

Militant

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Inside

Russia and E. Europe:

Splits at the top

Upheavals from below

By Peter Taaffe

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Poll tax - we won't pay

AS SHE appeared in the stand, nothing could be heard above the boos and hisses of thousands of fans waving 'red cards' distributed by the health unions. At the Scottish Cup Final Margaret Thatcher was left in no doubt what 74,000 Celtic and Dundee United fans thought of her hated poll tax.

By Jim McVicar,
Glasgow District
councillor,
and Eddie Donaghy

To try and rebuild support for the Tory government in Scotland, she had come to present the Cup. But she dared not meet the teams on the pitch; it was considered a threat to her safety.

Opposition to the poll tax is building up throughout the country. In local shopping centres, people are signing up to join the fight, with comments like "I'll go to jail before paying the bloody thing". Even in the House of Lords there has been unease at imposing a tax which hits a dustman as hard as a duke.

In Glasgow alone, more than 2,000 people have attended 15 anti-poll-tax public meetings. It is estimated that 20 per cent of poll tax registration forms have not been sent in and thousands have been returned with requests for more information.

The Strathclyde Region registration officer has told Dumbarton District Council, which has refused to collaborate in the implementation of the tax, that he is to pry into their confidential lists of council tenants and users of libraries and sports centres.

In the Lothians, in the last week alone six anti-poll-tax unions have been set up at enthusiastic meetings. At Bonnyrigg, one of the many women present admitted she had missed *Coronation Street* for the first time in 15 years!

At the meeting in Pilton, a pensioner was greeted with great applause when she said: "Every week it's the same - rents going up, prices going up and now benefits being cut. It's the system, there must be something wrong with the system."

The campaign is building

momentum. In Edinburgh, 40 representatives of 20 different anti-poll-tax organisations have met to form a city-wide federation.

Working-class families have been enormously encouraged by the anti-poll-tax unions. There is a feeling that at last something is happening in the local schemes to fight the Tories.

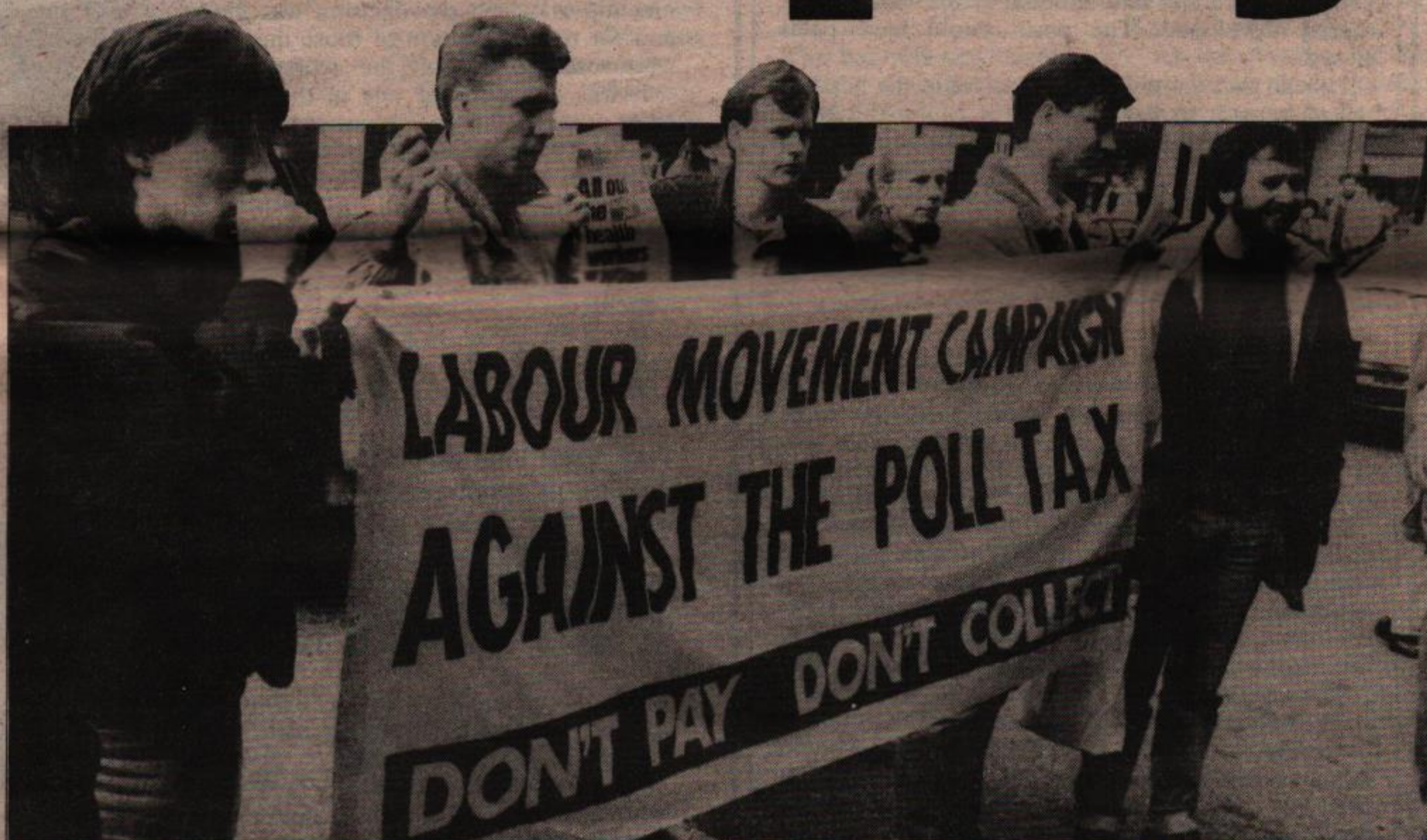
The Labour Party Young Socialists have been in the forefront. A voter in the Edinburgh local elections told the Labour candidate at the polling station in Niddrie: "I'm voting Labour not because of you but because of the Young Socialists".

Ready to fight

In contrast, Labour-controlled regional councils have meekly agreed to comply with government regulations and introduce the poll tax. The working class is ready to fight, but their Labour representatives are shamefully bowing down to the government.

The 'Stop it' campaign, dominated by Labour's right wing, who oppose a policy of non-compliance, has failed to build a base in the communities.

At the Tory Party Scottish conference, Thatcher stated her intention to "regain Scotland for the Conservatives". But the housing schemes will remain no-go areas for the Tories. One visit to the Scottish Cup Final will not wipe clean the crimes of the Tories on working-class people in Scotland. Like Thatcher at Hampden Park, the Tory poll tax will be shown the red card, in Scotland, England and Wales, as workers take up the fight against this iniquitous tax.



Anti-poll-tax protesters lobbying Scottish Labour Party conference.

Photo: Steve McTaggart.

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Militant

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Lessons of P&O

THE SEAFARERS' strike has vividly brought home the need for a fighting socialist leadership within the trade unions.

For 16 weeks Dover seafarers have been determined to defend jobs, hard-won conditions and safety at sea. They have brilliantly answered the cynical claim of the 'new realists' that workers will not fight.

Tragically however, at each stage their will to win has come up against the obstacle of the leadership of the National Union of Seamen (NUS).

In February, faced with a legal challenge, the leadership wound down the developing national strike in solidarity with the Isle of Man Steam Packet workers. A decisive leadership then could have struck a massive blow for all NUS members.

Dover P&O workers stayed out in their own battle. The particularly brutal P&O management had drawn encouragement from the union leaders' vacillation. They became even more determined to destroy all that NUS members have won over the years.

But even though all other ferry companies were waiting for P&O to win so they could impose similar conditions, the NUS leaders refused to develop the strike nationally.

After weeks of fighting alone, a minority of seafarers began to lose heart. A small breach in the strike was then utilised by P&O and some sailings restarted.

But the response of seafarers nationally was magnificent. From below a national strike developed. As a result Sealink took the NUS to court, and the funds of the union were plundered. If the NUS leaders had made a clear call, a full national strike and international action would have rapidly developed. The ports would have been closed.

Instead they simply put themselves at the head of the movement to keep control of it. As the NUS lawyer said in court, Sam McCluskie "had little choice but to lead from the head so that in the long term he would retain the confidence of his men."

Then, to contain the action, the leadership turned to an unholy alliance with Sealink, who offered some casual jobs. For Sealink that was a device to break the strike. Rather than create jobs, they will get rid of seafarers if P&O win their battle.

The ending of the secondary action by the NUS leaders will have further encouraged the ferry bosses. McCluskie's excuse is that the strike was crumbling. But any loss of support was entirely due to the lack of clear direction from the top.

Now the Dover strikers have been left without the active industrial support of other British seafarers. This makes much harder the chance of securing active solidarity from dockers and seafarers on the continent. Apparently Calais dockers have already turned down their union's call for action for precisely this reason.

The national NUS leaders accept that the survival of the union is at stake from the threat of non-union labour being introduced by P&O and they admit that "the threat is real—not just for P&O but for Sealink as well". Yet they actually believe they can be protected by working hand-in-glove with Sealink to isolate and damage P&O!

As a Harwich delegate at the NUS conference said, the leadership misunderstand the workings of capitalism if they believe the union can use one employer against another.

Nationally all that is left now is a commercial war to beat P&O. All active trade unionists will strive to help this campaign. But P&O have massive resources. Only 10 per cent of their profits come from ferry operations, as opposed to 50 per cent of Sealink's.

The battle of Wapping against Murdoch showed the difficulty of trade unionists maintaining a trade war over a lengthy period.

The strength of the working class is in its organisation and the power to hit the employers through industrial action.

Dover seafarers have kept this fight alive. They understand the importance of upholding the credibility of their union. Trade unionists nationally must campaign to sustain this strike financially and to help to rebuild broader solidarity.

Many activists in this strike are already drawing the longer term lessons, that in the NUS and the unions generally an urgent campaign must be developed to build support for the broad left, to help secure a fighting socialist leadership at all levels.

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NUS strike:

'Victory snatched away'

ANGRY SCENES took place at the National Union of Seamen's Conference on Monday 5 May as the leadership came under criticism for their handling of the seafarers' dispute.

By Darren Summers

Twenty sacked P&O workers from Dover had travelled to Hull to lobby delegates and to call for action to ensure their reinstatement. Representatives of the sacked seafarers in Aberdeen, Belfast and Heysham were also there.

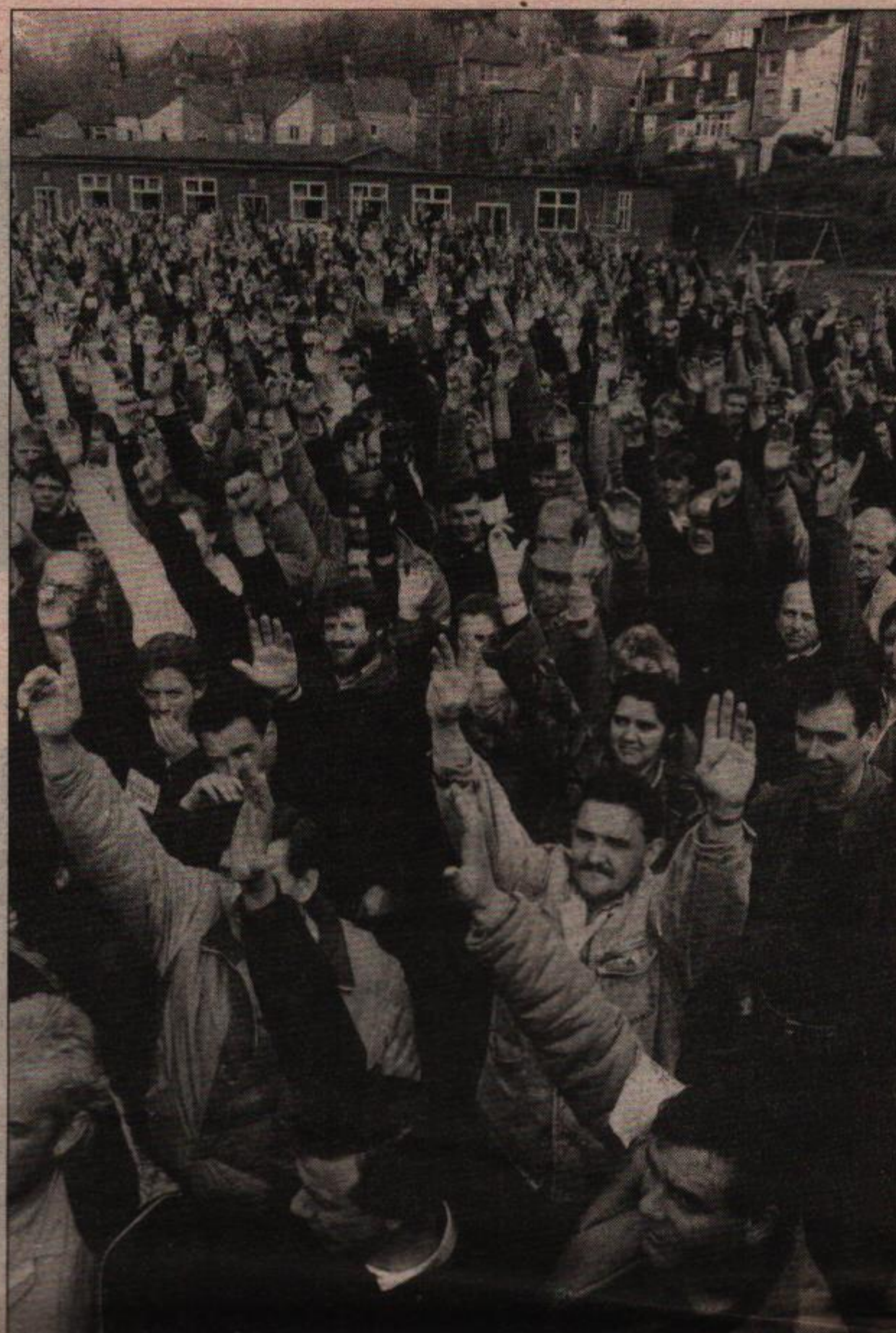
The Dover seafarers explained why they had come: "We wanted to put a rank and file position over. It was wrong of the leadership to call off the secondary action. It caused demoralisation. The reason there are scabs is down to money problems. The union should have given regular amounts to the strikers."

"We don't necessarily want McCluskie out, we want him to fight for us. We want him to speak on behalf of the workers. We want him to put pressure on the TUC to get Numast and the TGWU to give us backing."

An emergency motion from Liverpool noted the deplorable recommendation of the EC to call off all secondary action. It called for an investigation into the EC meeting at which the decision was made and for the resignation of those members who voted to call off the action.

It was defeated but one in three delegates at this small conference voted for it.

As we returned to Dover the mood of the strikers was confident. Plans are being laid to establish a Broad Left within the NUS to ensure the leadership does fight for the workers.



Dover strikers vote unanimously to carry on striking, while their national leaders retreat.

Photo: John Harris (IFL).

The speech McCluskie wouldn't hear

THE VOICE of the strikers was heard at their union's conference when sacked P&O worker Sue Haines spoke.

But general secretary Sam McCluskie did not want to hear. He left in the middle of her speech and the microphone was turned off on her. We reprint extracts from her speech below:

"I'm a rank and file P&O striker who voted along with 2,300 other members to withdraw our labour to fight against the archaic working practices P&O management wanted to impose."

"I am proud to say that Dover members, previously notoriously non-political have shown courage and tenacity over the past 15 weeks."

"Trade unionists realised the implications should we lose. They urged us to stand and fight to ensure that P&O would not be able to impose unsafe working conditions that would jeopardise the crews and the public. They urged us to fight to save our union now under attack."

"Last week was the biggest high of the dispute, the debate in Parliament, the lorry drivers' blockade and the united union of seafarers. We had it there—victory—and it was snatched away from us. Questions have to be answered and the EC must understand we feel that our loyalty to the union executive has been betrayed."

"We now once again find ourselves battling alone. Surely trade union leaders should have by now learnt from the experience of the

miners' and printers' struggles."

"We understand that the Tory anti-trade union laws leave little room for manoeuvre. But all union leaders must now accept that if the only way to fight and win is by breaking the Tory laws then it must be done."

"All seafarers know that a commercial war will not win this dispute. Why should we be involved in a bitter struggle for our livelihoods when our unions allow another unwanted shipping baron to make more profit?"

"You cannot expect union members to stand firm if you yourselves are not prepared on our behalf to take this dispute down the road it should go."

"If the finances and the buildings have to be sacrificed it must be accepted. But at least at the end of it we should have a strong and united membership who can help the leadership build a better and stronger union. I think it has been proven by delegates speaking this morning, you have seriously misjudged the support and strength of the NUS membership around the country and you have seriously misjudged the feelings of strength of the seafarers in Kent."

"We are willing soldiers. We shall fight but you must fight with us, not against us. Do not let down the seafarers in Dover, people who have willingly sacrificed so much."

"Don't let down the man whose wife has thrown him out because he will not cross the picket line. Or the stewardess, a single parent with two children, whose neighbour applied for and took her job."

"We shall see in Dover on Saturday 21 a rally organised by rank and file members. A visible sign of how the mass of trade unionists are behind us. Let the leaders of their respective unions take heed of the power we hold as a combined body. Let's use that power now before the Tory laws crush us and no one will be left to speak out."

"You, Sam, and the rest of the EC owe it to your sacked members, not only

in Dover but in Belfast and Aberdeen. You also owe it to the 193 people who were killed on 6 March 1987. We the Dover P&O sacked strikers demand that the NUS leadership call and campaign for a national 24 hour stoppage for the reinstatement of all sacked NUS members."

"The NUS leadership must demand that all port unions give their total support with solidarity action and give full backing to any individual who takes this course of action. If our sacked NUS brothers and sisters are not immediately reinstated we demand that the union leadership call an all out national NUS strike."

"We further demand that all P&O scabs be expelled immediately and pressure from the leadership be brought on Numast to abide by their decision not to sail with non-NUS and replacement crews."

Driver victimised

LORRY DRIVERS' spokesman, Tony Budell, was sacked as soon as the blockade of Dover was lifted. He has since been down on the P&O picket line. "I found out there is more to life than just sitting behind the wheel of a truck," he said.

When the lorry drivers voted to end their action, Polish drivers held their coats over their heads, fearful that TV cameras might show them voting to carry on the blockade and that they would be in trouble when they got back to Poland.

Crisis pounds at Tory leaders' door

THE UNPRECEDENTED public clash between Thatcher and Lawson over the exchange rate for the pound is one of the most serious divisions in the government since the Tories came to power in 1979.

By Ben Eastop

The split is no longer between 'wets' and monetarists now even Thatcher's firm supporters are standing up to her.

With rebellions recently over poll tax, housing benefit and health charges, Thatcher and her Downing Street 'kitchen cabinet' have been compelled to make a show of unity with the Chancellor. Interest rates have now been cut by half of one per cent.

But this may not be sufficient to halt the upward pressure on sterling. If this continues then the battle between Lawson and Thatcher over how far to intervene in the markets to hold down the pound, could well break out all over again.

Geoffrey Howe came down on Lawson's side, possibly remembering the disastrous effects of high interest rates coupled to a strong pound which deepened the 1979-81 recession, when he was chancellor.

A strong pound is not a sign of a healthy economy. The pound's exchange value, now at its highest for over two years, is a sign of crisis.

The Tories face a dilemma: if they allow the pound to rise further, to 'find its



Chancellor Nigel Lawson at odds with Thatcher.

own level' as Thatcher has argued, British industry would continue to lose out to foreign competitors at home and abroad.

The balance of trade, already critically in the red, would worsen. British capitalism, still suffering from decades of underinvestment, cannot take advantage of even an artificially extended consumer credit boom.

However, if interest rates are cut substantially (they are still higher than Japan and Germany), this could mean higher inflation and credit spiralling out of control as the consumer spending boom continues. Either way they cannot win.

Lawson has been more

responsive to the demands of the CBI, representing industry, who are squealing about the high cost of borrowing which is eating into their profits.

Inflation

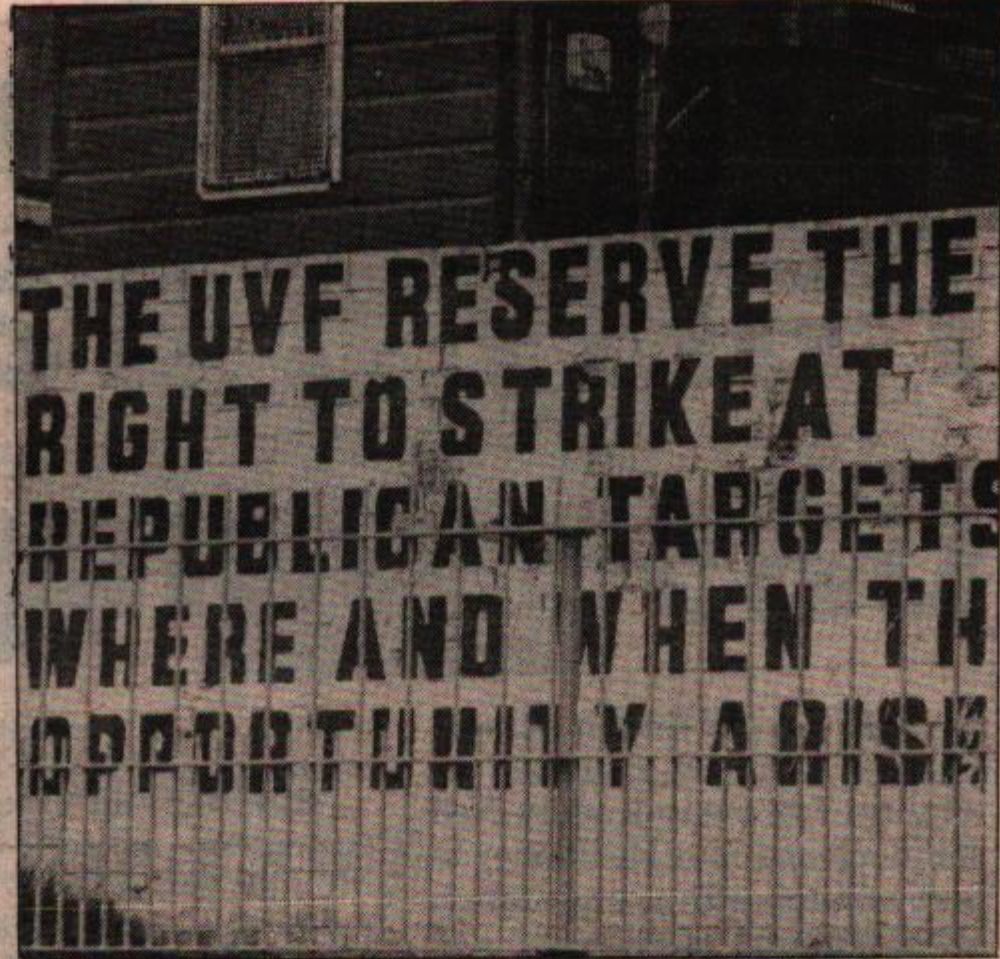
Thatcher has acted roughly in the interests of the financial institutions and the City. They and the treasury want to keep borrowing within strict limits by relatively high interest rates. Rising inflation, which could result from lowering interest rates, would undermine the massive wealth accumulated by the money lenders under the Tories.

Lawson's comments in the *Wall Street Journal* that

there could be a new round of interest rate rises worldwide, following rises in the US, sent share prices tumbling knocking \$7 billion off values around the world. This in itself shows the precarious nature of the world economy after last October's shares crash.

Thatcher's obsession with a strong pound, regardless of the effects on manufacturing industry and exports, could be a factor in starting a new, and potentially far worse, recession this time.

Unfortunately Labour's leaders have lined up behind Lawson instead of exposing the issue as a conflict between two wings of capitalism in crisis.



Loyalist slogan in Belfast.

Three die in new loyalist offensive

THE ULSTER Volunteer Force (UVF) attack on 15 May on lunch-time drinkers in the Avenue bar, Belfast, reverts to the indiscriminate terror tactics of the 1970s.

By a correspondent

The bar was singled out because of its mainly catholic clientele. Shortly before closing time, one of two gunmen rang the security buzzer. When let into the bar, they opened up with automatic gunfire; ten customers were hit. Three died and others are seriously injured.

The attack has been claimed by the Protestant Action Force (PAF), a cover name for the UVF. The UVF were also responsible for the brutal murder on 10 May of a catholic bricklayer in his north Belfast home.

Terry McDaid was shot in the stomach when a UVF gang broke into his home. His wife, who tried to fend off the attackers, said they fired all round the room, also wounding the victim's mother, before calmly walking out.

These and other attacks signal a new loyalist terror offensive. The UVF is known to have received its share of a large loyalist arms consignment. They have more sophisticated weaponry than ever before—Kalashnikov rifles, Browning pistols and anti-personnel grenades.

The other major loyalist paramilitary, the UDA, murdered ATGWU shop steward Charles McGrillen outside his workplace in Ormeau Road, Belfast, earlier this year. The removal of UDA commander-in-chief, Andy Tyrie, could well produce an internal power struggle and unleash further sectarian violence.

In many loyalist attacks, there is disturbing evidence of complicity by the security forces, at least at some level. The routine army/police presence in catholic districts often seems to disappear when loyalist gangs attack.

The shooting of mourners in Milltown cemetery, Belfast, raised

questions of how the attacker knew the usual military presence at funerals would be missing, and why the military did not intervene.

After the killing of two soldiers in Andersonstown, the PAF sent death threats to families of some of those arrested before the police released their names.

As the Avenue bar had been blown up by loyalists before, the bar had a 'panic button' connected to North Queen Street RUC station about two minutes' drive away. On Sunday this button was pressed as soon as the attack started but the RUC took 20 minutes to arrive.

Threat

The upturn in activity by these right wing murder groups is a threat to the labour movement. Historically loyalist terror has targeted not only catholics, but trade unionists and socialists.

Trade union activities were probably why Charles McGrillen was picked out and may have been the reason for a catholic trade union activist in the Gamble Simms steel plant, Lisburn, being seriously injured in an assassination attempt last week.

Only weeks ago, 4000 DHSS workers showed magnificent solidarity in their strike against INLA death threats. Mass united action can drive the paramilitaries back.

The trade union movement must respond to these attacks in like manner. A rank and file conference of trade unionists together with genuine community organisations must now be called to discuss concretely how to defend workers against sectarian attack from whatever quarter.

The security forces cannot provide defence. Nor can any of the paramilitary groups, loyalist or republican, as their actions only inflame the situation. Only the trade union movement has the authority and power to effectively stop the killings by mobilising tens of thousands of workers, catholic and protestant, in their own defence.

Labour leaders admit Militant attracts youth

LABOUR LEADERS have admitted that Militant supporters are having more success attracting youth than they are.

By Mark Meredith
National Chair, YTURC

But their astonishing response is to launch yet more attacks on the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) and the Youth Trades Union Rights Campaign (YTURC) because of Militant's influence in them.

"YTURC is picking up the ground very successfully," says a consultation document discussed at the party's latest youth committee.

Does this high praise mean the youth committee now supports YTURC?

Not likely! Witch-hunting union official Tom Sawyer's way of rewarding success was to move a resolution saying the campaign worked against the party's interests and encouraging organisations to



have nothing to do with it.

And they have attracted the attention of Murdoch's *Sunday Times*, which comments: "Labour is losing its musical battle for the soul of the party's youth and Militant is holding its own..."

The report admits that attacks on the LPYS have backfired badly. Members forced out of the LPYS by the dropping of the age limit have built YTURC, which has gained 5,000 members in less than six months and had its first national conference.

The right-wing's response is to go for more of the same disastrous attacks.

"Regional party officials should spend their time getting rid of the Militants from the LPYS," John Evans MP told the committee.

The report is obsessed with "reducing the effect of Militant...The consensus was that any regional structure, or even regional events would allow Militants to move in." It proposes raising the minimum membership for an LPYS branch to ten.

The right are only forced to discuss a programme for young people in an attempt to counter the popularity of Militant's ideas. The report says Labour "urgently must produce a clear and attrac-

tive statement of all our youth policies and that they have to be sharp and radical."

This is where YTURC is successful, it said and proposed a "schools pack". If they want a radical youth programme, are they going to adopt policies such as guaranteed jobs, a living wage and an end to slave labour schemes? Perhaps not, because that would be the hated YTURC's programme!

YTURC's many supporters will undoubtedly voice their disgust at Sawyer's proposal and further attacks on the LPYS.

Photo: Militant

Labour Party news

Party's traditional base being lost

LABOUR LISTENS is attacked as a "cynical exercise" in support for party leaders Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley in a report following consultation with regional party staff and agents.

By Mike Waddington

"An exercise in yuppifying and selling out the traditional base of the party", was one comment, and the "NEC/party don't listen to the members," was another.

Agents were asked: "What is the biggest problem facing you when speaking to a general committee or branch on Labour Listens?" Half of the regional organisers mentioned cynicism, low morale, distrust of the Labour Listens exercise and convincing members of its relevance. But the report didn't provide any answer to this.

Another report, to be considered by the NEC, recommends setting up a national membership list, allowing members to join through the national office and introducing a cut price fee for

members of affiliated trade unions.

At a National executive sub-committee meeting right-wing MP John Evans said: "We should eventually move to a position where everyone who paid the political levy automatically became a member." But even Kinnock seemed unhappy about this idea. It would be seen by activists as an attempt to flood the party artificially to boost the right-wing.

Unwelcome

Membership in 1987 was down to 289,000 from 297,000 the year before. The report says: "It would now appear that less people are being more active. The unwelcome face of the party is a regular complaint made by members...particularly new members, many of whom attend one branch meeting and never participate again."

But there is nothing to explain why the political life of the party has drained away, or why membership is falling. The solution is to set up a national membership list, with a file on

every member carrying personal details and positions held. The list and the files would be available for the constituency party secretary, the regional office and the Member of Parliament.

The report gives assurances that the data would be strictly factual and would not be developed into any form of file on a member. But as Dennis Skinner commented: "We are not sure who could run off with the membership list and files. There could be a code put against people's names on their files, like the London Labour Party did to Bermondsey."

Hound activists

The central list will be a gift to witch hunters, who have already used covert methods of spying on individual members and keeping files on *Militant* supporters. It will be used by the right to hound activists. By introducing the reduced membership the right hope to reduce the party to an inactive mass, which won't challenge the leadership's rewriting of party policy.

Kilfoyle out of step with party

WORKERS HAVE responded magnificently to the appeal to support the 47 surcharged Liverpool councillors.

Many workers pay monthly amounts on a check-off system. More than £14,000 is coming in every month towards the legal costs of £400,000.

As part of this campaign, the 47 have given every household a copy of *Liverpool Labour News* to mark the first anniversary of their disqualification, giving Labour a boost in the local elections.

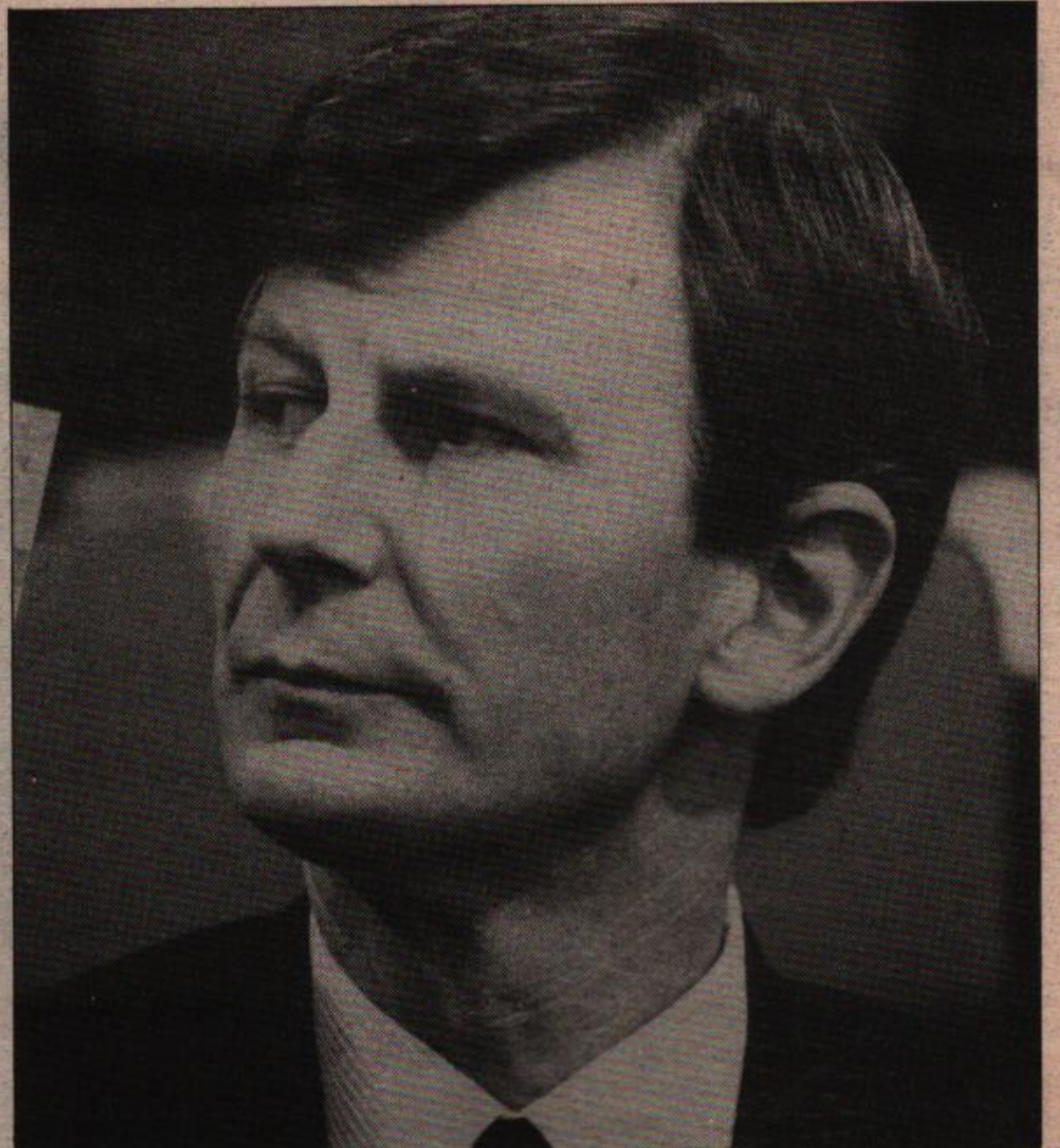
Yet incredibly, Labour agent Peter Kilfoyle, appointed to police the Liverpool Labour Party, publicly attacked the 47 in the *Liverpool Daily Post*, a paper boycotted by the labour movement, alleging that the news sheet could add to election expenses.

Kilfoyle's own ward party, Grassendale, has passed a resolution censoring him for speaking to the *Post*, and has called for an investigation into his behaviour over this issue.

Liverpool's Labour group have voted by 26 to 19 to continue the boycott of the *Post* and *Echo*.

For the man who recently said, referring to *Militant*: "You can only beat good organisation with better organisation," Kilfoyle recently showed his talents. He organised a meeting to support John Prescott's campaign for deputy leader. 25 people turned up.

By Dave Cotterill



Bryan Gould—chief architect of Labour's policy review.

Policy review aims to purge socialism

LABOUR'S POLICY review is further proof that the fundamental aims of the party are under threat. It is another exercise in purging the party of its socialist principles.

By Ben Eastop

Policies are aimed at the 'consumer', home owners and the better-off, rather than any challenge to big business which would benefit low paid workers, the unemployed and the poor.

The review group on the "productive and competitive economy", led by Bryan Gould, has abandoned public ownership and nationalisation as a response to nine years of selling state assets.

Instead it calls for 'public interest companies' which would "meet the needs of the consumer and of the economy as a whole." Instead of renationalisation of public services, private companies would continue to reap profits from vital services. Labour would attempt to control these enterprises with new regulatory bodies.

A Labour government would continue to use the market and existing financial institutions for long term investment.

In the review of defence and international relations there are just four paragraphs on defence

policy. Emphasis is put on recent super power arms treaties and acceptance of Nato's role.

Kinnock has also hinted at acceptance of the US nuclear umbrella within the Nato framework—a further move from unilateralist policies passed by successive party conferences. He would not support a total ban of foreign nuclear weapons in Britain.

Environment

On the environment, the review group led by Jack Cunningham says little about the need for massive investment in public housing, or facilities for youth in the cities, but talks about respect for privacy and "not making excessive noise." And echoing Thatcher's remarks: dirty streets are not just due to the failure of local authorities, but the responsibility of those who drop litter.

Labour would keep secret workplace or postal ballots for strike action. There would be a new bill of workers' rights and the power to sequester unions would be removed. But it is not clear how much of the Tories' anti-union legislation would stay in force. Policy on secondary picketing is vague, and this action may only be allowed in certain disputes. How this would be decided, and who by, isn't clear.

Stockport purge

RIGHT WINGERS in Stockport have launched another attack on *Militant* and the left.

Chief witch-finder, Labour group leader Alan Mobbs, has released a list of names, all of whom he claims are associated with *Militant*.

Mobbs won't say how he got hold of the names, but they came from an address book in a bag left overnight in the local Labour club. It seems the right have now stooped to rifling through the personal belongings of those they don't agree with.

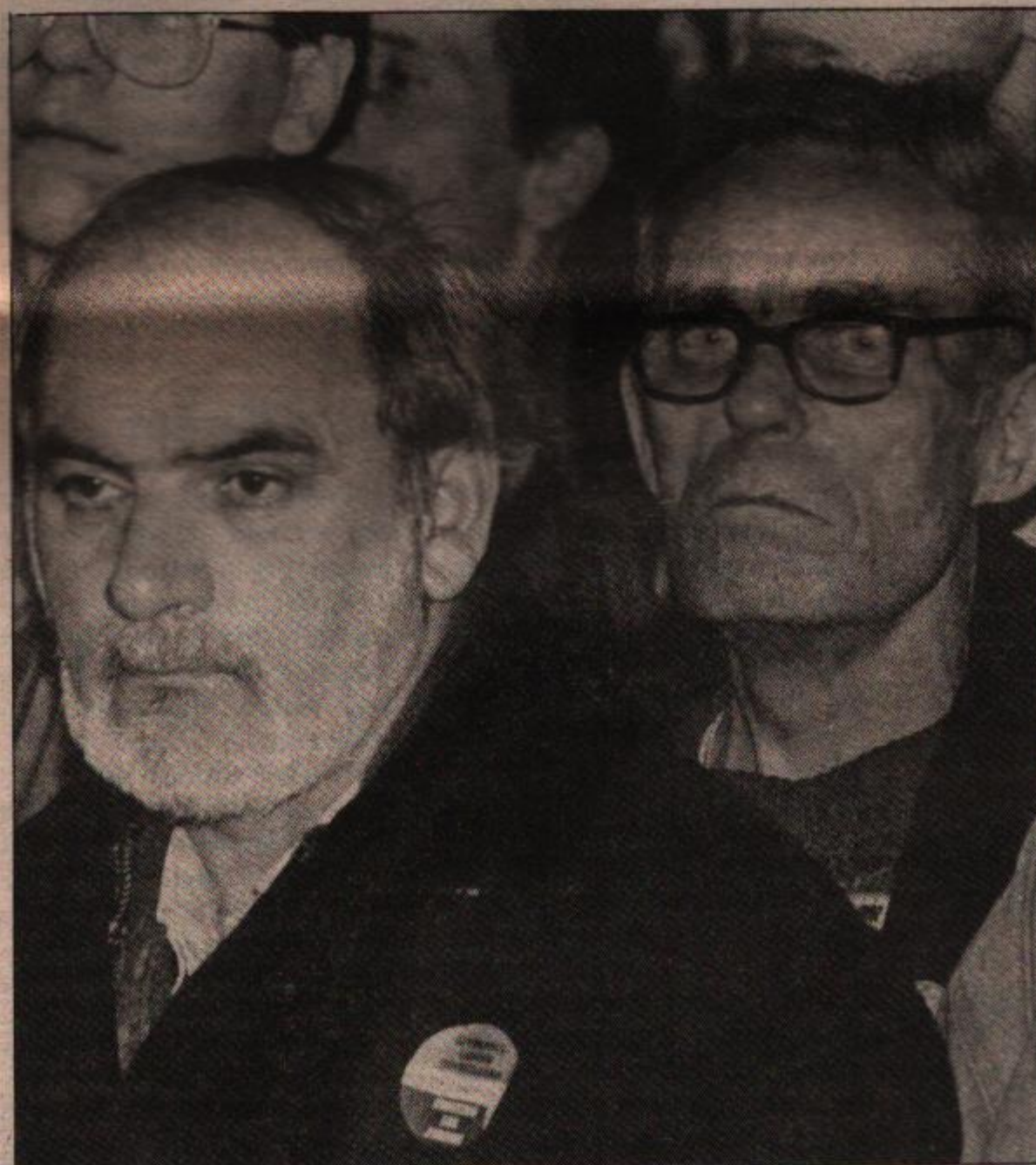
Many of the names on the list are not *Militant* supporters, or even politically active, so it's a

case of guilt by association.

The reason for this latest attack is clear. Despite Labour's successes in the local elections elsewhere, something was needed to divert attention away from the continuing dismal performance of the Labour group under Alan Mobbs' leadership.

The witch-hunters want the labour party as an election machine for their own careers. They've turned their backs on workers in struggle, and attack anyone in the party who stands in the way of their personal ambitions.

By a Militant supporter



Supporters of Liverpool Council at the High Court—councillors need support now to pay £400,000 costs. Photo: Dave Sinclair.

Making democracy more difficult

DEMOCRACY CAN be baffling—especially if you want to select a parliamentary candidate under the new Labour Party rules.

Our AEU branch recently had a circular attempting to explain the new electoral college, so we could make a choice of candidate. It used to be quite simple: the branch would meet, discuss the pros and cons of each candidate, then vote. Our delegate to the general management committee would then follow the branch's decision.

Now, as the circular says, it is "a little complicated." The share of the vote in the electoral college going to the affiliated organisa-

tions (unions etc) must not exceed 40 per cent. The share of that 40 per cent is divided amongst the affiliates according to their number of delegates on the general committee. So if the affiliated organisations together have more than 40 per cent of the delegates, the voting strength of each is worked out as a proportion relating to the size of their delegation. Got it?

The whole system is designed, not to extend democracy, but to put members off from participating.

By Alec Thraves

Chair, South Wales AEU
Broad Left

The Right's man for the job

LABOUR'S NEW youth and student officer—the replacement for Andy Bevan—has been appointed. His name is Neil Usher and he has all the right qualifications.....for the party leadership that is, who want a tame, uncritical youth organisation.

Usher has little record

of activity within the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) or of campaigning with young workers. He is the recently retired chair of the

Kinnockite National Organisation of Labour Students (Nols).

He is a member of the new right Labour Coordinating Committee

(LCC) who have backed the expulsion of Militant supporters. They were prime movers of the Sawyer proposals which imposed harsh curbs on the activities and democracy of the LPYS.

At the last Labour Party conference Usher moved a resolution supporting Sawyer's proposals, which were opposed by 90 per cent of LPYS members.

As Nols chair he has presided over a fall in membership. The last Nols conference was the smallest for at least 10 years with only 120 delegates there.

Usher has been appointed as the leadership's policeman of the LPYS, not to organise campaigns or help to build the LPYS. The YS supporter who applied for the job was not even interviewed.

But if his priority is to try to smash support for Marxism among Labour's youth, he has a long hard road ahead of him. The LPYS rank and file will fight to defend their rights and their political viewpoint.

By a Young Socialist



Manoeuvres about!

THE BRANCH ballot for the LPYS place on Labour's National Executive is being delayed by officials at Labour Party headquarters.

Joyce Gould (one of the party's senior organisers) claims that there are discrepancies between the LPYS branches registered at national and regional offices.

This is clearly an excuse for

delaying the ballot. All LPYS branches should make sure that they are registered at both regional and national offices.

And a further attack on the democratically elected LPYS representative on the national executive looks likely, with the suggestion that the place be elected by the party's national conference.

Strathclyde imposes Clause 28

LABOUR CONTROLLED Strathclyde regional council describes itself as an equal opportunities employer. But it is going along with the infamous clause 28, outlawing the so-called promotion of homosexuality.

The council has written to all college governing bodies under its control to say that the clause (now section 29 of the Local Government Act) comes into effect on 29 May and warning college councils that grants to student unions are conditional on them complying with it.

NUS

Some college councils will use this to attack gay and lesbian societies and college help lines. Right-wing governors could use the letter to stop students unions from affiliating to NUS.

At the recent National Union of Students (NUS) Scotland executive the Kinnockite 'Democratic Left' majority denied all knowledge of the letter although it was sent out on 18 April.

Militant supporters proposed that the executive demand withdrawal of the letter, send guidelines to student unions confirming their right to campaign on gay and lesbian rights and send a delegation to the council.

This position was passed and must now be implemented. A campaign must also be run in the labour movement to pressurise Labour councillors and resolutions must be sent to Strathclyde regional Labour Party.

Already Pollok Labour Party has condemned the move and Nalگو Broad Left members are taking the question up.

By a Scottish student



Labour students demonstrate against clause 28.



Fight for the future

Fighting Baker's bill

OCCUPATIONS HAVE broken out in several colleges around the country.

Many college authorities, like those at Middlesex and Newcastle, have been inspired by the Education Reform Bill to prepare the ground for course closures and privatisation. But the students' response has shown that Baker's bill will get a stormy reception when it is put into operation.

Militant supporters have advocated joint action by students and campus workers' unions to win the battles. Below are reports from several of the colleges taking action:

Middlesex Poly

IN A military style operation, 100 Police ended a three week occupation by students. In the early hours of Friday 13 May, four occupied sites were taken over simultaneously.

Earlier, the students union was served with an injunction which could result in fines of thousands of pounds.

Students had been occupying the college in protest against plans to move the humanities faculty to a different site, a step towards privatising the polytechnic and closing the faculty.

Militant supporters are advocating that students previously involved with the occupation campaign for a one day strike of all students and the college workforce. Such united action will be the only way to defeat the move and save the student union from bankruptcy.

By Paul Morris

University of London

FOUR HUNDRED students occupied the Senate House Library for 24 hours. They were protesting against plans to make it reference only.

This will mean medical and science books will be removed to another site and specialist libraries in

Trouble brewing

SCOTTISH AND Newcastle Breweries have axed a pop group due to play on one of their McEwans lager adverts.

They claim the group, the Shamen, advocate drug taking and show pornographic slides at their gigs. The Shamen say these allegations are ludicrous. The group say the sacking has more to do with the fact that they made an anti-Falklands war record and support Labour.

Scottish and Newcastle gave thousands to the Tory party last year. Who do you believe?

By Andy Walker Cleveland

several institutes of education will be closed. The plans will cost the university money and result in job losses.

Students believe the college authorities plan to close down the library altogether.

By Keith Budden Occupation committee (personal capacity)

Newcastle Poly

COLLEGE AUTHORITIES are proposing to move some of the college's students to an out of town campus. It would mean increased travel costs, accommodation difficulties and lack of facilities like creche and library.

Similar proposals were put forward at the end of last year, but due to protests by students and campus unions, led by Militant supporters, the director dropped the proposals.

But at the height of the exam period the poly directorate reintroduced the idea of 'rationalisation' through course moves.

Unable to learn the lessons of the previous campaign, the Socialist Students in Nols leadership of the student union executive have failed to involve the wider student body or the campus trade unions in the campaign.

Militant supporters are advocating a half day strike involving the wider student body and campus unions.

We hope a clear strategy will be adopted and victory will be secured.

By Paul Heron, Steve Gilbert and Garth Cadden

Newcastle polytechnic Militant supporters

Polytechnic of North London

VICTORY! AN occupation by 300 students has stopped plans to move exams to another site.

Discussions with management involving Natfhe and Nalگو union reps secured victory against the college management. Clearly, the recent one-day strike at PNL has left the management feeling nervous.



Where loadsamoney goes

BRITAIN'S RICHEST five per cent will have about £3 billion more to spend from June when the tax cuts come in, say economists Morgan Grenfell. They already have their wallets bulging with about £2-3 billion from increased company profits.

The *Daily Express* comments that most of this will go on luxury cars, holidays, hotels, private education and medicine and expensive domestic appliances. They recommend investors to put their money in concerns like private hospital operator AMI Healthcare.

But the *Express* also warns of a hard landing later in the year because all this spending on imports and holidays abroad will add billions to British capitalism's trade gap.

Star flaws

THE *DAILY Express* is not predicting the exact date of the next economic collapse. Neither is *Militant*, we just know it's coming. But one American astrologer, one of the breed beloved of President Reagan, is less circumspect.

Kathleen Johnson says that on 9 November, the day after the presidential elections, Saturn which represents restrictions and limits, will move into Capricorn, ruler of the economy. Uranus, which wreaks havoc, moves in the next day.

All of this spells trouble with a capital T, she says. Even if you think it spells nonsense with a capital B, she makes about as much sense as most of Reagan's advisers.

Copping it

THREE SENIOR West Berlin police officers were beaten up by thugs on a May Day demonstration, and the Tory press hardly mentioned it. The officers were in plain clothes and were hit repeatedly with batons and tear-gassed by the police, despite screaming at their colleagues that they were their commanding officers and not demonstrators.

Lawyers for the 130 people arrested are pleased to have such reliable witnesses to the police's brutal behaviour.

A song for profit

THE RECENT Eurovision Song Contest was about as good for cordial relations between European nations as the battle of the Somme, but someone benefitted. Ireland was the host nation, so Irish capitalists sponsored it to the tune of £1 million.

The result was a two hour advert for Irish big business. Tourism in Norway went up 40 per cent after the contest was held in Oslo. The songs may have been diabolical but the sound of cash registers will, the bosses hope, be sweet music this summer.

Sink or swim?

SUTCLIFFE CATERING have just produced a pamphlet "Eat fit, stay fit". One of its health tips says: "swimming is an ideal exercise". Underneath it is the logo of Sutcliffe's parent company—the P&O group.

Home, sweet home?

THE OLD people's home where I work was purpose-built for elderly people who were fully mobile and sound in mind.

By a residential home worker

But these days, privately-owned homes take most of the residents who can walk and talk and are not confused. At the same time, NHS cuts are putting more people who are confused and have psychiatric problems in our homes.

Community care is impossible at present. Without the necessary cash, old people left in the 'community' can't take care of themselves and end up in council homes.

They often need facilities you find in psychiatric hospitals. Our staff are not trained nurses and we haven't

enough staff to care for the incontinent and confused residents we have. At least 20 of the 48 are incontinent, some doubly incontinent. 12 are in wheel chairs and seven use walking frames.

Confusion

Many residents are schizophrenic or manic-depressive or violent; many are very confused. The staff can deal with incontinence, but confusion needs special care. We've also got two men with permanent catheters. It's pure luck that I'm a registered nurse so I can show staff how to take care of one; there's no guarantee homes will have nurses around.

Some staff have done social work courses but if you have to distribute drugs, you need a medical background. We also need visits from occupational

therapists and physiotherapists.

You need training on how to motivate old people, otherwise they just sit around, and in the long run just give up. I'm learning how to do this as I go along.

Sometimes you work a 16-hour shift. You can be on duty at 7am when the night shift are still there. When the day staff come in, they finish getting people up, washing top to toe or bathing, changing clothes every day and toileting all in time for an 8am breakfast.

There's a pile of paper work and visitors to deal with, doctors, psychiatrists, social workers, priests, new residents. We might have a death or an illness or have to supervise people sentenced to community work.

Finance is a bigger problem than ever. The officers handle the home's budget. You're al-

lowed so much per week for food, but have to make sure it's varied with a particular watch on special diets.

Cutbacks

It is difficult to get furniture and fittings, we're always being told to cut down. Even when windows were broken in October's storms, the joiner was told he could only do a limited number.

The council don't want us to work so much overtime either. Neither do we but unless we get more workers, there is no alternative. We have to cover the home 24 hours a day.

An 84-year-old man started singing: "I wish I was in Greenall Whitley land." one morning. Perhaps he was singing the sentiments of residents and staff.



At a council old peoples' home in Wandsworth.

Pension off the bosses!

WATCH OUT for your pension rights! The Tories and big business are after the money workers have paid in for a comfortable retirement.

By Steve Wood

The Tories know that the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme (SERPS), which gave people without company schemes a reasonable pension will cost a lot of money. They are reducing the payout for people who retire after 2013 (probably most people reading this article.)

They have made the SERPS scheme totally unattractive to most people. Many workers have compulsory Occupational Pension Schemes (Occ.Pen.) often known as the pension fund. You pay reduced rate national insurance and pay into the Occ. Pen. instead.

These schemes vary from awful to very good where the

pension is fixed and any shortfall is made up by the employer.

These plans have recently made far more money than they've paid out, thanks to massive redundancies and large stock market profits. British Rail's pension fund is valued at £5.5 billion and it is only one of the ten largest.

Big business

The government now decrees that funds can only have 5 per cent surplus over current demands. £300 million a year has officially rolled into Nigel Lawson's coffers through taxation. The *Financial Times* thinks this is an underestimate.

Big business is after your money too. US firms creamed off £3,000 million from pensions in 1984 alone. It is harder to do this in Britain but Lucas just stopped paying into their pension fund in 1985 while their workers carried on; this 'contributions holiday' added

£13 million to their profits. Only half-day strikes forced the company to negotiate better deals.

Firms have taken over other companies just for the pension fund as Hanson plc wanted to do when it tried to take over Imperial Group. Parasitic bosses may even wind up the scheme to start afresh, creaming off the surplus in the meantime.

The rail unions have been in a battle over the BR pension fund's £1.2 billion surplus. The employers want a 'contributions holiday' to cut the grant it needs from the government. The unions want lower contributions, bigger lump sum provisions and death-in-service payments.

Thatcher wants us all on privately-run Personal Pension schemes. She is removing the compulsory element of Occ. Pens. and subsidising private schemes to encourage us to put our money directly with capitalist investors.

The businesses running the

schemes benefit most, deducting on average 19 per cent, sometimes nearly 30 per cent. Employers usually find these schemes cheaper than others. Hoover had to back down from introducing one in 1986 when workers threatened to strike.

No guarantee

Personal pensions are based on investment so if the stock market does badly so does your pension. You are not guaranteed anything, just what comes out of the profits, when you retire.

Capitalism makes life bleak for most workers reaching pension age. The Labour Party must be committed to a pension of at least £130 a week linked to the cost of living for everyone along with reduction in retirement age to 55 for everyone.

Most of all, it should be fighting to pension off capitalism well before most of us retire!

Lenin at Alexandra Palace

AN ORGAN recital, a play entitled the *Doll's House* and a gymkhana, were amongst the entertainments laid on 85 years ago when the Social Democratic Federation held its May Day celebrations in the Alexandra Palace.

The SDF was an early Marxist grouping that numbered some of the most militant of the trade union leaders of the day in its ranks, like Will Thorne (leader of what is now Gmbatu) and Tom Mann (of the engineers).

The SDF played an integral part in the foundation of the Labour Party. Of course today's right wing Labour leadership try to deny any involvement of Marxism in the establishment of the Party.

When the Alexandra Palace rally was held, the working class around the world was just awakening to its revolutionary potential. It instinctively understood the need for the international solidarity that May Day celebrates.

Internationalism

The meeting was a great continental gathering. Along with German, Jewish and Russian choirs, socialists from America, Poland, Spain, France and Germany addressed the meeting in their own languages.

Top of the list was Vladimir Lenin, founder of the Bolshevik Party, leader of the October Revolution and the

greatest revolutionary leader of the time. Just as today, youth led the way. Banners and placards had been made up from the different socialist Sunday schools. "Down with child labour," read the banner from Battersea. Edmonton youth asked: "Are we to die in the workhouse-workers march for socialism."

From South East London came the call; "Workers of the world unite." Whilst Walworth stated: "English workers' children send fraternal greetings to the workers' children of the world - down with wage slavery."

In 1988 the labour movement has returned to the Alexandra Palace. The South East TUC held a May Day meeting

there, and the Labour Party plans a national health rally there in July.

Pioneers

But in terms of the mass turnout mobilised and of the fighting socialist speeches it will be the *Militant* Rally on 19 June that will recapture the radical commitment and international outlook of those early pioneers of the working class movement.

However, the organisers of the *Militant* rally have to announce that anyone this year expecting a ring side seat at the gymkhana will be disappointed!



Lenin addressing a Marx memorial meeting.

Where to find us

EAST SCOTLAND

For details of meetings contact: Andrea Charles-031 659 6187.

STRATHCLYDE

For details of meetings contact: 041 221 1443.

NORTHERN

For details of meetings contact: Bill Hopwood-091 276 1736.

MERSEYSIDE

For details of meetings contact: Richard Venton-051 260 3111.

Liverpool:

Marxist discussion group, 22 May and fortnightly 2, Lower Breck Rd. 7.0 pm

SOUTH WEST

For details of meetings ring 0272 631471

YORKSHIRE/HUMBERSIDE

For details of meetings contact: Henry Gregory-0709 371250

Sheffield:

Lessons of France 1968 23 May S.C.C.A.U. West Street, 7.30pm

Hull:

Militant 900 edition. anniversary meeting Speaker-John Pickard, 12 June Green Ginger Man, Bus station 7.00 pm

MANCHESTER/LANCS

For details of meetings contact: Mike Johnson-061 273 8648.

Manchester:

Militant womens' meeting, Strategy to fight poll tax 20 May, Gulliver's Bar, Oldham Street 7.30 pm

EAST MIDLANDS

For details of meetings contact: Andy Jackson-0602 623112.

WEST MIDLANDS

For details of meetings contact: Bill Mullins-021 552 7624.

East Birmingham:

Fight the poll tax 19 May, Sheldon Heath Leisure Centre, 7.30 pm

WALES

For details of meetings contact: 0222 736682

EASTERN

For details of meetings contact Teresa MacKay 0473 713179

St.Albans:

What *Militant* stands for, 26 May, St.Albans Town Hall, 7.45 pm

SOUTH EAST

For details of meetings phone 01 533 3311

HAMPSHIRE/THAMES VALLEY

For meeting details phone 0703 786879

Southampton:

Redbridge Marxist discussion group, Every Wednesday, 7, Goodwin Close, Millbrook. 2.00 pm

LONDON

For details of meetings contact George Roberts-01 739 9123.

Hackney:

19 May Chat's Palace, Brooksby Walk 7.30 pm

Bermondsey:

Save ILEA, 24 May, Boermund Centre, 177 Abbey Street SE1 7.30 pm

Enfield:

Fight Thatcher's Poor Law 8 June, Angel Community Centre, Raynham Road N18. 7.30pm.

Brixton:

24 May, Jesse Jackson campaign, St. Matthews Meeting Place, SW2, 7.30pm.

Militant RALLY

ALEXANDRA PALACE

19 JUNE 1988 12-6 pm

£6 in advance £7 at the door

Doors open 11.00am Cheques payable to 'Militant Rally'

Sign language interpreters for the deaf

SALES OF *Liverpool—a city that dared to fight* are soaring. 40 copies were sold at the CPSA conference, with delegates from several big offices setting targets for sales when they get back. The Department of National Savings, Glasgow are planning to sell 25.

Delegates from many branches took copies of the special letter that has been produced offering discounts for orders of five or

more.

Month of revolution—France 1968 has also had an outstanding launch. Over 60 copies were sold at the CPSA conference. Special posters and leaflets are now available to organise your public meeting around the book.

Copies of the books or the publicity letters, leaflets and posters from:- Fortress Books, PO Box 141 London E2 0RL.

Month of Revolution £2.50

5 copies for £8 post free

Liverpool—A City That Dared to Fight

£6.95 plus 90p postage
5 copies for £25 post free

Sell 900 of issue 900

CELEBRATE 900 issues of *Militant* and join with us in our sales drive.

We are launching a campaign for every area to sell at least 900 copies of our 900th issue. The 900th issue will be out just one week before the *Militant* Rally so you can make sure that it is a double celebration with record sales of our paper. This will mean sales in every town, on every estate and at the offices and factories! Why not join us, ask your friends and relations to each buy a copy.

The Gorton and Burnage areas of Manchester reported sales of 78 last week following the article on the Burnage school issue. In the Chorlton ward area of Withington sales regularly top the 50 per

week mark.

Sellers in Rochdale sold 50 door to door using the feature on Asian women. One of them sold 18. In Newham 10 were sold in one street. At the CPSA conference 384 copies of the paper were sold.

Now three sellers in Manchester have pledged to each sell 100 copies in one week.

We will print a report of their successes but they tell us they are willing to take on a challenge from any other area for the 'seller of the week' award.

Send in your extra orders now for issue 900 and make it a bumper sale.

By Ruth Campbell

What we stand for

* The immediate introduction of a 35 hour week without loss of pay as a step towards the elimination of unemployment.

* A minimum wage of £135 a week, tied to the cost of living, for everyone including sick and disabled people.

* Reversal of all Tory cuts and a massive programme of public works on housing, education, and the health service etc.

* Opposition to the Tories' anti-trade union laws and reversal of attacks on 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.

* Workers' management of 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.

* 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.

* A socialist plan of production democratically drawn up and implemented by committees involving 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.

Become a Militant supporter

YOUR NEXT STEP...
OUR FIGHT IS YOUR FIGHT...JOIN IT!

I wish to become a Militant supporter:

Name.....

Address.....

Tel:.....

or telephone 01-533 3311 NOW!



Russia and Eastern Europe

Splits at the top Upheavals from below

"REVOLUTION STARTS from the top", said Marx. Sensing an impending revolt by the working class, the summits of society begin to split into different camps, one looking for reforms to stave off the deluge, while another looks towards increasing repression.

Marx was speaking about differences within the capitalist class being the most visible symptom of the coming storm, but his words apply with equal force to a ruling caste like the Stalinist bureaucracy in Russia.

Even without the fresh evidence of the tumultuous events in Armenia, Poland, Hungary and practically every state in Eastern Europe, the open splits within the Russian bureaucracy would in themselves indicate impending social upheavals.

The ferocious struggle between different wings of the bureaucracy has unfolded in a manner not seen since the inter-war period, in the battle between Stalin and Bukharin's 'right opposition'. Open warfare has broken out in the run-up to the June 'extraordinary conference' of the 'Communist Party', the first of its kind since 1941.

Gorbachev has publicly flailed 'conservative' critics of his policy: "We must defeat conservatism blocking our path. We must root out all that hinders the process of *perestroika* (restructuring)."

In November we witnessed the clash between Gorbachev and the former Moscow party boss Yeltsin. Representing that section of the bureaucracy more responsive to the feelings of the mass of the population—he rode on public transport, something unparalleled for a bureaucrat—Yeltsin began to echo some of their criticisms of the niggardly effects of *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika*.

He even dared to criticise Gorbachev and his wife Raisa, as representatives of the new 'enlightened' bureaucracy. His brief rebellion ended with the recantation of his 'errors' and removal from the Politbureau.

His confession was reminiscent of Stalin's show trials. Now he has sensationally revealed in the Ger-

By Peter Taaffe

man language edition of *Moscow News* that he had been "brought out of hospital and drugged in order to attend the November meeting at which I was dismissed".

Whether he is telling the truth or merely covering up for his ignominious 'confession', the very fact that he is allowed to state this publicly is a symptom of the open clashes within the bureaucracy.

Faced with criticisms from the 'conservative', more openly Stalinist wing of the bureaucracy represented by Ligachev, Gorbachev has probably been compelled to lean on Yeltsin and his supporters.

The Ligachev wing is correctly terrified that Gorbachev's measures have opened the floodgates. They are attacking him for opening the door for the emergence of the working class and the danger of political revolution.

From the first day of Gorbachev's rise to power, *Militant* pointed out that in no way was he prepared to challenge the rule of the bureaucracy, but that he stood for greater privileges for the top layers of the elite. His measures were an attempt to cut down the swollen privileges, particularly of the middle layers of the bureaucracy.

Staunchly defending the 'legal' privileges of the elite, he conducted a war against the 'illegal' waste and corruption which was swallowing a colossal amount of the surplus produced by the working class.

While loudly proclaiming the virtues of 'democratisation', his regime has arrested and imprisoned the organisers of the recent feeble and ineffective 'democratic

conference' and the editor of the journal *Glasnost*.

Dismissing any idea of "returning back to capitalism", Gorbachev is at pains to stamp on anything which challenges the foundations of bureaucratic rule: "We are not destroying the social system or changing the forms of ownership... Just think of it, 70 years on and they are still trying to scare us with descendants of capitalists and Trotskyists."

"They" are Ligachev supporters. For "Trotskyists" read the ideas of workers' democracy and the political revolution.

Gorbachev's policy has been "reform from the top to prevent revolution from below". But by lifting the lid of the pressure cooker of Russian society, a process could be begun which could threaten the very foundations of bureaucratic rule.

The tumultuous events in Armenia in the past three months completely vindicate this. Two demonstrations, each a million strong have taken place in this the smallest of the 15 republics of the 'Soviet Union', whose population is no more than four million!

While the strike in Armenia in February was called off with promises by Gorbachev of concessions, the strike in Nagorno Karabakh, an autonomous, predominantly Armenian region within Azerbaijan, continued for more than a month. It was only called off after the bureaucracy in revenge closed a number of factories.

While refusing the central demand for Nagorno Karabakh's right to link up with Armenia, Gorbachev has promised a massive 2,000 million roubles (£2,000m) of investment in Armenia. Other concessions have been granted by the 'Supreme Soviet', though they have warned that "strikes are not part of *glasnost*".

These concessions may temporarily mollify the Armenians but they will not solve the central denial of the democratic right of the population of Nagorno

Karabakh to determine its own fate (see *Militant* 889 for further explanation).

The unresolved national question throughout the USSR could lead to further upheavals in the next period. The bureaucracy will not be able to continue to make concessions on such a scale as in Nagorno Karabakh.

While these protests were partly connected with the people's national aspirations, they also arose from protests against the despoliation and pollution of Armenia and indeed the whole of the Transcaucasus.

The protests began with a demonstration about the proposed building of a rubber factory. Between 1965 and 1985, cancer, arising from environmental pollution, quadrupled in the region. Indeed every state in the USSR and Eastern Europe now has examples of ecological disasters arising from the untrammelled rule of an uncontrolled bureaucratic elite.

Such is the situation created by Gorbachev's 'reforms', that now in the USSR on any one of a number of issues, from the national question to the poisoning of the environment, to wages and other social issues, a social explosion could develop.

Gorbachev was absolutely correct to characterise the situation before he came to power as one of "pre-crisis". He has characterised his programme as "revolution without shots". He has a section in his book *Perestroika* justifying the concept of "revolution from above".

This turmoil within the bureaucracy is rooted in the catastrophic economic situation. Marx pointed out that the key to the development of society is the development of the productive forces. No system, he said, leaves the scene of history without exhausting all the possibilities inherent within it. This holds as true for the Stalinist regimes as for capitalism, although they are two entirely different social systems.

The bureaucracy in Russia has been allowed to maintain its rule over decades because it presided over a colossal development of the productive forces—science, the organisation of labour and technique. Rates of growth of 10-20 per cent, far exceeding anything seen under capitalism, were recorded because of the advantages of a planned economy.

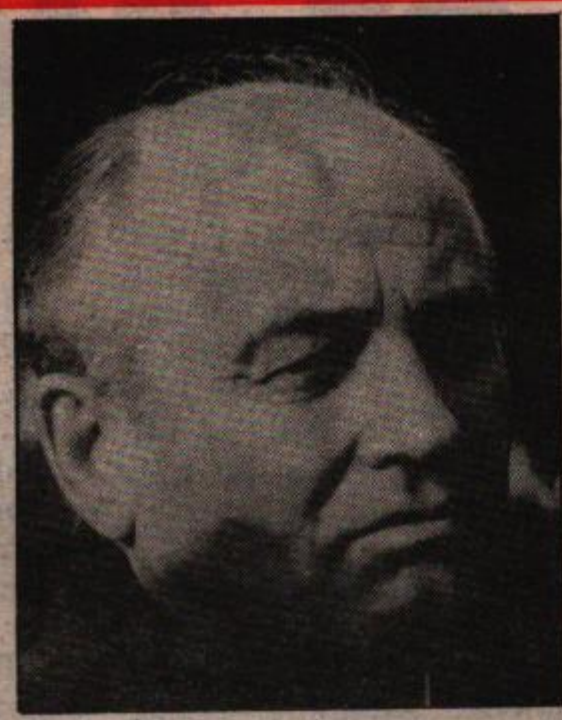


Yeltsin.

Despite the waste and crimes of the bureaucracy, while the economy was developing at such a pace, it was able to play a relatively progressive role. It maintained a grip on power by this economic growth and also by playing on the Russian workers' fear of imperialist intervention. These factors stayed the hand of the mighty Russian working class.

But the bureaucracy, like capitalism in the west, is now an absolute fetter on the further development of society. This had become obvious under Brezhnev, when the economy grew by a meagre three per cent a year, below the rate of development of many of the capitalist countries, particularly Japan.

This is not at all, as the capitalist economists have argued, because of the inherent weaknesses of a 'planned economy'. Faced with the impasse of their own system, they never fail to point to the waste, mismanagement and shortfalls of the planned economies.



Gorbachev



Mass demonstration in the Armenian capital, Yerevan



The Bolshevik programme for safeguarding workers' democracy:

- ★ All officials to be elected and subject to recall.
- ★ No official to be paid more than the average wage of a skilled worker.
- ★ No standing army, but an armed people.
- ★ No permanent bureaucracy, but the rotation of administrative tasks among the population.

economic upswing, but at the cost of piling up colossal debts of \$1,600 per head of the population.

Servicing this debt is having a crippling effect on the Hungarian economy. Now Prime Minister Grosz, who on a recent visit to Britain expressed admiration for Thatcher, proposed 'privatisation' and the aping of capitalism.

In Russia and in Eastern Europe a pro-capitalist wing of the bureaucracy exists. It is a minority and there is no possibility of a return to capitalism. But the very fact that such tendencies can develop is a symptom of the impasse of the regimes.

Only by tapping the colossal reserves of initiative and improvisation of the masses would it be possible for Russian society to extricate itself from its blind alley.

In the West, private ownership and the nation-state provide the major barrier to an enormous development of the productive forces. In the East the rule of the bureaucracy and the nation-state, with its harmful duplication, is the main barrier to the further development of society.

Gorbachev does not represent some 'new force' to debureaucratise Russian society. Indeed the very measures he is advancing can enormously aggravate the problems and ignite a movement of the working class in the direction of political revolution.

As in Poland and Yugoslavia, Gorbachev's advisors are advocating the withdrawal of subsidies and 'greater efficiency' by allowing managers to 'release surplus workers'.

One government estimate reckons that about 16 million workers, as many as in the whole of Spain, will be evicted from the factories by the year 2000.

In Yugoslavia, the consequences of 'decentralisation' are revealed in the one million 'unemployed' and the 200 per cent inflation which is ravaging Yugoslav society.

In Kosovo province it has resulted in open conflict between the populations of Albanian and Serbian extraction, with armed clashes, murder and rape and the fleeing of the Serbian population from the area.

The gap between Kosovo and the richer republics of Slovenia and Serbia is wider than between Yugoslavia and America. One commentator said it was like having West Germany and India within the borders of the same country.

The recent price increases in Poland provoked upheavals in Nowa Huta and Gdansk. The regime has only managed to hold the situation by a combination of concessions and repression.

Compared to the other regimes of Eastern Europe, Russia has enjoyed relative price stability. But the combination of withdrawing subsidies and the squeezing of a smaller workforce for greater production, which is at the root of Abanbegyan's proposals, could result in similar explosions as in Poland—only on a far wider scale.

The zig-zags of the bureaucracy from centralisation to decent-

ralisation and back to centralisation and re-decentralisation, have not removed the fundamental impediment to the further development of Russian society, and that is the rule of the bureaucracy.

However, the inter-bureaucratic struggle will itself encourage the working class to come out into the political arena. Already Gorbachev supporters in letters to the Russian press have warned that he could be removed, but that "the masses would not remain silent". This is a veiled threat to organise counter-demonstrations in the as yet unlikely event that Gorbachev could be removed.

But while Gorbachev can permit a move in the direction of greater 'freedom' for the bureaucracy to discuss and debate the perspectives for Russian society, no such rights will be accorded to the working class. It is impossible for a Stalinist regime to permit free trade unions and democratic rights as exist in the capitalist West.

Capitalism can tolerate these rights because of their roots in society as a result of their ownership of the means of production, whereas the Stalinist bureaucracy are a parasitic excrescence.

Once the working class possesses the right to criticise and participate in elections, the very function of the bureaucracy will be called into question.

As soon as the Polish workers in 1980-81 had established effective dual power, it was not just wages and trade union issues they wished to discuss, but the monstrous corruption and very role of the bureaucracy.

The only thing that prevented a political revolution in Poland—the establishment of workers' democracy—was the absence of a far-sighted leadership. The representatives of KOR, like Kuron and accidental figures like Lech Walesa played the main role in derailing the Polish revolution.

Now, when the Polish workers, after seven years of repression, have regained the confidence and strength to go into battle, Kuron and Walesa are warning them not to 'provoke' the regime, with veiled and not-so-veiled advice to keep quiet in order not to upset and 'antagonise' Gorbachev.

Walesa has even, pathetically, offered a united front with Gorbachev for the democratisation of Russia and Poland.

Without the development of a far-sighted Marxist leadership, armed with the programme worked out by Trotsky for the political revolution, there can be a protracted period of upheavals, followed by an uneasy calm, as we have seen in Poland.

To succeed, the political revolution—like the social revolution in the West—will now need the 'subjective factor'. Because of the smallness of the forces of Marxism, the political revolution will not be in one act, but a process that develops over a period of time.

However, recent developments in Russia and the open clashes within the bureaucracy are a harbinger that the process of the political revolution has now begun to unfold in Russia itself.

Russian was getting poorer or being compelled to turn to the black market or a second job in order to maintain living standards.

All the advantages of a planned economy have been vitiated by the bureaucracy. Rather than overtaking capitalism as Khrushchev had boasted, Russia has fallen behind. Factories have become rusty—the proportion of metal-working machinery that was more than 20 years old had risen from 16 per cent in 1980 to 21 per cent in 1985.

With almost the same amount of machinery at the elbow of the working class, the output of Russia is about 55 per cent of that of the USA. That fact alone will condemn the rule of the bureaucracy. For it was Marx who pointed out "all economy comes down in the last analysis to an economy of time".

An even greater mismanagement and waste is revealed in the agricultural sector. Russia, once the granary of Europe, is now compelled to import grain. This is partly of course due to the terrible crimes and mistakes of Stalin's enforced collectivisation in the 1930s which leaves its mark on Russian agriculture right up to the present.

At the same time it reflects the indifference, waste and mismanagement of the Stalinist regime. A recent study in *Memo*, the journal of Moscow's Institute of World Economy and International Relations, points out that the Soviet Union has over 24 million farmers, more than in all the countries of the industrial west and Japan combined; yet Russia's farm output is only 22 per cent of the West's.

The Economist points out that "the Soviet labour productivity in agriculture is about one fifth of western Europe's and one tenth of the United States'." Russia produces four times as many tractors as the United States and yet cannot get the same results in agriculture!

In Uzbekistan, *Pravda* has

revealed that "a vast system of organised crime, racketeers, 'underground millionaires' and 'professional killers' have operated." A total of £4 billion was skimmed off the state by panning out cotton production figures. (See *Militant* 884 for more examples).

Gorbachev's campaign against corruption, particularly among the middle strata of the bureaucracy, has undoubtedly met some success. Together with the war on alcoholism, it has initially given a boost to the economy, but will inevitably run into the sand on a bureaucratic basis.



Ligachev.

70 years after the Russian revolution, and moreover with capitalism on the eve of a new recession, one wing of the bureaucracy now looks towards the 'market' as a solution. One of Gorbachev's political advisors has condemned "the concept of state socialism" as a "Stalinist error".

Fyodor Burlatsky has declared: "So far we can only see the broad contours, (which) would include a planned, although market economy, based upon profit and loss accounting, with many different forms of social property and ownership."

Gorbachev has sought to imitate the 'Hungarian model' precisely at a time when this is breaking down. Hungary found some escape on the world market at a time of capitalist world

But these are a product of Stalinist mismanagement rather than the planned economy.

They deliberately underestimate the colossal economic achievements and potential of the planned economy.

Russia is about ten years ahead in space exploration. One and a half million scientists, a quarter of the world's, are Russian. It has the most educated population in the world, with one third of the population having some kind of university degree.

In computers, it is estimated to be only two to three years behind America. The productive potential, at least in 'European Russia' is similar to the most advanced capitalist countries of the west.

The Economist commented recently that "Russia's problem is not any shortage of inventiveness". But because of the dead hand of the bureaucracy, two years after Soviet inventions have received a patent, called an 'author certificate', only 23 per cent of them have been put into production, whereas in America the figure is 66 per cent and in West Germany 64 per cent.

It gives the example of a revolutionary method developed in the Russian steel industry in 1955. 27 years later only 12 per cent of Russian steel industry was using this method, whereas 62 per cent of the factories in West Germany and 79 per cent of those in Japan were using it.

Thus as with Britain, although for different reasons, the inventiveness and ingenuity of the Russian workers has been squandered. The dead hand and wastefulness of the bureaucratic elite, rather than the limits of the market as under capitalism in Britain, has prevented the use of this technology for the benefit of the peoples.

Gorbachev's main economic advisor, Abel Aganbegyan, has argued that there was no real growth at all in the first half of the 1980s! Since the soviet population was increasing by one per cent a year, this meant that the average

“Workers’ power—May Day 1988”

MAY DAY 1988 was the third May Day of COSATU, the Congress of South African Trade Unions. As I walked to the meeting I thought of COSATU’s first May Day, in 1986.

Then I had walked with others into an African township near Cape Town. We wore COSATU T-shirts, the red dust of the township was on our shoes and we smelled the smoke of wood-burning fires. People came out of their houses to greet us on our way to the meeting. One woman shouted to her children: “Come here quick and look at the whites”. Most simply said: “Viva COSATU, Vi-va!”

May Day 1988 was much different. Today I am on my own walking through central Johannesburg to the COSATU rally at Wits University. No “Viva comrade viva”s today.

Of course, more than that separates these two May Days: 30,000 detentions, the banning of 17 organisations, more than 600 dead in Natal, and attacks on COSATU.

But it has been point and counter point. The young lions of Natal have risen magnificently against the butchers of Inkatha. 5-6 May 1987 saw the biggest political strike in South African history. The railway workers and mine workers fought in their biggest battles and Sharpeville Day 1988 was commemorated as never before.

COSATU on May 1986 numbered around 500,000—now it is one million strong.

Yet there were many questions in my mind, especially about the leadership of COSATU. At COSATU’s founding Congress in 1985 the mood of the rank and file permeated the leadership. There were speeches about apartheid and capitalism being vanquished together.

Astonishing

At the May Day meeting this year COSATU President Elijah Barayi called for a South Africa based on “democracy and social justice”—without mention of ending capitalism. This was not a slip of the tongue.

The COSATU leaders, in an astonishing message to the membership published recently, admit that there are doubts and divisions in their midst. They say: “The office bearers as a collective failed to offer collective decisive leadership in many of the crises that faced us in 1987”. And further: “we have seen endless decisions remaining just on paper—from our resolution on the new pass laws to the Labour Relations Amendment Act”.

The proposed Labour Relations Amendment Act is a vicious legal attack on the rights of workers to organise, to strike and take solidarity action. The first proposals were brought out in late 1987 but still there has been no co-ordinated national campaign of opposition. The ‘strategy’ has been for unions to act individually and not collectively.

Cyril Ramaphosa, General Secretary of the NUM, has even suggested that deals should be done with individual employers who do not use the new laws. The only protest that workers have been called to take is demonstrations during lunch time!!

Admittedly a special Congress has been set to discuss all this on 14-15 May but the signs are not good.

These thoughts occupied me as I approached Wits university. Then I heard in the distance the strains of one of my favourite freedom songs: “Shona, shona



At the May Day rally.

By a British trade unionist who recently visited South Africa

malanga shona, Shona, shona malanga, shona”. It conveys the idea that the enemy will be killed with bazookas at dawn. The nearer I got to the outside of the hall the louder it got.

It was a delegation of workers and youth arriving from Soweto. There were about a hundred of them and they sang and danced all the way up two flights of stairs into the hall. They were the first arrivals so the stage was theirs! The hall shuddered with sound, feet stamping in unison on the wooden floor, shrill whistling, “Hayii Hayii”, “Viva COSATU viva, Phansi Botha phansi”!

And how they sang. A new one to me was ‘Mangasothu Buthelezi uyimpimpi’ (Buthelezi is a spy or a traitor).

Then about 20 minutes into the ‘show’ a huge delegation of women from FAWU (Food and Allied Workers’ Union) arrived. There is nothing to compare with seeing these faces and hearing these voices. You just find yourself grinning all over your face. It fills you with joy for this struggle, sets adrenalin pumping round your body. It is the revolution, in tangible form.

“Zokulula Mandela” (we will free Mandela) the FAWU women sing and the place goes into raptures. The crowd marches up and down the aisles. “Hey basisi—hey sisters—this is May Day!” You cannot get away from the unrestrained joy and confidence they show.

The square outside the university Great Hall is done out in ornate red facebrick, fringed by jacaranda and poplar trees. Now it is filled with a crowd of two or three hundred doing the toyi-toyi.

Zimbabwe

The origins of the toyi-toyi are not known but some say it was the dancing march of the ZANU legions in Zimbabwe. It is a sort of syncopated running on the spot, with a cheerleader exhorting the mass who chant in reply and toyi-toyi in unison.

“The message from Mandela—make the townships ungovernable”; “What will we do with the soldiers? We will kill the soldiers,” the cheerleader cries. “Hayii, Hayii”, “Hayii, Hayii,” the dancing crowd answer.

The township has come to town. I think that the fervour shown here is every bit as intense as it was in Cape Town in 1986. I ask a woman why she has come. She looks puzzled: ‘Why have I come here? Well, it’s workers’ day. That’s it’.

Inside the hall is now packed and is a blaze of the familiar T-shirts, reds, yellows and whites. The COSATU T-shirt declares “Workers’ power—May Day 1988”. Another says “Poverty the bastard child of apartheid”. Many bear the slogan of Congress unions from the 1950s: “Organise or Starve”.

The meeting begins at 11.30 am with the singing of the national anthem “Nkosi Sikele i Afrika” (God bless Africa). British workers may have heard the haunting tune at the portrayal of Biko’s funeral in *Cry Freedom*. The women sing descant soprano. An old man slaps the head of a boy who comes into the hall with his baseball cap on.

The chairperson opens the meeting by quoting Martin Luther King: “The mark of a man is not where he stands in times of tranquility but where he stands in times of challenge and conflict”. He could have been addressing the leaders of COSATU.

The speeches strike the usual tone of defiance: “COSATU is not just a federation of a few leaders, there are thousands of worker leaders in every factory. They cannot destroy this movement...”

“The working class are being attacked as never before, but they will not stifle our cry for freedom...”

“We struggle together because you the workers with your sweat and blood have built South Africa. We will celebrate this day forever...”

The outlook of most of the COSATU leaders has shifted decisively away from the struggle for socialism

But there is an unerring consistency it seems. Five comrades speak from the platform and capitalism and socialism have not been mentioned. A FAWU speaker leads “Viva”s not only for Nelson Mandela and COSATU, but for the South African Communist Party and the CP of Cuba. He ends his speech: “Forward with our struggle for freedom and justice”.

The COSATU leadership currently present their problems as organisational. That is not the real reason. Their problems are political. The political outlook of most of the COSATU leaders has shifted away decisively from class struggle and the fight for socialism towards class compromise and the illusion of a negotiated ‘democratic’ stage in

the struggle.

This reflects the ideas and politics of the SA Communist Party. The SACP leaders believe in a ‘two-stage’ revolution based on a democratic ‘first stage’ with a capitalist mixed economy and parliamentary democracy.

They argue the South African state is too powerful to be beaten and that it can be ‘divided’. The ‘good’ capitalists have to be separated from the ‘bad’ capitalists, the ‘reformists’ from the ‘militarists’ in Botha’s cabinet and alliances made with them. These elements must not be frightened off by talk of class struggle and mobilising the masses in action!

Thus ‘socialism’ has become a bit of a dirty word for most of the COSATU leaders. Socialism is for the distant future. Talk like that now is ultra-leftism, they say.

Sixth speaker

Then the sixth speaker comes to the rostrum and ignites the audience with his simple message. “Phambili to socialism phambili (forward to socialism)”, he begins. “I have advice to give you all. Let us not practice capitalism. Let us practice socialism.” The hall erupts.

“We say ‘An injury to one is an injury to all’, but we do not practice it. Capitalism does not just oppress you at work, it oppresses you at home. It oppresses everybody who is black... Our struggle should not just be for wage increases. We must fight, but not just to reform capitalism. We must act more and talk less”.

For me and most of the workers this is the speech of the day, partly because of its message but also because the speaker is ‘a young lion from Tembisa’. He is less than 10 years old and has to stand on the table to give his speech!

When the speeches are over the workers and youth take over the hall again. No-one could ever convince these people that the struggle for freedom is anything less than a struggle for power. Freedom will never be given. It will be taken and that requires a worker-led revolution. Experience teaches the masses, not the lectures of their leaders.

As I leave the hall it is filled with a crescendo of sound from the singing of a current favourite song about Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the ANC. It is a complaint that Umkhonto has delayed, has not armed the masses: “Umkhonto wajikeleza (Umkhonto you have gone round in circles)”.

The generals of this army may be confused and hesitant but the soldiers seem to know where they want to march.

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Marxist Shot

ON 12 MAY, two days after the Sri Lankan government lifted its ban on the racist JVP party, Dr Nandasena Fernando, a candidate of the Marxist Nava Sama Samaja Party for next month's round of provincial elections, was shot dead by the JVP.

Dr Fernando was the third candidate on the United Socialist Alliance list, and the second NSSP candidate, to be murdered during the present elections. Like Erasiri Mahindabahu, the NSSP candidate killed in April, Dr Fernando had been a member of the JVP before it degenerated into racism.

He had started his political activity in the old LSSP and had a long record of fighting racism and communalism. He had stood as a JVP candidate in the 1983 Ratgana parliamentary by-election, opposing racism and defending the Tamil people's right to self-determination. In 1985 he joined the NSSP. Dr. Fernando was married with five children. His 17 year old son, wounded in the attack, is still critically ill.

We extend condolences to his family and the NSSP. We are confident that on the basis of Marxist policies the NSSP will be able to isolate and defeat the JVP's poisonous mixture of racism and pseudo-radicalism.

Blood for votes

A DISGUSTING and cold-blooded attempt by France's right-wing ex-prime minister, Jacques Chirac, to buy the extreme right vote for lives in the recent presidential election has been exposed.

Three days before the election, obviously preferring a bloody 'patriotic' spectacle to negotiating, French security forces were sent in with guns blazing to release 23 French hostages held by the KSNLF (guerrilla movement fighting for independence in the French colony of New Caledonia).

Guerrillas who surrendered were reportedly shot down, their faces unrecognisably mutilated in a hail of bullets.

Previously the entire Gossana tribe had been rounded up, the men and children locked up, the women herded onto a football field and not allowed to go to the toilet. They were threatened with being burnt to death in their houses if hostages were harmed or many soldiers killed.

At the same time, the Chirac government apparently paid out millions for the release of French hostages from Beirut—perhaps this assignment was too tough for France's notorious commandos.

French workers, however, were not impressed with Chirac's cynical manoeuvres.

A full discussion of the perspectives for France will appear in a forthcoming issue of *Militant*.

Lessons in 'realism'

AS NEIL Kinnock tries to rewrite Labour's policy in the spirit of 'new realism', he should ponder the experience of his New Zealand counterpart, Labour prime minister David Lange.

Breaking with 'old-fashioned socialism', Lange's government has deregulated the economy, abolished subsidies, sold off public assets and doubled unemployment to 7.6 per cent—almost as 'realistic' as Thatcher herself!

Now even a Royal Commission has had to protest at the results, pointing out that the brunt was falling on the most disadvantaged groups in society, in particular Maoris and women. Increasing poverty and deprivation, it warned, would lead to deepening social polarisation.

It called for "significant improvements in the social and economic well-being of the Maori people", and allowances for women at home in recognition of their unwaged work.

Lange is said to be 'studying' the Commission's report. Perhaps he will learn that kicking workers in the teeth is not the way to win their hearts and minds.

But what an indictment of a Labour leadership, to be read elementary lessons on its tasks by a Royal Commission—after ignoring the protests against its policies from the ranks of the party itself! (See *Militant* 29 April)

Philby's loyalty

PHILBY IS dead. But will his ghost ever be exorcised by the British intelligence establishment?

By Lynn Walsh

Kim Philby was once regarded as one of the brightest in MI6, the overseas intelligence service nominally controlled by the Foreign Office. But from 1940 until he came under suspicion in 1951, he was supplying the Kremlin with top-level information.

At one time Philby even headed MI6's counter-espionage department!

As an impeccable public-school, Cambridge-educated professional, his loyalty was beyond question. He came within spitting distance of becoming chief of MI6. Only the panic defection of Guy Burgess put Philby under suspicion.

Even then he brazened it out. In 1956 he was sent to Beirut as an undercover agent. Only in 1963 did the net finally close, with Philby escaping to the Soviet Union.

Revelations of Philby's real role shattered the credibility of British intelligence. Ever since Whitehall spy-masters have

been chasing their own tails, hunting for the 'fifth man' and other moles. The affair poisoned relations between British and US intelligence.

Peter Wright's book, *Spycatcher*, which claims the former MI5 head, Sir Roger Hollis, was also a Soviet mole, is another symptom of the legacy of paranoia left by Philby.

In the obituaries, capitalist commentators predictably revile Philby for betraying his country. Yet when he feigned support for the fascist powers to establish a cover, this was never held against him.

Rankles

It is the class betrayal which really rankles. Philby repudiated his own upper-class origins.

The moralists who stigmatise Philby's lack of patriotism are unperturbed by the fact that Britain's secret intelligence services devote most of their attention to 'the enemy within', the labour movement and other organisations which uphold democratic rights.

Philby's loyalty, however, was to the ruling bureaucracy of the Soviet Union, not to the working class or socialism.

Undoubtedly, his motive for spying was ideological. Like Burgess, Maclean and Blunt he belonged to a layer of upper-class intellectuals, radicalised by the crisis of capitalism in the 1930s.

They were appalled by the mass unemployment of the slump. After Ramsay MacDonald's betrayal they could have no faith in the Labour leadership. Above all, after Hitler's triumph in 1933, they were galvanised by the menace of fascism.

Philby and his friends no doubt hoped for a fundamental change of society. But they belonged to an elite cocooned in privilege. Alienated from their own class, they looked for another elite—the Stalinist leadership of the Soviet Union.

Stalin had power. His regime, in their eyes, was a bulwark against fascism. They were blind to the suppression of workers' democracy, and did not see Stalin's contribution to the victory of fascism. It was in Russia, they believed, that 'the future was being built.'

Remote from the working class, they did not turn to the labour movement. They

became agents for the KGB. Their access to the top of the state machine was an exceptional opportunity for the Kremlin.

Disillusioned

Most of the intellectuals who looked to Stalin for salvation were soon disillusioned, shaken by the purges and stunned by the Hitler-Stalin pact. In the war and during the post-war revival of capitalism they were re-assimilated into the capitalist establishment.

Those under contract to the KGB, however, were caught in the one-way lobster pot of espionage. Loyalty to the Kremlin was the only certain escape route.

In the Soviet Union he enjoyed an immensely comfortable lifestyle, and was showered with the highest official honours. When Andropov took over the KGB, Philby was called in to advise him on the modernisation of Soviet intelligence. The grandiose Moscow funeral was a mark of the Kremlin's appreciation of one of their most successful foreign agents.

A 'man's life' in the army?

THERE HAS been a spate of reports in the press about bullying in the army. But it is nothing new. When I was a soldier 10 years ago it was well known that bullying took place and the NCO's and officers made no attempt to control it.

In my regiment, the 16/5 Lancers, bullying started when you finished basic training.

Most of the bullying I witnessed took the form of people coming in drunk and throwing new recruits out of bed. Lockers were tipped over, followed by beatings. It was not considered bullying as it was 'for their own good', and they were rarely hospitalised.

If the recruit fought back he would get a good hiding. If he reported it to the NCOs it would be ignored. Everyone would find out who the informer was and he would get it again.

'Agony aunt'

Anyone suspected of being gay was certain to be beaten.

Whilst the bullying was done by a small handful, most others approved or just ignored it. However, if anyone was caught thieving or did not wash, almost everyone joined in with the full encouragement of the NCOs.

Now the government has decided to outlaw initiation ceremonies and establish an 'agony aunt' system.

But the army consciously attempts to drive out any individuality from its soldiers. Its aim is to turn them into efficient killers who are prepared to inflict pain and suffering.

The only protection against bullying, where soldiers would feel safe to make complaints, would be trade union rights in the armed forces.

By an ex-soldier



Photo: Militant

THE SPECTRE of racism within the British army might only have raised its head in the media recently, but it has been an established part of army life for years, in some regiments anyway.

Racist attitudes and beliefs can be found at every level of the command structure, with perhaps the so-called 'enlightened' class (the officers) being particularly affected.

I have witnessed many incidents of vicious racial harass-

ment and intimidation. The harassment is especially evident in basic military training, which can last from several months to nearly a year.

Break down

I know that some of the methods employed by various training establishments are designed to mentally and physically break down the raw recruit's personality and civilian attitudes. I am not

referring to this process, which in itself is very dubious.

Black soldiers are, as a matter of course, picked out and abused verbally and physically by NCOs, whilst officers (often literally) look the other way, or just laugh it off as 'character building.'

Since when has being called 'nigger', 'coon' or 'jungle bunny,' been character building?

By a comrade in uniform

We need militant leaders

Inside story

Dear Comrades,
What would AJ Cook say if he could see how the leadership of the South Wales miners are acting today? Would he have supported Benn and Heffer or kow-towed to Kinnock and Hattersley as Des Dutfield has done?

Cook was Rhondda No 1 District Chairman of Lewis Merthyr Joint Combine Committee, a Rhondda councillor and one of the finest leaders the miners of Britain have ever seen, who led the historic 1926 general strike.

When the threat of six-day working raises its ugly head and the eventual threat of privatisation taking away all the gains the miners have won, the slogan 'Not a second on the day, not a penny off the pay' takes on the same relevance

for workers today as in 1926.

Take note, Tom Sawyer, chief architect of Labour's new realism policy and leader of the 'Keep your head down' campaign in which the Nupe leadership are entrenched at the moment. The gains fought for by the man who worked at Trefor Coedcae and Hafod pits, are not yours to give away.

The working class are moving on to a new level of struggle, as shown by the NHS, Ford's and NUS workers. What is now needed is more militant leaders like AJ Cook, Arthur Scargill and John Macreadie to lead the workers into victory.

Steve Harris, Nupe shop steward, Westminster City Council road sweepers, Lison Road depot.



AJ Cook speaking at Hyde Park rally.

Dear Comrades,

I thought *Liverpool - A City that Dared to Fight* was excellent. I've had plenty of time to read and study while in prison and books like *Liverpool* are priceless to me. Thanks!

One bloke I lent it to—he thought it proof of what will eventually be achieved—his brother came up on a visit not long ago and told him of a mate who had topped himself.

Apparently all he could see in sight was nothing and he was too honest to break the law to supplement his 'social', which is what my man's brother had tried to persuade him to do, so he hung himself instead!

I feel like puking whenever I hear Tories talking of 'Protestant ethics' and 'Victorian values'. I also wonder if one of those so keen to expel socialists from their own party will go round to the parents' house to explain to them the policy of the dented shield.

A prisoner, Lowestoft.

Spuc and violence

Dear Comrades,

"If you don't shut up I'll come over there and batter you" shouted Chris Walsh, National Council member of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC), at a woman he disagreed with.

The mainly young, female audience, at a debate on the Alton Bill organised at Wythenshawe College, Manchester, gasped in disbelief as he went on: "I mean it; I'll knock spots off her". He also shouted at the audience: "You are all murderers; you are guilty of ripping babies limb from limb".

This behaviour is in tune with SPUC members' general attitude to women. He also said: "When a man and woman come together in what I call the marital act, they should consider the possibility of conception".

What this Victorian attitude denies is that many 'marital acts' are accompanied by violence and intimidation. This is obvious in the case of rape outside the home, but also most women who arrive at battered wives' homes report sexual coercion and violence as features of their married life.

Aileen Ingham, Manchester.

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

Militant,
3-13 Hepscoth Road,
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Profit-mad P&O

Dear Comrades,

The coverage of the P&O dispute is typical of the hypocrisy of the Tory media. After the tragedy of the *Herald of Free Enterprise*, the Fleet Street barons were baying for blood. They wanted guilty heads on plates.

This of course did not apply to the profit-mongering P&O bosses, whose total lack of regard for safety was conveniently whitewashed by Maxwell, Murdoch, et al.

Now when seamen are on strike to prevent the decline in safety stand-

ards aboard ferries, they are the ones accused of hurting the public. No mention of the fact that if P&O's new working practices are introduced there will be a greater risk of yet more Zeebrugge-type disasters.

All workers should unite behind the strikers in their fight against a profit-mad company who have no regard for public safety. Victory to the strikers and forward to workers' control of the shipping companies and the printing presses!

Mick Hunter, Tyneside.

We won't pay the poll tax

Dear Comrades,

At a meeting of 200 students and workers at Glasgow College of Technology, Ron Brown MP called for mass organised non-payment to break the poll tax: "If we do not put forward a position that is linked to action we are leading people up the garden path".

Tommy Sheridan, of Pollok Against the Poll Tax, demanded that Strathclyde Regional Council, Britain's biggest Labour authority, should refuse to do the Tories' dirty work by implementing the poll tax.

Only three people

refused to complete National Union of Students 'I won't pay the poll tax' pledge cards. The following day another 150 completed these cards within an hour.

An Anti-Poll Tax Union has been set up, with the aim of linking students with community campaigns. If meetings of this size took place in every college affiliated to the NUS in Scotland, then there would be twice as many students committed to non-payment as there are places in Scottish prisons.

A member of the NUS Scottish executive.

Sales package

Dear Comrades,

Our weekly *Militant* arrives at the railway station at the same time as supplies for a local news wholesaler.

One week when our papers had disappeared before collection, an acquaintance who works for the wholesaler let slip that *Militant* had been used to help packaging national newspapers for retail outlets. I was furious and told him in no uncertain terms what I thought about such disrespectful use of our paper.

Opportunities

A couple of days later I bumped into him again. The packing depot had had phone calls from regular customers wanting to know the retailing arrangements for the new paper—*Militant*! They were putting out the 'packaging' for sale!

Having had the retailers take the initiative, we have naturally followed up their enquiries and hope to establish regular sales. It only goes to prove that sales opportunities come about in the most unexpected ways and from the most unlikely sources.

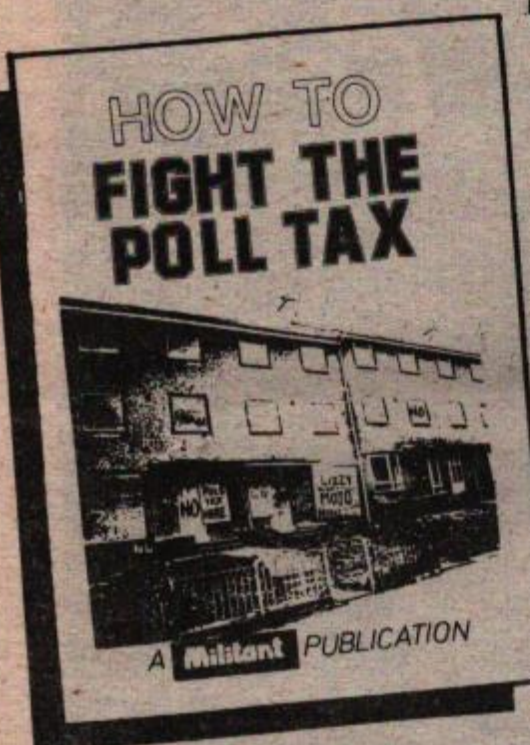
Jennifer Cole, Ipswich.

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.

○ Thorn-EMI workers are invited to meet Tony Mulhearn, co-author of *Liverpool—A City that Dared to Fight*, at the Gorse Hill Hotel, Chester Rd, Stretford, Manchester, at 12.45pm on Friday, 20th May.

○ Post-Rally Fighting Fund disco. Sunday 19th June, 7-10.30pm at the Nightingale Pub, Nightingale Lane (off Alexandra Park) £2 waged/£1 unwaged.



□ Stickers available in rolls of 250. 'Kick out the Tories', '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 collecting tins £1 each, 10 or more 75p each.

Available from Fighting Fund Dept, 3-13 Hepscoth Rd, London E9 5HB. For all orders add 25 per cent P&P. Cheques payable to *Militant*.

"Fight the Poll Tax" stickers 20p per sheet of 12 + p+p, send orders to:-Flat 2/3, 425 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow G2.

Tower Hamlets *Militant* Supporters Social, disco, cabaret, food. Sat 21 April 7.30 Approach pub. Approach road E2. £1.50.

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Schools starved of resources

Dear Comrades,

At my school there is a great lack of resources. Teachers are always moaning about not having basic equipment such as art materials or textbooks.

I'm doing my GCSEs and in maths, chemistry and biology, the kids in my group can't take home textbooks to do revision because there aren't enough to go round.

In the science department the labs are designed to fit about 20 people, but the average sized class is about 30. When we do experiments (needed for part of the GCSE assesments) there is never enough equipment to go round.

So after the mad rush to get what equipment there is, someone has to go round and borrow some from another

lab. (Great if that class happens to be doing a similar experiment!)

Some teachers end up paying for textbooks, etc out of their own pockets, even though they can't really afford it. One of my teachers has another job teaching at night school and a woodwork teacher is also a taxi driver.

The Tories say they care about state education and talk about raising standards. They don't give a damn about our education and I bet most of the cabinet didn't attend state schools and nor do their kids.

Instead they give massive pay rises and tax cuts to their richer than rich friends.

Karen McLoughlin, Brighton LPYS



'Time to get off your knees'

LOCAL GOVERNMENT and water privatisation, the break-up of national pay bargaining in the water industry, continuing low pay for health workers and massive cuts in public spending.

These are just some of the serious problems facing members of the National Union of Public Employees (Nupe) in the coming year.

The very future of Nupe is now threatened by this reactionary government. The jobs of hundreds of thousands of council workers are threatened by the privateers.

For delegates gathering at this year's conference the question to be answered is a simple one: are we going to stand and fight? Or are we going to meekly submit to this government?

The 1987 conference committed the union to a massive campaign against privatisation with leaflets, rallies and mass meetings. The aim was to unite the members in a national campaign in the realisation that members could not be left to stand or fall locally.

It just has not happened. Delegates will be wanting to know why. Last year was a very difficult one for Nupe members with Labour's general election defeat.

The massive movement of health workers was an opportunity to resoundingly defeat the Tories. However, the Nupe leaders shied

By a Nupe member

away from co-ordinating the action, even organising their day of protest a day later than Cohse's.

The *Nupe Listens to its Members* campaign has been only a paper exercise—literally. Members' opinions have been gathered from lengthy questionnaires where the questions themselves provide the answers. Asked for instance whether Nupe should provide cheap holidays for its members it would be difficult to answer negatively.

Yet where have been the questions about members' willingness to fight? Or about whether Nupe should negotiate severance schemes or do deals with employers agreeing cuts in pay, hours and staffing levels? Or about whether Nupe should be organising industrial action to fight privatisation? The real questions have been missing.

They are left to the delegates at this year's conference. On the final agenda, delegates will have the chance to commit Nupe to not abandoning socialist policies in the Labour Party. Resolutions and amendments from Bexley General and Harlow District both



Nupe members have been in the front line of opposition to the Tories' attacks on the NHS.

commit the union to not "ditching the socialist policies and aspirations of the Labour Party such as the minimum wage, renationalisation and nuclear disarmament".

A number of excellent resolutions in the NHS section could commit Nupe to ensuring that Labour "returns all privatised services to the control of the NHS" and a campaign to defend the NHS must have "as a cornerstone, industrial action".

20 branches have submitted resolutions and amendments on

local government privatisation. The majority call for national action. In the words of the Clay Cross branch, it is "time to get off your knees".

This year's conference also includes a rules revision conference.

Delegates will have another opportunity to democratise our union by supporting those amendments which would provide for full-time officers to be elected by the branches.

Tony Benn will address a fringe meeting, giving delegates an op-

portunity to hear why Labour should not abandon socialist policies or working people.

The current Labour leadership have hardly shown their commitment to Nupe members. Our members must be given the opportunity to vote on who Nupe will back in the leadership elections at this year's Labour Party conference. A vote for Benn and Heffer would be a signal that Nupe intends to "get off its knees" and fight this Thatcher government.

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

Alan Fisher

NUPE DELEGATES at this year's conference will want to pay tribute to Alan Fisher, general secretary from 1968-82, who died on 20 March this year.

By a Nupe member

His death was greeted with much sadness by Nupe members from all parts of Britain. He led the union in the period when it grew from just 200,000 to its peak of some 720,000 members.

During his time as general secretary, Nupe established itself as a fighting union. 1970 saw the six-week 'dirty jobs' strike; in 1973, hospital ancillary workers struck for the first time ever. And in 1979 the union was forced into conflict by a Labour government which had bowed to pressure from big business and the IMF and was making massive cuts in public spending.

He could be an inspiring speaker, not afraid to speak out—even when he could be in a minority in the TUC or Labour Party.

As Bernard Dix, Nupe's former general secretary, pointed out at Alan's memorial meeting, he did not "believe in surrounding himself with a bunch of 'yes' men and women". Indeed, as Bernard pointed out, Alan Fisher was prepared to recruit full-time officials from many strands of opinion on the left—from Communist Party members to supporters of *Militant*.

He rightly stated: "Alan's only test was ability and commitment to the union".

Alan Fisher himself contributed an article to *Militant* in January 1979, setting out the union's policies. He never aligned himself with those pursuing witch-hunts within the union or Labour Party.

While he was general secretary in 1976, the union produced an

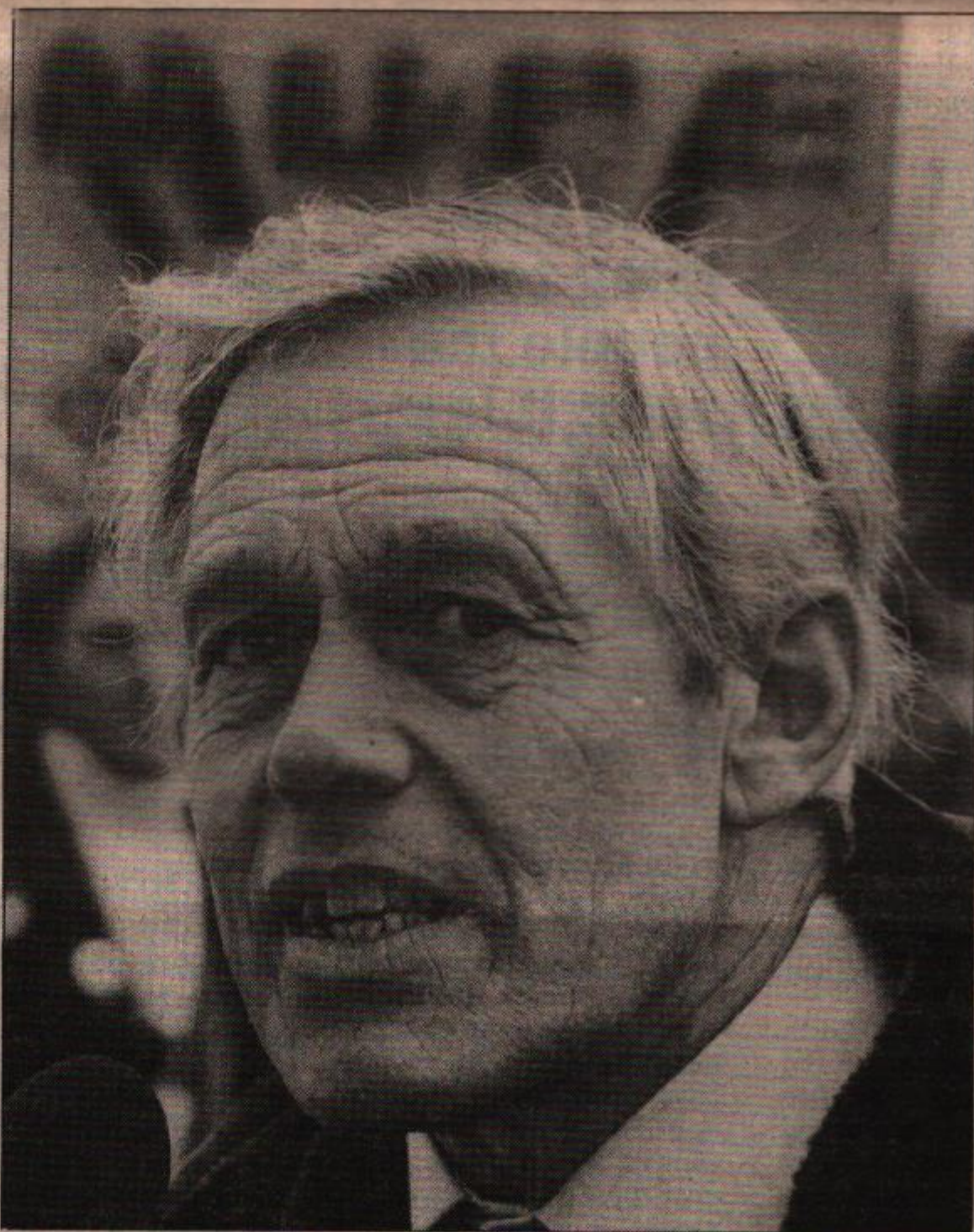


Photo: Militant.

important document entitled *Time to change course*. It argued that "important though new planning measures and machinery are, the problem of controlling the economy cannot be left to solutions which fudge the issue of public control over the giant monopolies".

Public ownership

It concluded that there must be "an extension of public ownership to cover the major monopolies that are increasingly dominating the economy".

Under Alan Fisher's leader-

ship, the union was prepared to fight and strike. The membership grew accordingly.

Today, the Nupe leaders are embarrassed by strike action by their NHS members. Picket lines were to be called 'Protest lines'. Tom Sawyer has been prepared to vote for and actively pursue witch-hunts against the left. He has supported a watering down of Labour's programme in the hope that it will be an 'electoral success'. This strategy has failed.

Nupe members in paying tribute to Alan Fisher will also be measuring its current leaders by its past.

Crucial choice for UCW

THE UNION of Communication Workers' conference will be one of the most important for many years.

The Post Office has made clear its intentions to split the businesses, letters and counters, in an attempt to divide the workforce and weaken the union in preparation for privatisation.

The report by the Mergers and Monopolies Commission on the counters business and Girobank recommends selling 50 per cent of the branch network. This will undoubtedly be pursued by the Tories and management in their quest to sell the public assets. The union must immediately launch a co-ordinated fight, jointly with the National Communications Union (NCU) who represent workers in Girobank, to keep services public.

The whole question of the leadership of our union will be raised in the debate on the shorter working week claim. Fifteen amendments call for the negotiating team and/or Alan Tuffin to be censured over the handling of the claim and the subsequent industrial action. The mishandling of the dispute and the way in which conference instructions were ignored has brought to the fore the need for an alternative fighting leadership.

Conference will also be discussing an issue which affects the future of all workers—especially those of us who work in communications, an essential service—that of no-strike deals. The very concept of no-strike deals flies in the face of the history of the trade union movement—the fight by generations of workers to win and defend the right of workers to withdraw their labour.

The resolutions opposing no-strike deals should be vigorously supported and our general secretary should be mandated to oppose their introduction on all

bodies where he represents the union.

The pay deal being proposed to the membership is welcome in the sense that the same grades in separate businesses have been made the same offer. However, while postal officers and postal assistants have been offered a deal over 12 months, mails grades have been offered one over 18. In addition, the remuneration packages will mean different overtime rates for different grades.

These moves, which delegates should oppose, are potentially divisive and are a further indication of a move towards the privatisation of the service.

The executive are preparing to accept the lowering of the decision levels for discipline. These moves must be opposed.

There will be a lively debate on the Labour leadership election. This is not a question of personalities but is central to the whole future direction of the party. The executive want us to back Kinnock and Hattersley but it is Tony Benn and Eric Heffer who want to prevent the abandonment of socialist policies and the union should back them.

The necessity for amalgamation with the NCU along democratic lines, to create one communications union, is of paramount importance. Delegates will have the chance to support this policy in the trade union rationalisation debate.

The thread running through the whole conference will be how best to meet the challenge of increased Tory and management attacks on our members. The answer must be to help build the Broad Left to create a new, fighting, socialist leadership for the union.

By Chris Whale,
North London district C&CS
branch, personal capacity

Delegates dampen right's victory

THE VICTORY of the right in the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA) NEC elections is a major setback for civil servants' struggle to eradicate low pay, job insecurity and poor working conditions.

This setback weighed heavily over the recent CPSA conference.

However, as the week progressed, increasingly, the left was striking back, winning one key debate after another and, in the process, showing where the real future of the union lay.

The Broad Left NEC, over the last 12 months, has given an exemplary lead. It has fully backed up members in struggle. It has refused to be involved in secret, behind the scenes deals. It has waged campaigns in defence of jobs, against low pay, against YTS and for reasonable working conditions.

It gave every possible assistance to workers in other unions in struggle.

Labour movement activists will particularly remember the outstanding role of John Macreadie who attempted all year to transform the TUC into an active, campaigning body, leading the battles against the Tories.

General secretary, Ellis, was widely quoted as saying there would be "dancing in the street" at the news of the Broad Left's defeat. The truth is, however, that the dancing will be restricted to Downing Street when the Tories see the calibre and lack of fight of the new CPSA NEC.

What were the reasons then, for this setback?

Glossed over

When they assumed office last year, the Broad Left executive inherited the disastrous pay campaign tactics of the right wing and broad left 84 (BL84). Months of drawn-out selective and regional action had exhausted union members and sapped their confidence. The defeat in this battle led to a mood of caution this year on the pay front. This would have been cut across with one significant breakthrough on pay in the public sector.

Unfortunately, CPSA members instead witnessed other civil service unions signing separate pay deals. BL84 and the right wing dishonestly held these up as an easy solution to the chronic problems of low pay in the civil service.

They simply glossed over the fact that thousands of jobs have gone in these deals, massive downgradings of posts have been agreed and performance related pay has been accepted.

This seemingly easy way forward without struggle has had some attraction at a time when CPSA members have felt isolated. The right-wing election material blatantly had inferred that pay rises of up to £20 per

By Steve Dunk

week would be forthcoming from a 'moderate' NEC, without any need to fight.

Now they are in office the ranks of the union will demand that they deliver.

The long courtship between BL84 and the right wing has now been cemented. The *Morning Star* welcomed the defeat of the left but then went on to advise its BL84 supporters in the union to be careful not to be gobbled up by the right.

Too late! They are now to all intents and purposes one and the same. The BL84 merely hides behind the label 'broad left' in order to try to keep credibility with the young and volatile membership of the union.

The Morning Star welcomed the defeat of the left

This year, already, in the largest and traditionally most militant section of the union, DHSS, one united right-wing slate was put forward. In future, as they become more desperate in the face of challenges from the genuine left, any last pretence of independence from the right will be cast aside.

This right-wing alliance had massive support from the bureaucracy at CPSA headquarters who had worked all year to undermine, thwart and obstruct the activity of the left NEC. The union's journal, *Red Tape*, was used ruthlessly as a weapon against the NEC.

In the elections themselves, John Ellis issued a circular which was nothing short of blatant interference on behalf of the right.

He attempted to justify this circular at the union's press conference with the disgraceful remark that: "It is one thing to give people the vote; it is another when they don't know how to use it."

This activity was backed up by a mass campaign in the press, orchestrated by Murdoch's *Times*, which went so far as to demand, in an editorial, that CPSA members "Vote against *Militant*".

At the conference the real, leading role in the union of the Broad Left was absolutely clear. However, with the separate pay deal of NUCPS about to be concluded, delegates decided, by a relatively small majority, to accept the ext-



Photo: Dave Sinclair.

ra 40 pence offer from the government.

The left saw this 40 pence as an insult. They also argued against acceptance because of the potentially dangerous reference to open-ended long term pay talks in which both the government and the right-wing alliance will try to foist upon the members a deal similar to that concluded by the IRSF.

The only other significant defeat for the left at the conference was on an emergency motion from BL 84 condemning an interest-free loan to John Macreadie. The loan was to allow him time to pay the court costs incurred by the right-wing NEC in the legal battle surrounding their refusal to accept John's victory in the general secretary election.

This was a totally one-sided debate, in which the massive financial benefit to the union from John's decision to live on the average wage of a skilled worker was never fully explained. John Macreadie was denied the right to speak in the debate by Marion Chambers, the right-wing president.

Ecstatic

On all other key questions, the position of the left prevailed. Conference rejected regional merit and performance-related pay and, for the first time in three years, agreed to campaign against any casualisation of the civil service.

It endorsed the NEC's position to pay the senior full-time officials the same cash rise as received by CPSA members and called upon the incoming NEC to go further to bring the wages of senior full-time organisers closer to that of members.

The NEC decision to cut *Red Tape* from a fortnightly to a monthly journal was also massively endorsed.

The underlying explosive mood inside CPSA of opposition to Tory attacks again and again punctuated

the conference.

It showed through in the support for the Hither Green strikers, in the reception for the striking seafarer, and above all in the absolutely ecstatic response for Nimrod Sejake, the exiled South African trade unionist. Nimrod spoke of the way the black South African workers had been forced to break the law in order to advance their struggle. He spoke of the fight for socialism in South Africa and internationally.

"It is one thing to give people the vote; it is another when they don't know how to use it" (John Ellis.)

The reception he received for his uncompromising, fighting socialist message vividly gave expression to the real aspirations of the mass of union delegates. Those who say the union is moving to the right should have listened to the reception Nimrod received. It showed the massive support there would be in the union for a totally united, fighting leadership.

Over 400 copies of *Militant* were sold and £4,800 raised for the fighting fund.

John Ellis claimed *Militant* was finished in the CPSA for decades but Marion Chambers sounded a note of caution 24 hours later when she said: "I don't go along with John on this...I don't think they're finished by a long way."

There was none of the usual euphoria that normally greets CPSA election results.

The right wing came into office noticeably subdued.

They know they face horrendous problems in the next 12 months. The Broad Left NEC have frustrated Tory attacks on a number of fronts.

Now the Tories will see the election of a right NEC as a green light to press ahead. The right-wing alliance will attempt to make some noises of opposition before capitulating and trying to convince the rank and file to accept Tory attacks. They will find, however, that the union members will not be prepared simply to submit.

While there may have been some temporary caution on pay, the problems of poverty remain. Boiling anger on this question is barely below the surface; it

will not be contained long.

On jobs and conditions, members have already conducted fierce defensive struggles. Ellis has said that the strike weapon is dead. These words were already coming back to haunt him at the conference with the announcement of strike action among prison workers.

The victory of the right is a temporary pause in the leftward march of CPSA.

It is in the fight against all the attacks of the government and against the vacillations, weakness and refusal to fight of the right-wing alliance that CPSA members once again will turn, in far stronger numbers than before, to the Broad Left and to the ideas of *Militant*.

Strike to back Hither Green

THE OUTGOING Broad Left executive's call for one day strike action on 26 May in support of the Hither Green strikers is now being balloted on amongst the CPSA's London membership. The strikers are protesting at the employment of known fascist organiser, Skeggs, at their DHSS office.

His visit to the DHSS head office, where it is now rumoured he may be transferred, was met by a walk-out of 30 union members.

March and rally on 26 May: assemble 11am
at Geraldine Harmsworth Park, adjacent to the Imperial War Museum, Kennington Road.

March 11.30am.
Arrive DHSS head office, 12 noon; rally at Kennington Park annexe at rear of Kennington Park.

First textiles strike for forty years

AN HISTORIC strike of 12,000 textile workers took place last Tuesday. For the first time in 40 years mill workers in Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cumbria took action over a unified pay claim. Workers throughout the industry voted 73 per cent in favour of 24 hour strikes to take place every Tuesday. The claim for 10.4 per cent would mean an £11 per week rise on minimum rate.

"If the company can offer management 17 per cent they can give us more than five and a half per cent. We

should be getting more than 10 per cent" said Zahir, one of the 50 pickets outside Hollen Bank mill near Burnley.

"Workers here voted 92 per cent in favour of striking", according to David Thurston, another picket. "Textile workers have always been low paid. This is the first time for 40 years we've all stuck together."

"We deserve more money. They're reaping the profits in and we're getting a lousy five and a half per cent—not even the inflation rate."

Living wage

Directors of Smith and Nephew, the owners of Hollen Bank, have increased their dividends by 50 per cent to £70,000 last year.

Peter Haigh, a shop steward at Hollen Bank, pointed out that textile workers have accepted low or zero pay rises in the past—when redundancies were taking place. Workers have paid for the problems of the past. Now it's a struggle for a proper living wage.

By Phil Forrester

'Hands off Wearside yards'

TWO HUNDRED and sixty North East Shipbuilding (NESL) workers from Wearside will be amongst a lobby of Parliament on 19 May. The lobby has been organised by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions to support Labour MPs who have forced an emergency debate on the future of British shipbuilding.

By Alex Witt

The Wearside shipyards have borne the brunt of the Tories' attacks since 1979 with the loss of 3,500 jobs.

Alex Witt spoke to Danny Morgan and Billy Ritchings, shop stewards at Austin and Pickersgill in Sunderland.

"If shipbuilding on the Wear finishes it will make Consett look like a picnic. Sunderland was one of the biggest shipbuilding towns in the world with a proud record of quality and reliability.

"We have given everything in flexibility, mobility and interchangeability. Now we are faced with the possibility of closure and privatisa-



The threatened NESL shipyard.

tion."

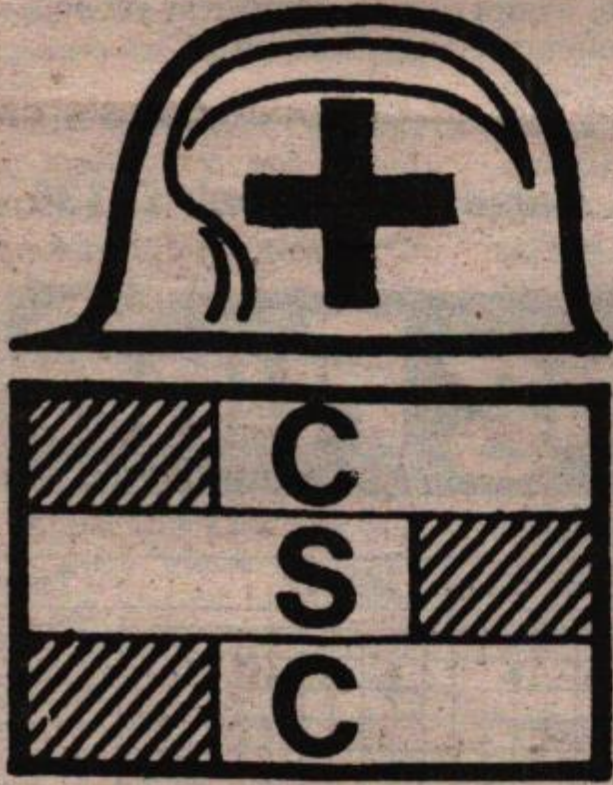
"The warning we're now giving to the Tories is 'Hands off!'. In 1986, a six week strike was solid in forcing Thatcher to back down. This lobby will be the start of a real campaign to defend the shipyards and jobs."

Danny said: "History and tradition is steeped in these yards. We must

fight to save them, not just for us, but for the future of the younger generation now leaving school who have no real job prospects."

Danny and Billy were both adamant: "At two mass meetings attended by the members, we voted to take whatever action is needed to save our shipyards."

Construction Safety Campaign launched



TUESDAY 10 MAY saw the first public meeting of the newly formed Construction Safety Campaign.

With the figures recently announced of the death rate in the building industry being the highest for 20 years, it was hardly surprising that the mood of the packed meeting in East London was defiant. Rank and file building workers had come together to plan a fight back.

After a minute's silence for all those who have lost their lives on site this

Equal pay victory

THE HOUSE of Lords has ruled that Julie Hayward, a cook at Cammell Laird's was entitled to the same pay as male painters, joiners and thermal insulation engineers at the shipyard.

Julie Hayward's claim, the first test case under the 1984 changes forced on the Tories by an EEC directive to incorporate equal pay for work of equal value into the Equal Pay Act, has taken four years to get to the House of Lords and now Cammell Laird is appealing to the European Court.

Both the trade union involved, the GMB, and Cammell Laird have invested thousands more than the £5000 back pay that Julie Hayward is due because of the repercussions for other women workers.

It is now up to other workers at Cammell Laird to demand the conditions that Julie Hayward received be extended to all workers.

Many other women workers seeking equal pay have fallen by the wayside when losing in the law courts. The Ford sewing machinists initially lost in the law courts but later won recognition of their skills and re-grading after an industrial struggle.

This ruling will open the door to more claims for equal pay by women workers. The law by itself cannot be relied upon to give these concessions. Every employer will attempt to find other means to not pay women workers more and if they are forced to concede equal pay they will attack conditions in other ways to ensure the maintenance of their profits.

It will only be the organised action of trade unions that will secure real improvements for women workers generally and it is up to male workers to demonstrate solidarity action.

By Maureen Hearn.

year, it was pointed out that since the Health and Safety Act was introduced in the 1970s, 8,000 men and women had died, earning their living.

Speaker after speaker told of the horrors of working in what is now the most dangerous industry in Britain. In later life, many more suffer lung diseases and cancer from the chemicals and toxic fumes found on many sites.

Although the meeting was organised by only a small number of activists with limited time and resources, it is a testimony to their dedication that over 100 attended, many of them stewards and convenors from the major Lon-

don sites.

If the unions involved in construction had devoted as much of their time and effort to a campaign, a meeting of a thousand could have been organised. Such is the mood of builders on this issue.

One of the final speakers summed up the mood: "In a week when we've seen off Chirac, Alton and Zola Budd, let's see off the bosses' offensive". All strands of thought agreed on that.

By Danny Walsh,
UG 296 branch,
London region Ucat

News in Brief

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



High Moor colliery

MINERS AT High Moor colliery in Derbyshire were on strike last week over extremely wet conditions on the afternoon shift. They were told by the deputy manager not only that they couldn't be

released early from the job but that "If you had worked harder at school, you wouldn't have to work in water".

High Moor miners
spoke to Militant

Dunlop Leicester

400 TGWU members at the Dunlop (Metalastik) plant in Leicester are on strike over a two-year pay deal with strings offered by the management.

Dave Richardson, deputy convenor, said: "We want a one-year deal with no productivity strings. So we called a two-day strike in protest. However the company is now threatening to impose the pay deal and lay

off workers on Friday. "We were going to London today to lobby the headquarters of BTR, who own Metalastik, over the BTR/Sarmcol strike in S Africa. But this strike means we have to stay on the picket line. We think BTR are out to break a union branch that stands up for its rights."

By Steve Score

Rialto Homes

THERE'S BEEN a lot of talk in the papers over the last few months over how "great the building game is" 'loadsamoney', £100 a day and so on.

However, there is another side to the industry. A number of weeks ago, TGWU building trade group organiser, Frank Westerman, visited a Rialto Homes site at Grove Park, Camberwell, after 27 bricklayers and labourers were locked out.

Upon introducing himself, the site agent called him a "troublemaker" and swore at him. The agent then told a fork lift truck driver to run him down with the instruction: "Kill the bastard".

As he dodged the truck,

the agent encouraged some of his lackeys to "Give him a good kicking and throw him off the site". The TGWU solicitors wrote to Rialto complaining that the alleged threats constituted common assault. A meeting was arranged between two union regional officials and Rialto management at the site.

After an apparently satisfactory meeting, the TGWU officials left. Ten minutes later the brickies and hods were thrown off the job by the police. The dispute has now spread to another Rialto site in Wandsworth.

By Paul Richardson,
Brixton 1st branch,
London region Ucat.

Dresser Rand

LAST WEEK, 117 engineering workers at Dresser Rand, Wythenshawe, walked out on indefinite strike over conditions of work and pay. Management have refused to fully fund a pay increase or back-date the unions' claim. This means the workers are owed about £300 each.

This is seen as the thin edge of the wedge as the management have also withdrawn early morning canteen facilities and tea break facilities.

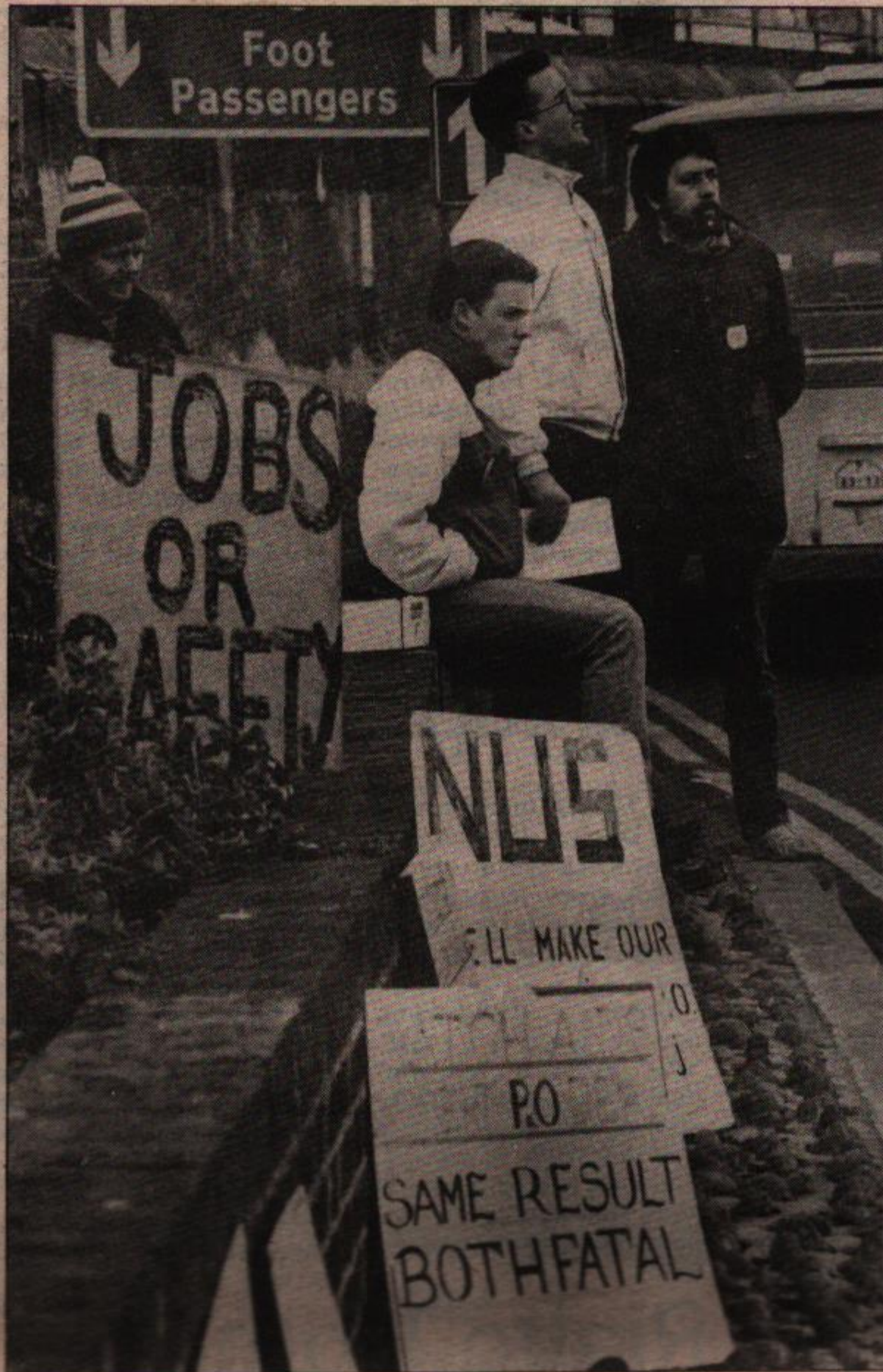
Coming on top of 240 redundancies last year, and the sending home of six men last week for disciplinary offences, the all-out call was answered unanimously. Dresser Rand is the result of a

recent merger between Ingersol and Dresser, both American firms. The merger took place in an effort to share out resources, markets and losses.

As the market in the engineering field continues to move into slump, even large firms such as these are seeking to reduce costs wherever possible.

Last Thursday, the men voted unanimously to continue the dispute. The strikers are determined to resist these attacks upon their hard-won gains and are prepared to call on support from other workers in the Wythenshawe area.

By John Hall.



Dover fights on

Ian Parker spoke to P&O striker Gary Jackson.

"THE STRIKERS at Dover know we have to carry on this fight to the finish.

"When people heard the union had called off secondary action they laughed about it...so that they didn't cry. We were angry about it but now we are more determined to win a settlement we can work under.

"The mood on the picket line is still the same as it was. We all go up to the picket line very early in the morning to wait for the scab buses to come through. We're still determined to try and get them to get off the bus and join the union again.

There's loads of police up there and they try to intimidate us and try and get people arrested. There are about three policemen to one picket.

"We urge everybody who's sailing on those ships to come back off the ships and rejoin the union and carry on the strike with P&O.

"If they succeed in beating us down in Dover then they'll go to all the other ferry ports and they'll get rid of the closed shop there. They'll start going from the

ferry ports back to shoreside and wreck all the union shoreside as well.

"That's why it's a fight to the finish. The attack on us in Dover is an attack on the union.

"If we're beaten down the Tories will launch more and more attacks on the right to strike. They'll use the courts as they are against us and they have at Wapping and, against the miners.

"So now, more than ever before, the trade union movement is needed to defend the NUS in its struggle.

"The rally in Dover on 21 May is a focal point now. We'd like all the trade unions to come down and support this rally and take it to all their workplaces all over this country.

"Collections and food are more vital than they were at the start. I urge every trade union member to come down to Dover and go back and tell all their members that we are still there fighting.

"Tell them that this dispute is not over by a long way yet and we need your support."

JOINT NUS SUPPORT GROUPS (DOVER)
VICTORY TO THE NUS
March and Rally
Saturday 21 May
ASSEMBLE:
11.00am Elmsvale recreation ground,
Elmsvale Road, Dover
 Speakers: Arthur Scargill, Dennis Skinner, John Macreadie, Sam McCluskie, Paula Hanford (chair LPYS), Betty Heathfield

Coaches from London to Dover for 21 May rally
LPYS: Leaves York Way, Kings Cross station 9am returns from Dover 4pm. Cost £2.50.
Bethnal Green: Town Hall 9am, Poplar Baths 9.30am. Cost £5.00. Bookings: 739 7294.
Hackney: Stoke Newington Green 8am. Bookings: 249 6930.
Lambeth: Town Hall 8.30am. Bookings: 733 5135 or 733 5670.

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Help build Militant

DESPITE THE setbacks at their conference, the fighting mood of CPSA members was shown in the £4,458 raised for Militant's fighting fund from delegates and visitors.

Many CPSA members are low paid. And strikers from Hither Green DHSS and Leeds Prison, and Department of Employment workers in London who've just finished a 13 week strike were among those at Militant's Readers' Meeting.

Despite this, many gave £50 and even £100 each into the collection, answering John Ellis' absurd claim that Militant was finished in the CPSA!

Donations at FBU Conference added £211 to our fund. Militant supporters in London LPYS branches have given us £100. Roy Wembourne and Ann Howarth sent us £200.

We appeal to all readers not only to send us a day's pay but a weekly donation. Mick Murphy, Newham NW CLP, has sent £30. Mr. and Mrs. Arnold, OAPs in Nottingham and regular contributors have sent another £10. Can you match these examples?

Help us build and expand Militant's socialist ideas. And take Militant to your workmates and friends and ask them to contribute as well.

A seller in Dover raised £42 in his rattling tin in extras on a shopping centre paper sale. Get those tins out on the streets, estates and workplaces. And ask for a donation when selling tickets for our Alexandra Palace rally. A Hackney reader got £10 for a ticket last week.

Thanks to: Carol Phillips, CPSA

Target 2 July £80,000. Raised this week £3136.

Fighting Fund Week 2

| Area | Received | % of target achieved | Target |
|--------------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------|
| 1 London | 736 | | 16,100 |
| 2 Manchester/Lancs | 194 | | 4400 |
| 3 South West | 81 | | 2100 |
| 4 East Midlands | 145 | | 3750 |
| 5 Southern | 115 | | 3200 |
| 6 West Midlands | 185 | | 6200 |
| 7 Scotland East | 90 | | 3050 |
| 8 Wales | 120 | | 5300 |
| 9 Yorkshire | 196 | | 8900 |
| 10 Merseyside | 150 | | 7250 |
| 11 Eastern | 58 | | 3450 |
| 12 South East | 31 | | 2300 |
| 13 Scotland West | 42 | | 3400 |
| 14 Northern | 2 | | 5100 |
| 15 National | 2962 | | 5500 |
| Total | 5107 | | 80,000 |

(Dorset) £20; Tudor Parsons (Blaenant NUM), £20; Michael Hunt, EETPU (Newcastle) £10;

Linda Brooks, low paid worker (Birmingham) £10; Steven Piper, unemployed (East Kilbride).