

Meetings

Wednesday 24 February

After TUC lobby:

Lower club lounge, YMCA Great Russell street, Speaker—John Macreadie.

Edinburgh:

Crosswinds Community Centre, 12.30pm

SAVE THE NHS

one day general strike

AS THE TUC meets to discuss what next for the NHS dispute, we in Scotland will be out on the streets trying to keep out the privatising leeches who want to suck profits from public health care.

The 24 hour Scottish health strike has won the backing of thousands of health workers. Up to now the ancillary workers have been in the front line of the struggle in Scotland, but they have the overwhelming support of the nursing, admin and technical staff.

In my own hospital, despite being sent threatening letters about the consequences of "unprofessional conduct", over 80 per cent of nurses have voted to strike.

Strathclyde NALGO, the largest local authority union branch in Britain with 20,000 members, has voted for the one day stoppage. A number of workplaces, like the Motherwell engineering plant Anderson Strathclyde, have decided to come out. Others have asked

Our monster day of action on 24 February should prove to the TUC, if they need any more proof, that the entire trade union movement is just waiting for the call to take action to save the NHS from privatisation, cuts and poverty pay.

Throughout Scotland there is mass opposition to privatisation. A System Three opinion poll revealed 68 per cent opposed to privatisation of hospital services, including 38 per cent of Tory voters. Only 20 per cent supported the introduction of private contractors.

Public backing

But the Tories are still attempting to railroad it through. We know the only way to make them listen is through determined action.

Privatisation was introduced four years ago in England and Wales and it has been a disaster. Private companies allow just 13 seconds to clean a bath and only one second to clean each square



foot of floor space.

In a hospital, with all the risks of infection, turning over responsibility for hygiene to profit hungry capitalism, is like putting Dracula in charge of the blood transfusion service!

As for Scottish health workers, privatisation would mean redundancy or a 20-25 per cent pay cut for already poorly paid catering and domestic staff.

We will be following intently the progress at the TUC General Council on John Macreadie's resolution for a one day general strike throughout Britain on 14

March the day before budget day. The health union, Cohse, has already called a day of protest for that day and asked for other unions' support.

If the TUC fails to give a lead health workers will not just sit back and let this mood to fight evaporate. Thousands of them will be prepared to strike, with emergency cover, as part of Cohse's protest. And they will want to visit factories and offices to urge other workers to come out and back them. Yorkshire Cohse stewards have voted to strike on 14 March.

A massive one day general strike would be the best possible argument against the Tories' budget tax cuts for the rich. It could be the start of the campaign for a socialist Labour government, prepared to take the productive wealth out of the hands of the few and plan its use for the benefit of all, and to devote the resources needed for public health care.

By Ailsa Burns,
COHSE shop steward
Gartnavel Royal Hospital,
Glasgow.

Militant Give us
one day's pay

A DAY'S wage to campaign for a one day general strike has inspired two readers to donate more than a week's wage! D.Highland from the Potteries and T.Horn a Leicester TGWU member both gave £150. A *Militant* rally in Glasgow raised £817, and at a *Militant* rally in Birmingham, £650 was collected. We urge every reader to donate a minimum of a day's income. Send us your donation today! (See page 13)

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grow see page 3

Car industry—the
future? see pages 8-9

Land Rover strike
see page 14



Militant

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Lessons of Ford strike

THE FORD strike was the clearest confirmation yet that despite nearly nine years of attacks on union rights, closures and redundancies, the power of organised labour is basically intact.

Within a week all Ford operations throughout Europe were grinding to a halt. The cost was £600m in lost production. The company was on its knees.

Ford workers voting to return to work had mixed feelings. Many were relieved that the company had been forced to back off from a three-year deal and the imposition of flexible working. But the pickets and the most aware workers understood the strength of the workers' position and the outstanding opportunity to fight on for their full claim.

The complete closure of all the Ford factories showed every car worker that an integrated, rationalised production system can quickly be disrupted by a solid strike.

Already the Ford result has given a massive boost to Vauxhall and Land Rover workers who have voted to strike over pay and conditions. In the words of a Land Rover executive: "I think that without the Ford dispute we could have got a deal".

During the 1981-1987 boom, car industry profitability has increased, so the workers feel strong enough to demand a greater return on their investment of sweat and toil.

Ford were highly vulnerable. They had made no preparations for a strike. *The Independent* commented: "No effort was made to stockpile parts at plants elsewhere in Europe... If British Coal and the Central Electricity Generating Board had gone into the pit strike similarly unprepared, the miners would have won."

"Why then," the *Independent* continues, "did senior Ford management misjudge the mood of those who work for the company?... Ford relied too much on the assessment provided by the full-time union officials... Those officials proved to be equally out of touch."

These officials, Jimmy Airle and Mick Murphy, endorsed the original Ford offer and had to be overturned by the overwhelming majority of their Ford membership. Yet now they are shouting the loudest that the final settlement is 'historic'.

These 'leaders' completely accept the management's arguments for more efficiency, even though it must mean job losses. The joint union/management statement presented to the final mass meetings, pointedly only rules out "compulsory redundancies as a result of efficiency improvements."

They do not oppose the Nissan-style working practices Ford wants, merely that they were to be imposed. The final settlement was conditional on an "agreement in principle by the full union side of the national joint negotiating committee (NJNC) to the company needs."

Having been accepted in principle, the new working practices are to be left to local negotiation. If there is no resolution there, it will be referred to the NJNC which has endorsed the new methods!

Local negotiations on flexibility changes will inevitably mean the weaker plants being picked off. The smaller Enfield plant has had temporary labour on four-week contracts for 15 months.

An immediate national shop stewards conference must be called by Ford's union branches to discuss the lessons of the strike and draw up plans to oppose flexible working practices. Such a conference would have the authority of all 32,500 Ford workers and make the company think twice before attempting any changes.

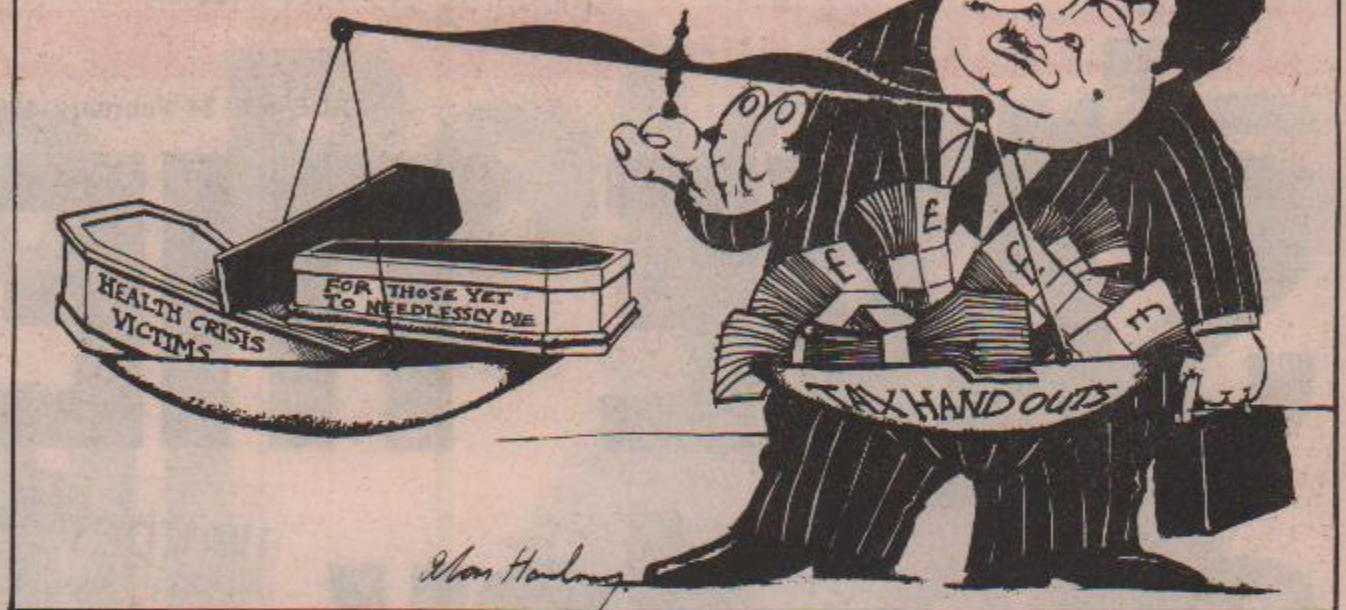
This conference should reconstitute and re-elect the NJNC. The main lesson of the strike is the need for a negotiating body accountable to the rank and file with union officials only there to advise.

Ford will not be caught out again. They will use the next two years to prepare for future offensives. The gains that were there for the taking will become that much harder to win the next time round.

But the workforce must absorb the lessons too. They have demonstrated their fighting strength. With a determined national leadership answerable to the ordinary workers, a decisive defeat could have been inflicted over all the strings that Ford intends to implement. Already out of the strike there have been calls for a Ford workers' broad left, which could campaign for the building of that leadership.

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BALANCING THE BUDGET



Kinnock's Golan gaffe

ON THE final day of his Middle East tour, Neil Kinnock's anxiety to ingratiate himself with Israeli public opinion has put him in the ludicrous position of appearing to both condemn and condone the occupation of Arab territory seized in 1967.

By John Pickard

After his visit to Gaza and the West Bank, where he expressed his outrage at Israeli military repression, he then declared his complete agreement, not only with the occupation, but with Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights.

"The security of the state of Israel", he told reporters, "...cannot be accepted as permanent if the Golan Heights are in any other hands". The Israelis, he added, "have to fight to retain their land... That does not make them warmongers".

The disgraceful condition of the Palestinians refugee camps and the

evidence of brutal repression had earlier made an impression. "Everywhere you look is destruction", he said.

He pointed to the "stark and appalling contrast" between the Palestinian areas and the relative affluence of Israel. He visited hospitals to meet victims of army shootings, some as young as ten.

As the tour was coming to an end, the killings of protesters continued. The official death toll has now risen to over 60.

The Israeli army brutality has hardened the outlook of the Palestinian population and increased their determination to achieve genuine self-determination. But Neil Kinnock's sympathy for the Palestinians is not apparently matched by support for their national rights.

Apart from his gaffe on Golan, he has expressed his agreement with Foreign Minister Peres on Israel doing a deal with King Hussein, despite the

overwhelming evidence that the big majority of Palestinians oppose 'federation' with Jordan.

In his final press conference, Kinnock even warned the Palestinians against holding out for 'full sovereignty' and spoke of a Palestinian 'homeland' rather than a state. This would be no more acceptable to Palestinians than the 'homelands' in South Africa are to black workers.

In his statement on Golan, the Labour leader has made the same fundamental mistake as other apologists for the occupation, by making the 'security' of capitalist Israel the prime consideration.

The uprising in Gaza and the West Bank prove that there can be no peace or 'security' anywhere in the region as long as the national and social aspirations of the Palestinians are unfulfilled. Palestinian and Israeli workers have a common interest in a socialist federation with all national rights guaranteed.

Bermondsey Labour fighting on two fronts

MEMBERS OF Bermondsey Labour Party have evidence that a full-scale purge is planned. Greater London party officials have set out their plans in a document dated 25 January 1988, two days before the national executive committee's decision to suspend and hold an inquiry into the party.

They aim to build a "politically aware constituency Labour Party strong enough to resist *Militant's* organisation (sic)". To this end it will "build a political profile of all the wards, their membership, attendance, present personnel, etc".

The same is proposed for the general committee, "including political association of membership, potential for further delegates from all sources including trade unions".

This is in order to "build a file of contacts, to make the membership more active and politically aware of the *Militant* problem in that constituency and to bring on members prepared (i) to attend, (ii) to speak at meetings."

It lists nine party officials who will be "ward overseers to seek out information and act thereon".

The officials will be committing the very crimes that Bermondsey *Militant* supporters have been falsely accused of—membership vetting, manipulation of party meetings and full-time organisers to oversee ward parties.

These officials will be drawn away from fighting the Tories and building the

party in other parts of London in order to spy on members they are supposed to serve.

A prominent member of Bermondsey Labour Party, Jim Mortimer, the party's former general secretary, has condemned the NEC's action.

As a result, on a list of Bermondsey party members on which party officials have marked political affiliations, by 'OK', 'Militant', etc., Jim Mortimer is put down as a 'Militant fellow-traveller'!

The right wing are not waiting for the inquiry; they have already found Bermondsey guilty and are using Gestapo methods to trample on members' democratic rights. It is vital that they reinstate the Bermondsey party and call off this purge.

voted against.

The Alliance also opposed the £3 increase but proposed a smaller increase with cuts which would have led to 3,000 redundancies.

A victory for Labour in the Chaucer by-election will be a clear vote against both the rent increases and the witch-hunt.

Alex Moore has appealed for help on polling day, Thursday 25 February. Contact Bob McKee on 403 0674 or come to Banks House, Rockingham St. (near Elephant and Castle stn).

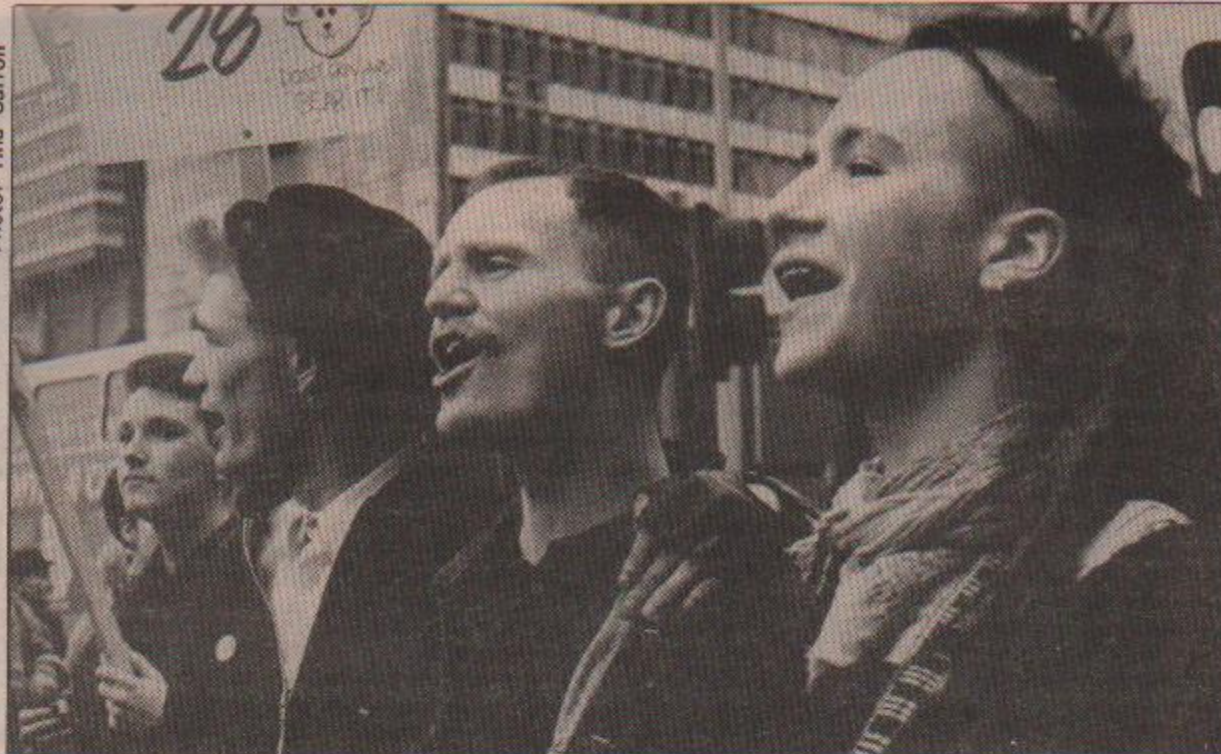
Far more damaging are Southwark Labour council's cuts and rent increases. The Labour right wing joined forces with the Tories to push through by just three votes a £3 a week rent rise. 13 Labour councillors

Thousands march to defend gay rights

20,000 gay rights activists took part in a demonstration in Manchester against Clause 28, the section of the Local Government Bill which forbids local authorities to promote homosexuality.

There was a tremendous mood on the march, one of the largest in the city for many years and the protest ended with a concert at the Free Trade Hall. Many local Labour parties, student unions and local anti-Clause 28 groups took part.

Photo: Tina Carroll



Health workers' protests grow

Manchester

City-wide sympathy action

12,000 HEALTH workers and other workers marched in Manchester last Friday in what was virtually a city-wide general strike in support of the health workers.

By Aileen Ingham and Phil Frampton

2,000 health workers were joined by workers from Thorn EMI and numerous other sections. At a Broad Left Organising Committee meeting after the march a Thorn EMI steward expressed the workers' determination: "I represent the 500 unskilled workers at Thorn EMI who struck today in support of the nurses. The management are issuing us with a writ for legal action, but we will still come out on 14 March."

Eighty per cent of workers at Volex factory walked out. Maintenance workers at Agecroft Power Station staged their own march. 4,000 building workers, the libraries and

town hall staff from four boroughs went on strike. So did Princess Road bus depot. Fire fighters and bus drivers in uniform joined the health workers.

Before Rodney Bickerstaffe spoke at the rally, a vote for a one day general strike on 14 March was overwhelmingly supported and the ITN news was forced to comment on the widespread support for this demand.

This marvellous show of solidarity must be matched by the health workers' leaders. Any attempt at legal action against the sympathy strikes must be met with a city-wide conference of labour and trade union organisations to mount huge protests including further city-wide strike action.

The north west TUC must now recognise that its call for a one hour silent vigil is totally inadequate. The Manchester health shop stewards, without the support of the TUC, brought ten times more workers out on the streets.

The health shop stewards must now link up nationally to make the 14 March call a reality and force the TUC to put its authority behind the action.

14 March, because the NHS was fought for by workers and must be defended. He was proud to have walked the full length of the demonstration.

successful campaign in 1981). Management are still altering wards in the newest Trent wing, leading to speculation that it might be sold off as a private hospital.

Nottingham North Constituency Labour Party has organised a 'defend the NHS' march and rally on Saturday 27 Feb, assembling at 10.30 am at Highbury Hospital.

By Joanna Slattery.

Nottingham

NUPE AND Cohse nurses walked out from two shifts at Nottingham's Highbury Hospital when a Nupe nurse was suspended.

They demanded that management speed up the inquiry into the disciplinary action.

At the Nottingham General Hospital workers are preparing for another battle to stay open (after a



Mass demonstration in Manchester votes for a one day general strike.

Union leaders under pressure

A MEETING of Cohse's Yorkshire shop stewards voted unanimously for a one day strike on the union's 'day of action'—14 March. But it was made clear at the meeting that at the top of the labour and trade union movement support for action is anything but unanimous.

Cohse full time officers told how union general secretary, Hector Mackenzie, had been put under intense pressure to call off

the day of action. Neil Kinnock has reportedly met with Nupe leader Rodney Bickerstaffe imploring him to halt the strike movement in the NHS, which apparently is an 'embarrassment'.

Disgracefully Bickerstaffe, a 'left' union leader, is refusing to back Cohse's call claiming that "the mood is not there".
By Adrian O'Malley, chair Cohse Pinderfields hospital, Wakefield.

Addenbrooks

JUNIOR HEALTH minister, Edwina Currie, was confronted by a silent protest of 200 when she visited the transplant unit of Cambridge's Addenbrooks Hospital, famous for its long strike against privatisation.

A joint committee of Cohse, Nupe and the RCN organised the impromptu demonstration and Currie was sent an invitation to meet health workers' representatives.

A petition sent round hospital workers in the morning collected an astounding 1600 signatures and black arm bands were worn by workers unable to leave work, to show their opposition to the government's policies on the NHS.

Mary, a student nurse,

presented the petition to Currie, who tried to make casual conversation as demonstrators followed her into the hospital. She asked Mary what she planned to specialise in and Mary replied that she hoped when the time came that there would still be a viable NHS in which she could choose a speciality.

Ignored

Union representatives who met Currie felt she had refused to acknowledge the serious problems facing the NHS locally and nationally. Hospital workers were outraged when they heard that Currie had said "everything was fine" and that there were no morale problems.

By an Addenbrooks worker

Edinburgh

TWELVE MEMBERS of Lothian health board's efficiency team were met by angry hospital workers when they arrived at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital to measure rooms and wards for private firms.

The workers barged their way into the ward and placed barriers in the way, stopping the team from moving around the hospital.

The health board's general manager said he wouldn't hesitate to use private contractors immediately in the hospital's laundry if workers struck again. But the laundry workers were adamant that they would fight back and fully support the calls for action on 5 March and 14 March.

By Russell Taylor.

MILITANT MEETINGS

Defend the NHS One-day general strike

PETERBOROUGH Great Northern Hotel. 1 March, 7.30pm. Speaker: Ron Craven, Nupe. Nimrod Se-jake (Salep).

PAISLEY Town Hall. 25 February, 7.30pm.

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

READING, Room K, Reading South Community Centre, 9 March, 7.30 pm.

LLANELLI, YMCA, 8 March 7.30 pm.

HULL Trades and Labour club, Beverley Road, 8 March, 7.30 pm. To celebrate International Women's Day. speakers: Ruth Herdman, Cohse nurse and Jane Hartley, expelled LP member.

ILKESTON, Derbyshire, New Inn, 29 February, 7.30 pm.

LEEDS, Leeds Polytechnic, 9 March, 7.30 pm. Speaker: Kevin Mullins, Cohse.

DULWICH, Youth strike and support the health workers, Allbrighton Community Centre, Dog Kennel Hill estate, 2 March, 7.30 pm.

MANCHESTER, Free Trade Hall, 10 March, 7.30 pm.

GLASGOW, Partick Borough Halls, 29 February, 7.30 pm.

SOUTHALL Town Hall, 9 March, 7.30 pm.

SCARBOROUGH, defend the NHS and stop Alton, The Library, Vernon Road, 8 March, 7.30 pm. Speakers: Julie Marshall; Gwyneth Cullen, Cohse nurse.

PECKHAM, Station Pub, Camberwell New Road, 9 March, 7.30pm

Maidstone

THE TORY stronghold of Maidstone in Kent was woken up by an enthusiastic, 400-strong demonstration from the New Maidstone Hospital to the town centre.

Nurses in uniform led the march, Coshe banners held high and shouts of 'Maggie out!' ringing round the town.

Support from the public was magnificent—car horns blared, stickers and petitions were well received and office workers waved and shouted support as we passed. Even police officers sported Coshe 'Pay up' stickers.

There was a great cheer when French lorry drivers turned up complete with banner.

It was a party atmosphere all day, but the warning to Thatcher is clear—the mood of workers will deepen with further inevitable struggles.

If the labour leadership took up bold, socialist policies in defence of the NHS and other services then Thatcher and her cohorts would soon be finished.

By Gary Nightingale (Kent County Nalgo)

Blunkett brought to book

Old slanders in new-look *Guardian*

MOST PRESS reaction to *Liverpool a City that Dared to Fight* has been predictably hostile. The Tory papers prefer to use the book as a pretext to write new exposes of 'Militant plots' than to comment on the councillors' heroic struggle.

But the worst example of all has been the *Guardian* Agenda article, *Militant half-truths, reading from left to wrong*, by Labour MP David Blunkett. This contains personal abuse and distortions of history as bad as any written by the worst hacks in Fleet Street and repeats old slanders about the role of *Militant* and Liverpool City Council.

Not once does he quote from Peter Taaffe and Tony Mulhearn's book, which answers in detail all the allegations raised against *Militant* in Liverpool. He prefers instead to rely on his own highly personalised account of the period from 1983 to 1987.

He accuses *Militant*-led Liverpool of "going it alone" in 1984. Yet at a Liverpool Labour Party meeting in March 1985, at which he was the guest speaker, the *Liverpool Echo* reported how Blunkett "paid tribute to the battle fought alone for the last 12 months by Liverpool City Council and said that this year other Labour authorities were joining in".

Not one single worker was made redundant by Liverpool council.

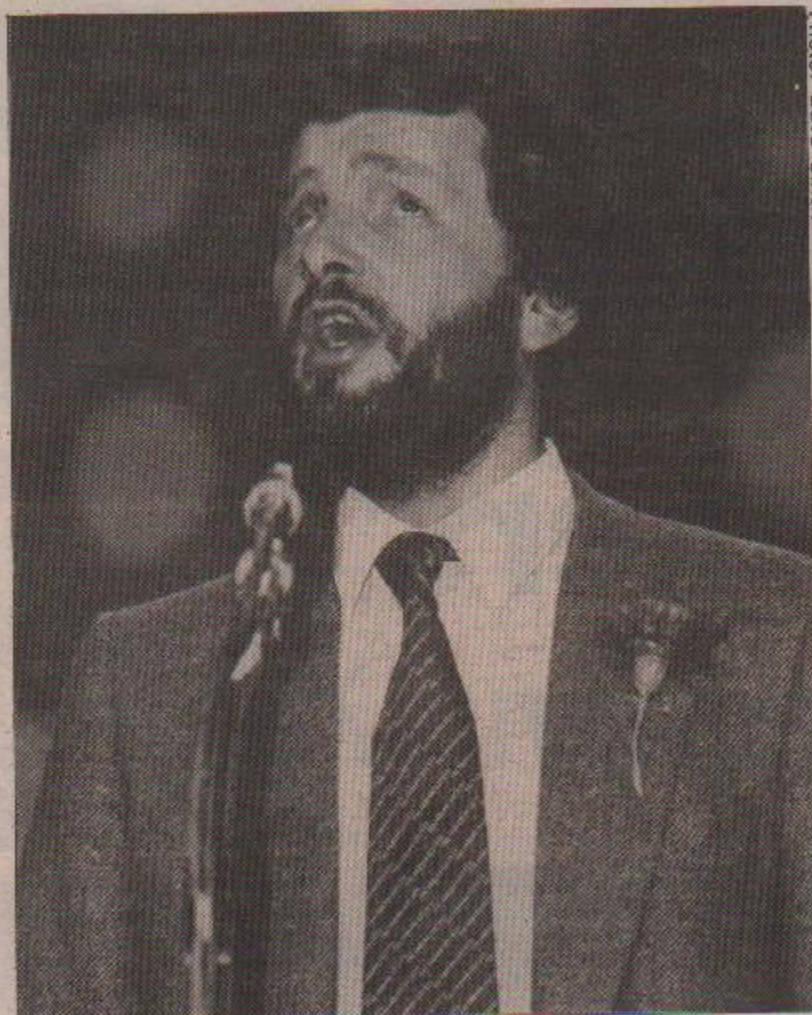
"*Militant* shunned genuine co-operation with other Labour-run authorities" he asserts. In fact, against Liverpool's better judgement and in the interests of a unified campaign in 1985, Liverpool went along with the no-rate tactic supported by Blunkett and his colleagues on the 'radical left'.

He himself declared, in the *Liverpool Daily Post*: "No local authority will be acting independently and none will make individual agreements".

Unfortunately, as *Militant* feared, apart from Liverpool the rate-capping battle was confined to the council chamber, with all the radical left Labour groups abandoning the struggle, to leave Lambeth and Liverpool isolated.

Having run away from a battle and carried out Tory cuts, Blunkett tries to cover his tracks by slandering those who 'dared to fight'.

To accuse *Militant* of having a "close affinity with the right" is to turn reality on its head. The expulsion of *Militant* supporters and some Liverpool councillors has been carried out at the behest of the capitalist press by the right wing of the Labour Party and the trade unions.



(Top) Glasgow rally to launch book. (Above) David Blunkett replying to local government debate at 1985 Labour Party conference.

IN ISSUE 883 of *Militant*, Tony Mulhearn was quoted as referring to "the present council leadership in Liverpool grovelling before Nicholas Ridley". He wishes to state that he was in fact referring to the Labour authorities generally, rather than to Liverpool City Council who were not included in that reference.

To his shame, David Blunkett, who at one stage moved a resolution urging 'tolerance' in the party, voted with the right to expel Liverpool councillors who had carried out Labour Party policy. He has become part of the 'new right' majority behind Kinnock on Labour's national executive.

The red herring of the redundancy notices does not hide the fact that not one single worker was made redundant by Liverpool City Council between 1983 and 1987. Why does Blunkett not castigate his friends on the radical left in Manchester, who have just voted for a package of 4,000 real redundancies?

Nalگو strike

He attacks Liverpool for lack of co-operation with the council unions. But he overlooks his dispute with Nalگو in Sheffield when he was council leader. 13 workers were suspended after refusing to implement a new agreement which had not been agreed by their union. It led to a 24-hour strike of all Nalگو members in the city. Some co-operation!

David Blunkett once more sullied his reputation as a left when he replied on behalf of the national executive committee to the debate on Liverpool at the 1987

party conference. He recommended rejection of a resolution which called for support for the 47 surcharged and disqualified councillors.

What is more, he attacked some councillors who he claimed "arrange their affairs to avoid the consequences of bankruptcy" echoing the theme of the capitalist press. Yet he knows that no councillor, not Derek Hatton nor Tony Mulhearn nor those on the right who are known to be well off, would escape the seizure of all their assets if they were made bankrupt.

Liverpool—a City that dared to Fight explains: "This charge was answered by Tony Mulhearn and former council leader Tony Byrne in an open letter to Blunkett demanding that he justify his shameful remark in a debate in Liverpool or Sheffield. Needless to say this request was turned down".

It is a pity that Blunkett uses the pages of the capitalist press to attack Liverpool. Still, as that old radical left-winger Keir Hardie said: "When our enemies in the press attack us, you must be on the right road".

By Martin Lee

It states "that no member of the party shall engage in a sustained course of activity prejudicial to the party". Yet the only charge against the three is that they have sold *Militant*.

Despite letters from union branches, party officials and individual members testifying to these comrades' commitment to the party, the general management committee (GMC), by the slimmest of margins, have recommended their expulsion by the national

constitutional committee (NCC).

Already the three have held a rally of 100 mainly young people, a 100-strong lobby of the GMC, over 600 signatures on a petition and a local party branch has opposed the expulsions.

Letters of opposition to the expulsions should be sent to Cumbernauld and Kilsyth CLP secretary, c/o 96 Ainslie Road, Kildrum, Cumbernauld, Scotland.



Rallies boost book

ON THE tour to launch *Liverpool—a City that Dared to Fight*, by Peter Taaffe and Tony Mulhearn, a thousand miles were covered in 107 hours.

By Kevin Ramage

There were five evening rallies, two lunchtime meetings with students and council workers, three press conferences, interviews with at least twelve regional newspapers and seven radio stations, a two-hour live radio phone-in, a 20-minute radio interview and a High Street book signing session.

Yet even these daunting statistics barely express the huge success of Peter Taaffe's tour to Leeds, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester and Birmingham and earlier visits by Tony Mulhearn to Sheffield, Bristol, Cardiff and Swansea.

The size of the meetings and the sales of the book—over 500—showed the enthusiasm to learn the truth about the struggle in Liverpool and apply its lessons to the re-awakening of the trade union movement now.

The iniquitous poll tax, opposed by 70 per cent of the population of Scotland where it is being introduced first, raises again the issue of Labour councils following Liverpool's example and being prepared to break Thatcher's law by refusing to implement the tax.

In almost every city, cuts in jobs and services by Labour councils are leading to mass protests against the closure of schools, nurseries and libraries and a searching by council workers, tenants and those affected by the cuts for a strategy to resist the government.

The health workers' struggle against cuts, low pay and

privatisation has thrown to the fore the critical role of leadership—or the lack of it from national trade union leaders—demonstrated so clearly in the Liverpool struggle.

As *Militant's* influence and support grows so does the venom of the right wing and former lefts who are organising witch-hunts against socialists in the Labour Party. The rich lessons of the struggle against expulsion in Liverpool are relevant everywhere.

In Glasgow, at an ecstatic meeting of 250, Peter Taaffe was interrupted by applause 13 times in a 35-minute speech, the loudest for the call for a 24-hour general strike on 14 March.

Bookshops

At all the meetings, many people not only bought books for themselves, but extra copies to sell to workmates, on *Militant* sales or at meetings. Some people bought bulk supplies—12 for Stirling, 14 for Wolverhampton, 16 for Stafford and 40 for Bradford.

Bookshop orders are also flooding in. 250 have already been sold in Liverpool. One shop has sold its initial order of 14 and ordered another 21 copies. Another has ordered 28 hardback copies for selling to libraries.

WH Smith, while not handling the book nationally, have allowed their shops to place orders with Fortress Books. If you are planning a visit to bookshops, please contact us for details.

The special discount price (£5 softback, £8 hardback) will be continued for orders of ten or more copies. Please add postage of £5 per ten books. Individual copies £6.95 + 90p post (softback) or £14.95 + £1.20 post (hardback) from Fortress Books, PO BOX 141 London E2 ORA.

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Please send copies. I enclose £

Return to Fortress Books, PO Box 141, London E2 ORA

Cumbernauld expulsion threat

CUMBERNAULD AND Kilsyth Labour Party are recommending the expulsion of Martin Welsh, Eric Stevenson and Kevin McVey under clause IV, sub-section 5, of the constitution, the first time it has been used to justify expulsions.

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Letters of opposition to the expulsions should be sent to Cumbernauld and Kilsyth CLP secretary, c/o 96 Ainslie Road, Kildrum, Cumbernauld, Scotland.

Miners back Bradford N

SHARLSTON branch of the National Union of Mineworkers has expressed its disgust at the suspension of Bradford North Labour Party, saying it is amazed that when the Tories are weak through internal splits, "the Labour Party seems intent to attack its own members rather than the appalling

policies of the Tories". Sharlston are in line with their union policy, unlike the Yorkshire and Humberside regional committee of the TGWU who have come out in support of the witch-hunt.

Bradford No 3 textile branch, the biggest in the city, has passed a motion disassociating themselves from the regional decision and reiterating the national conference policy against witch-hunts and expulsions.

Why the community cannot cope

Cut backs hit mental health care

CARE IN the community should in theory be a breakthrough for the mentally and physically handicapped.

By Winnie Murphy
(Nupe shop steward, personal capacity)

The big grey institutional hospitals were a hangover from the days when the handicapped were hidden away from society. Stark and cold, without adequately trained staff, many were places of horror and cruelty, even though they fed, sheltered and gave some

comfort to people who were hardly given a chance.

The twentieth century opened up these places with a new code of conduct, and efforts to develop the potential of children born with a mental handicap. Research, training and more enlightened attitudes brought many benefits.

Community care was proudly heralded by governments, but capitalist society does not part freely with money for such projects. Without proper facilities like training centres, staff, schools with trained teachers etc. the community can't cope.

The closing of the institutions is welcome but putting people with special needs on estates without adequate resources just leaves them at the mercy of a harsh

environment.

The mentally handicapped increasingly face private exploitation. Private homes are springing up everywhere. One bank says money is freely available for private care homes to borrow because they are such a safe bet for profitability with a usual minimum charge of £180 a week.

Closures

Cheshire's health service is struggling to cope with the number of people leaving its institutions. The Regional Health Authority has closed geriatric hospitals to cover the costs; one section of the NHS is starved to feed another.

Cutbacks hit community care schemes too. One 24 hour care house with five long stay clients used to offer improved accommodation, more individual attention, the chance to shop, visit social centres and go for days out. These have been severely reduced because clients' social security has been cut from £23 per week to £7.

The authority say there is provision in the budget for clothing and we only have to apply. I wait with interest to see this put into practice.

Adult training centres can't provide the places needed. Devoted hard-working parents with profoundly physically or mentally handicapped children have to fight for staff to help them with intravenous feeding, with

giving special drugs for epilepsy, and with physiotherapy.

After our big institution was run down, 90 patients deemed unfit for community care were to be housed on land on the present hospital site. Each bungalow was to have a double garage.

Were the health authority going to give handicapped people two cars for every bungalow? Or did they intend eventually to sell them off on the open market? Even the local authority were suspicious and refused planning permission.

While drug companies, private homes speculators and other companies can make a profit out of somebody's handicap, and governments encourage them, real care in the community will just be a dream.

'It was like a factory'

THE BRITISH Medical Journal recently interviewed a nursing sister on why she left NHS nursing. She stressed that pay was important but not being able to do your job was the main problem.

"Medical records staff was cut from seven to three. Nurses were expected to ring for notes, fetch and carry. They halved the number of porters. Who did the portering? The nurses."

She spoke of having to go from ward to ward, borrowing equipment like bed elevators or blankets. Wards were filthy because domestic staff had been cut.

"Every day we had too many patients for the empty beds available so routine admissions would be sent home sometimes three times..."

"Sometimes we would have three patients in one bed within a shift. Our miscarriage in the night

would go home at 8 a.m. Then an extra day case patient would be put into the bed. The waiting list patient who came at 10 a.m. would wait until 5 p.m.

"And if the day case patient bled the waiting list patient came back next morning starved for a major operation."

"It was like a factory. Nurses were literally running at times.... Patients didn't dare talk to us because we were so busy."

Doctors had to discharge patients too early and hospital staff overworked and made themselves ill. The Tory policies of starvation are destroying the health service.

The BMJ, a conservative professional journal, has provided ammunition against the Tories' lying propaganda. It is up to the unions to organise the army of solidarity which can force the Tories to either provide a properly funded NHS or resign.

After the 'savings'

A HEAD porter at a Merseyside hospital told *Militant*: "In the early 80s, Thatcher started replacing regional and area health authority chairmen with her political devotees."

"That's made it easier to attack the NHS. In Liverpool, drivers, domestics, porters, catering grades have lost their jobs. This forces a worse service on the sick."

"Reductions in the driving pool mean a nice profit for private taxi firms, taking over the job of picking up nurses for duty and acting as a messenger service."

"Porters have faced staff reductions, changing shift patterns and loss of bonus earnings. Bonus payments are a poor substitute anyway for a decent wage to take staff out of the poverty trap."

"Management don't face the same pressures as the workers, they get 5 per cent bonus on any savings they push through. Some bonuses can be as high as £7000 in a financial year-for hurting staff and patients."

"The labour movement must take industrial action to show the Tories we want our health service properly funded."

Striking back at cruelty

NURSING STAFF at Craigilea private nursing home in Gateshead were sacked recently after striking in support of their patients.

The strike by 24 nurses followed months of complaints about

the home's strict regime. Patients are terrified of the matron; the strike flared up over the force feeding of an elderly patient who was unable to eat.

The home's only concern is making a quick profit. Craigilea charges £180 a week, but when the elderly patients' money runs out, they are passed on to the local Social Services department and the NHS.

head with a hammer by his father and needed a brain scan before he could be treated.

But the intensive care unit can now only run four beds, so he had to be taken to another hospital. While health workers tried to find one which could take him, the boy died.

Victim of Tory cuts

A SIX-YEAR old boy was brought to King's College Hospital, London, last week as an emergency. He'd been hit on the



Nurses outside Charing Cross hospital.

Who's Who?

John 'less' Moore

MOORE, JOHN—Health and Social Security Secretary. Thatcher clone.

Learned about needs of sick and poor whilst chairman of US investment bank Dean Witter International, and a Lloyds underwriter.

During government's annual expenditure negotiations last autumn, said he did not believe in higher spending. So government did not increase spending on health much. Believes charges won't deter anyone from having eyes or teeth checked.

Now health strikes have begun, says of cash earmarked for NHS: "I did not think that is enough."

Told 1987 Tory conference it was a "total travesty of the truth" to suggest NHS on verge of collapse, starved of funds, short of staff, saddled with primitive equipment or buckling under ever increasing demand. "There have been no cuts in public spending on the health service," he said.

Emptiest

Guardian described his speech as "probably emptiest ever delivered to Tory conference".

Special responsibility for privatising in last Cabinet. Now wants to force private profit wholesale into health care.

Told Young Tory conference this month NHS should not provide free health care for all. He wants those who can afford it to take private health insurance, leaving the NHS just as a 'safety net' for old and poor.

Was recently stripped of title of 'honorary student' at London School of Economics—the first person to be deprived of this title.

Ladbroke's once quoted him at 6 to 1 as possible successor to Thatcher. If health workers have their way he will fall at the next fence.

Militant fights for:

* A massive injection of funds into the NHS. The £2 billion tax cut money must go to the health service immediately just to restore the standard of service to the level before the cuts.

* Reversal of all privatisation and the abolition of all private medicine, with the private sector integrated into the NHS.

* Abolition of all prescription charges, dental and optician's charges.

* Regional and district health authorities to be run by democratically elected committees of health workers, other unions and local community representatives.

* Nationalisation of pharmaceutical industry under democratic workers' control and management.



Sporting chance

IF YOU are a capitalist entertaining business contacts, you might fancy taking them to a sporting event (for work purposes, of course.) But you don't want to mix it with the riff raff, do you?

Never fear, the Maceworth company, is dedicated to serving people like you by organising hospitality days at all kinds of sports events. Men's final day at Wimbledon costs £895 plus VAT with champagne, strawberries and cream and a four course luncheon plus a visit from a tennis celebrity.

Of course all this is vital to keep the wheels of commerce turning. Don't let loony lefties kid you that it's perks for those who are already stinking rich.

Rights stop at birth?

THE WEEK before the debate on David Alton's anti-abortion bill, his supporters in SPUC ran an advert in the newspapers listing their well-known supporters. 52 Tory MPs signed it.

38 of these 52 were in the House of Commons on 13 January. That day Dave Nellist MP moved an amendment to the Tories' Social Security Bill. He proposed that severely disabled children under two years old should get the same attendance allowance as they will do when they are over that age.

Not one of the 38 voted for the extension of this allowance of only £33 a week. Yet they sanctimoniously argue that abortion on the grounds of disability is discrimination against the disabled and should be stopped.

"These Tory hypocrites only care about the disabled up until the moment they are born!" says Dave Nellist.

Unavoidable absence

PERUVIAN STATE prosecutor Isaac Felipe Sanchez recently demanded that his country's judiciary impose a ten year sentence on three men accused of terrorism. Sanchez insisted that the accused men should "be present to hear the accusations because these anti-social and dangerous elements..."

At this point the defence lawyer interrupted him to explain that Felix Calderon, Isidro Cholon and Jose Gonzalez Perez had died 19 months before in June 1986 with 300 other prisoners when a prison strike was brutally put down by the state forces.

Solidarity forever?

FROM THE minutes of the Parliamentary Committee of the Parliamentary Labour Party:

Item 4. "The Committee considered all aspects of the present industrial situation."

And...?

Young Tories Conference

Reactionaries rampant



Crazy but dangerous: Far right young Tories cheer their candidate for chairman.

Photo: Andrew Moore (Reflex).

YOUNG TORIES celebrated Valentine's day with a punch-up on Eastbourne pier.

By Tony Cross
Bow and Poplar Labour Party

One delegate to their conference held that weekend is to be charged with actual bodily harm, inflicted during the course of an ideological disagreement. Police were called to a hotel to break up a fight between 'wet' and 'dry' delegates.

A group is crystallising in the Young Conservatives (YCs) who would happily play the role of butchers in a British coup. A report by the YCs themselves showed that refugees from the fascist sects have entered the Tory party and joined up with its right wing.

But where are the screaming headlines and

rabid editorials that have been devoted to the Labour Party Young Socialists? The press have merely shown a polite concern that the YCs' behaviour may embarrass the party leadership.

Stranger still, the Labour leaders have refrained from exposing the Tories' youth wing, even though they have launched attack after attack on their own.

The young Tories have been wracked by factional conflict. Rules have been broken and limbs have come close to it. Last year the party closed the Federation of Conservative Students (FCS) because it had been taken over by the maniacal right 'Libertarians'.

Bow and Poplar has the misfortune to play host to the branch where the ultra-right have made their base. It was "one of the few

groups not to view FCS people like monsters from Mars," one says. Several leading ex-FCSers are members, although they don't live in the area, not even in the new yuppie flats in Docklands.

The Libertarians are so keen on Thatcher-style 'individual freedom' that they want to legalise child sex and heroin. But an attack on the 'loony left' will always get enthusiastic applause out of these crazies!

They are backing Andrew Tinney, a Thatcherite City accountant, for the YCs' chairmanship.

Tinney's conference rally was a small-scale orgy of reaction, lubricated by £500 worth of free drinks. Supporters waved "Victory to the Contras" banners. The right broadcast their support for such bloodthirsty counter-revolutionaries in

various parts of the world. One even bragged that members had "carried arms" in the sectarian bloodbath of the Lebanon.

Slandorous comparisons are made between these vicious reactionaries and *Militant* supporters. Yet it was *Militant* that warned that a trend like this would appear in the Tory party.

Meanwhile liberal papers take the tone of a disapproving but sympathetic uncle with the YC riff-raff. They think they are sowing their wild oats and will probably become merchant bankers in later life.

How different to the venom that is spat at *Militant* and the LPYS! But then Labour's youth demands jobs for all with decent wages and conditions. What dangerous extremists!

Far right funding

TINNEY'S OPPONENTS claim his campaign is funded by two far-right groups, the Committee for a Free Britain and the International Freedom Fund.

The author of the Committee for a Free Britain's manifesto is solicitor David Hart. In it he

calls for the abolition of the NHS and state schools.

During the miners' strike, he plotted with Roy Lynk and other scabs to set up the UDM. The 'wets' say he organised a dinner at which to discuss taking over the YCs last autumn.

Loony left out

CONSERVATIVE CENTRAL Office intervened to stop Harry Phibbs, notorious editor of the FCS magazine, attending the conference. He stood outside shouting "Smash the NHS" and distributing the

magazine of 'Phibbs Youth'! One of his friends says of his YC branch: "People thought if they were prepared to have Phibbs, they were prepared to have anyone."

Poll Tax will hammer youth

THE TORIES admit that young people will be worse off when they introduce their poll tax.

"Many at this conference will lose out. That may seem hard," Michael Howard, the minister responsible told the Young Tories' conference.

Everyone over the age of 18 will have to pay. That means the young unemployed, already struggling to survive on the Tories' miserable 'benefits', and students, on the pathetic grant, will have to find the money somehow. The NUS estimates many of its members will have to pay an

extra £2 a week.

Howard blithely denied that this would lead to people not registering to vote to avoid the tax. But already the electoral roll in Glasgow is down a massive 11,500 on last year. This can only be explained by people wanting to dodge the poll tax, which is being introduced in Scotland first.

"Remember it is the widow or the pensioner who is subsidising you at the moment," said the minister, who receives £40,798 per year from the public purse.

By Mark Meredith

Sell Militant

300 COPIES of *Militant* were sold on the Manchester NHS demo last Friday. The next day our sellers were on the anti-Clause 28 demo and on an NHS march in Birmingham, where they sold at least 60. Marches, vigils and protest meetings are becoming the norm and with a bit of planning we can ensure that buying *Militant* also becomes the norm at these activities.

Last week Ford workers

voted to accept the deal cooked up between their national officials and the management. We can proudly report that *Militant* was on sale at every plant that day.

Figures are coming in now for total sales on the issue with the feature on Asians in Bradford. At least 200 extra copies were sold there alone. Send in more material like those articles and help us sell *Militant*.

Comrades in Barnsley have reminded us to report that sales at the pits are continuing. We have not mentioned Royston pit before where around 20 are sold outside each week. It's often the small but regular sales that can pay off dividends in new sellers and supporters in the future.

By Gerry Lerner.

Dear Maggie, we're striking

THE YOUTH Trades Union Rights Campaign (YTURC) has served notice on Thatcher that they are calling on youth to strike on 14 March.

"Dear Mrs Thatcher, you have declared war on young people," says their letter to the Prime Minister. It was delivered by a delegation dressed in bandages to remind Thatcher of the accidents and deaths on YTS and a ball and chain because of the slave labour conditions on the schemes.

Real jobs

"Unable to find youth real jobs you now plan to take unemployment benefit away from 16-17 year olds, forcing them onto slave labour YTS," it continues.

The letter says Thatcher's "servile minister" Baker is destroying further education and accuses the Tories of trying to destroy young people's future.

"You will not succeed," it says and demands real jobs for youth.

By Mark Meredith
YTURC press officer



Signing up to YTURC on Edinburgh youth strike and calling up (right) on 11 February.

No benefits from new Tory Bill

THE TORIES' Social Security Bill will become law on 1 April. It will devastate the young unemployed. And young workers who are householders will be hit by the changes in housing benefit.

An 18-25 year old who earns £50 a week will lose at least £3.50, while a 16 or 17 year old on the same wage will be at least £6.50 a week worse off.

A Social Fund will replace current weekly additions and loans. Young single people are to be designated 'low priority' for applications and grants. As well as this, the Social Fund officer will have to decide whether a person is able to pay the loan back.

What chance will young people on reduced benefit have of qualifying? If they want a blanket to keep warm or a pan to cook with, they will have to turn to the loan sharks. They will have to pay back exorbitant rates of interest up to and above 1,000 per cent. The Tories will be driving us into debt.

Homeless

No money will be given to pay a deposit when moving into privately rented accommodation. In areas where council house waiting lists run into tens of thousands, there will be a massive increase in homelessness.

The Social Security Bill will mean misery for thousands. The YTURC's strike is timed to show our anger against it. Join the youth strike on 14 March!

A Liverpool claimant

We know what's going on

LAST WEEK on the Scottish YTURC strike, myself and others came out to demonstrate about the Tory plans for YTS.

It was a great day and 15 other people from my school joined YTURC. We put forward plans for a strike committee inside our school.

But the next day I was called into

the headmaster's office. He told me how dangerous it was to get mixed up in politics at such a young age when I should be concentrating on my school work.

I answered him it was not my choice because I don't want to be exploited on a YTS scheme. Another thing he said is YTURC is taking school students from their class rooms because they can't get

adult people who know what is going on.

Well, we do know what's going on. And we aren't going to sit around waiting, we're going to fight and win against these Tory slave labour schemes. All out on 14 March!

By John Kay
Lasswade High School

Oxford apathy?

OXFORD YOUNG Socialists have found great support at Larkmead school in Abingdon.

Despite the headmaster meeting us and saying his pupils were apathetic and a teacher telling pupils to throw our leaflets away, a crowd of a hundred gathered outside the school gates to speak to us. They were dispersed by another teacher, but after school over 20 met us.

We have also had to raise funds. So we went around the pubs dressed

By Debbie Sayers and
Pat Foley
Oxford LPYS

as Margaret Thatcher with petitions against compulsory YTS. We raised £14 in three pubs and a McDonald's.



Students and school students flood the streets of Canterbury on 11 February.

YTURC calls conference

JUST TWO weeks after organising the national youth strike, the Youth Trades Union Rights Campaign (YTURC) will hold its first national conference. We aim to have 2,000 young people there from all over Britain.

By Davie Archibald
YTURC Secretary

If we are to force the government back and stop compulsory YTS and if we are to win jobs,

education or decent training for all young people, our campaign must continue. The conference will plan the next stage in the fight against Thatcher's plans.

YTURC has to give hope to young workers and the even worse off 600,000 youth on slave labour YTS. We will discuss a unionisation campaign to defend young trainees and young workers. There will be debates on the NHS, education and training, youth and the labour movement and youth and the struggle for socialism.

International debates

Young workers from other countries will speak in a debate on the struggles of youth internationally. Other speakers will include YTURC's honorary president, Dave Nellist, and John Macreadie from CPSA.

The weekend will start with a rally to defend the Labour Party Young Socialists.

All in all it will be an event you should not miss.

A question of principal

WYTHENSHAW COLLEGE student union held a demonstration on 11 February. It was against education cuts and to let the students know that our governors are withholding funding for our union.

We decided to occupy the principal's office till the funds we demanded for our union were handed over. We were told that the principal was in London, so we demanded that a governor come and tell us why we hadn't had our money after five months.

Council leader

We also phoned Graham Stringer, the leader of Manchester city council, and invited him to come and explain why he was making cuts in our education.

After three hours the principal came rushing in demanding to know what we were doing. We took a delegation to discuss with him and he agreed to call a special governors' meeting about our demand.

By the way, Graham Stringer never turned up, nor did any of the councillors or governors. I wonder why!

By Lynn Worthington
Wythenshawe NUS general secretary
and Fels national exec.



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

For more information contact: YTURC national secretary, PO Box 390 London SE4 1NS.

Car industry- what future?

SUDDENLY, MILITANCY has returned to the car industry. As 32,000 Ford workers return, having shown management their determination to win a better deal, 6,000 at Land Rover have voted to come out over an unacceptable two year pay deal and Vauxhall workers have voted to strike over their pension scheme.

This seems very far removed from the description of the situation at the Sunderland Nissan plant given by personnel director, Peter Wickens. In *The Road To Nissan* he says: "Quality standards exceed Nissan's world-wide target, schedules are always met, the commitment of all staff can, according to most visitors, virtually be felt, improvements in quality and productivity are constantly made by the people actually doing the job, turnover and absenteeism is low, lateness is virtually non-existent."

In a future issue of *Militant* we will look more closely at the Sunderland plant itself but it is even more important to examine the threat which Nissan poses indirectly to workers in the other big car companies where their ideas are being taken up.

The aim of Nissan is to cut themselves a big slice out of the British car market. This they intend to do this by producing cars cheaper than their competitors, using so-called 'Japanese-style' working practices. Wickens' book spends a lot of time extolling the virtues of treating workers fairly and making them feel 'part of the family' but then goes on to warn:

By Tim Harris

"Companies are not in the employee relations business.....they are in business to sell profitably a product desired by the customer."

They are simply increasing the exploitation of labour. In a given time, each worker produces more cars than are produced by his counterpart at, say Ford. This achieved through a mixture of new technology and reducing to virtually zero the amount of 'unproductive' time the worker is in the factory.



The drive towards increased productivity has been a constant theme in the British car industry over the past few years. This year, Nissan plan to produce 50,000 cars with a workforce of just 1150. Production is scheduled to increase to 200,000 vehicles built by 3,500 workers in 1992.

The fortunes of the car industry are of course, tied up inextricably with the health or otherwise of

the economy as a whole. With the onset of recession in the United States, the world's biggest car market will start to contract. Companies like Jaguar, which export over 50 per cent of their output to the US will be particularly hard hit. Indeed, they are already feeling the pinch.

But a new recession will not be confined to the other side of the Atlantic—the whole of the capitalist world will be caught up in it. The repercussions for the motor industry will be dramatic, a point appreciated by many Ford workers when they argued that this was the best time to fight the company while order books are full.

Probably more than any other section of capitalists, the car giants are continually searching for new ways to increase their share of the market and boost profitability by opening up new markets, keeping down wages and increasing productivity. This has been especially true since the late 1970's.

Between 1980 and 1987 the productivity of the British car industry has increased by over 100 per cent. A similar number of vehicles are built with less than

half the workers. The example of Austin Rover is probably the clearest. In 1977 6.5 cars were produced per worker in British Leyland, as it then was, whilst the figure last year was a staggering 14.

As employment has been wantonly slashed, so the pressures of working on the line have increased with the introduction of speed-up and new technology. In British Leyland/Austin Rover for every three workers that there were a decade ago, there is now less than one.

In this period, four assembly plants and 13 component factories have been closed. Of course, capitalism has provided no alternative work for those who have been thrown out.

The Ford multinational has taken up the system of 'just-in-time' availability of parts and the specialisation of certain plants for specific components. For example the Dagenham plant is the sole source of the 1.6 litre passenger car diesel engine destined for assembly in Valencia and Cologne.

This specialisation has proved to be an Achilles' heel for the company in the recent strike as it quickly led to lay offs on the Continent.



However, the enormous increase in productivity achieved by the workers, and the massive profits which have resulted, are not good enough for the car bosses. Ford is expecting to show a profit of £350 million for 1987, and Austin Rover anticipate the first operating profit since 1976.

These figures appear to show the industry in a rosy hue, but the reality is very different. Since 1982 there has, it is true, been a 28 per cent increase in output, but production now is still not much more than half its 1972 figure, having slumped dramatically in the late 1970s. Over this period the British car market has expanded but there has been more and more import penetration and a decline in exports. Twenty years ago British Leyland were making a million cars a year—today the figure is only 400,000.

So, the inexorable drive for greater productivity goes on. The Body and Assembly plants at Dagenham are planned to have doubled output per worker by 1992, no doubt explaining management desperation to get agreement on changes in working practices.

Against this background of increased competition amongst the major manufacturers, managements are continually dreaming up new schemes to gain further control over 'their' workers and at the same time undermine their ability to defend themselves.

During the late 1970s, an onslaught started against shop floor organisation in the car industry. Victimisations, such as that of

Derek Robinson, Longbridge convenor and the establishment of the rule of fear in the plants, were the order of the day.

Michael Edwardes, former BL chief, was notorious but by no means unique.

The Japanese bosses with their 'in-house' tame trade union leaders have exported not just massive quantities of cars but also anti-trade union ideas, including so-called 'quality circles'.

The European and US bosses have eagerly taken up these ideas; job mobility, 'right first time' production methods, and so on. On paper, or in Peter Wickens' book, these may sound harmless, but in the language of stress and sheer hard work it means hell for the workforce.

Increasingly, the older car workers, when given the opportunity, have volunteered to take their redundancy payments rather than continue in this hot-house environment.

Nowadays, new workers are thoroughly vetted for their suitability. When Nissan opened their Sunderland plant, they interviewed 30,000 for 500 jobs. Needless to say, if you've got a record as a militant, you won't get a job. Consultancy firms are used to check up on the history of any worker who gives the bosses problems.

Management are continually trying to cut corners. Disputes, rarely reported in the press, often flare up as a result. A typical case occurred at the AR plant in Longbridge when an overhead car body carrier was seen by the workers as unsafe—a two hour stoppage resulted. What was management's response? They suspended the two maintenance men who had pointed out the problem to the track workers in the first place. Then they issued disciplinary letters to the track workers.

Much has been spoken and written about Nissan's 'revolutionary' work practices but what do they involve?

☆ Unions. In Nissan there is a single union agreement which the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU) has signed. There is also a no-strike deal. About 25 per cent of the workforce are union members. There is a company joint council "to promote harmonious relations". This is the negotiating body between workers and management. Non-union members are eligible to sit on it. The employees are expected to speak "with one voice".

In *The Road To Nissan*, Wickens describes how in Japan, "full-time union officials are often company employees seconded by the company to the union following their election. At a time when relationships between the company and the union are good, such a move can be beneficial to the career of a promising executive, particularly if he works enthusiastically for and the company. On the manual side of the union, more than 50

"Everyone knows that Nissan is being used as a stick to beat us with." Ford worker.



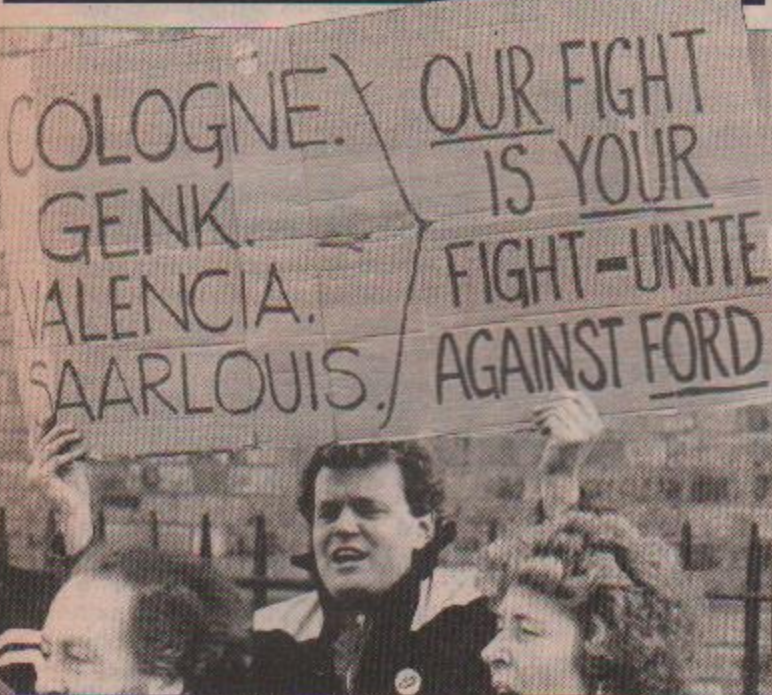
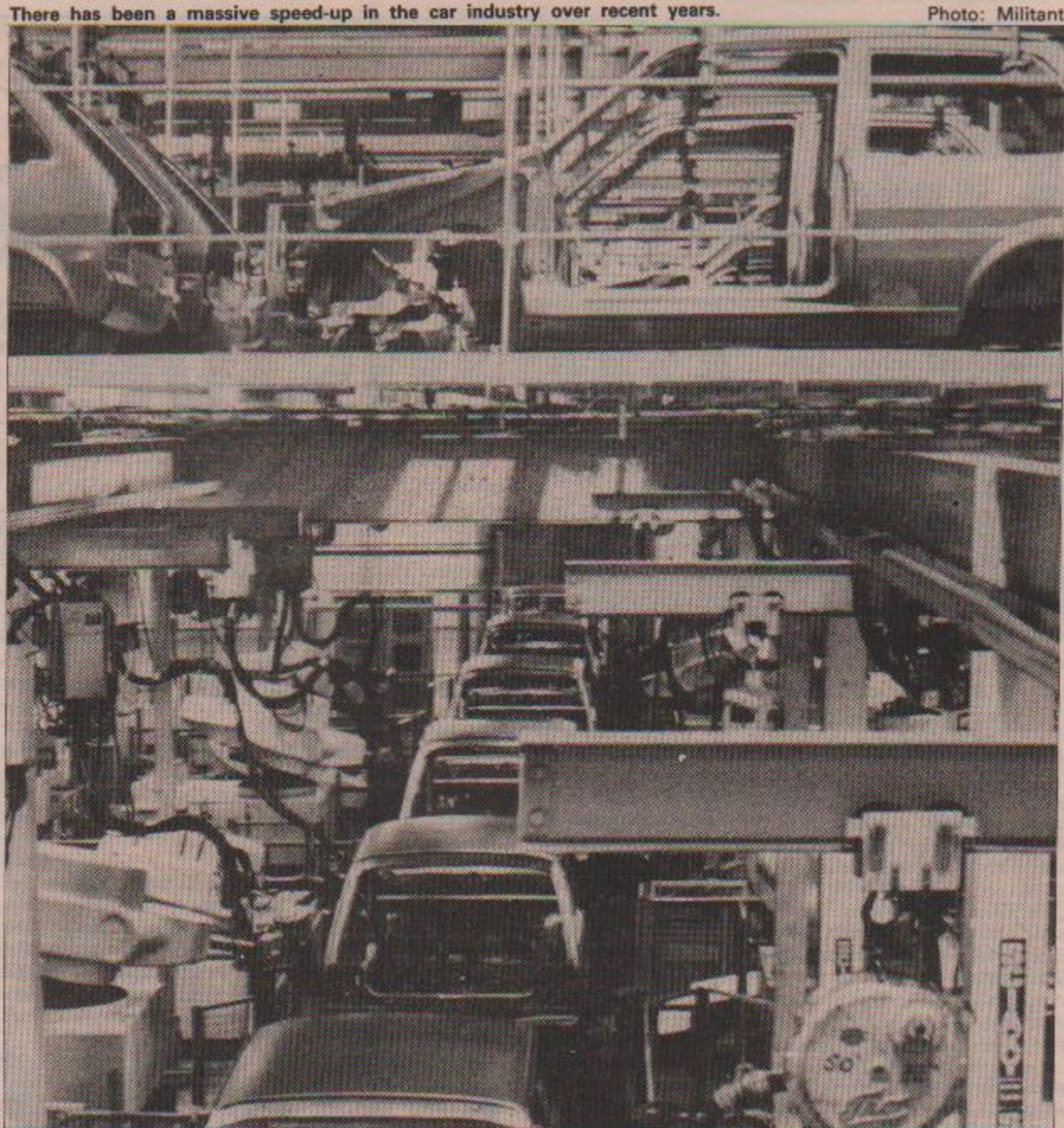
Ford workers leaving mass meeting to vote last week.

Photo: Dave Sinclair

A socialist policy for the industry

Militant calls for:

- ★ Annual wage deals.
- ★ No to 'quality circles'.
- ★ No to speed-ups.
- ★ No redundancies.
- ★ New technology to be used to shorten the working week.
- ★ For a 35 hour week with no loss of pay.
- ★ No to pension funds being used for re-investment.
- ★ An integrated transport plan.
- ★ Re-nationalisation of Unipart, Freight Rover and Jaguar.
- ★ Nationalisation of the private manufacturers and their integration with Austin Rover into a car industry run under workers' control and management.
- ★ A socialist plan of production based upon the nationalisation of the banks, insurance companies, and the commanding heights of the economy on the basis of democratic workers' control and management with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need.



Ford workers lobby their negotiators. Photo: Dave Sinclair

My life on the line

SOME TIME ago a bloke fell out of a crane and was killed in my shop.

The general foreman who witnessed the scene was understandably shaken.

In fact he was trembling. The superintendent just told him to get on with his job—he wouldn't even let him have a cup of tea.

This incident indicates both the pressures and the attitude of management. I work in the press shop at Dagenham. We work a three shift system on a cycle of a week on earlies, a week on nights and a week on lates. There's half an hour for 'lunch' with one ten minute tea break and three ten minute relief breaks during the course of a shift.

To say the hours are unsociable is to understate the problem. You feel permanently tired, no matter how much sleep you get. Eating at different times each week takes its toll on the digestive system. No two weeks are the same. I was told I'd get used to shift working. Well, I'm not after two years and there are workers of 25 years standing who still aren't used to it.

If I'm on an early, I'll clock in at 6.30am. The foreman gives me my gloves—I'm working with sharp metal—and tells me what press I'm on. This will never be the same two days running. I may be relatively lucky and get the relief man's job, covering for ten men while they are at break, or I may get a real bastard—stuck on one press all day with a big job.

Every job has a number—the quota you're supposed to get through in an hour. Sometimes, for example with a small stamping job, you can 'hit' a number and make yourself some time. On the other hand I may get something like Sierra door inner skins. The number for this job is 400 an hour

—which is basically impossible because the press frequently has to be stopped. You can be working up to two and a quarter hours between breaks.

There's no pattern. You don't know what job you'll get next, and there are hundreds of them. I work on Sierras, Tridents and sometimes spares for old motors. With a car door, there are five presses, the first to mould, the second to cut away the scrap around the sides, the third to put in the flange, the fourth to cut out the window and then a final stamp.

In the press shop there are probably about 160 on each shift with perhaps 25 foremen. Over the last two years there's been a general speed-up with productivity up 40 per cent.

Some of the foremen are worse than others. Some are really bad. On a typical shift I may handle, say, 2000 doors—two or three tons of metal.

When the shift's finished I'll always feel the same—knackered.

One of the worst things is the regular visits from more senior management who just walk around looking. They shouldn't be there at all.

The job is tedious, it is boring and it is hard. Stress and tension blow up from time to time. There are sometimes fights. Another problem is alcohol and drug abuse, the results of the pressure. I've worked with blokes who I've seen waste away over the last couple of years.

As far as I'm concerned, the latest deal is going to make things worse—that's if I'm not out of a job.

By a Dagenham press shop worker

per cent of full-time union officials in the Nissan Union—and this is typical—are foremen.

In such an environment, for a worker to go on strike is now somewhat unusual.

How can such a 'union' official represent workers and management at the same time? What happens when relationships between company and workers are not good?

foremen will lose their jobs.

★ Temporary workers. At Nissan, the idea is to employ temporary labour between April and July prior to the August peak of new car registrations.

★ Length of agreement. Nissan favour two year deals.

Already, these practices, which are standard at Nissan UK, are being introduced, or certainly planned, throughout the British car industry. At Ford, there will now be plant by plant talks on job mobility and quality circles, temporary workers and voluntary redundancies.

The Isuzu van plant in Luton, which is a joint venture with General Motors (Vauxhall) has already introduced many of the methods and now the other half of the partnership, Vauxhall themselves, are pushing through a two year deal and many of the other changes.

Land Rover workers have voted on strike action over a two year deal, while there are mounting rumours that Austin Rover are being eyed-up for takeover by Ford.

These practices represent an enormous threat to all car workers, and many other workers for that matter. There is no doubt that Nissan is being used as a stick by the other companies. The threat is clear: "If you don't

accept new working practices to boost productivity, you'll be out of a job".

For the car industry, the next period is going to be a stormy one. Even where agreements have been signed with the unions, that is no guarantee of peace, once the full implications of some of the management plans become clear.

Nissan may think everything in their garden is rosy at the moment, but with a young workforce, predominantly in their mid-twenties, how long are things going to stay calm? Whatever dreams of harmony between shopfloor and management that they might try to sell, the company is operating in the real, cut-throat world, and much

as they would like the disruptive effects of the class struggle to go away, they themselves are forced daily to wage it just to stay in business.

Meanwhile, to add further to the explosive mix, the black clouds of economic recession are now building on the horizon. The outlook for the car industry looks very stormy.



★ Shopfloor 'flexibility'. Production workers can be moved around the plant and expected to carry out simple maintenance, sweeping up and so on. At Ford, this was introduced as part of the last deal in 1985.

★ Quality circles. These employ the 'right first time' work method: the production workers in a team are responsible for inspecting and rectifying their own work without the need for separate line inspectors.

★ Skilled workers. These become members of work teams, carrying out some production work. Unskilled workers could be their 'team leaders'.

★ Supervision. Group leaders are recruited from the shop floor. In Ford, an estimated 60 per cent of

Time for workers' offensive

ON THE morning of Tuesday 16 February Vijaya Kumaranatunge, leader of the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party (SLMP or People's Party), the biggest left party in Sri Lanka, was brutally gunned down. Hours before he had announced the formation of the United Socialist Alliance of the SLMP, the Communist Party, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party and the Marxist Nava Sama Samaja Party.

Within hours white flags of mourning appeared on Colombo's streets. Later, queues several miles long gathered to pay their last respects.

The mood aroused by the murder of this popular mass leader, who was also the most famous actor in the Sinhala cinema, has cut across the divide between the Sinhala majority and the Tamil minority groups. Tamil people in the north showed their sympathy by putting up white and black flags.

Vijaya's funeral on 21 February turned into a massive display of grief, solidarity, and opposition to the right wing UNP government and terrorism. Over 500,000 Sinhalese and Tamil workers joined the funeral procession.

Although nobody has claimed responsibility for the killing it is common knowledge that Vijaya, along with other left leaders, had been threatened with death by the Sinhala guerrilla movement, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP).

The background to this murder was the signing of the Accord between India and Sri Lanka last July. This, together with the intervention by Indian troops, has completely transformed the Sri Lankan political scene.

The Accord has fallen far short of the Tamil people's hopes of a

solution to the national question. The Indian 'peace-keeping' troops, who were garlanded by Tamils upon their entry into Jaffna last summer, within weeks turned their guns on the Tamil Tiger guerrillas and the civilian population of Jaffna.

Indian intervention

It is now clear to everyone that the Indian army intervened not to 'liberate' the Tamils, but to defend Jayawardene's right-wing United National Party (UNP) government and prevent the victory of the guerrillas in the north, which would have created a separate Tamil state.

This could have meant the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a deformed workers' state in the north and east of the island. Either of these possibilities would have given a boost to separatist tendencies and destabilisation within India itself.

In the south the Sinhala population were overwhelmingly opposed to the entry of Indian troops, rightly viewing them as a foreign army of occupation. The Sinhala chauvinists of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the JVP and assorted racists organised a virulent campaign of opposition to the government on this issue and against the concessions to the Tamil minority.

The JVP have come to the fore with a campaign of assassinations of UNP leaders and activists, as well as local organisers and leaders of the left parties—killing 360 altogether since the signing of

the Accord.

The left parties have distanced themselves from Sinhala communalism and stood for concessions to the Tamils and for Sinhala-Tamil unity. This was a big step forward from the 1960s and 1970s, when the LSSP and CPSL leaders went into an alliance with the SLFP and became tinged with Sinhala chauvinism.

The NSSP played a crucial role in pushing the left to an anti-communal position by its consistent stand in defence of the Tamils' right of self-determination.

Vijaya Kumaranatunge was seen as a symbol of anti-communalism. In 1984, after splitting from the SLFP with a large section of its rank and file, he formed the SLMP. On the silver screen and from his party's rostrum Vijaya demagogically talked about the problems of the poor and the need for change.

The left leaders must organise a concrete programme of mass opposition to the JR government.

But Vijaya and the middle-class SLMP leaders were incapable of understanding that the cause of the nationalist civil war tearing the island apart was rooted in the crisis of the capitalist system of Sri Lanka, aggravated by the policies of JR Jayawardene's government.

Standing everything on its head, the leaders of the Communist Party, the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) and the SLMP welcomed the Indo-Lanka accord, mistakenly thinking it could solve the national question, bring stability to the Indian sub-continent and weaken US imperialism in the region.

In reality Rajiv Gandhi and the rotten Indian ruling class, aspiring to the role of a regional superpower, intervened in Sri Lanka on behalf of all the imperialist powers.

Incredibly, the Stalinist and reformist leaders in Sri Lanka welcomed the Indian troops, claiming that they would bring peace and protection to the Tamils. They called on the Tamil Tigers to give up their arms to the Indian troops, without posing any class alternative.

In effect, having abandoned a class standpoint, the 'left' leaders have been used by JR Jayawardene to justify the policies of his regime.

Therefore, at a time when the entire Sri Lankan population was moving against the government, when the Sinhala masses felt nationally humiliated by Indian domination and even the Tamil people had become hostile to the Indian army, the reformist left leaders were seen to be the only ones in favour of the Accord and—indirectly—the Jayawardene government.

This gave the SLFP and the racialists the opportunity to tar the left as collaborators of the

UNP regime, and gain support.

The limited concessions by Jayawardene to the Tamil people on autonomy, language and citizenship rights must be defended against the attacks of the Sinhala racists. But neither JR nor Rajiv Gandhi have the interests of the Tamil people at heart, nor will they solve their problems.

Concessions

The concessions can only be guaranteed through the coming to power of a workers and peasants government on a programme of carrying out all the democratic tasks, then proceeding to expropriate the reactionary Sinhala and Tamil landlords and capitalists.

The rapidly declining support for the UNP regime can be seen in the recent resignations of three top cabinet ministers (including Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel), the resignations of thousands of UNP party members and the collapse of the UNP unions in many state industries.

These developments have been caused by—and have further encouraged—a rebellion of the youth in the universities and a fightback of the workers in the last few years, with plantation workers, health workers, nurses, doctors, university lecturers and other sections taking strike action. Unfortunately, the militancy of the youth and workers has not been matched by the left leaders—with the notable exception of the NSSP.

The spontaneous outburst sparked off by Vijaya's killing must be galvanised by the newly formed United Socialist Alliance into mass action against the UNP government.

The formation of this front is the culmination of a long campaign by the NSSP for a united front of workers and left parties. The Alliance must not allow itself to be used by the government and must lead the fight to bring down the repressive UNP regime.

The best defence against the murderous activities of the JVP and other racists lies not simply in acquiring weapons, but in the left leaders organising a concrete programme of mass opposition to the JR government, the Indian army and the SLFP.

Such a campaign could be built up by local committees of the united front parties in the workers' districts and villages, appealing also to the opposition trade unions, peasants and fishermen's organisations, and mass organisations of the Tamil people.

These local committees of action must take up the question of defence against the state and communal terror. In this way the JVP can be isolated and smashed, with the prospect of winning away the best JVP youth to the left movement.

The Alliance would get a big response if it organised such a campaign with meetings, demonstrations and pickets leading to a national day of strikes and protest—against the terror of the state and communal forces; defending living standards, democratic rights and the rights of the Tamils; opposition to the Indian army; for the government's resignation; immediate general elections and the coming to power of a workers' and peasants' government.

By Mukesh Moorthy
London NSSP member

Turning point in Cyprus

ON SUNDAY 21 February the 'independent' Vassiliou, backed by the Communist (AKEL) and Socialist (EDEK) parties, was elected President of Cyprus. Clerides, leader of the extreme right wing, was defeated.

The 1988 elections could have been historic for the working class. There was a real possibility of electing a left-wing president if a common candidate were agreed by AKEL and EDEK.

Socialistiki Ekfrasi, paper of the Marxist left wing of EDEK, led the campaign for a common candidate of the workers' parties, on a programme of socialist demands to unite Greek and Turkish Cypriot workers.

Instead, AKEL came out in support of the 'patriotic' millionaire Vassiliou, whose economic policy is similar to Thatcher's! Lyssarides, the EDEK candidate, was the only option left for the working class.

But many workers were suspicious of his nationalistic attitude and unclear economic policy. With the working-class vote split, his chances of election were destroyed.

After the first round it became a run-off between Vassiliou and Clerides. *Socialistiki Ekfrasi* came out in support of Vassiliou, though warning that his policies were almost as bad as those of Clerides. EDEK was seriously considering abstaining in the second round.

In four days 5,000 copies of *Socialistiki Ekfrasi* were sold, thousands of leaflets delivered and £1,200 collected towards election expenses. Though small, the paper became a household name in Cyprus.

Then EDEK decided to support Vassiliou and the contest became one of the left (albeit with a right-wing candidate) against the right. The situation was polarised. Anti-communist scare tactics and provocation became a daily thing.

Socialistiki Ekfrasi was attacked not only by the right but also by the EDEK leaders because its influence was so great.

Vassiliou is now in the difficult position of wanting to attack the working class but not having the necessary support to do it. Very soon he will break with AKEL in the class struggles ahead. He will attack the workers' living standards with monetarist measures.

Working-class people will become more disillusioned with their leadership and look increasingly towards Marxist ideas.

The result has proved what *Socialistiki Ekfrasi* was saying: a common candidate of the left is electable. This is a real turning point. The working class now knows that it could have its own president. Next time round, it will be more forceful in its demands for one.

From a Cypriot correspondent



Mass meeting during 1980 general strike led by the NSSP. The strike was defeated through lack of support from other left parties.

West German car industry

Ford workers want international links

THE FORD strike in Britain highlighted the common interests of Ford workers internationally and the need for closer links. Two workers at Ford's plant in Cologne, West Germany, spoke to a Militant reporter during the strike.

"WE HARDLY know what the strike of the British colleagues is about. There is absolutely no information given by the shop stewards. Last week they brought out a three-page leaflet, but it was just about child benefit.

We heard about the strike through newspaper and radio, and there they said it was about a 7 per cent wage increase. I think the Ford workers in Britain know how much we get here in the German plants, and it is very good that they demand more.

It is also good for us, because there were plans to close the Cologne factory because of too high wages, the

management said. They said they want to produce more in Britain because of the low wage levels there.

So we think that the fight of the British colleagues will help us to keep working.

One of our colleagues regularly listens to the BBC, and there they said the strike is also about some plans to restructure the working conditions. We in Germany should keep an eye on that, because they might have similar plans over here.

Toolmakers

In the Cologne plant alone, 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.

There are also workers who are angry with the British colleagues. We heard that Genk and Saarlouis are

closed now, and here we might have short-time work from the end of this week onwards. The workers will lose money.

The main problem is, because of the lack of information from the shop stewards they cannot really understand the reasons for the strike.

Normally there is a shop stewards' committee meeting every three months, and the next one is in March. But I'm not sure if they will deal with the British strike.

It is very good that there are international meetings of the Ford shop stewards every half year. But it is my impression that they just exchange silver plates or general information.

Their main task should be to think about ways how they could support each other in fighting against the bosses. And a precondition for this is that all the workers in the factories all over the world know all about it."



Jobs have been decimated by automation in the German car plants.

Murder Inc.

EVERYBODY HAS their price.

Para is one of the northern states of Brazil. The following cutting from the Sao Paulo newspaper Noticias de Tarde gives an idea of the ferocious class struggle raging in this area as big capitalist landlords fight to take over plots farmed by smallholders, many of whom have already been pushed out of other 'frontier areas':

"An office disguised as a private security firm charges \$50 for the murder of a normal smallholder. A rural trade unionist, however, costs \$500, half pre-paid and the rest when the job is finished. For less than this it's not possible to find a professional killer, i.e. one who leaves no trace and who, if arrested, will never reveal the name of the client who ordered the crime.

"The murder of a priest

is even more expensive, and you can't always find a professional willing to do the job."

This shows how the courage of a section of priests, and even some bishops, in opposing the landowners has put them on the publicised hit lists for assassination.

Not all the church has this attitude. There is a right-wing minority, and the leaders of the middle ground who insist on the 'rule of law' in the hope of avoiding a spiralling class confrontation.

But the role played by priests in the struggle for agrarian reform is a sign of the intense polarisation in society, and the huge possibilities of linking up the struggle of working people on the land with that of the big battalions of labour in the cities.

From Latin American correspondents.

S.African youth slam Thatcher amandla

CAYCO
BELLVILLE
FEB'88

WORKERS AND YOUTH UNITE FOR POWER, NATIONAL LIBERATION AND SOCIALISM!

THIS ARTICLE from *Amandla*, paper of the Cape Youth Congress in South Africa, brilliantly confirms that workers and youth have more in common with their brothers and sisters internationally than with the bosses in their own countries. We are sure that this call of working-class internationalism from black workers and youth in Cape Town will inspire workers and youth in Britain and every other country.

Ivin Malaza memorial fund

IVIN MALAZA is one of the workers' leaders murdered by Buthelezi's scab force, UWUSA. The Ivin Malaza Memorial Fund has been set up to help support his family and continue his work. Please take collections in your workplace, trade union, Labour Party or YS branch.

Donations to: Cllr Lynn Faulkes, 143B Amhurst Road, London E8 2AW.

Thatcher and Gatsha - smiling faces of terror

Margaret Thatcher is vicious! She backs the apartheid state to the hilt, why? British imperialism invested the most money in South Africa. They pay starvation wages and make huge profits. They fear revolution. That is why Thatcher and the British bosses back the counter-revolutionary Buthelezi.

btr & uwusa

BTR where 800 NAMA (NATISA) members were sacked for demanding union rights is a British multinational. Now the Thatcher backed BTR bosses have rewarded Gatsha and Inkatha by recognising UWUSA!

reactionary

The Conservative government of Thatcher is the most reactionary government in Britain this century! It has mercilessly attacked the working class. At present 3 million unemployed are threatened with reduction of benefits from the state with no prospect of a job.

Yet the 150 000 miners who fought for their jobs in a magnificent year-long strike in 1984-85 were viciously attacked by Thatcher's police. Thatcher spent millions of pounds to beat the miners! Their strike was defeated when the Trade Union Congress leaders failed to organise solidarity action. Since 1982, 90 000 miners lost their jobs!

racist

Black people in Britain have the worst housing, the least chance of finding work and are among the lowest paid.

Racist attacks by the police against Black and Asian people occur regularly. Some have led to deaths and permanent injury. Thatcher's government is racist like Buthelezi!

liverpool resists

Thatcher's government has cut-back housing and social services. The British capitalist newspaper, Financial Times said: "There are 50 000 teenagers homeless in London!"

The people of Liverpool resisted Thatcher with their Marxist-led Labour Council. She used the courts, the press, the parliament to remove them from office.



The verdict of the people was to re-elect Marxist MP Terry Fields. Here'side had the biggest election swing to the Labour Party in Britain because of the fight of its sacked socialist council.

Thatcher attacked millions of working people in defence of capitalism. Nurses, waterworkers, miners, dockers, teachers, steelworkers, civil servants, women, school students have all seen reactionary measures taken against their rights.

Defeat Thatcher! Defeat capitalism! Labour to power on a socialist programme!

defeat capitalism

The British working class will defeat Thatcher and the capitalist system. It has a ten million strong trade union movement. It has mighty traditions of struggle.

Its internationalism is shown in massive support for the South African revolution. The international working class is our only ally in the struggle for national liberation and socialism.

Gatsha you have your friends. You deserve them and they deserve you. You will be vanquished.

Reformism exposed

ON 27 January the powerful CGTP (General Confederation of Peruvian Workers) was preparing a second 24-hour general strike in protest against the harsh economic policies of 'reformist' President Garcia. In the Andean province of Andin, however, workers went further in showing their true feelings about politicians who don't keep their promises.

Mayor Rosello was upbraided by infuriated citizens for betraying his

election pledges. Then he was stripped naked and paraded, in sub-zero temperatures, through the city's main streets and avenues as an example.

Next time, he was told, "things would be different".

Incidents such as these show how unstopably the masses of Latin America will react against their oppressors in the revolution that is developing throughout the continent.

The coming N.Y. revolution

The two of them were over six foot tall. She was on her own, a small woman sheltering in Port Authority from the freezing New York winter.

They kicked her in the legs As she sat among her bags. They swung their clubs and spat "Get the f... out of here."

She rose up in front of them Her fists clenched, her wild eye flashing She fought them, the handcuffs cut her. As they beat her to the ground their bellies wobbled.

Outside on 8th Avenue the long limos glided. Inside them fat landlords rested. The black woman's rage screamed at the cops. Revolt and vengeance is building in the Big Apple.

By Sean Fallon

Economic League intrigue

Dear Comrades,
A recent *World in Action* report exposed the activities of the Economic League, a right wing group who in their own words "Aim to oppose all subversive elements which attempt by stirring up strikes and disaffection to interrupt the smooth working of industry and to counter attempts to damage our national security."

The League's main activity is to maintain a blacklist of labour movement activists and anyone who has been involved in industrial action or broadcast 'unsound' opinions.

The report featured a list of companies which finance the League and make use of its services—these include all four major banks, GEC, Maxwell UK and Coalite (of which Eric Varley former Labour MP for Chesterfield is a direc-

tor). The League is one of many right wing concerns, some masquerading as charities, which spy on the labour movement in the interests of the bosses.

Groups like the Adam Smith Institute, Centre for Policy Studies and Aims for Industry are supported by leading Tories, who endorse the sinister and sometime illegal activities of these groups.

What answer have the 'defenders of law and order and freedom' to the allegations of the programme?

**Duncan Harris
Bolsover**

Dear Comrades,
World in Action recently revealed how an employee of the Economic League has infiltrated unions such as Astms and pressure groups such as the Anti-Apartheid movement. His 'work' involved obtaining names of labour movement activists which were then put on central register and used to blacklist them.

The programme gave the example of Bill Anderton, who came across an advert for a Scottish industrial relations advisory officer. Shortly after applying he received a letter from the Economic League telling

Culture versus capitalism

Dear Comrades,
I was interested to read the letter the other week on culture. I agree it is a good idea to have articles on literature and art if they reflect working class struggles, but I think he was a bit patronising to say workers are only interested in 'beer, fags and skittles'. Most workers have a wide range of interests.

Culture, like everything else, is a political question. Marx said "The ruling ideas of an epoch are essentially the ideas of the ruling class of that epoch." Capitalism uses and adapts culture to perpetuate its power; in the past this was mainly

through religion, now it is mainly through the media, although most literature and art reflects the values of capitalist society.

The bourgeois reinforce the class division of society by making certain types of culture—art, ballet, opera, classical music inaccessible to the mass of the population. In a society based on need not profit and with a planned economy, workers would be free from the cares which burden them at the moment and would have time to pursue different activities which now only the bourgeois can.

Dawn Churchill Derby

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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



Eyes On The Prize dealt with the civil rights movement in the USA. Here police attack demonstrators against unemployment in 1934.

Eye-opener

Dear Comrades,
I have watched with much emotion and anger the BBC 2 series *Eyes On The Prize*. The series has certainly opened my eyes to the organised state violence, backed by big business, against the black population of the USA.

The episode 'Mississippi is this America (1963-64)' in particular highlighted the police murder of civil rights activists.

Also featured was the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party formed to fight racial oppression in the most racist of all the

states. The party was refused access to the Democratic Party Congress in 1964 because of the fear of offending racist supporters of the Democrats and because it opposed the national leadership.

Would it be possible to produce a feature on the American civil rights movement and the need for a US Labor Party?

David Milson Sheffield

No comment

Dear Comrades,
After Channel 4 News there followed *Comment*, a five minute chance for someone to put their point of view. The person on was Tom Sawyer, Labour Party NEC member and full time Nupe organiser.

I thought to myself here is a chance to put the health workers' case without any interruptions from reactionary TV interviewers.

To my amazement he didn't even mention the NHS dispute. He spoke about the 1958 Munich air

disaster and how he lost his schoolboy hero, Duncan Edwards. Of course it was a tragedy but the real tragedy was Tom Sawyer wasted a valuable chance to gain more support for NHS workers.

If this is the kind of leadership our comrades in Nupe are relying on they are going to need all the help they can get.

Colin Scullion Glasgow

Outstanding opportunities?

Dear Comrades,
I work at Sainsbury's where the company aims to 'offer outstanding opportunities...and concern for the welfare of every individual.' The reality is somewhat different.

A butcher at our branch was told when he joined seven years ago that he would be shown his trade. Instead he was forced to do the same repetitive job to 'develop his learning'. When he sustained a bad knife wound to his hand he required stitches and physiotherapy.

Management then marked his attendance record 'below average' though his sickness leave was no greater than any other year. He was told he was not good enough.

When workers refuse to work on their

days off to provide cover they are told "That's not bloody good enough" and "don't expect any favours from me."

Even workers that voted Tory have told me of their disgust for management. Hours have increased and cover over dinner breaks is often non-existent with workers having to cover two departments at once.

With the increase in profit (20 per cent) workers are given only a tiny concession in terms of profit-sharing. One worker recently received a cheque for 80p for his efforts. Yet shares that become available to those on higher grades can push a branch manager's income up to £44,000 annually. Is this the equality Gould talks about in his share-owning democracy?

Andy Woods Poole

RALLY '88

Alexandra Palace
Sunday 19 June
Tickets £6
Order your ticket now! From Militant Rally, 3/13 Hepscoott Rd, London E9.

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.

Too young?

Dear Comrades,
In Issue 881 one young woman summed up the feelings of many young people. She had thought she was too young for politics and wanted to enjoy herself. The fact is, it has been getting increasingly difficult for us to enjoy ourselves. From April it will be practically impossible for those affected by the cuts.

A few months ago I moved into a council flat with a friend and we have since been struggling to pay bills. If I don't find work before April I will have to leave and move back to my parents in Lincolnshire.

There must be plenty in a similar position, which means that even before these cuts, employers will be able to take on those who have to find a job in a hurry, paying them only a minimum wage.

Gail McGee Newcastle

Get stuck in

Dear Comrades,
The day after the NHS strike on 3 February Margaret Thatcher claimed in Parliament that 400 operations had to be cancelled because of the strike.

In Coventry nearly 1000 took some action on the day with at least 50-60 on the 'protest line' most of the day at Walsgrave Hospital. It's also true that 50 operations were cancelled. Not because of the nurses' action—but because of bed shortages. Just another example of the Tories' cheap hypocrisy.

Fortunately few workers pay Thatcher's words any attention. They're more concerned with knowing what they can do to help the nurses. There is enormous support for striking to back them up. Why don't the Labour and trade union leaders get stuck in?

Dave Griffiths Coventry

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 Hepscoott Road, London E9.

ABORTION RIGHTS
A Socialist Approach

- 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 Hepscoott Rd, London E9 5HB. For all orders add 25 per cent P&P. Cheques payable to Militant.
- S Kelly—Please return item you borrowed from me 'For a couple of days' in 1984. Mike West

London Bloc meeting.
Mon 29 Feb 7.30. Ealing Town Hall.

LPYS charge

Dear Comrades,
Three LPYS members were flyposting Uxbridge High St for a meeting on the NHS when two police officers turned up, fol-

lowed by two police cars and a van. They were put into the back of the van and taken to the police station where they were charged for bill pos-

ing. Uxbridge YTURC is helping to raise money for legal costs etc so send donations to: Uxbridge YTURC, c/o 16 The Water Tower, The Straight, Southall.

Marc Vallee, Uxbridge YTURC secretary.

Fight the Education reform Bill

Teach Tories a lesson

By Roger MacKay
President Ipswich Association
NUT (personal capacity)

To stifle growing concern about the Bill's proposals amongst Tory backbenchers and local education authorities, the Tory leadership is expected to use the 'guillotine' and get a final reading of the Bill as swiftly as possible.

Whatever the final version of the Bill, workers in state education should have no illusions about the drastic effects it will have. Teaching, once regarded as a secure job, will become increasingly subject to fixed-rate contracts, redeployment and redundancies.

This Bill, taken in conjunction with the Teachers' Pay and Conditions Act passed last year and with rate-capping imposed on local authorities, is fundamentally aimed at dismantling state education in England and Wales.

Some of the sweeping measures are Dickensian in effect:

- selection of pupils, not only by ill-conceived testing but by ability to pay.
- schools for the poor, alongside schools for the well-off.
- sacking of teachers by a school's board of governors, which may have been appointed by Kenneth Baker or his successor.
- payment of teachers by results with unprotected salaries.
- use of unqualified staff in schools.
- regionalisation of pay last used in 1956.
- substantial increases in class sizes.
- loss of maternity rights and benefits for women teachers.
- loss of the various support units which are now an integral part of state education.
- exclusion of children from their own neighbourhood school unless they pass tests and/or have parents who can pay.

These drastic changes will affect the working life, the tenure, security and pay of every teacher in every school.

The real purpose behind the Tory proposals is best shown by the opportunity given to schools to 'opt out' of the state system.

This process can be started by a majority vote on a school's board

of governors, or as few as 20 per cent of parents of children at that school. The final decisions would be taken by a secret postal ballot of all parents.

Once 'opted out', control of the school—its premises, education policy, financing, pupil intake and staffing—would all pass from the local education authority to the board of governors.

Funded by central government, such boards will have virtually unlimited power to run schools to their own requirements. Teachers and their organisations will have no say and will have to toe the line.

Schools which do not 'opt out' will become subject to open enrolment, a system whereby parents can choose whichever school they wish to send their children to, which could even be in another local authority area.

Margaret Thatcher's children attended St Paul's and Harrow at £3,000 and £7,750 a year respectively.

Inevitably this will lead to increased rolls in some schools and decreased rolls in others. Whereas 'opted out' schools can stabilise their numbers by means of selection, those schools still under local authority control will become subject to either oversize classes and overstretched resources or face the prospect of closure due to lack of pupils.

The Tories have used the concept of choice in a demagogic fashion. The reality is that over 90 per cent of parents currently get their first choice of school.

For teachers, open enrolment will mean redeployment, redundancies, fixed-term contracts, or, at the very least, pressure to keep a school educationally and financially viable.

Another proposal—local financial management, whereby all schools become responsible for managing their own finances—is a recipe for more educational cuts, with teachers being the most expendable item on a school's shopping list.

Boards of governors could decide to employ a financial

adviser—exit one teacher, perhaps even two.

Kenneth Baker, secretary of state for education, sent his children to public schools: his daughters went to Roedean with fees of £6,225 a year; his son's fees cost £6,200 a year.

The purchase of expensive equipment may mean dropping a teacher on a fixed-term contract for a term or so. Promotion posts will be withheld, younger 'cheaper' teachers will be preferred to 'expensive' experienced teachers, cover for absent staff who are ill will disappear.

In-service training, as well as the use of specialist advisers and support units will become financially deductible from the school.

Given the complexities of planning and resourcing education the Bill can promise nothing but administrative chaos, financial mismanagement and educational poverty for the majority of children.

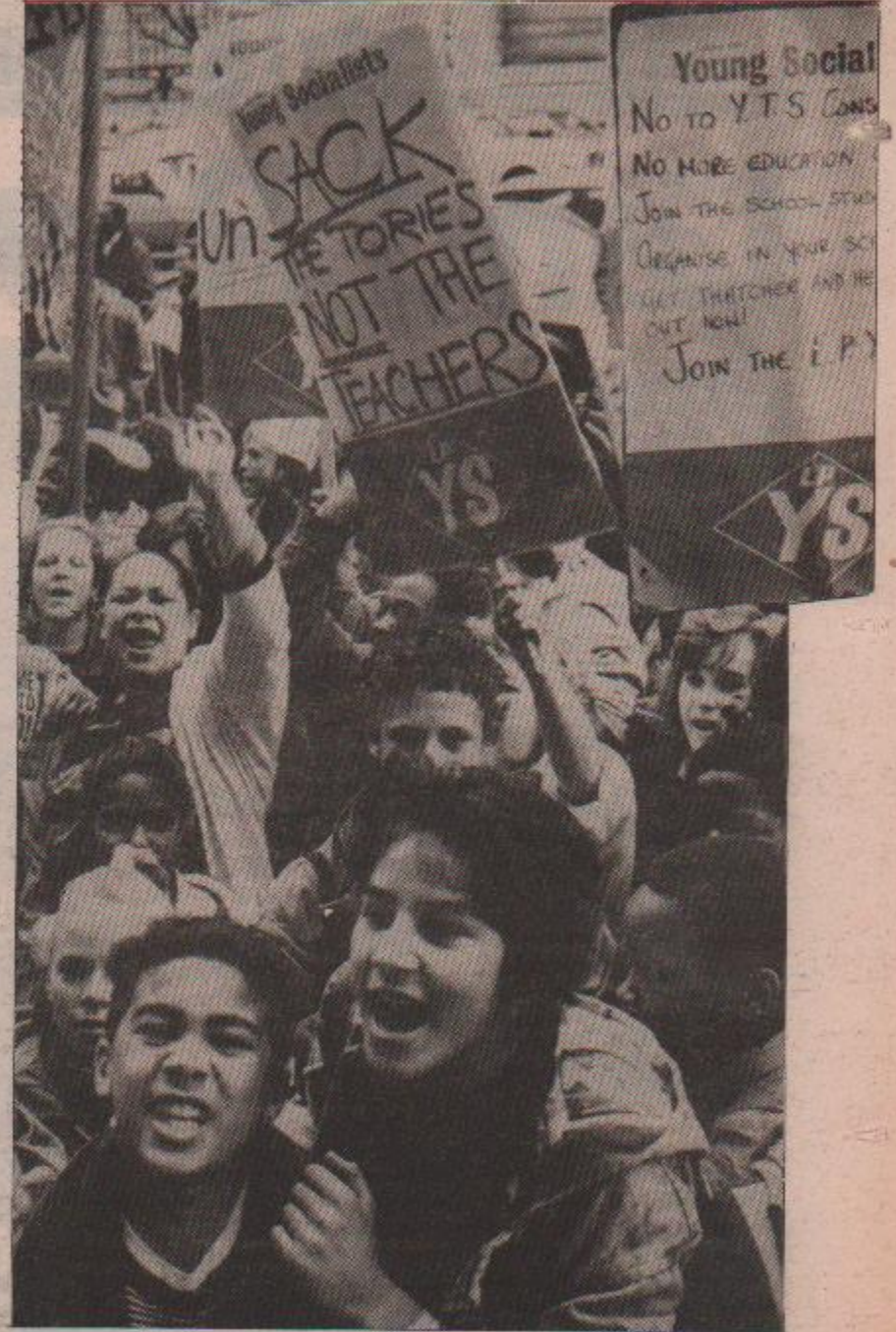
Few would deny that the current system is far from perfect with the desperate underfunding of the state system. In spite of this, more reports tell of increasing standards and the satisfaction of parents with their local schools.

To their shame, the leaderships of the teaching unions appear to be incapable of providing their members with the type of campaign necessary to oppose the drastic measures proposed by the government.

The NUT's 'most crucial campaign' of letter-writing to MPs the press and parent-teacher associations, whilst waiting for the church authorities and the House of Lords to 'do the business' blatantly fails to involve the membership in direct action.

The hounding of union activists up and down the country and in particular the lack of support for London teachers who face the complete break-up of the Ilea is nothing short of scandalous.

At a time when Thatcher's



London school students demonstrate against teacher cuts and redeployment. Photo: Dave Sinclair

A recent Marplan poll revealed that 61 per cent of those interviewed would prefer schools to remain under local authority control. 48 per cent thought that teachers' pay should be increased nationally.

casino economy is being exposed on the Stock Exchange and the Tories are openly squabbling amongst themselves not only over the Education Bill but the introduction of poll tax, Alton's Anti-Abortion Bill, the funding of the NHS etc, the TUC's token support of the teachers' cause poses serious questions about the ability of the leadership to mobilise workers.

8 per cent of British children over 11 go to fee-paying schools. 96 per cent of Cabinet ministers' children over 11 went to fee-paying schools.

With the current lead given by the health workers, the time is ripe for a united campaign involving all public service unions, not

only in defence of jobs, wages and conditions but in defence of those very services.

For teachers already under fire as a result of the Teachers' Pay and Conditions Act 1987, it is essential that the rank and file especially of the NUT and NAS/UWT brings pressure to bear on its associations and divisions so as to be involved in action. A call for a one day national strike should be the start of such a campaign.

TUC Lobby

Public meeting and lobby of Parliament on Education Reform Bill: 1 March 12.30-4.00pm public meeting Central Hall, Westminster. 2.30 onwards lobby of Parliament.

Fighting Fund

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 East Midlands	973		2500
2 London	2354		6770
3 South East	457		1570
4 West Midlands	1006		3510
5 Northern	926		3270
6 Scotland West	527		2520
7 Southern	392		2020
8 Merseyside	945		5360
9 Eastern	377		2260
10 Manchester/Lancs	490		2690
11 Scotland East	345		2150
12 Yorkshire	862		5950
13 South West	161		1270
14 Wales	439		3510
15 National	2598		3790
Total	12852		50,000

An entire week's dole money! That's what an unemployed youth gave when he went to his very first Militant meeting in Manchester. That's how he showed his enthusiasm for the ideas of Marxism and our demand for a one day general strike.

The current movement of workers in the car industry, the civil service, on the ferries and above all the revolt of health workers in the NHS, are all piling pressure on a timid TUC leadership to call a one day general strike on 14 March. We are producing thousands of leaflets, stickers, placards and pamphlets to argue the case. This is costing us thousands of pounds. So Militant is asking every reader to donate at least

one day's pay to help us prepare for a one day general strike!

The response after just one week has been fantastic. At the Newcastle Rally to launch the Liverpool book, Simon Potter a seaman gave £250! A worker on a CP scheme gave £100. An unemployed worker donated a week's dole. An unemployed youth in Blackpool gave £15 and a school student in Portsmouth donated his week's income of £5.

The Birmingham Militant Rally collected £650 and a social held following the Leeds launch of the Liverpool book raised £319 including £50 from the pub landlord!

The attention of many workers will be focused on

the 5 March TUC demo. Make sure you have a good supply of the 'One Day General Strike' stickers and a collecting tin for the event. On the Manchester demo last Friday over £200 was raised from 20 readers selling stickers and asking for the solidarity price of the Militant.

Special thanks to this week's contributors: Tudor Parsons and Melrion Evans, Blaenau NUM, £90 & £10. Rob Owen, Wales, £60. R. Phillips, Tyneside, £40. A. Thomas, South London, £30. Norma Michael, Neath, £20. Stuart Bracking, student from Leicester, £8. A subscriber to the Militant from Gibraltar sent a fiver.

Land Rover strike solid

"THERE'S NO need to go jogging here to keep fit. Management keep you jogging all shift", commented one picket. Another remarked on the fact that 12 months ago 65 Range Rovers would come off the track. Now 116 come off. Last year, profits are thought to have been in the order of £15-17 million.

There is a general feeling that management have gone too far,

especially after they got MORI in to phone up workers after not believing the 66 per cent ballot result for strike action. Management claim they know what workers want but in reality they're completely out of touch.

The first day of the strike saw about 400 pickets outside the main gate alone.

The local radio reported there

were nearly a thousand in all. No hourly paid workers went in. The mood was electric. No all-out strike has taken place since 1981. Some pickets were sceptical before the strike that it would be solid but seeing the mass turnout everyone's confidence was boosted. The picket line was good natured despite a few managers driving provocatively fast through a yard corridor of pickets. As they

drove through in Land Rovers, pickets shouted, "This is where our profits go!"

Pension funds

In another incident, a van drove up and one picket asked if it had Gilroys' wages in it. Gilroys is the plant manager. Anger was expressed at the fact that £80 million was spent from the

workers' pensions by management—equivalent to £13 per worker, per week. One steward said, "We will not go back if anyone is victimised".

The workers are claiming an increase of £25 a week across the board, a one year deal, holiday pay on average earnings and sick pay from day one.

By Andy Viner.



I WORK at Freight Rover, where the Sherpa van is built, and I've been selling the *Militant* at work for the last four years. By selling on the factory gates and following up any sales inside, my regular sales have increased from one or two to about a dozen. Just by being known as a *Militant* supporter has led to some workers coming and asking for the paper.

One worker who bought the paper for the first time came back ten minutes later and asked for another for his mate.

Selling the paper openly could lead to the sack so the best way to increase sales is to maintain the gate sales but also to encourage my regular readers to sell the paper in their own areas. When the paper has carried articles on Leyland Daf or the car industry in general, workers who don't buy a regular copy have shown a great interest.

Militant is the only paper that not only writes about the everyday problems faced by workers under capitalism but also offers an alternative. That's why I am determined to increase my sales at work.

By a Freight Rover worker.

Organising Mecca

MILITANT SUPPORTER, Brian Wilton has recently been elected, by 37 votes to two, as staff rep at the Mecca Bingo hall, Birkenhead. Traditionally this position has been used as a career stepping stone for up and coming trainee managers.

"You're here to represent the management to the staff", Brian was told. However, he had different ideas, especially over the way staff were treated about 'shorts'—if the money in the till is short, management naturally assume the staff have either stolen or lost it. The losses have to be made up from an average take home pay of £69 for 40 hours on shift.

One lad who was working in the cafeteria was told that as one of the machines had broken down and given a false pay-out of £100, he would have to make up the shortfall under part 1, clause 12 of the Mecca contract.

Brian organised the staff and protested to the management who eventually said they would take no disciplinary action to "recover the money".

From this, Brian and another *Militant* supporter now sell three papers to the staff every week and have got a number of the workers to join the TGWU 6/688 branch, although management refuse to recognise any union—because they say they have adequate staff representation!

By Phil Cooper, TGWU 6/688.

...as Ford's return to work

THE MOOD amongst the activists that I know in the Halewood plant is one of bitter disappointment that a golden opportunity was lost. I myself voted to reject the Ford offer although I know a lot of fellow workers who voted to accept.

It was best summed-up, I think, by a striker at Dagenham who said: "It's like playing in the FA cup final and being five-nil up at half time. Then in the second half, your own captain decides to kick the

other way and scores six goals."

We were out solid and could have won the whole claim. However, we showed management what we were capable of. The strike really brought home the need for the organisation of the left inside Ford. There are moves afoot to establish a Broad Left inside the company. Everyone can see that now there'll be local negotiations. This means more battles ahead. We must be more prepared for those than we

were this time. The Broad Left will produce regular material to show the way ahead.

Our fight has definitely given encouragement to other groups of workers considering taking on the Tories or the bosses. Why then do I read the following quote from a trade union leader? "Ford could be an isolated case. I would need more evidence over the next six months before I would say this was a watershed. Even then it would be a fragile confidence which would need careful

nurturing to ensure it was not crushed."

These comments from Tom Sawyer of the National Union of Public Employees not only totally misunderstand the new situation in Britain but at a time when his own members are locked in battle against the government over low pay and privatisation, represent an abdication of leadership.

By a Ford Halewood worker.



London BLOC Health worker speaking at London BLOC meeting where 200 called for 24 hour general strike on 14 March. Photo: Dave Sinclair

P+O Dover

STRIKING P&O ferry workers at Dover have again voted to stay out over the threat to cut more than 400 jobs and introduce new rotas at a mass meeting of 2000.

The anniversary of the Zeebrugge disaster is on 6 March and the seamen are organising a commemorative march through Dover to the town hall.

The mass meeting was addressed by Lawrie Knight, president of the Kent area NUM, who gave the backing of the miners. Soup kitchens have now been set up in Dover and Folkestone. Other support has come from P&O workers in Belgium and France who have taken solidarity strike action.

Messages of support and donations should be sent to: National Union of Seamen, Maritime House, Snargate Street, Dover, Kent.

FBU victory in Manchester

INDUSTRIAL ACTION sparked off by dictatorial management attitudes in the Manchester fire service has resulted in a significant victory for the Fire Brigades Union.

By Mick Eaves, Cheshire FBU

The latest in a long line of disputes came when the deputy chief officer attempted to break a written agreement on minimum staffing levels in the control room.

An exercise was planned which included evacuation of the main control room staff to a stand-by control room. During this exercise, the staff in the main control room would have been reduced from the agreed minimum of six to only two.

To defend the control room

staffing agreement, the FBU took industrial action, starting the night before the planned exercise. Only emergency calls were dealt with.

There were rumours that pay would be reduced by 50 per cent unless the union agreed to work normally. But the membership remained solid.

During the following week a sub-committee of the Labour-controlled Fire Brigade Joint Board, under the chairmanship of former FBU secretary Austin Flood, backed the chief officer and a cut in pay seemed possible.

Plans were laid for strike action as the only alternative if the FBU membership were to have a reduction in pay. To allow management to break a written agreement without response

would leave all conditions up for grabs.

Branch meetings were held and a lobby of Fire Brigade HQ organised on the day of the full meeting of the Joint Board. By then the Manchester membership had voted overwhelmingly to hold a ballot for a series of one-hour strikes.

In confident mood, 400 firefighters from Manchester and surrounding brigades heckled Labour councillors on their way to the meeting. The general secretary and president went in with local officials to meet the councillors.

The members adjourned to a nearby pub. Within an hour they were joined by the officials in jubilant mood. Faced with the determined stand of the membership, management had

caved in completely.

There was to be no cut in pay, the staffing levels in the control room were reaffirmed and there was to be an inquiry into industrial relations within the brigade. A petition calling for John Macreadie's call for a one-day general strike in support of the NHS was signed by the general secretary and president and filled within minutes.

This victory however will only provide a temporary respite locally from the attacks on conditions and staffing levels. Spurred on by cash limits and Home Office directives, politicians and chief officers will keep up the pressure on the FBU. But with confidence and careful preparation we can win.

Fight to save Ilea

"WE'D BETTER open the parents' home as a strike headquarters," said one woman who is a parent, primary assistant and Nupe shop steward at a primary school in Hackney, after a public meeting attended by over 300 people.

By Joanne Martin
Hackney parent

Government attacks on the Inner London Education Authority (Ilea) have aroused deep anger amongst working class people. Save Hackney Education Committee is a co-ordinating group made of eight unions, school-keepers, parents and users.

There was a Ucatt shop steward, a grandad of four children attending Ilea schools. He told of falling standards and cutbacks in the direct labour organisation.

He pledged that he, his children and his grandchildren would all support the action on 8 March. There was a 15 year old school student who is prepared to take action now to protect both her own and her week old brother's future education. There were calls to link up with other workers in struggle, such as in the NHS.

The meeting also endorsed a charter that set out demands for London's education, including a grant for all 16 to 18 year olds to enable them to continue education without the threat of compulsory YTS.

Schools in Inner London are at crisis point already.



Hackney Teachers Association—invited in the campaign to save Ilea. Photo: Militant.

They are sending home classrooms of children because of the desperate shortage of teachers. In Hackney 300 primary school children are sent home every week. In Tower Hamlets 300 pupils have been refused entry due to lack of places.

Parents, staff and governors at a recent meeting in Hackney's Colvestone primary school were unanimous in their support for the Ilea unions' action on 8 March. An action committee was formed and they immediately organised a coach to the teachers' demonstration and lobby of

the divisional office. They opened the parents' room to make banners and placards.

Child care

Save Hackney Services will be organising child care for younger children and children of working parents away from the school on 8 March. People are coming forward to provide food and child care. This will cut across any danger of parents being isolated. With the best will in the world, it is hard to go on a march with up to six under fives. Working parents will

not be pressured by the threats of losing their jobs. All older users and workers in the service will be urged to join in the mass demonstration.

Ilea employs 90,000 people and is used by over three million people. The education shutdown on 8 March is on the same day as the council workers' strike called by the London Bridge committee.

The mood of the workers is summed up by a shop steward who said: "I don't care what they do to me. They can sack me, but I'm going to fight this all the way!"

Divine intervention?

FRIDAY'S NATIONAL Union of Teachers Rally for Education at the Albert Hall must provide a focus for resistance to Baker's Education Bill. If the event is to be simply an evening's jamboree, however entertaining, it will not cause Baker and his allies too much distress.

Above all, its success will be determined by whether or not it marks the beginning of a serious, organised campaign against the

Bill. One thing is clear: the Tories mean business. By creating a semi-privatised tier of City Technology Colleges and opted-out schools, they intend to develop a privileged layer over the rest of the state sector, which will be left to rot.

Underfunding

Indeed, that is what is literally happening, according to an Audit Commis-

sion report just issued. This argues that some schools are in such disrepair, through years of underfunding, that it will only be a matter of time before they have to close for safety reasons. The Baker Bill, which is all about creating education on the cheap for the majority of schools, will only compound the crisis.

Friday's rally needs to mobilise all education workers, parents and students in a campaign of

action in defence of state education. The line-up of speakers, including a bishop and an archbishop, suggests the union is once again looking to God and the peers to save us. Welcome though divine intervention would be, union members should put their faith in a concrete, practical strategy of action.

By Bob Sulatycki
ILTA officer
(personal capacity)

Bifu presidential campaign

ANDY WALSH, Militant supporter and Broad Left activist, is standing on a fighting programme for the post of president of the Banking, Insurance and Finance Union (Bifu). If elected, Andy will fight all redundancies and is pledged to fight for a flat rate pay increase of £15 per week to eradicate low pay. He will defend the interests of Bifu members across the finance sector.

Midland Bank workers are still in a state of shock this week following the announcement that losses last year were the highest ever for a British company. The Midland Bank group, which made £434 million in 1986, managed to lose £505 million last year despite passing the hat around exist-

ing shareholders to help them through the immediate after-effects of the stock market crash.

Sir Kit McMahon, Midland's chairman has been quick to pass the buck down the line, making it perfectly clear that the bank staffs must be prepared to take job cuts, increased hours, deterioration of conditions and widespread Saturday working to pay for the mess.

Extreme bitterness

The attitude of management is causing extreme bitterness amongst the staff in the branches and rightly so too!

Why should we go back to the

conditions of service we fought against for years, winning bit by bit, year by year, the nine to five day and five day, 35 hour week? With the majority of Midland's staff already unionised, the need now is for the office representatives, the predominantly young activists and lay members who will suffer enormously from management's proposals, to go to their union branches, transform the almost dead apparatus of the union and build the basis at rank and file level for opposition to this round of attacks.

John Heddon
Bifu

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

Glasgow UBO strike

TWO HUNDRED staff from unemployment benefit offices and job centres in Glasgow are taking week-long strike action in support of the Civil and Public Services Association campaign against the imposition of YTS as cheap labour. The workers, members

of the Glasgow MSC and Strathclyde Central DE branches of the union, attended a rally addressed by John Macreadie and Andy Duncan from the recently victorious Sheffield MSC strikers.

By Stevie Lees and
Gerry Croall

Aidan MacAnespie

A 23-YEAR old County Tyrone catholic, Aidan MacAnespie, was shot dead last Sunday by British troops. He died instantly, shot in the back from a heavy machine gun after walking through the British army cross-border checkpoint at Aughnacloy.

He was a shop steward for the Federated Workers Union of Ireland at Monaghan Poultry Products.

The previous Sunday he was mentioned in a national paper as being regularly harassed by troops. Relatives say he was often held at the

checkpoint for up to an hour.

The day before he was shot he was stopped at a checkpoint on his way home from his uncle's funeral. His family said he was detained for an hour and troops threatened they would "get him".

All sections of the labour movement in Britain must condemn this killing and demand that Neil Kinnock condemn it as forcefully as he has in similar cases in Gaza and the West bank.

By Manus Maguire

Melton Post victory

MELTON POST workers have scored a complete victory over intimidatory management, at least temporarily.

After the workers struck solidly, demanding that plans were dropped to scrap the second delivery, management backed down. They then said that the workers would have to do two deliveries together, in other words, double their workload, to

clear the backlog. They hadn't bargained on meeting such determined resistance, however, with support coming in from other branches and were forced to make a complete climbdown.

We have to be wary, though, because the management may try it on again.

By Gina Nicholls
Melton UCW
(personal capacity)

Mersey Bus

MERSEY BUS Limited is facing the possibility of industrial action from angry staff, who are unhappy at the possibility of a three per cent increase in earnings which will formulate a new pay award for the coming financial year.

Mersey Bus, as many of the new bus companies, find themselves in a situation where they are struggling. This was obvious from day one. To meet the privatisation 2,000 jobs were lost through voluntary redundancy. The bus fleet was reduced by 200 with three garage closures. Many transport

workers who voted Tory now know the true meaning of privatisation and free market competition. In reality they mean smaller growth in earning capacity, poorer working conditions and uncertainty of employment in the future.

In an area like Merseyside we need more job security. It is the feeling of the trade union leadership that they will lead from the top unlike Ford's and NUS. The rank and file need the support of their trade union leaders. It is encouraging to know they will have their support.

Public meetings—Defend the NHS!

☆ 9 March, 7.30pm, Winkfield Community Centre, Winkfield Road, Wood Green.

☆ 10 March, 7.30pm, Leytonstone Library, Church Lane, Leytonstone.

Militant

Defend the health service
 Assemble: Embankment from 11am
 March: From Embankment 12 noon
 Rally: Hyde Park 2.30pm
TUC rally 5 March

No to Baker's

Bill

This Saturday (27 February), tens of thousands of students will be demonstrating their anger at the Tories' Education Reform Bill, on a march organised by the National Union of Students (NUS).

By Andrew Brady

The attacks contained in this Bill threaten the whole future of education in Britain and have enraged students throughout the country.

The Bill will mean course closures and job losses, with a drastic fall in the quality of education. The Tories, once opponents of state intervention, have become the most fervent supporters of 'centralisation'. All polytechnics are to be taken out of local authority control. Kenneth Baker, secretary of State for Education, will exclusively choose the people to sit on the proposed university and polytechnic funding bodies. The idea of 'education for all' has been turned into 'education for the needs of big business'.

The Bill will also remove local authorities' ability to top up funds for polys. Millions will be removed from funding and thousands of students would lose the chance to study. FE colleges will become nothing more than YTS slave labour centres.

Students are fuming because the attack on education comes on top of a 23 per cent reduction in grants since 1979, and because 250,000 FE students receive no grant whatsoever. Now the Tories are threatening to replace grants with loans, ignoring the fact that 50 per cent of students already require a loan in the form of an overdraft.

A recent survey by an Edinburgh

University lecturer shows that bad exam results are linked to student poverty. Even after struggling through education, students face the threat of the dole: an incredible 23 per cent of polytechnic students are still unemployed a year after graduating.

Privatisation

Education, along with other vital services like the NHS, is being 'reformed' (ie cut!) in the interests of the wealthy at the expense of the millions who rely on such services and cannot afford to 'go private'. Underlying these attacks is the crisis in the economy and the Tories' desire to reduce public spending.

But by attacking both students and workers in education, the Tories are unwittingly laying the basis for their own defeat. Students can link with the strength of the trade unions to defeat Baker's Bill. Unfortunately, the Kinnockite Labour leadership of NUS have failed to grasp the opportunity of a joint campaign. Instead, the demonstration this Saturday will only be aimed at mobilising students.

However, Labour clubs and students' unions everywhere must begin the building of an education alliance of students and workers. They must link the struggle to defend education with the defence of the NHS. Students must ensure that coachloads of

workers and students attend the TUC demonstration in defence of the Health Service on March 5. This must be used as the launching point for a one day general strike to defend education, defend the NHS and stop the attacks on youth.

Such action can lay the basis for an education alliance which opens up education for all.

NUS must fight for:-

- * public sector unity against the Tories—defend education and the NHS,
- * a campaign of action with low paid workers for a living grant and a living wage,
- * a socialist education system with real democratic control by workers and students.



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

Tory cuts have already hit students badly even before the introduction of the education Bill. One student on a two year social care course will finish at the end of the first year as the social worker is taking early retirement and will not be replaced and the health worker's one year contract is not

being renewed.

This student and many others receive a grant of £7 a week with which they have to provide their own paper and equipment. By April they have to raise £150 for a no option barge trip!

NUS Demonstration-Saturday 27th Feb. All Militant sellers to assemble at Cleopatras Needle from 10.30am onwards, for collection of leaflets, papers, stickers and tins.

Become a
Militant
 supporter



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I would like to donate £ p each week/month to the fighting fund.

Sell

I would like to sell papers per week (minimum 5) on a sale or return basis.

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Address

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Return to the Circulation Department, Militant, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

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.