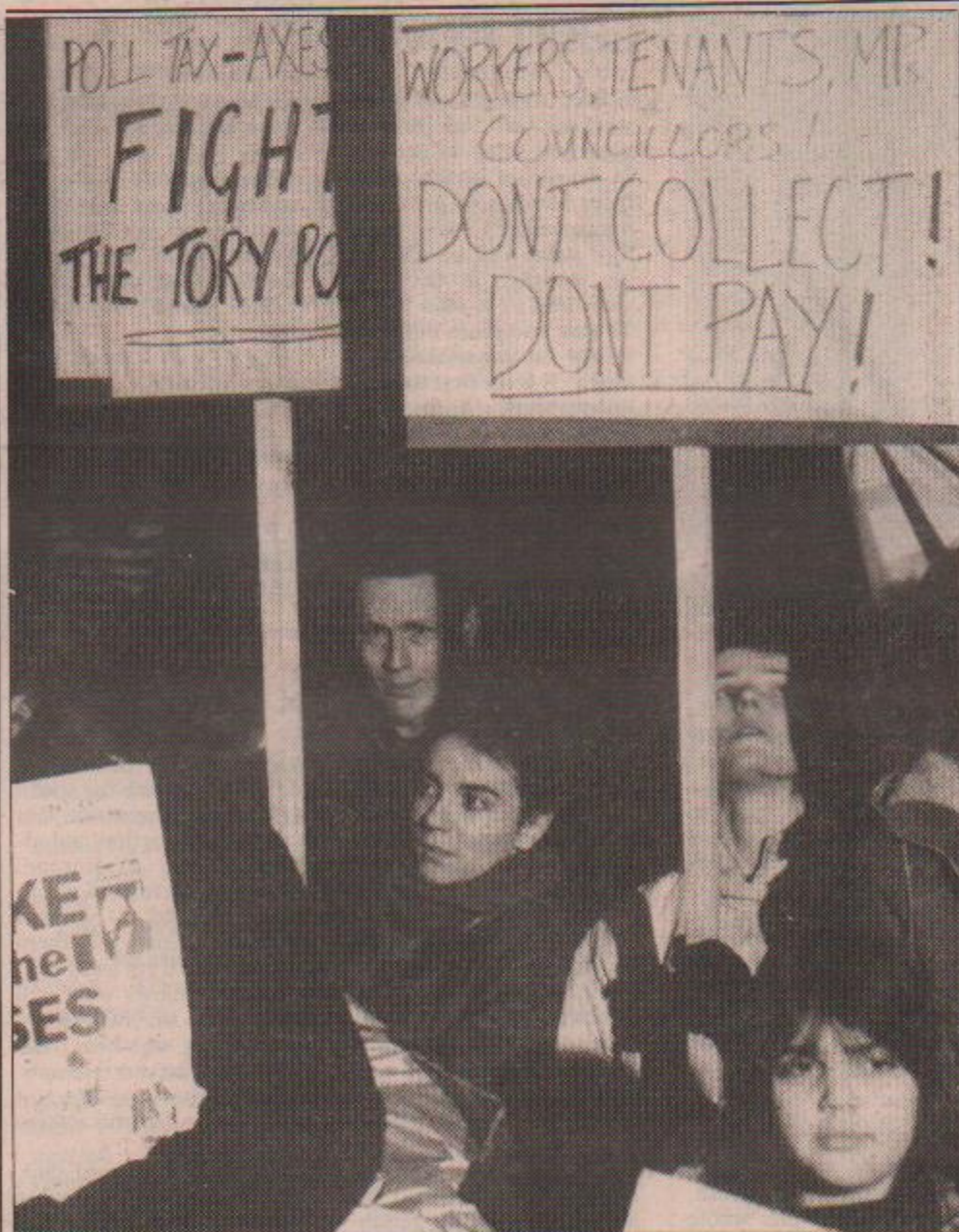
US, and from catholic bishops all over the world. The campaigns go away but the groups do not. They continue to produce propaganda and fund 'caring' organisations like Life.

"These groups are neither caring, nor are they simply small groups on the ultra-catholic fringe. Many of their members are leading members of Opus Dei, the secret international catholic organisation, composed of leading businessmen, conservative politicians and churchmen.

"Also from these 'caring' people in Ireland comes op-

position to divorce, opposition to the right for married women to work and to social security payments to 'unmarried mother'. They have made public allegations that young women walk the streets to find someone to make them pregnant, so they can have these payments!

"They also call women who have abortions 'murderers'. To believe that these organisations could in any way provide counselling or support for those who have had abortions is ridiculous".



Lobby of Labour Party local government conference in Edinburgh.

THE LABOUR leadership's policy of staying within the law to defeat the poll tax was knocked back last weekend by the Scottish Labour Party Executive.

It turned down a recommendation from Donald Dewar, Scottish Affairs spokesperson, to oppose any campaign of non-payment of the poll-tax next year.

Cut or fight choice for Liverpool Labour council

NICHOLAS RIDLEY has given Liverpool council a kick in the teeth by rejecting a plea by its Labour leaders to put up the rates by five per cent and relax penalties in an attempt to bridge the £43 million budget gap.

Moderate

The moderate image being cultivated by the right wing Labour group and the urging of the bishops, local business, and the Labour leaders to keep within the law, has come to nothing.

When asked what to do next, council leader Keeva Coombes said "God only knows", but added that he was sure "we will make a legal budget".

It is clear from Ridley's comments that he wants to see rent rises and cuts. Some of the right wing would be willing to deliver these immediately hoping to get backing from the new, purged district Labour party (DLP). Eddie Sabino, chair of the DLP, said at his

local ward meeting that to continue the municipal house-building programme through the Urban Regeneration Strategy, as the 47 surcharged councillors did, is "out of date".

The right wing are split over the budget crisis and the last Labour Group meeting had to be adjourned for a week, and a special council meeting cancelled, because of disagreements in the right wing caucus.

The right is in disarray because the Broad Left has stayed firm in demanding no cuts in jobs and services and has the full cooperation of the unions in its campaign.

Broad Left supporters in the right's stronghold of Riverside Constituency Labour Party were elected as delegates to the Labour Women's Council, and in Mossley Hill constituency party Broad Left supporters won two out of three delegates to the north west regional party conference.

By a Militant reporter

'Pledge not to pay' poll tax

FIFTY-FIVE people attending a meeting of the Gorgie and Dalry Anti-Poll Tax Union in Edinburgh signed a 'pledge not to pay' the tax. Speakers condemned the district, regional and national Labour Party leaders for their lack of fight against the poll tax.

All at the meeting agreed to join the union, which was set up by Marxists and left wing trade unionists, and a further 45 who couldn't attend had already agreed to join.

One pensioner asked: "Why is it that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer".

The main speaker, Russell Taylor, prospective Labour candidate for the district council, explained

the lack of strategy to fight the poll tax was due to the political philosophy of the Labour leadership, both locally and nationally.

The union is to link up with three other anti-poll tax unions in the city, and with the recently formed Labour Campaign Against Poll Tax which is pledged to pressurise the regional councils into refusing to administer the poll tax legislation.

A massive movement is building up on the housing schemes and the main cities of central Scotland, and the Labour leadership may try and ignore it but it won't go away.

By a Militant reporter

Fighting Fund

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 South East	432		1570
2 London	1817		6770
3 Northern	785		3270
4 West Midlands	618		3510
5 East Midlands	427		2500
6 Scotland West	409		2520
7 Southern	322		2020
8 Manc/Lancs	437		2890
9 Eastern	322		2260
10 Scotland East	305		2150
11 Merseyside	623		5360
12 South West	138		1270
13 Yorkshire	469		5950
14 Wales	126		3510
15 National	2553		3790
Total	9783		50,000

WITHIN A few days of the start to our ONE DAY'S PAY FOR A ONE-DAY GENERAL STRIKE campaign we've received some inspiring donations. Rod Fitch, a member of the TGWU in Brighton has sent us £100! Mike Singleton, AEU, also from Brighton donated £50. Alex Milhallovich, an ACTSS member from Brentwood donated £30. NUPE member Bill North, from Brighton gave a cash donation of £17.

Militant has been overwhelmed with requests for one day general strike stickers—20,000 have been sold in a week! One supporter on the London train to the BLOC conference raised £31.36 from sales of the sticker. Supporters in Liverpool on the TUC day of action in

defence of the NHS convinced one of the demonstrators of the ideas of Marxism. She immediately started selling the *Militant* and raised over £6 selling stickers.

Militant sellers in Broadgreen, Liverpool, raised over £70 in a week in extras donated from the sales of *Militant*; £40 of which was raised at the local hospital.

Make sure that workers in every Hospital, car plant, major workplace, on picket lines and demonstrations are asked to buy the *Militant* at the minimum of the £1 solidarity price.

Have you organised a *Militant* meeting in your area to discuss the current industrial struggles and the need for a one-day general strike? *Militant*

meetings on the NHS in Peckham and in Hackney raised £163 and £108 respectively.

The book on the lessons of the struggle of the Liverpool Labour council has convinced people to donate to the *Militant*. Kevin Hargreaves a Labour Councillor in Haringey paid £20 for his copy.

Special thanks to all our contributors who this week include; Dave Watts, Hull, £40. Louise Birch, Hackney, £40. Bernie Hogan, GMB 200 member, Liverpool, £10. Gary Fraser, £10 and Susan Riley £5—both members of ASTMS, Edinburgh. Francis Robinson, Southend £10. R.Long, Newham South LP, £5.

Industrial reports

Car workers fight back



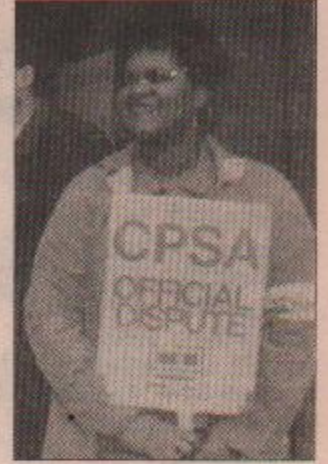
Photo: Dave Sinclair

THE CAR industry is in turmoil. Not content with dramatic increases in productivity—40 per cent in Ford over two years, and over 100 per cent in the industry as a whole since 1980—the bosses are attempting to turn the screw tighter with Japanese-style work practices coupled with job losses. They want to squeeze the last drop of sweat out of their workers.

At Ford, 32,000 production workers are on strike, 6000 Land Rover workers have voted to come out in protest at a two year offer,

as have 1300 at Renault. Meanwhile, transport union members at Vauxhall, Luton, voted to reject a two year deal, although the AEU voted to accept.

Car workers everywhere are facing the same threats. At last week's Broad Left Organising Committee conference the call was raised for a national car stewards combine. Bloc and Militant supporters have a vital role to play in pushing this and other measures to build the strength and unity of car workers.



London UBO dispute

STAFF IN the Department of Employment (DE) are voting on taking one-day strike action on 18 February in support of CPSA's continuing campaign against compulsory transfers, staff shortages and the sacking of casuals.

By Simon Dennison and Tom Taylor (personal capacity)

The stakes have been clearly raised in this dispute. Last week, DHSS members who have been refusing to handle any work connected with the DE dispute, were threatened with suspension unless they "worked normally". This intimidation rebounded on management. Members were incensed at such blatant provocation and have come out on all-out strike until the suspensions are lifted.

Before the DHSS suspensions were imposed, CPSA negotiators had been expecting a response from DE management to the union's staffing claim. It is now clear they resorted to suspensions in a desperate attempt to break the strike. They hoped that DHSS members would back down, thereby undermining CPSA's bargaining strength.

These tactics have now backfired on management. There are now 18 DE offices and four DHSS offices involving around 1000 members on all-out strike. The task now is to increase the pressure on management in order to force them back to the negotiating table. Last week's strikers' meeting overwhelmingly supported a call from Militant supporters Charlie Parker and Steve Bell to put every effort into building the one-day strike. Strikers will speak at every DE office in London, raising the issues at stake and identifying offices which are willing to take all-out action.

Members are confident that sufficient pressure can be exerted on management to force them to recognise the justice of CPSA's claim for adequate staffing levels. If they come up with an acceptable offer, and agree to reinstate the sacked casuals, compulsory transfers will be unnecessary. Every DE member should join the action on 18 February to show management we are serious about achieving a victory.

Land Rover

A BALLOT of Land Rover workers at the Solihull plant has voted 66 per cent in favour of strike action from Monday in protest at management's pay offer. The strike will be the first big stoppage at the plant since 1981. The offer is £18-21 over two years but £3 of this is the consolidation of bonus. It is the first time the management have been after a two year deal and follows the pattern in the rest of the industry.

Feelings are running very high among the 6000 workforce. There has been a speed-up in the plant and

workers feel they should get some reward for their efforts.

So desperate were the company to get agreement that they put out five or six leaflets before and during the ballot—all to no avail.

The union is calling for:

- ★ Sick pay from day one.
- ★ Holiday pay on average earnings.
- ★ An across the board increase of £25 per week.

Paul Ellis spoke to a Solihull TGWU member

Leamington & Daventry

THE STRIKE is solid amongst the 600 production workers in the Leamington foundry. No-one is crossing the picket line except office staff and production is at a total standstill.

The men think the management's wage offer is derisory and the strings attached to it stink. Ford's huge profits have been a decisive factor.

One picket spoke of the value of a strong union. "My brother used to work here", he said, "but he fancied the lump sum offered with voluntary redundancy a year or so ago. Now he works down the road. There's no union and he's treated like muck. He gets no time and a half for overtime or weekends. He's completely fed up."

At the massive Daventry

parts store the pickets are very pleased with the speed with which the strike has stopped production and affected plants in Europe. "We are determined not to be kicked around anymore", one of them said. "If Ford get away with this, who knows what will happen in the next three years? It was us, the workers, who put this company at the top. We got them there and this is how they treat us."

One AEU steward said, "Other workers, including those in the health service, are looking to the Ford workers to set the pace and break through Thatcher's anti-union policy. There should be a general strike to defend the nurses."

By Tim Lewis

"IT WAS us, the workers, who put Ford at the top. We got them there and this is how they treat us." Ford Daventry worker.

"I THINK the Ford workers in Britain know how much we get here and it is very good that they demand more. The management said they wanted to produce more in Britain because of the low wage levels there."

"In the Cologne plant there are now over 200 toolmakers working on the line. Most of the work is on contract that only lasts a year, or even half a year." Two workers at Ford, Cologne, spoke to Militant.

"THERE SHOULD be a general strike to defend the nurses." AEU steward, Ford Daventry.

One-day general strike to defend the NHS.
 ★ Speaker: Dennis Skinner. Mon 22 February, 7pm, Hampstead Town Hall, Haverstock Hill, NW3.
 ★ Speaker: Dave Nellist. Fri 19 February, 2pm, Lesser Free Trade Hall, Peter Street, Manchester.

Halewood

THE STRIKE is 100 per cent as we knew it would be. No-one is going in except some foremen and the office workers. It's been good to see the strike bite within a couple of days. No-one was pleased to see the lads in Genk laid off but the reports on the TV showed that they understood and supported the action we were taking here. I hope Fords climb down, but if they do I'd be surprised at this stage. It wouldn't be the Ford Motor Company that I know and love.

Let's hope the union leaders represent the lads right the way down the line. I hope they don't sell us a bum steer at the first opportunity. The union has got to put anything decent to us while we are still on strike.

In Halewood, it's going well but one criticism I would make is that there should be more involvement of the members in picketing. At the moment it seems to be mainly the stewards that are doing everything and most of the lads are stuck at home. I think we missed a golden opportunity on 10 February to pull all 8000 Halewood workers out onto the demo in support of the health workers.

By a Halewood worker

Basildon

BASILDON TRACTOR plant is giving complete support to the strike and we've had plenty of backing. Firemen have given us cash and a bottle of scotch, we've had bread from the

bakery and some workers from the Ministry of Transport came down with pallets. They told us, "These are on Maggie!"

The local Labour Party Young Socialists organised a meeting of 40 and raised a collection for us. It was heartening to see school students putting money in.

For me, the biggest issue in this strike is the strings attached to the offer. With 'flexibility' and the ending of demarcation, they want everyone to be a jack of all trades and master of none.

This could be a long strike so the priorities now are getting support from other workers, raising cash, and involving the whole workforce. The stewards need to find out where everyone lives. We must have regular mass meetings to keep the members informed and involved. It is vital everyone is involved in the picket duties.

contracts have got shorter and more subcontracting is evident which makes it difficult keeping the site organised and maintaining contact with regular readers!

Work in the construction industry means four to six months work if you're lucky and there is a growing realisation that after 1988 construction workers will go through a very lean time.

Comrades in Hull have always maintained a link with the site workers especially EETPU members by selling outside trade union branch meetings. When I started on the site, ties which were made years ago were quickly re-established and within two weeks I managed to get 15 regular buyers. I had to sell them secretly because 'new-starts' are under a four week probation and this called for a tactical approach in selling. Another comrade on a different part of the site sells an additional four or five papers.

By a Humberside engineering worker

THE CONSTRUCTION sites around Humberside have over the past few years proved fertile grounds for selling Militant. On the Easington gas terminal construction site three or four years ago, as many of our older readers will remember, 60 papers per week were being sold.

Construction work at the best of times is only temporary but over the last two years

Militancy haunts the Tories

SINCE THE end of the miners' strike in 1985 the Tories have boasted that the 'British disease' of strikes and industrial unrest has been cured. Figures for the number of days lost through strikes have been cited as evidence, as has the new, 'more reasonable' attitude of the trade union leaders.

It is true that the figure for days lost fell from an average of 11.1 million between 1975 and 1984 to only 1.9 million in 1986. This has been misinterpreted not just by the Tories but unfortunately by many trade union leaders, proponents of the idea of 'new realism'.

One of the foremost of these is Tom Sawyer of Nupe, described by the *Financial Times* as "a leading labour movement theoretician", who only two weeks ago was warning of the bad image of unions being in favour of strikes.

This was in a week when health workers, car workers at Ford and Renault, pit deputies, civil servants, bus drivers and ferry workers, to mention just a few, were on strike. They were not on strike because they were, to use Sawyer's word, "grabbing", but in order to save the health service, defend jobs and conditions, or support their sisters and brothers elsewhere who were under attack.

Last week, over one million workers were involved in disputes. The comment of the *Financial Times*, faced with this new situation was that "after almost a

the Tories



Nurses' picket line in South London—more and more workers are fighting back.

decade of retreat, the unions appear to be baring their teeth and threatening all manner of trouble".

One reason is that despite the reluctance of most of the union leaders to lead a fight, many groups of workers are finding themselves pushed into this situation by the attacks of government and employers. Others are demanding a fair share of the massive profits that their bosses have made recently.

The strike figures for 1987 showed a 90 per cent increase on the previous year and the trade unions, which we were told had become obsolete, have started to build their membership again. Already, the shopworkers, Us-

daw, local government staff in Nalگو, and the building workers, Ucatt, have shown increases. The Transport and General Workers Union is expected to show the same trend when figures are announced soon.

All of which goes to indicate that the latent power of the organised working class, despite the mass unemployment, cuts, privatisation and anti-union laws of the past few years, is still there. Surely it's about time the leaders of the movement used it, before the Tories inflict any more damage on the standard of life in Britain?

By Tim Harris.

ILEA workers will fight

INNER LONDON Education Authority workers are facing cuts of £140 million, 9000 job losses and privatisation before abolition of the authority. A vacancy freeze is already causing big staffing problems and volunteers for redundancy under the age of 40 are being sought.

Baker has offered £15 million for redundancy payments!

The trade union officials are talking about winning 'in-house' tenders in catering and cleaning instead of organising the fightback against all the threats we

face. Neither they nor the Labour leaders of the authority have outlined any kind of way forward.

Last week, an angry mass meeting of 250 school keepers voted unanimously to reject any cuts in pay, conditions or jobs. Such cuts would be inevitable if no fight was organised against privatisation. Over £100 was collected for the nurses and support was given, again unanimously, for a 24 hour general strike.

Management are trying to introduce shift working to eradicate overtime, non-residential

school keeping staff and new job descriptions. These would involve us doing work like window cleaning and repairs which at present are done by contractors.

We don't trust the union officials. All our negotiations will be done by lay officers and the members will make the final decisions at mass meetings. There will be no 'behind closed doors' deals.

Although no strategy has been put forward by the joint union committee, the members are now organising themselves. On Thursday, 500 stewards met

and the question was bluntly posed to the officials, "When are you going to organise strike action against privatisation?"

They received no answer from the top table but 80 stewards from eight different unions agreed to campaign on the platform being argued by the Broad Left, linking together all the issues facing us and going to the members with a programme of industrial action.

As a start, the strike on 8 March must be a resounding success.

By Bill Graham, asst branch secretary, Nupe ILEA school keepers, personal capacity.

Sheffield YTS victory

A SMALL but significant victory has been achieved in CPSA's fight for trade union rights for YTS trainees. 23 members who have been on indefinite strike at the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) headquarters in Sheffield, learned last week that the management was removing the YTS trainee from their section six weeks ahead of schedule.

Their action had begun when the trainee had been imposed without any guarantee of employment and at less than half the pay of other clerical workers. Management has buckled under mounting pressure.

Last Wednesday, the MSC strikers were joined on indefinite action by 250 strikers from benefit offices, job centres and other Department of Employment (DE) workplaces. In the DHSS, unemployment benefit office work was blacked without any resistance from an impotent management who backed away from confrontation.

The strike has demonstrated that where the arguments for opposition to cheap labour YTS have been aired, members will respond.

Hundreds of MSC head office workers have signed a petition

supporting CPSA's demands for:

*Trainees to receive trade union rates of pay and guaranteed jobs.

*Extra posts to administer quality training.

*No YTS without union approval.

The support from the Sheffield DE offices was magnificent with a vote of over three to one for action. In particular, tribute should be given to the Sheffield UBO switchboard operator, a member of NUCPS, who refused to cross the picket line. This was in marked contrast to some notable officials of that union who astonished their colleagues in CPSA by joining the ranks of the blacklegs.

By a Sheffield CPSA striker.

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



News in Brief

Dover ferries

A MASS meeting of over 1500 members of the National Union of Seamen (NUS) employed by P&O have voted unanimously to continue with strike action over plans to cut the Dover workforce by more than 400 and introduce new rotas.

The strike is rock solid and now has the backing of Belgian, Dutch and French dockers who are refusing to handle ferries with scab crews. The number of seamen putting their names forward for picket duty is increasing and Kent miners wives have pledged their support. Seamen's wives support groups are now being established.

The NUS leadership has a responsibility to give full backing to this strike. It cannot afford to

run away from the issue as it did over support for the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company members on strike over swingeing attacks on jobs and conditions.

Mr Justice Davies, in the High Court, fined the NUS £7,500 for defying an injunction preventing a national strike. This was despite several appeals by general secretary Sam McCluskie for his members to return to work.

The dispute shows graphically how Tory anti-union laws are being used against workers fighting to defend their jobs and conditions but it also says a lot about the leadership of the NUS.

According to the judge, "the NUS is extremely fortunate....to have Mr McCluskie as its general secretary". Doubtless, many members of the NUS will not share this view.

Hackney walk-out

OVER THREE hundred Nalگو and Nupe housing workers voted at a mass meeting on Monday morning to walk out in protest at the closing off of services to the homeless and to tenants at Hackney's central housing office. They were also protesting against the cuts package which the council is about to announce and against the victimisation of housing workers following a re-

cent dispute.

The strike was overwhelmingly supported by members of both unions right across the directorate and serves as a warning to management that if they continue with their cuts plans they can expect more industrial action.

The one-day walk out has been linked to a programme of selective industrial action and disruption of the housing department which will commence immediately.

By a Hackney council worker

Melton post

POSTMEN IN Melton, Leicestershire are in dispute with management, who have tried to change work practices and suspended one member who refused to go along with them. The whole branch came out in support.

Management agreed to talks but would only reinstate the member on their terms. They want to scrap the second delivery, but the workers want to retain it to offer a better service to the public.

Members think the managers are trying to provoke a dispute to

weaken the union in preparation for privatisation. Melton are getting support from Leicester, Northampton and Coventry.

The strikers are 100 per cent united. One said: "The tide is turning. She's had nine years but that's enough. Now we are fed up with Thatcher. We are going to stick out until we win".

When LPYS members went down to the picket line with a £10 donation all the pickets started cheering and clapping. But they need more cash to keep the dispute going. Messages of support and donations to S Baguley, District Convener UCW, 39 Compass Court, Coventry, Warwickshire.

Militant

**Defend the health service
TUC rally 5 March**



FIGHT FOR FULL CLAIM

Reject this deal A fair deal?

AFTER JUST two weeks we have brought Ford management to their knees. The strike has been rock solid. A full victory on all our demands is there to be won.

By a Dagenham striker.

Ford have lost at least £500 million in lost production and have been forced to lay off 10,000 workers on the Continent. They have been forced to give in on some aspects of their original 'final offer'. The wage deal would now only last for two years, and the new efficiency and flexibility proposals will not be imposed nationally. They will go for negotiation at local level.

Our union negotiators on the NJNC are hailing this as a "historic deal", but we all remember that TGWU chief negotiator, Mick Murphy, described the last deal, which we decisively rejected, as "historic" too.

But if in just two weeks we have forced the company to back down half way, how much more could get from them if we stuck firm?

Our negotiators do not seem to have been negotiating on the claim we gave to them at all, they have only been discussing with the management the company's offer. Mick Murphy admitted after agreeing to the latest offer: "I believe the company will get the changes they will require, but they will get them by carrying the labour force with them".

In other words, our leaders see the changes—including the 3000 Dagenham redundancies—as inevitable.



This is not good enough.

We are in a very strong position. The deal should be rejected and we should continue the strike to win the full claim:

*No strings, not even 'voluntary' ones.

*No redundancies.

*A 10 per cent rise this year.

*A one year deal.

Ford have already slashed the workforce by more than 30,000 since 1980. We have been responsible for a massive boost in productivity and profits over the last few years but that, apparently, is not good enough for our bosses.

Any moves towards more 'flexibility', in other words, Nissan-style working practices, must be

opposed.

But whatever happens in the ballot, the lesson we have all learnt in this dispute is that the NJNC should be re-constituted, it must be accountable to the rank and file. We want a leadership that is prepared to fight for our demands. From now on national negotiations should be in the hands of our elected

shop stewards with full time officials present in an advisory capacity only.

We must step up the struggle also for full democracy in our unions. Full time officials should be subject to regular election and should live on the same wages as the workers they represent. Perhaps if they earned the same as us, they would be more deter-

FORD WORKERS will be interested to learn that while they have to strike to improve an offer of seven per cent this year, coupled with an array of attacks on conditions, the directors have awarded themselves 19 per cent, the chairman, already on over £4000 a week, an increase of 41 per cent and the shareholders a modest 206 per cent.

mined in fighting for our wage claim.

No Ford worker wants to stay on strike for longer than is necessary. But we are not prepared to go back without an agreement that matches our very reasonable demands.

We should reject this deal and before any further deal is put to the workforce it should be ratified by a majority in a national Ford's stewards conference.

Our fight is a crucial one not just for our future, but for that of every car worker in Britain. Other groups of workers facing attacks from their employers or the government are also looking forward with relish to our victory to give them a boost.

**Become a
Militant
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Make cheques payable to *Militant*.

What we stand for

- The immediate introduction of a 35-hour week without loss in pay as a step towards the elimination of unemployment.
- Reversal of all Tory cuts and a massive programme of public works on housing, education, the health service, etc.
- A minimum wage of £120 a week tied to the cost of living for all, including sick and disabled people.
- A socialist plan of production democratically drawn up and implemented by committees involving the trade unions, shop stewards, the unwaged and small business people.
- Opposition to the capitalist Common Market, the EEC. For a socialist United States of Europe as a step towards a World Socialist Federation.
- Workers' management of the nationalised industries. These should be run on the basis of one-third of the places on the management board coming from the unions in the industry, one-third from the TUC representing the working class as a whole, and one-third from the government.
- Opposition to the Tory government's anti-union laws and reversal of attacks on the trade unions.
- Massive cuts in arms spending. Support for unilateral nuclear disarmament, but with the recognition that only a socialist change of society in Britain and internationally can eliminate the danger of a nuclear holocaust.
- Nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies, including the banks and insurance companies which control 80 per cent to 85 per cent of the economy. This should be through an Enabling Bill in Parliament with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need.