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See page 7

Tories blitz Rover jobs

THE LAST British-owned car manufacturer, Rover, is going to be 'saved' Tory-style -by losing 4,900 jobs. So much for Tory propaganda about their 'economic miracle', the recovery of manufacturing industry and the decline in unemployment.

Rover's bosses and the Tory government conspired to keep their plans hidden from the workers they are planning to sack. The Tories are desperate to sell off Rover to British Aerospace (BAe) at a knock-down price. So they let BAe in on their nasty secret too. But the workers who make the cars and whose jobs will go were kept in the dark for as long as possible.

Details of the corporate plan only leaked out from the European Commission. It is a plot to close two whole factories at Llanelli and Cowley South.

"This procedure has been going on for a year, but they hide the truth. They've been telling lies," a Cowley worker told *Militant*. "If you've got a mortgage or children it's going to be impossible to cope. What sort of reward is this for ten to 15 years' service?"

Rover boss Graham Day has ordered speed-ups and squeezed sweat out of Rover workers. At about the time when the day shift at Cowley is fit to drop, he relaxed on a sofa in his

By Peter Howarth
Oxford East Labour Party

office and spoke to the press. He shrugged off the effect the job losses will have.

Workers from Llanelli and Cowley could apply for jobs elsewhere at Rover, he said. Many Cowley workers have already moved from unemployment blackspots, fed with promises that they were taking on secure jobs. Have they got to get on their bikes again?

The company's letter to workers says they want to achieve the "headcount reduction" at Cowley "as painlessly as possible". How are they going to throw people on the dole painlessly?

All Cowley workers are anxious about their jobs now. The only car left there will be the Rover 800, which is not selling well. So what chance has the rest of Cowley got?

The plan is an admission that Rover can't survive in the 'volume car' market. Its solution is to move into

production for a smaller specialist market.

But there is one fatal flaw in this. Just as the company plans to put all its eggs into the basket of specialist cars, that part of the market is beginning to shrink. How is Rover going to compete with the Audis and BMWs?

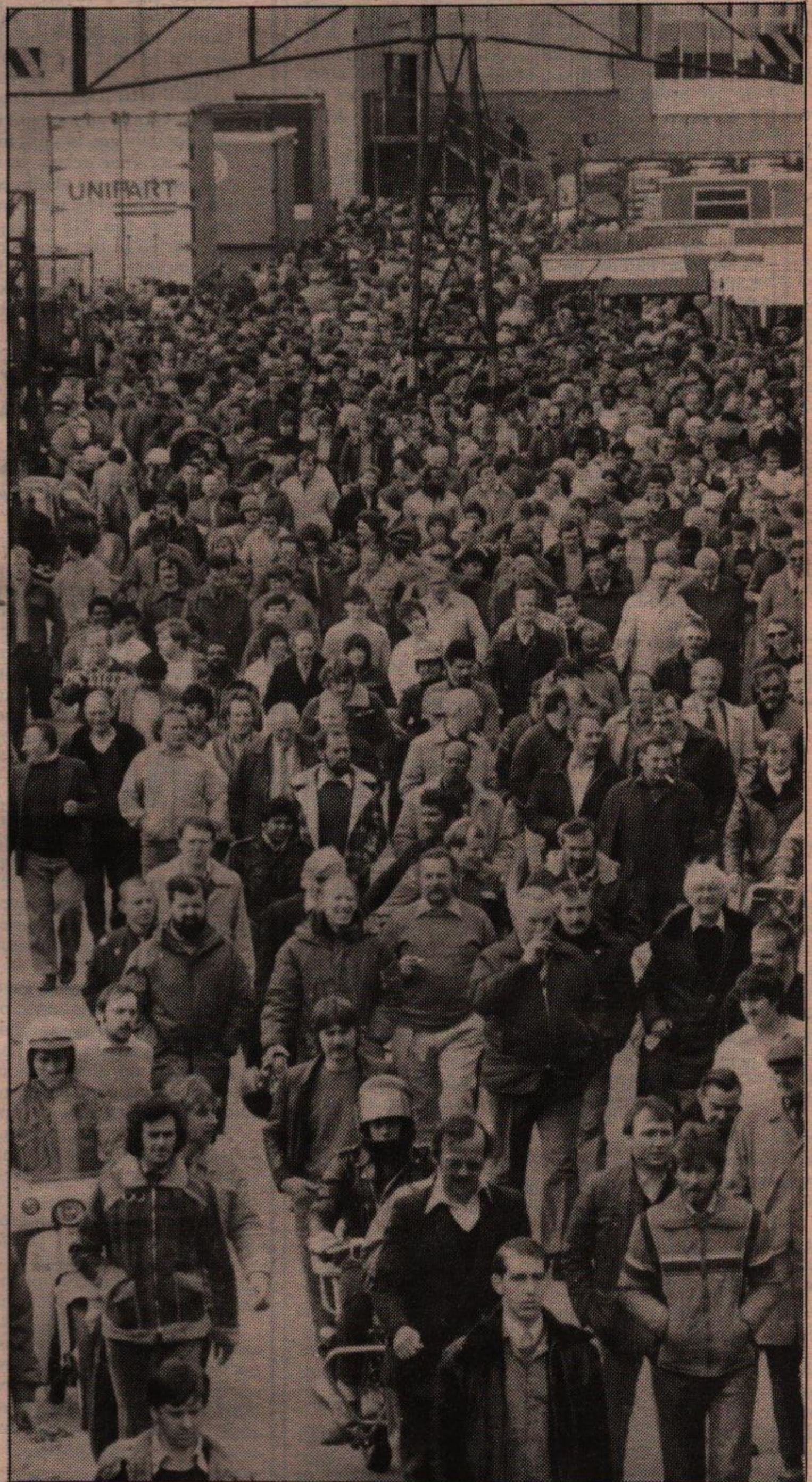
No doubt a future corporate plan will propose turning away from specialist cars into something else - perhaps tractors or Dinky cars!

The Rover unions must go all out to fight the job cuts and the Labour leaders must give them all the support they need. But Rover has a minuscule share in the European market now -about four per cent. The British car industry is doomed to destruction if it is left in the hands of the capitalists.

The labour movement must fight for the renationalisation of Rover. If it is true that it cannot survive as a major car producer, then merge it with nationalised Ford, Vauxhall and Peugeot into one publicly owned car company, run under workers' control and management.

A socialist plan for the car industry, not the bosses' corporate plan, is the only guarantee of car workers' jobs.

What the plan means - see page 3.



Workers leaving Rover's Cowley factory.

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**Sri Lanka -
the challenge
facing the left**

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Militant

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Peace in the Gulf?

THE IRAN/Iraq war, which has claimed one million lives seems to be ending. Iran has accepted the UN's ceasefire terms and has clearly dropped its insistence on the overthrow of Iraqi leader, Hussein, or for the UN to declare Iraq the aggressor.

One of the UN's terms—withdrawal to pre-war borders—has in effect been realised. Since April Iran has suffered a number of setbacks, forcing it to pull out of the Fao peninsula and other Iraqi territory on the northern front.

Despite incursions into each other's territory since 1980, both are now back to the areas they held at the start of the war. In eight years of hostilities no-one has gained, least of all the workers and peasants of the two countries. Only the international arms traders have won anything from the slaughter.

Both sides made damaging miscalculations. Iraq attacked hoping to make geographical gains from an Iran it believed to be still in turmoil in the aftermath of the revolutionary overthrow of the Shah.

It concentrated its fire on the oil-producing province of Kuzhestan. It hoped (falsely) that the Arab speaking population there would rise up against the Farsi speaking Iranian leadership.

Despite superior weaponry, Iraq was forced back by human waves of young revolutionary guards still fired up by the embers of the revolution.

But Iran had the misconception that the majority Shi'ites of Iraq would be won over to Ayatollah Khomeini's Shia regime, rather than the Sunni Muslim Iraqi leaders. National loyalty, however, within both nations remained fundamentally intact.

Neither side was capable of decisive victory. But the stalemate had all the horrific features of the Somme in 1915—prolonged trench warfare, even hideous mustard gas.

The super-powers could not allow either side to be victorious. It would upset the delicate balance they have established in this most sensitive area.

In particular imperialism could not allow Iran, which seemed to have the upper hand in 1984-6, to win. It would have become the dominant power in the Gulf. Although the Khomeini regime represented the carrying through of an Islamic counter-revolution, its instability and unpredictability still frightened American imperialism.

Enormous aid was given by world capitalism to Iraq. Its debts were paid off by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. As a result it has a four times superiority in tanks and planes. With the tanker war US forces had the pretext to move into the Gulf itself.

All this allowed the successes of Iraq of the last few months, especially as it has been a question of pushing Iranian forces from Iraqi territory.

Iraq accepted the UN terms when they were first put forward a year ago. But Iran has accepted them mainly in the face of the total war weariness of its people and the growing resentment at the privations they face.

Earlier this month demonstrators in the southern city of Fasa attacked and demolished the local barracks of the revolutionary guards in protest at the continuation of the war. There were violent demonstrations in Isfahan in May.

Speaker of the Majlis, Rafsanjani, warned that without peace the future of the regime was at stake, commenting: "We could all swing in the main square of Tehran."

He was made commander in chief after the Fao retreat. Under him the ministry responsible for the revolutionary guards has been wound up, and they are to be incorporated into the regular army.

Under Rafsanjani, who is emerging as a leading figure, bourgeois bonapartism—a military police dictatorship—resting on the regular army is being consolidated, although a new world recession and new crisis could possibly still cut across it. There are still deep divisions within the Iranian regime.

Rafsanjani wants to end an unpopular war and divert resources to industry, infrastructure and housing to placate the disaffected masses.

The working people of both countries are paying the price for the absence of Marxist leadership in the Iraqi revolution of 1958 and the Iranian revolution of 1979, both of which could have led to the ending of landlordism and capitalism. It has cost them the nightmare of the war and their oppression by Muslim theocratic reaction in Iran and a ruthless capitalist dictatorship in Iraq.

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Working in the North Sea

"WHEN ARE you due to go home?" That's the most common conversation between workers on the rigs I work on. It sums up the feelings of men living and working away from home two weeks of every month in the North Sea.

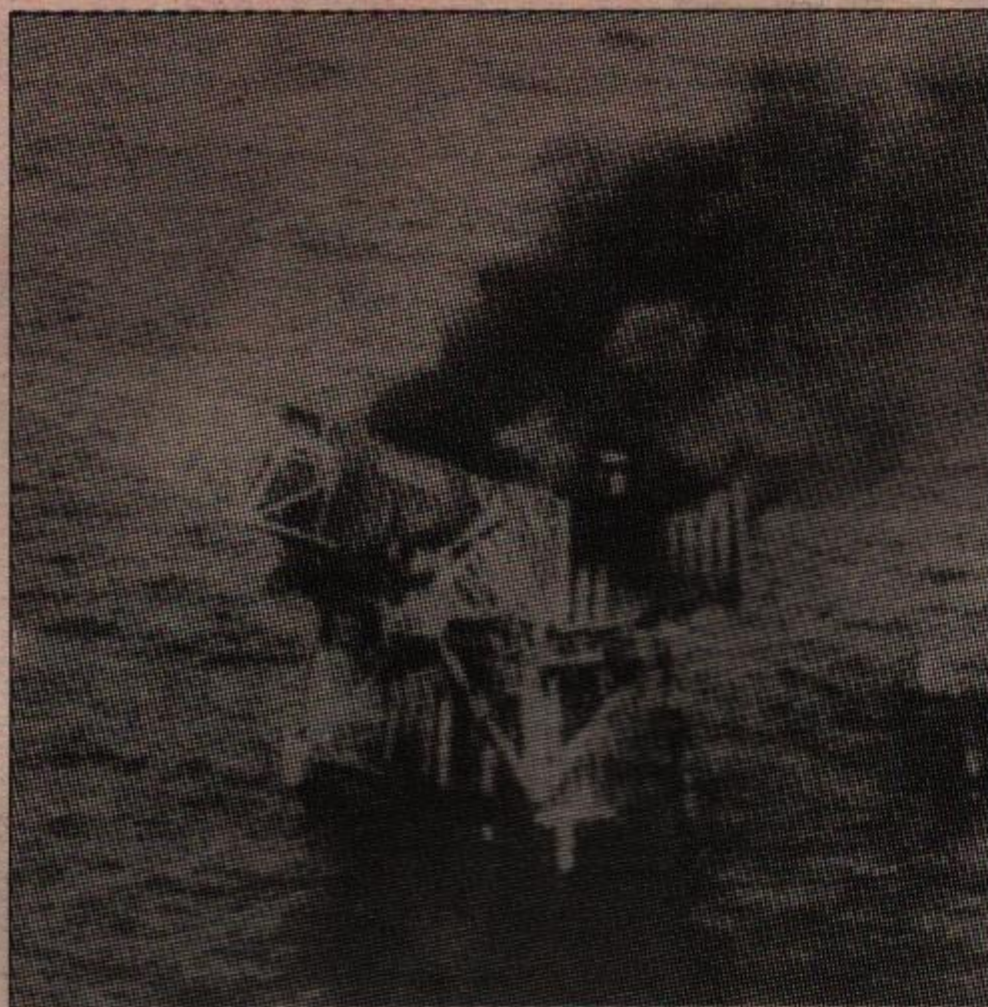
By a gas-rig worker

It makes me sick when the Tory press claim that offshore workers have a good life and a high standard of living. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The contracts we work on are two weeks on, two weeks off. But management usually ask you to stay on after two weeks and to come back early off leave. If you don't bow to their demands you're treated like a rebel.

For being away from my family, working 12 hours a day for 14 days and having two weeks off, I receive roughly £190 a week. That money is only guaranteed if you actually get 14 days in. If the weather delays you, you usually spend all day at the heliport, when the company pay you £15 a day.

I started in the construction industry 15 years ago, working 40 hours a week. Now I'm working 84 hours



The Piper Alpha disaster brought home the dangers faced by rig workers.

a week with all hours at the same rate of pay. Is that what Thatcher means by Victorian values? You're even expected to work overtime. That's a joke, when you're usually working 12-14 hours a day.

All it is is work and sleep—if you can sleep. Noise from the generators and the water-pumps makes ear-plugs essential. The rooms are very small and with four men to a

cabin it is very hot and stuffy.

Emergency

You have to get up one at a time to get ready for work. There's not enough room to do anything else. If there was an emergency it would be chaos getting out of your room.

For recreation there are two pool tables and a television between 150

Dukakis smashes hopes of "radical" Democrats

THE WHEELER-dealing and backroom agreements at the Atlanta Convention show how far the Democratic party is removed from the American working class. Once the white slaveowners' party, the Democrats today are one of the two parties of US capitalism.

To reassure his big business paymasters, presidential candidate Dukakis is desperately trying to shed any liberal image by choosing as his vice-presidential running mate, millionaire Texan senator Lloyd Bentsen.

Jesse Jackson, who gave some vent to the anger of the working class—especially blacks—could not be tolerated on the Democratic ticket. Appealing to those millions of victims of Reaganism—in Atlanta itself 27,000 blacks and poor whites queued for free Christmas meals last year—Jackson secured seven million votes in the Democratic primaries.

Bentsen urged using the atom bomb to end the Korean war. Now he backs the Nicaraguan Contras. When Reagan was first elected, Bentsen endorsed tax and budget cuts. Now he stands as the alternative to the Republicans!

Bland campaign

Even Dukakis justified the shooting down of the Iranian Airbus by a US frigate in the Gulf.

The choice of Bentsen will shatter many workers' hopes, aroused by Jackson's campaign, that the Democrats could be a vehicle for real change. Already Dukakis' bland campaigning has let Bush close the gap in the opinion polls,



Dukakis meets Bush—Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

even though the legacy of Reagan and Contragate hangs around Bush's neck.

It is possible, though not very likely, that on a lower than ever turnout (and Dukakis will not inspire workers or blacks to vote) Bush could still win.

But neither candidate and neither party can offer anything to the working class. Even Jackson's programme is inadequate to resolve the growing crisis of US capitalism.

Jackson himself is a capitalist politician who latched on to mass discontent. The *San Francisco Chronicle* praised him for "channeling...black anger into the political process. The alternative has always been the streets and violence."

But his campaign gave a glimpse of what the real alternative of a party of labour could achieve.

White workers backing a black candidate and responding to a 'radical' programme confounds the myth that American workers cannot be won to socialism.

THE CURRENT *Militant International Review* carries a full article on the significance of the Jackson campaign. Many Marxist discussion groups plan to discuss it on their programme of meetings. Make sure your area discusses this important article too.

men. But by the time you have had your tea and a shower you're falling asleep.

Working conditions are as bad. Most safety equipment is usually locked away in the foreman's office so it usually takes half an hour to get a pair of gloves before you start work.

Tools are non-existent. That's probably the hardest part, trying to get the right gear. But the bosses are not bothered about providing proper equipment, they're more bothered about you having an extra minute at tea-breaks. It's the same onshore but it's more unbearable living and working on a rig half the size of a football field for two weeks solid.

When you go home it's an enormous relief. But far from enjoying your leave, after paying the mortgage and other bills, you are always counting the money to try and make sure there is enough left when you go away so that your wife can buy the food.

The pressure on my wife is great. She has to manage the home and look after the kids on her own, every day worrying about me, wondering if I'm OK, especially after the recent disasters offshore.

Despite being openly shunned by the Democratic establishment, Jackson remains committed to 'party unity'. But there is deep resentment among his rank and file supporters.

Party of labour

Many workers and youth will now see that the Democratic Party will never represent working class interests. The demands raised while Jackson's bandwagon was rolling for free health care, welfare reforms and big increases in education spending can only be realised by a party of the working class.

When the presidential election is over and especially when recession bites, pressure will keep growing in the unions to build a Labour Party that can stand on the fine traditions of independent socialist candidates and parties in the US.

By Paul Kershaw

MILITANT INTERNATIONAL REVIEW

From World Socialist Books
3-13 Hepscoth Rd
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Labour MPs say no to poll tax

"WE THE undersigned MPs stand shoulder to shoulder with the 'Don't pay-don't collect' campaign already under way in Scotland and pledge our support to the Day of Action called by the Scottish TUC on 14 September as the start of a mass campaign. Individual martyrs will not defeat this tax but a mass campaign of defiance will. We, the undersigned MPs declare that we will not pay this Poll Tax as part of the mass campaign of defiance that we will assist in organising.

We call on local tenants and community groups, trade unions and Labour Parties to establish local Anti-Poll Tax unions to spell out the implications of this tax and to unite people in opposition to it and we call on the labour movement to organise a national

campaign based on mass meetings at community and workplace level, together with demonstrations and other protests.

We fully support those trade unionists in England and Wales who will refuse to implement this tax and those in Scotland who are refusing to process claims for the arrestment of wages.

We call for the non-payment of this tax and in solidarity, non-collection by the council workforce of this until this government backs down, repeals the Poll Tax and restores the £23 billion taken from local authorities by this government since 1979."

Harry Cohen, Harry Barnes, Bob Parry, Ronnie Campbell, Bob Clay, Eddie Loyden, Ron Brown, Dave Nellist, Terry Fields, Pat Wall.



Speakers at the Glasgow anti-poll tax meeting, attended by over 500 local people.

Battle ahead

ON A wet and windy evening, two days prior to the main Glasgow holiday fortnight, over 500 people plus 35 kids in the creche, turned up to the *Militant* public meeting in Glasgow to hear Peter Taaffe on how to fight the poll tax.

The audience, made up of a wide spectrum of the west of Scotland working class, from unemployed teenage youth, low-paid women workers, through to pensioners, rapturously applauded the four main speakers.

Peter countered the barrage of propaganda being poured out by the Tories and the capitalist media

and now unfortunately affecting the Labour leaders, that the poll tax is the law and the only option is for it to be paid.

The message from the meeting was quite clear that an almighty battle is going to be waged in Scotland in 1988/89 to sink the Tory flagship of the poll tax and that the working class expect not only their leadership to stand side by side with them but to lead them into that battle.

£610 was collected at the meeting for the Fighting Fund.

By Bill Blackstock

Thatcher gone too far

"THATCHER HAS bitten off more than she can chew" was the defiant message delivered by Tommy Sheridan, secretary of the Strathclyde Federation of Anti-Poll Tax unions. He was speaking at a meeting organised by West Derby LPYS in Croxteth, Liverpool.

Around 90 local people heard Tommy describe the battles currently taking place against the Poll Tax in Scotland, outlining the need for workers on this side of the border to organise now to fight the Poll Tax.

The meeting unanimously passed a statement calling for a mass campaign of non-payment and demanded

that Liverpool's Labour council refuse to implement the Poll Tax. With the city council's battles against the Tories between '83 and '87 workers in Liverpool understand that it's 'better to break the law than break the poor'.

This meeting is just the first of many to be held in the area. The task is now to organise Anti-Poll Tax unions in every area of the city before April '89 so that any attempts by the Tories to impose Poll Tax registration will be met with cast-iron resistance.

Les Tudor
West Derby LPYS

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THE LABOUR Party Young Socialists, the liveliest (and loudest) contingent on the Anti-Apartheid demonstration to celebrate Nelson Mandela's birthday. 250,000 people gathered in Hyde Park after the march to voice their opposition to apartheid.

No giro, try Tesco

A TESCO food voucher for £14.55—that was what DHSS officials in Chester gave a 17-year old unemployed girl in place of a giro.

Louise had gone to the DHSS to complain that she hadn't received her weekly giro cheque. Instead of an apology and a speedy correction, she got a three hour grilling.

At the end came the food voucher, as a crisis loan which would be doctored from her giro (when she got it) at a rate of £1.94 a week!

Will this be the pattern of the future when Girobank is privatised? Money for

the hard hit DHSS in exchange for plugging their products.

"I couldn't believe it," Louise told *Militant*. "I've had to keep borrowing from friends and relatives to survive because they keep messing my claim up.

"Then when I complained they hadn't sent me any money this week, they made me tell them exactly what I spent last week's money on. I told them I used it to pay off all my debts. I have to borrow; the Tories don't pay you enough to live on. But now they try to tell you what you can spend your money

on. "Under the terms of the Tesco voucher you weren't allowed to buy any sweets, alcohol or tobacco and you had to spend the whole lot at once!

"I feel really angry at how young people are treated by this system. I understand why people take drugs or riot. But I know it's only through political action that we can change things." Louise has now joined the Labour Party Young Socialists.

By Dave Martin

Rover

What the corporate plan means

IT'S NOT surprising Rover bosses wanted to keep their corporate plan secret. It is a terrible tribute to the havoc capitalism has wreaked on the British car industry.

The Tories' hasty attempts to dump the Rover Group into the lap of British Aerospace (BAe) almost failed when the plan came to light. They had offered BAe the whole company for next to nothing, plus a £557 million hand-out.

The BAe bosses feared Rover workers and their unions would be able to put pressure on them through the machinery of the European Community (EC). But the EC commissioner for competition obligingly agreed the plan.

The plan means that Rover will concentrate on the specialist market. From the point of view of the EEC commission, the Tory government, Rover management and BAe, this will be perfect.

The EC commission, acting on behalf of all the European capitalists, has a policy of eliminating "surplus" production facilities for the different European industries.

They have overseen the reduction of 500,000 jobs out of 900,000 in the community's steel industry. Now it is the turn of the car industry, particularly the volume car business, which

accounts for 90 per cent of all production.

Even in the present boom, European car manufacturers are only operating at 80 per cent of capacity. They rightly fear a new slump where perhaps only 60-70 per cent of capacity would be used.

'Small fry'

Rover is small fry to the EC. They want a tidy way of taking it out of competition in the volume car market. The corporate plan does the trick.

The Tories want to get Rover off their hands at almost any cost. The Thatcher wing of British capitalism has decided that there is no profit left in industrial competition with its rivals.

They are not prepared to put the necessary investment into Rover, or any other industry, to make it competitive on a capitalist basis.

The BAe bosses are interested in diversifying into car manufacturing. With the Tories' hand-out, they are taking no real chances. Graham Day, who is behind the corporate plan, looks set to become the next chairman of BAe.

But both Jaguar and BMW have recently cut back on production. Rover will have no real chance of

carving itself a niche in the specialist market.

The last people all these crooks worry about are the workers. Besides the 35,000 employed by Rover, another 100,000 plus jobs depend directly on the car company. The abandonment of volume car making will affect thousands of jobs in the industry, particularly in Birmingham and Oxford.

Labour must give a commitment to renationalise Rover, giving compensation only on the basis of proven need.

The labour movement must produce a socialist plan of production for the car industry, based on the needs of society as a whole.

With increased demand, a renewed confidence has come back to the Rover shop floor. Daily trials of strength have seen workers regaining elements of day to day control over the management, something which hasn't been seen since the late 1970s.

This confidence must be harnessed by the Rover workers' leadership to launch a campaign to save their factories and their industry.

By Bill Mullins
Ex-Rover senior shop steward

In the Labour Party

Threat to anti-poll tax leader

WITHIN DAYS of being elected secretary of the Strathclyde federation of anti-poll-tax organisations, Tommy Sheridan faces an investigation by the Labour Party's National Executive Committee...for recruiting too many members into the party!

This will enrage the thousands who have been involved in the fight against the poll tax. They expect the Labour Party to be leading that fight, not attacking their most effective local leader.

The Pollok anti-poll-tax union, of which Tommy Sheridan is secretary, now has 1,000 members, campaigning on the doorsteps, at meetings, in the streets and at workplaces.

In a few months it has sunk deep roots into the local community, drawn hundreds into

By a Militant reporter

political activity and prepared the ground for a magnificent mass campaign of non-payment. Tommy Sheridan has played a leading role in all this.

It has also, unfortunately, been necessary to criticise Labour councillors and MPs who have not supported the fight against the poll tax or even collaborated in its implementation.

This has incurred the hostility of the Labour MP for Pollok,

Jimmy Dunnachie, who has written to Joyce Gould, the party's director of organisation "to protest most strongly against the recent activity undertaken by Mr Thomas Sheridan".

He claims he was harassed and jeered on the magnificent demonstration in Pollok on 3 July. But that was a spontaneous response to his attempt to dampen the enthusiasm of the rally by saying that now the poll tax is legislation there is nothing we can do.

But Dunnachie's chief complaint is that "Mr Sheridan... told his audience to join the Labour Party to get rid of elected representatives who disagreed with their particular way of thought.

"This I find to be especially alarming in view of the large numbers of new members which Mr Sheridan has recruited to the Pollok Labour Party recently".

Reflecting the unspoken views of many right-wing MPs, Dunnachie has blurted out that he does not want the kind of active mass membership which Tommy Sheridan is helping to build up in Pollok Labour Party.

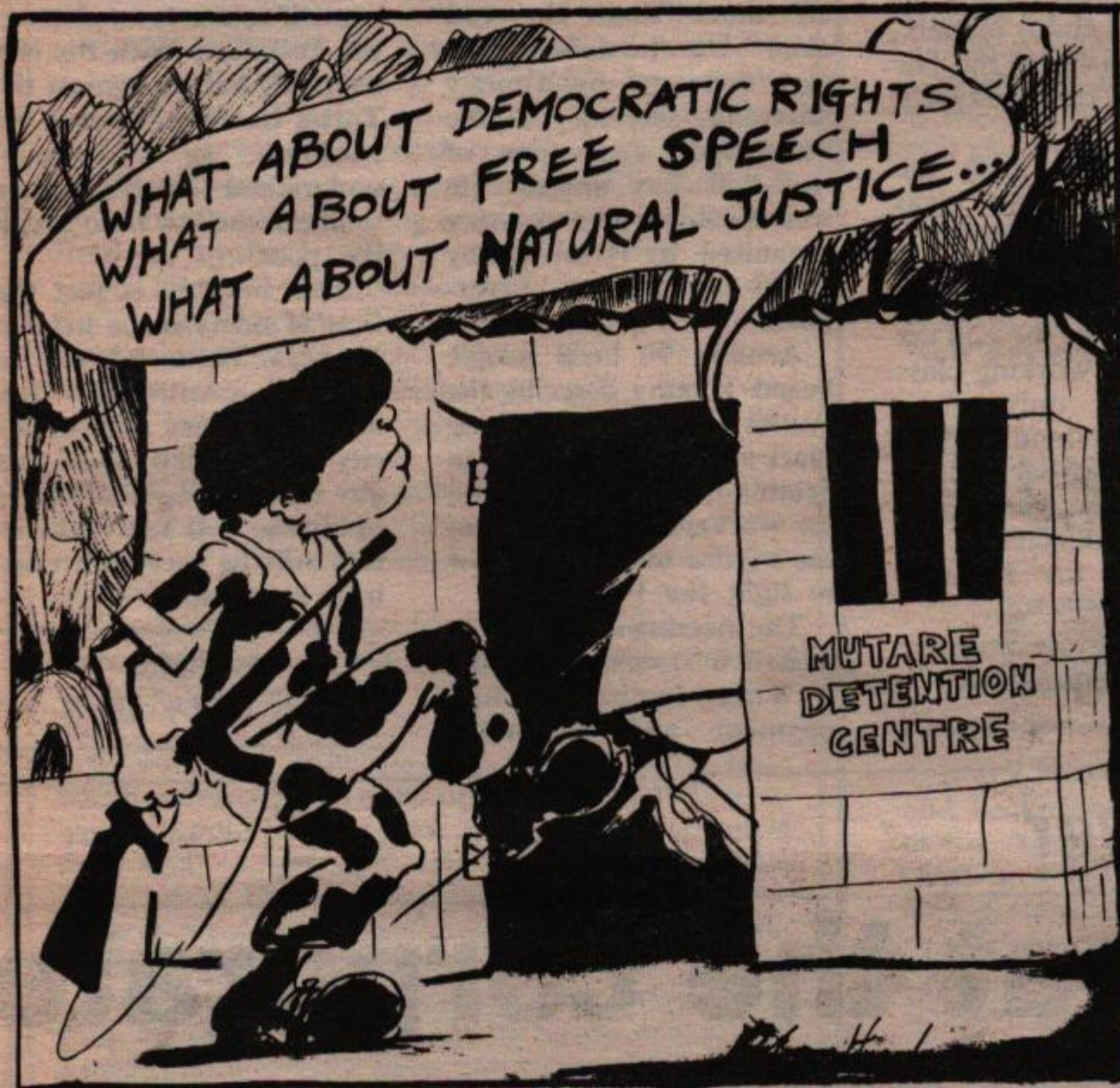
In contrast to the 1,000 who have joined the anti-poll-tax union, Pollok Constituency Labour Party has 450 members, 200 of whom are in the branch of which Tommy Sheridan is secretary.

The report to the NEC recognises that Pollok Labour Party members would not act against

one of their most active and successful members. "It had been hoped" it says "that if any action were to be taken it would be by the constituency party itself and not by the NEC.

"However, in the light of the letter received from the MP, it was clear that the NEC had to be made aware of the situation." So the NEC has extended its investigation to cover the activities of the constituency party as well!

The MP and the NEC, however, will provoke even more anti-poll-tax campaigners to join the Labour Party, to make sure that the attack is defeated and that the party is reclaimed for the working class it was built to fight for.



Back-door expulsion

THE UXBRIDGE North Labour Party branch could only muster five members to their last meeting on 13 July and so was inquorate. But four of them nevertheless decided that the fifth, Marc Vallee (20 per cent of the active membership!) could not take part in the meeting. It broke up after only half an hour.

A lobby, more than twice the size of the meeting itself, called on the branch and the regional office to admit this young party member, whose transfer into the branch has been delayed by the right wing for five months.

A member for four years since he was 15, he has been involved in the Labour Party Young Socialists, campaigning against YTS and education cuts.

The Uxbridge constituency party (CLP) executive has demanded to know why the branch is not accepting the transfer in accordance with the party constitution. Clause V (2) says that "in the event of a paid-up party member moving into this constituency he/she shall immediately be accepted into membership provided evidence of up-to-date party membership in a previous constituency is produced."

The branch secretary has written directly to Terry Ashton, the party's Greater London regional secretary, with 'evidence' that Marc Vallee is "a member of the Militant tendency" in the form of a press report of a conviction for flyposting!

Violation

Ashton replied: "You could not have a clearer example of support for the Militant tendency, proscribed by Labour Party conference, and therefore you are right to oppose the transfer of membership of this individual". In a dangerous extension of the witch-hunt, Ashton is backing a violation of the constitution, by-passing both the CLP and the National Constitutional Committee to expel a member for "support for the Militant tendency" which has never been an offence.

Send letters and resolutions of protest to Uxbridge Labour Party, Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge, Middlesex, and to Terry Ashton, 195 Walworth Road, London SE17, with copies to the Defend Marc Vallee Campaign, 16, Water Tower, The Straight, Southall, Middlesex

By a Militant reporter

Setbacks for witch-hunter

THERE HAS been a remarkable turnaround in the fortunes of the Shadow Welsh Secretary, Alan Williams MP, over recent months.

Over the last decade he has been in the forefront of Welsh MPs attempting to purge the party of Militant supporters.

The unsuccessful attempts against two members in his own constituency led to the disbanding

of the Swansea Labour Association (a joint general management committee (GMC) for the two constituencies) which was the power-base of the old right wing.

Two separate GMCs have now been formed. The one in Williams' West constituency has a left majority. It was the only constituency party in Wales to nominate Benn and Heffer in the

leadership campaign and has submitted a resolution to national conference calling for a campaign of non-payment of the poll tax.

Delegate

If this was not embarrassing enough for the Welsh witch-hunter general, the last GMC meeting elected Alec Thraves as

its conference delegate—one of the two proposed for investigation by the old Swansea Labour Association last year.

Not very good news for right-wing witch-hunters, but Swansea West Labour Party is determined to turn outwards and campaign for socialist policies.

By a Militant reporter

Why Labour lost in Kensington

THE SLASHING of the Tory majority in Kensington to 815 votes has exploded the myth that their policies are popular in south-east England. There is a deep undercurrent of angry opposition.

Yet the by-election result gives no comfort to Labour. They should have won easily, given the unpopularity of the Tory government revealed by the result.

The working-class and black and Asian community in the North of the constituency, already suffering from Tory policies, are now threatened with the poll tax, which in Kensington is estimated to be £340 per head, far in excess of most people's ability to pay.

And a clause in the Housing Bill that enables landlords to evict tenants in 'development property' will hit North Kensington, where

inflated house prices mean that all property has development potential.

Rumours also abound that the Tory-controlled council is going to sell off the entire council house stock to property developers and housing trusts by 1991.

While these attacks were touched on and condemned, Labour failed to tap the anger against the Tories. On poll tax for example, they preferred simply to 'present the facts' than to call for defiance.

Roy Hattersley blamed the media for ignoring the by-election. But when does the media ever help Labour to win elections? Only the party itself can inspire workers to vote.

The low-key campaign with no rallies or street activity led to a

lack of interest and a low turnout. Even Cynthia Payne's 'Payne and Pleasure' campaign made more impact!

There is no substitute for taking the campaign on to the estates, workplaces and streets, with a programme to convince working-class voters that Labour has a strategy to defeat the Tories, reverse their policies and benefit working people.

Disadvantaged

Even the editorial in the Tory *Evening Standard* the day after the by-election said: "Labour will only regain the votes of its natural constituents, the disadvantaged, if it gets down to the work of developing policies that are likely to benefit them".

Neil Kinnock has tried to blame the defeat on the left for challenging his leadership. But the real problem is the leadership itself. In the opinion polls, only 32 per cent are satisfied with Kinnock's performance and 55 per cent dissatisfied, the worst figures since the Greenwich by-election defeat.

Labour's leadership has failed to learn from the general election. In Liverpool, Coventry and wherever socialist candidates stood (and Ben Bousquet in Kensington) Labour's support was consolidated and built upon.

Labour can only win if it fights on bold clear socialist policies.

By Richard Famos,
Kensington Labour Party

**Nowhere
TO
Run**

A GENERATION on the run! That is what the Poll Tax will make working class youth.

After nine years when Thatcher's government have hit us hard, you might think things could not get much worse. But if the Tories get their way, young people condemned to poverty pay will also be robbed by this grossly unfair tax.

The Tories say the unemployed or low paid will get a rebate. Who are they trying to kid?

For instance, if your local poll tax is £224 a year, you would have to pay the tax in full unless you earned below £45.80 a week. On current estimates, a young civil servant in Glasgow earning £60 a week would pay £8 a week poll tax.

And, quite apart from the unemployed, many young workers have been pushed down to the poverty line by Thatcher's millionaire government.

Rebates are not guaranteed. If you are unemployed you may qualify for a maximum 80 per cent rebate. In Camden where poll tax is estimated to be £780, an 18-24 year-old on income support of £26.05 a week will still get a bill for £156!

The Tories have massacred youth wages, abolishing the Wages Councils for under-21s. Eighty per cent of under-21s now earn below the European decency threshold of £132 a week. Part time work among the young has risen by 250 per cent since 1979 because there have been few opportunities for proper jobs.

From September half a million 16-18 year olds will be forced on to YTS, when state benefit will be denied. For those over 18, the Tories have lined up a new slave labour scheme, ET (the alien we will soon come to know and hate).

Perhaps the Tories think Poll Tax will be an incentive to go on YTS, but that wouldn't save us money.

Everyone over 18 will have to pay at least 20 per cent-unless you can get a YTS scheme for the SAS or to be a nun, a monk or a diplomat! They are the only people exempt from the tax other than prisoners or the mentally ill or handicapped.

At present there are officially 50,000 young people homeless in London alone. Even they would not be exempt. If they stay in a hostel or sheltered accommodation, they will have to pay the full tax, calculated on a daily basis!

The tax will make youth homelessness even worse. At present 42 per cent of 16-24 year-olds live in households of three or more adults; these households could face a bill of £2,000 plus in some areas.

Perhaps we are supposed to console ourselves with the fact that at least the robbers won't lose out. Margaret and Dennis will be quite happy. When they move to their pad in Dulwich, they'll pay £1,140 poll tax instead of their £3,067 rates. Tory minister Paul Channon will save £3,008 on his Essex

home and £3,200 on his London home.

No doubt the Tories will be delighted to see thousands of youth not registering to vote as they move from home to home to avoid payment.

But that won't stop the protests. The Tories will have to contend with thousands of youth mobilised under the banner of the LPYS in a storm of industrial action and mass non-payment!

By Glenys Jones

ORGANISE LOCAL CAMPAIGNS

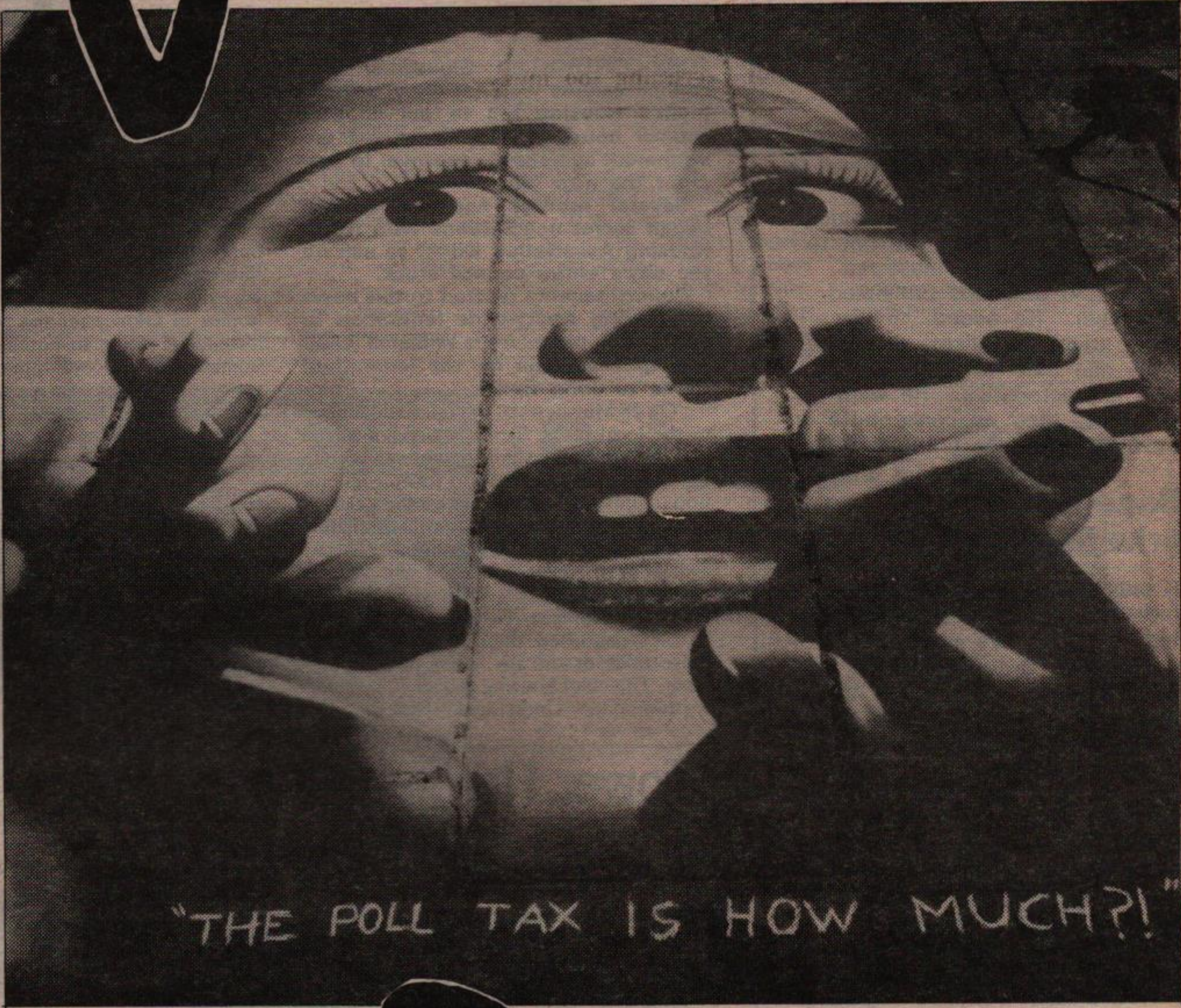
EVERY Labour Party Young Socialists branch should launch their "Youth fight the poll tax" campaign.

- ▶ Petition every estate
- ▶ Visit every young voter
- ▶ Visit every workplace, school, college, YTS scheme etc.
- ▶ Produce your own bulletins, stickers, leaflets, posters
- ▶ Hold street and public meetings
- ▶ Have a stall in the town centre
- ▶ Organise a local demonstration
- ▶ Build links with trade unions, Labour Parties, tenants' associations and build anti-poll tax unions
- ▶ Build your LPYS

FIGHT THE TORY POLL TAX

- ▶ For a mass campaign of non-payment
- ▶ For Labour-controlled local authorities to refuse to implement/collect the tax.
- ▶ For a national labour movement campaign, including industrial action, to defeat the poll tax.

Nowhere



Pavement artists against the poll tax. Could someone in your LPYS branch draw attention to street activities this way? Photo: Steve McTaggart.

to Runfrom Tory poll tax

LPYS ATTACKS

The fightback starts here

YOUNG SOCIALISTS have been outraged by the attacks launched on the LPYS. But they are determined that this time the right-wing leadership will not succeed! The following resolution was passed this week by Bedford LPYS—make sure your LPYS, Labour Party and union branch do the same urgently.

"Bedford Labour Party Young Socialists deplores the recent moves by the NEC to railroad rule changes to the LPYS through Party conference without any prior consultation with either the LPYS, CLPs or affiliated trade unions.

We note that the proposed rule changes, among others include:

- 1) The National Youth Campaigns Committee (NYCC) to become the prime body for the party's youth work—remaining unelected and with no age limit;
- 2) The possible establishment of Regional Youth Campaigns Committees (RYCC)—unelected and with no age limit;
- 3) A youth conference—with no age limit, no election of delegates and no right to debate resolutions and policy;
- 4) The election of the youth represen-

tative on the NEC at this conference by an electoral college, the make up of which is unknown;

5) The number for establishing an LPYS branch to be raised from five to ten members and the quorum of LPYS branches to be raised.

We believe that the proposed rule changes, far from assisting the party's youth work, demonstrate a deliberate attempt to stifle and thwart the activities and voice of our young party members. They represent an attack on the democratic traditions of election and accountability upheld within the LPYS.

We further demand that, if the NEC genuinely want to encourage young party members, that they withdraw the proposed rule changes to the LPYS; that they guarantee election and accountability of all representatives to any youth committee/conference; and that either the 23 age limit be implemented for all youth bodies or reversed to the previous 26."

By Helen Watson
Bedford LPYS



Chinese give-away

China's leading bureaucrat, Deng Xiaoping, let slip his contempt for socialism when he gave this advice to a visiting Mozambique delegation: "I advise you not to adopt socialism, at least not vague and unclearly principled socialism." He added, "If you must adopt socialism, you must have one that has your country's own characteristics." He went on to advise them to concentrate on developing private enterprises.

Benefits of privatisation

If only workers could award themselves a pay rise when they felt like it. That's what the directors of British Gas have done. The chairperson, Sir Denis Rooke, has received a 68 per cent increase, bringing his salary up to £184,000 a year. With the tax cuts he'll be more than £1000 a week better off.

British Telecom chief executive Iain Vallance recently received a 47 per cent increase taking his salary to £226,000. The chairperson of British Airways, Lord King, has received an increase from £52,000 a year to £178,000.

The need for privatisation has now been revealed.

Now you see them...

The government has a marvellous new plan to solve the dramatic rise in families living below the poverty line—pretend they don't exist!

A recent report from a Commons committee (with a Tory majority) reveals that nearly one family in five lives on or below the level at which they are eligible for benefits. Since Thatcher took office the number of families claiming benefits has risen from 4.4 million to 8.2 million. Another million live below the level of meagre benefits but do not claim.

To avoid further embarrassment the government has decided that figures will only be given about the relative rise or fall in living standards for the bottom 10 and 20 per cent of society—the number of people below the level of income support will no longer be counted.

Disneyland

From a letter published in the *Glasgow Evening Times*:

I was not surprised to hear Neil Kinnock refer to Disneyland politics, as he is an expert on Disney.

He 'disney' know whether he's for or against nuclear weapons, he 'disney' know how to beat Thatcher, he 'disney' know whether he wants to keep his job or resign, he 'disney' want to accept his Party conference decisions and he 'disney' think before he opens his big mouth.

Many thanks to all contributors. Keep them coming in!

Gloucester council tenants fight back

TORY-CONTROLLED Gloucester City council cannot wait for their government's Housing Bill to get shot of council housing. They want the environment secretary's approval to preempt the new bill.

Several months ago the council began secret negotiations with North Housing Association (NHA) to sell off the city's entire council stock.

Council tenants reacted to this news by forming a city-wide federation to oppose the plans. Anne Williams (chair and spokesperson for the federation) spoke to John Ewers.

"On 28 May news of the talks was leaked to the local press. Tenants were outraged and representatives got together to discuss the report. They agreed to form a federation to unite all tenants against the negotiations: At this stage we are completely opposed to the talks continuing with NHA. The council never consulted the tenants when they first discussed the government's Housing Bill last November and they haven't consulted them since, either on these talks or on any other possible options. The chief housing officer (CHO) has written to individual associations'

representatives trying to discredit us. He has refused to meet with us, claiming he didn't know who he would be talking to."

Why do you think a housing association based in Tyneside is interested in acquiring homes in South West England?

"NHA claims to be non-profit making but neither is it a charity. They say they are interested in 'social housing'. If that's so why don't they use their money to build homes in Gloucester for people in need, instead of trying to purchase our council homes? We can only conclude that they want our homes as collateral for future ventures."

What is your message to the council at the moment?

"At a recent tenants' meeting I asked the CHO to cancel talks with NHA and start the consultation again, this time involving the tenants. But the CHO still called a meeting inviting tenants' representatives to meet them last night, even though he knew we were boycotting it."

I understand the council and the NHA had a setback at a tenants' meeting on the largest of the city's estates this week?

"That's right. Over a hundred tenants attended and not one spoke in favour of the takeover. The overwhelming majority voted to stay with the council. If the takeover went through the tenants would be given 'assured tenancies'.

"At present we have 'secure tenancies' with the council and 'fair rents'. The assured tenancy that NHA are offering means 'affordable rents'. Affordable to whom?

Evictions for non-payment will be quicker and easier. There will be none of the consideration that tenants receive now. NHA will have to pay back from our rents the loans they obtained from financiers to buy the houses in the first place. They won't be sympathetic to delays even when they could well be caused by the tenants not receiving housing benefit.

No tenant should give up the security they have now for this arrangement."

The Federation should organise meetings of tenants on every estate to explain the issue. They have already met with some tenants from other parts of the country facing the same problems. These links must be built urgently.

Tower Hamlets residents say:

TENANTS OF six estates in Tower Hamlets face the threat of a Housing Action Trust (HAT). This is the Tories' latest gimmick to try and abolish public housing. At a meeting called by the Tower Hamlets Tenants Federation, around 1000 tenants listened with increasing fury to what this will mean.

By Dave Fryatt

The HAT appears to offer some hope of improvements to run down estates, of which Tower Hamlets has more than its share. When the HAT is set up tenants will lose all security. Rents will go through the roof. Residents on the Berner estate have already seen what this means in practice. A row of small workshops on their estate were privatised after the abolition of the GLC. Within a couple of years, rents had trebled.

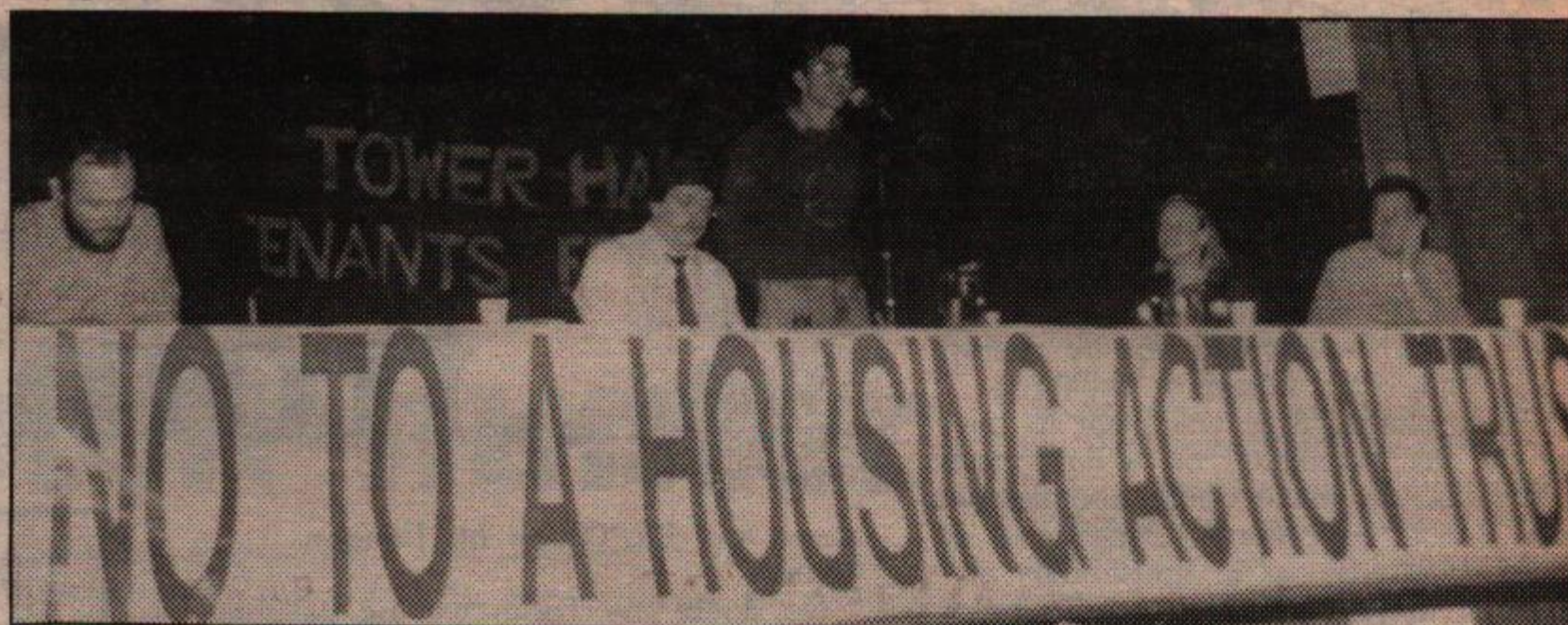
HATs will exist for about five years and then will be expected to pass the housing on to housing associations or private landlords. The government talks about tenants having the right to choose their landlords but they will only have the chance to choose from the list prepared by the HAT.

No control

The HATs can take responsibility for planning, public health and roads. If they want to put a road through your house they can evict you. If you own your own home they can compulsorily purchase it. Local tenants will have no control over the HAT, which is only answerable to the government. The HAT must carry out any instructions given by the Secretary of State for the Environment, who can replace the board at will.

The meeting grew steadily angrier and virtually exploded as Liberal councillor Jeremy Shaw got up to speak. He wrung his hands as he agreed that the HATs were a terrible thing but what could the council do. "Back us or look for

We are going to flatten the HATs



Angry tenants at Tower Hamlets meeting of Tenants Federation discussing the threats posed by HATs.

another job," one tenant suggested. But the real hypocrisy of the Liberals was exposed when Labour leader Phil Maxwell read out the minutes of a secret meeting in which Shaw had discussed with the Tories the best way to set up the HAT in Tower Hamlets.

The meeting voted virtually unanimously to fight the establishment of a HAT in Tower Hamlets. Tenants began to draw up a strategy of how to fight, by linking up with the trade unionists whose jobs are on the line if these proposals go through, and holding joint

meetings with tenants from the other areas under threat. One tenant, Eve Amor summed up the fighting mood perfectly when she said, "if they want my flat they will have to wait because they will only get it when I am carried out in a box".

Race setback in Dewsbury

THE RETREAT in the high court last week by Kirklees council in a racially motivated dispute with a group of Dewsbury parents could have serious implications for race and education in Britain.

The dispute began a year ago when the parents of the 22 children refused to accept the council's allocation and send their children to Heathfield Church of England school where 85 per cent of the pupils were Asian.

The parents claimed that such schools 'could not provide a proper act of collective Christian worship' and that their children would suffer because 'of poor standard of English'.

Although Kirklees council did not withdraw from the case on the basis of these arguments but on a 'technicality' nevertheless their

By Colin De Freitas

withdrawal would be seen as a victory by racists who would be given the green light to pursue similar cases.

Other local education authorities could now be faced with a rash of appeals from parents over first choice schools leading to closure of 'under-attended' schools. Moreover schools could also go down the road of racial segregation.

The Kirklees NUT have stated: "It will be happening all over the country. It is a disaster..."

Separatism can do nothing other than build up a time bomb."

The Kirklees Black Workers' Group is demanding a nationwide campaign including the labour movement, against racial segregation.

The Dewsbury parents have portrayed this simply as a matter of choice. They have tried to avoid any open expression of racial sentiment, since this would be balked at by the majority of workers.

But this is undoubtedly what partly lies behind the dispute and is certainly being played on by the Tories and their press to try and dampen down protests over the Education Reform Bill.

Most of the parents have openly criticised the Asian make-up of

the Heathfield school. Moreover their main organisers are characters who have a long history of involvement in right wing and racist groups. They have stated they have no objection to cultural groups having separate education.

Ironically they have had discussions with and received support from some so-called 'muslim leaders' who also call for separate religious and ethnic schooling.

These ideas are extremely dangerous and must be vigorously opposed within the labour movement. Such proposals will only lead to greater racial divisions.

Unfortunately the Labour leadership would seem to have taken on board these damaging ideas. In April of this year a

consultation document produced by Derek Fatchett one of Labour's front bench spokesmen on education stated that 'Hindus, Sikhs and muslims should be given the right to establish voluntary aided denominational schools.'

Instead the labour movement should be mobilising the working class, fighting the cuts for greater resources for education. For the right of veto for student unions and trade unions over course content to ensure against racism or sexism. For all the education governing bodies to be democratically elected by the student unions, the teacher unions and school unions and the local labour movement.

Summer camp - don't miss out



No perestroika-we're the CPB

"WITH REFERENCE to your letter asking if we would wish to debate with a representative of the *Militant* Editorial Board under the title of Perestroika-Can Gorbachev's 'Revolution' succeed?, I have to inform you that we will not be accepting."

Obviously, as far as the Communist Party of Britain is concerned, perestroika and glasnost are just for the inhabitants of the Soviet Union. "We felt that to get

the most from the debate, you should approach the Soviet Embassy."

The camp organisers eagerly await a reply from the 'official' representatives of perestroika.

But whatever the outcome, Lynn Walsh will be speaking at a rally on the crisis in the Stalinist countries. Other debates organised include: Should women have abortion rights?, with a speaker from the Society for the

Protection of the Unborn Child.

There will be twelve courses taking place throughout the week, including one on women and the fight for socialism, with discussions on the fight for the vote and women and the trade unions.

A professional creche is open throughout the day, so make full use of it.

SOCIALIST

SUMMER

6-13 August

Bracelands Campsite, Gloucestershire

Rallies at the camp

Clare Doyle: France '68

Lynn Walsh: Gorbachev's perestroika

Name

Address

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.....14yrs and over (£40 each).....deposits (£10 each)

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CAMP '88

SYD BIDWELL MP for Southall, has donated £75 to sponsor LPYS members to go to the camp. Have you approached your MP/MEP/local trade unions yet? It's not too late.

All you need is a tent, sleeping bag and cooking utensils, or eat the ready made meals that are available. Camping equipment is available for hire but **MUST** be booked in advance.

2 person ridge tent: £9.50. 4 person 'family' ridge tent: £17.00. 6/8 person ridge tent: £36.00. 4 person frame tent: £32.00. Double airbed: £5.75. Single airbed: £3.00. Twin burner stove: £6.00. Single burner stove: £3.00. Cash with order; make cheques payable to 'WEG'.

Drive on 905

MANCHESTER SELLERS broke all records last week. Their special 'drive on the 905' surpassed even their expectations. Despite torrential rain 60 copies a day were being sold on average in Manchester city shopping centre! Sellers were getting a good response using both the back page on South Africa and the front page lead story on the oil rig disaster. One rig worker approached a seller and gave £5 for a paper!

Huge efforts were made to get out selling at all times of the day. Five mums each sold more than 30 in three days—one of whom is a single parent with two children who had sold over 50 at the time of writing.

In Chorlton ward area alone 300 *Militant*'s have been sold in just four days

that is 1 in 3 of every Labour household!

The best seller so far had sold 102 in 4 days! For the Manchester area the sales drive has shown a trebling of their sales in just half a week and shown just how easy it is to sell *Militant*! We will give an update in next week's issue of total sales for the week.

SELL
Militant

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 Tory cuts and a massive programme of public workers on housing, education, and the health service etc.
- Opposition to the Tories' anti-trade union laws and reversal of attacks on trade unions.
- Fight racism. Oppose all forms of racial discrimination. Labour movement action against racist and fascist attacks. End police harassment. Oppose all immigration controls. Unite black and white workers.
- 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 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

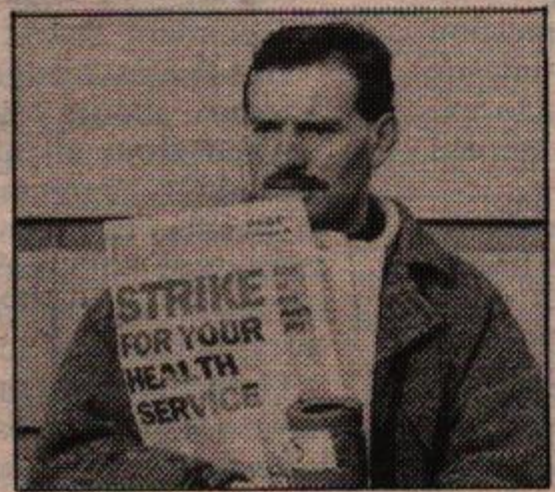
**YOUR NEXT STEP...
OUR FIGHT IS YOUR FIGHT...JOIN IT**
I wish to become a Militant supporter:

Name

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or telephone 01 533 3311 now!



THE MILITANT rally video, including a film Leon Trotsky—fighter for a Socialist world not shown at the rally, is available.

Send £12.50 per copy to Militant rally video, 3-13 Hepscott Road London E9 5HB. Cheques payable to Militant Rally.

Camden:
25 July
Fighting the poll tax
Basement Study Room,
Camden Town Hall,
Euston Road. 7.00 pm.

Walthamstow:
26 July
Defeat The Housing Bill.
Chestnuts Room,
Walthamstow Town
Hall. 7.30 pm.

Exclusive reports from Sri Lanka

The challenge facing the left

ON 2 June a gang of armed goondas from the JVP descended on the home of Ajith Munasinghe, Matara district secretary of the NSSP and candidate in the provincial council elections. Finding comrade Munasinghe out they terrorised his aged parents and a disabled relative, systematically looted and smashed his home, then burned it to a cinder.

A few days later in the same area two Communist Party members had their eyes gouged out by another gang of JVP communalists. These are but two of the numerous atrocities committed by the JVP against workers and youth who support the left parties.

The JVP are opposed to the granting of autonomous rights to the Tamil minority of the population, and were trying by terrorist methods to impose a boycott of the provincial council elections held between April and June.

The alliance of the four left parties known as the United Socialist Alliance (USA), comprising the SLMP, LSSP, the Communist Party of Sri Lanka (CPSL) and the NSSP, has borne the brunt of the JVP's attacks. Eight of their candidates have been murdered, over a hundred supporters killed or injured, and many meetings attacked.

Numerous leaders and supporters of the ruling UNP have also been killed.

"The first five people who cast their votes at every polling booth will be shot", was the widely publicised JVP threat. On 1 June almost all shops in the capital, Colombo, closed down because of death threats, and commuters hurried home in fear.

Not countered

This was the situation throughout the south. Such enormous intimidation had the effect of scaring anti-UNP voters away from the polls—particularly because it was not countered immediately by mobilisations of USA supporters on the streets.

The boycott campaign was most effective in the southern provincial elections on 9 June, which registered a 27 per cent turn-out (varying from seven per cent in the JVP stronghold of Hambantota to 42 per cent in the left-oriented Galle district). It was supported by the SLFP, who called for the spoiling of ballot papers.

On the other hand there was widespread ballot-rigging in favour of the UNP. Even Peter Kenueman, a prominent CPSL leader, turned up to vote and found it had already been cast!

The result was a 'victory' for the UNP in all seven provinces which voted.

Yet large numbers still turned

By Mukesh Moorthy

out to register their opposition to the UNP. This represented a slap in the face to the communalist campaign of the SLFP-JVP. Though less than the 81 per cent who had voted in the 1982 presidential election, a 57 per cent turn-out was registered in the Western and Central provinces on 2 June. Sixty per cent had voted in the other provinces on 28 April.

In the south, only 8-12 per cent of voters cast spoiled papers.

The USA narrowly failed to win a single district or province, but won over 1.4 million votes and 139 seats. Thus it has emerged as a potentially powerful alternative to the rightist UNP regime.

In the Colombo district Bernard Soysa, LSSP general secretary, won 54,000 votes, beating the UNP's chief ministerial candidate by 4,000 votes. In Gampaha district north of Colombo Ossie Abhaya Gunasekera, a SLMP leader, topped the poll with 77,000 votes against 27,000 won by the leading UNP candidate.

These electoral advances were made by the left front despite the fact that, since its formation, it has neither organised nor called any significant national action against the regime.

By holding the provincial council elections in the south, JR has begun to implement his part of last year's Indo-Lanka Accord. This has tightened pressure on the Indian army to complete operations in the north and east to allow provincial elections in the Tamil areas in July-August.

The cynical aims of the Indian and Sri Lankan capitalist governments, as *Militant* has explained, have nothing in common with the demands of the Tamil people. India's prime minister Rajiv Gandhi has used the Tamil question as a diversion from domestic crisis, and an opportunity to extend India's regional dominance.

For his part JR Jayawardena was forced to 'invite' the Indian army and sub-contract to them the job his own army couldn't do—smashing the Tamil guerrilla movement and preventing separation. With economic growth at an all-time low of 1.5 per



Mass meeting during the general strike of July 1980, led by the NSSP. The strike was defeated because of lack of support from further attacks by the UNP regime.

cent in 1987, JR also hoped to win aid and loans as a result of the Accord.

As a concession to the heroic and self-sacrificing struggle of the Tamil people, JR has been forced temporarily to grant the Tamils regional autonomy. The Accord also allowed him to transfer the Sri Lankan army to the south, where they are carrying out the same brutal oppression against the opposition and innocent Sinhala civilians as they did against the Tamils.

Self-determination

In these circumstances it is completely correct for Marxists to oppose Sinhala communalist pressure and defend any concessions to the Tamil people. Marxists defend the democratic right of the Tamils to self-determination, including the right to form an independent state.

But this does not mean that the Accord should be defended. Viewed from all angles, it is a reactionary agreement intended to stabilise two capitalist governments and hold back the revolutionary struggles of the youth and workers.

Unfortunately, the left leaders have accepted at face value the lofty claims of the Accord to solve the Tamil question, and have

What the initials mean

United National Party (UNP): ruling right-wing capitalist party of President JR Jayawardena.

Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP): 'radical' capitalist opposition party. Opposes the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord which is supposed to 'settle' the Tamils' demands for national rights—providing for Indian troops to police the Tamil areas and elections to provincial councils with limited autonomous powers—on a chauvinist platform of rejecting concessions to the

Tamils.

Janatha Vimukha Sarmaya Party (JVP):

party which formed in 1975. It is a terrorist method of imposing its policies and demands on the Sinhala Mahajana Samakam Party (MSP) which split-off from the Nava Sama Samakam Party (NSSP) party formed in

been labelled pro-UNP. While the Accord may appear to work for a time, on a capitalist basis all the problems will re-emerge.

It is clear that the United Socialist Alliance won a potentially large parliamentary base in the recent elections. But it would be wrong to judge the strength of the left front purely on the basis of parliamentary arithmetic. We should not forget that, because of the election boycott by the SLFP, the USA won its position partly by default.

The very large layer of support which the left front has still to break away from the SLFP is shown by the result in Dompe where an SLFP candidate, standing for the Liberal Party, came second with 13,253 votes. The USA was pushed into third place with 8,675.

The struggle to establish the

left front as the main alternative to the Sinhala communalist axis of the JVP-SLFP depends on the front adopting a clear fighting programme of economic, social and political demands and activities.

Strike

A 24-hour national strike and hartal (all-out protest) to rally the opposition would be a first step to building a mass movement to oust the government. The front must demand immediate general elections, complete opposition to the Indo-Lanka accord and the domination of Sri Lanka by imperialism, full national rights for the minorities, land reform, the ending of rural exploitation and unemployment, and a clear socialist programme for the nationalisation of the commanding

Ordeal of the Tamil people

MILITARISATION OF the Northern and Eastern provinces has now reached saturation point, with the so-called Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) overflowing the streets.

During 'Operation Pawan' (October-December 1987) the Tamil people in the North were terrorised, starved, driven to refugee camps and tortured. Several thousands were killed and maimed, thousands of women raped, property was plundered and destroyed.

What is the position now? Even today the people are harassed, humiliated and tortured. There has been a resumption of 'Operation Pawan'-style attacks in the Vadamachy area, which was put under permanent curfew for more than two weeks.

It has been much the same in the Eastern Province for the last few months. In addition to prolonged curfews, the IPKF imposes short-term curfews anywhere they think fit to carry out search-and-arrest operations.

One of the most agonising features of the IPKF occupation has been the shutting down of communication. Under the curfews, vehicle movement is prohibited or restricted.

This in itself has led to enormous hardship. For instance, hundreds of old and sick people have died because they could not get medical treatment.

Postal services are crippled. The telephone and telegraphic services have been dead for months.

During May the IPKF claimed, as if it was a miracle, that they had fixed three telephones in Jaffna—at the General Hospital, and at Jaffna and Chundikuli post offices. The very next day two of these were dead.

We don't think the Indians are incapable of repairing telephones. We strongly feel that the IPKF is resorting to sabotage in order to hide their atrocities from the rest of the world.

Such is the ordeal that the Tamil-speaking people are going through. On top of this is the food and drug shortage. While the Indian and Sri Lankan ruling cliques gang up to maintain their political power, the Tamil-speaking people of Sri Lanka have to pay most heavily for it.

Clearly, there can be no normality or peace in the North and East as long as Sinhala or foreign capitalist troops are stationed there.

Having suffered genocidal atrocities at the hands of the Sri Lankan forces, the people had illusions that the IPKF would bring justice. But they have fallen from the frying pan into the fire.

People are mortally afraid of what will happen to them from moment to moment. Arrests continue, and there is great anxiety about those arrested.

Protests are not tolerated by the IPKF. For instance, there was a hartal on 24 May in the North in protest against the actions of the IPKF. In the Kalviyankadu area, shops which closed on that day were closed down permanently by the IPKF.

Even at this late stage, the oppressed Tamil-speaking people should mobilise alongside the working class and the peasantry in the South and rise against the JR-Rajiv tyranny, force out the IPKF and overthrow the wretched JR regime.

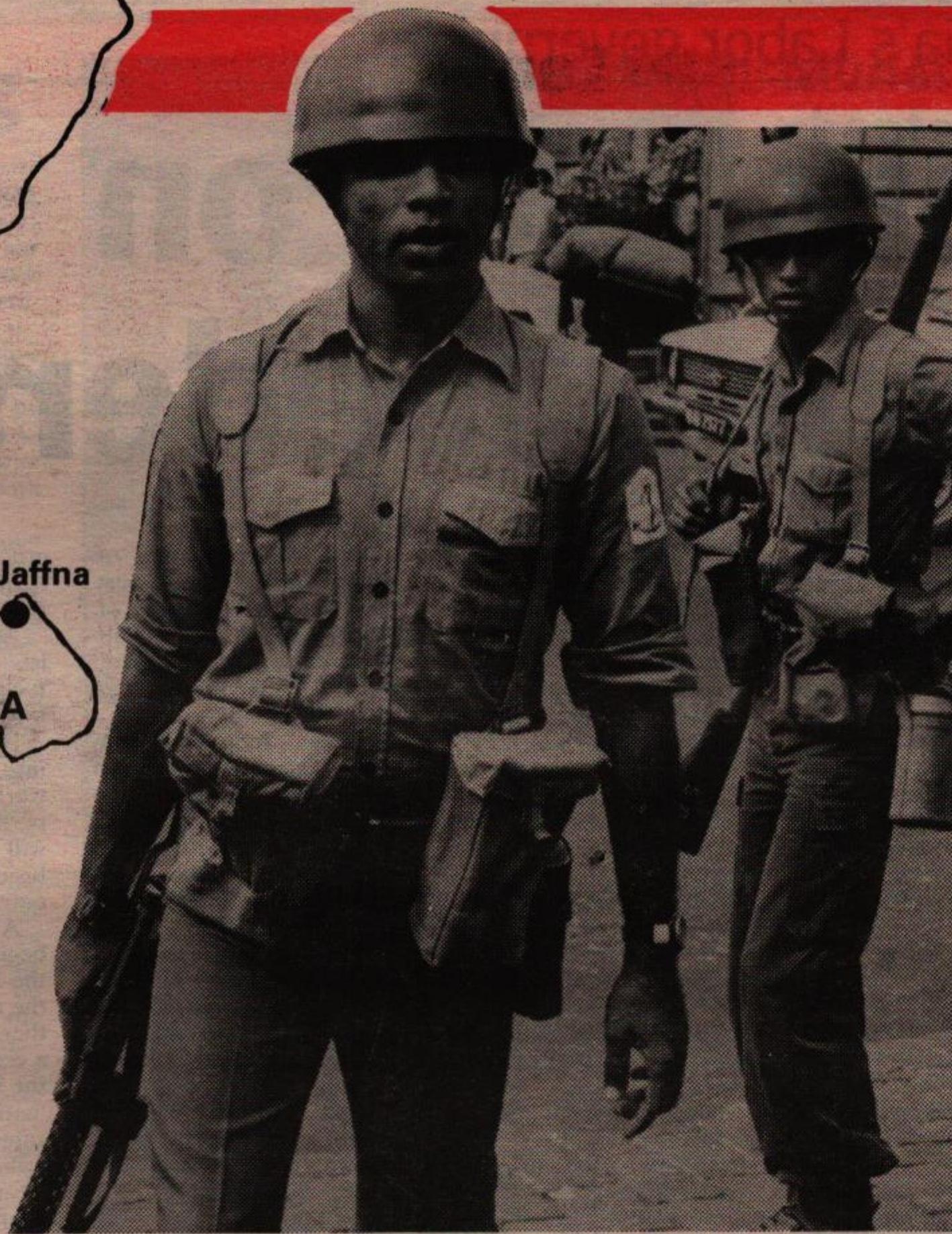
From a correspondent in Jaffna

INDIA

SRI LANKA

Jaffna

Population of Sri Lanka: 16 million (12 million Sinhalese, 3 million Tamil). The Tamil minority is concentrated in the north and east and the Sinhalese majority in the south.



mobilisation on the streets to defend the voting booths.

However, faced with the physical threat from the so-called 'Patriotic People's Front' (a pro-JVP organisation) the left leaders have scrambled to accept arms and weapon training from the government. But just as easily JR's regime will tomorrow take away these guns. The front can rely only on the mobilised forces of the working class and poor peasantry to defend it from all attacks.

In the 1930s, following the experience of the revolutionary upheavals in Germany, France and Spain, Trotsky pointed out that the defence of the workers' movement depends nine-tenths on a correct policy and political preparation, and only one-tenth on technical military questions.

Workers' defence

In Sri Lanka today this means that the left leaders should stop supporting the UNP and its Accord and commit themselves to socialist policies. Armed workers' and peasants' defence committees should be organised in every village, factory and plantation, based on the trade unions, mass organisations of the front and other mass opposition organisations.

In this way the foundations would be laid for a mass defence force or militia of the workers and peasants.

Of course, to neglect the military-technical questions would be folly. The trade unions and left front must systematically organise the military training and arming of their own forces to defend the movement. But this must be based on mass mobilisation rather than on the borrowed weaponry of the state.

The possibility of implementing such proposals rapidly is shown by the growing struggles against the regime. Normally sedate professional people such as doctors and dentists have been involved in joint industrial action with the nurses and hospital staff for several months. In the private sector workers at Ceylon Tobacco, Bata Shoes and ABM have been involved in long strikes.

Also on the private tea plantations some 70,000 workers were on strike for several weeks demanding wage rises, and broadcasting workers have

started industrial action for a wage increase.

Even UNP-controlled unions, under pressure of the workers, have been forced to call strikes at a wall tiles factory. Several spontaneous strikes by bus workers have broken out.

University students have been campaigning for the re-opening of the universities, and over 200,000 school students have taken part in strikes, demonstrations and boycotts.

Undoubtedly workers and youth have gained confidence from the formation of the USA and have sensed the vulnerability of the government in an election year. But, sadly, the USA has so far failed to even convene a joint meeting of its trade union organisations to map out a joint strategy.

Failure to act would only encourage the communalist forces. The youth in particular are looking for clear action rather than fine speeches against the government.

Because of the past betrayals by left leaders when they were in coalition with the SLFP, and their indirect support for the present UNP government, many militant youth have turned to the JVP with its brand of Sinhala chauvanism draped with Che Guevara and pseudo-socialist rhetoric. Already the JVP has taken the initiative in organising school students' strikes in many areas.

The USA has received a powerful echo of support for its appeal for a 'united socialist Sri Lanka' from the Tamil heartland of Jaffna to the Sinhala villages of the south. Now, following the provincial elections, workers are asking: what next?

Many activists fear that the reformist left leaders will repeat the disastrous mistakes of the past and, under the pretext of 'defeating the reactionaries', again enter a 'tactical' front with the capitalist SLFP. A coalition government formed on this basis would have the same consequences as the last coalition government between the SLFP and the reformist left leaders from 1970 to 1977, which ended in disaster for the workers' parties. Saddled with responsibility for the government's capitalist policies, the workers' parties were eliminated from parliament and the reactionary UNP was

able to come to power.

No concessions can be made to the communalist forces. In the recent parliamentary by-elections active workers had expected the USA to field candidates, mobilising and arming workers and peasants against the armed thuggery of both the UNP and the SLFP-JVP. By not contesting the by-elections, the left leaders are opening the door for the SLFP to re-establish itself as the main anti-government opposition and a for a new 'popular front' with the SLFP.

Conference

But the left cannot rely purely on JR's elections. He has often postponed them in the past. The broadest possible conference of workers' representatives of the trade unions, mass organisations of the left and Tamil parties—as was held on 25 March 1985—must be rapidly convened to prepare a programme of action against the government.

It must mobilise the power of the two million workers in town and country against the repressive policies of the regime, in support of the various struggles by the workers and students, linked to the call for the government to resign.

If properly organised, such action would reinvigorate the confidence of the working class after the blows of the last decade—the UNP's election victory of 1977, the savage attacks on workers and Tamils since that time, and the defeat of the 1980 general strike. Combined with a broad appeal to rank-and-file SLFP supporters, it could strike a decisive blow against JR's regime and campaign for the coming to power of a workers' and peasants' government to carry through the overthrow of capitalism and landlordism.

Confined to Sri Lanka, such a movement would inevitably face attack at the hands of Indian imperialism, in the South as in the North. The Sri Lankan workers' leaders will need to adopt a clear internationalist position from the outset, appealing on a class basis to the Indian workers and peasants as well as the Indian troops: for a socialist Sri Lanka, as part of a socialist federation of the entire Indian subcontinent.

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other left parties, opening the way to

hi Peramuna (JVP): ex-Maoist
ment, now basing itself on
lism, anti-Tamil agitation and

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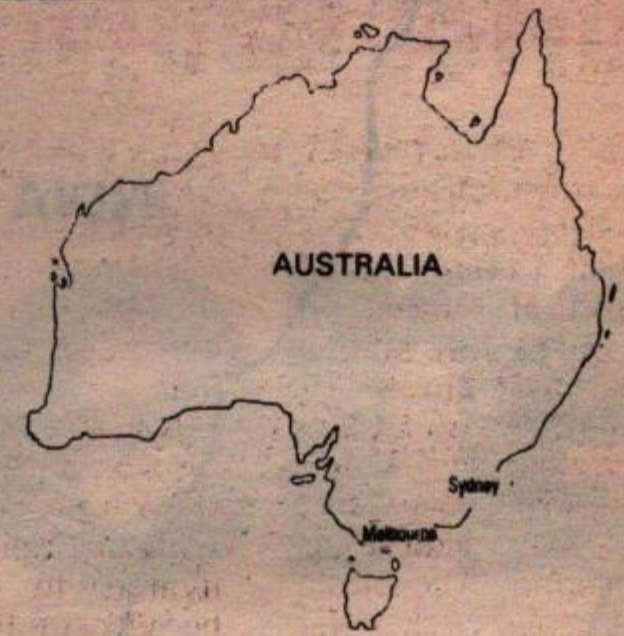
On this basis the front would
win massive support from all sections
of the population and
decisively weaken the SLFP.
Only a government of the left
parties based on socialist policies
could begin to solve the problems
of Sri Lanka.

The twin challenge today facing
the left alliance is that of organising
defence against the communal
gangs, and simultaneously launching
extra-parliamentary campaigns
against the government.

The present situation does not
allow for a polite division
between peaceful parliamentary
canvassing and extra-
parliamentary action. Even in
elections the only way to defeat
the thuggery and ballot-rigging of
the UNP regime, and deal with
the JVP racists, is by mass

Lessons of Australia's Labor government

Workers take on right-wing leaders



IN THE third term of Labor government the leaders' argument that workers must 'wait' for reforms no longer has credibility — especially with the economy apparently booming and record profits announced by some big corporations.

Second part of a two-part article by Tony Saunois

This 'boom' has largely been a result of recent increases in prices for commodities (minerals and raw materials) on the world market. Commodities make up 80 per cent of Australian exports. The onset of a new recession will send commodity prices tumbling down and have a devastating effect.

Nevertheless, the temporary upturn in the economy has emboldened Australian workers. As one worker put it at a union conference in Melbourne: "We now have to get back everything lost since

1983."

A massive industrial movement has erupted involving every layer of the working class. Such is the tension and bitterness that the main strikes over wages have gone side by side with disputes over working conditions and defensive battles against redundancies. Trade union membership has risen from 3.18 million to 3.24 million since June 1986.

24-hour strikes have taken place amongst 400,000 metal workers, building workers, teachers, rail and transport workers. Qantas pilots have threatened action for the first time in 21 years. Social security clerks have been involved in a bitter five week strike. Miners have struck to defend jobs.

Marched

Meat packers came to Sydney in trucks and marched around the city. Electricity workers demanding compensation for asbestosis marched to the Electricity Board head office, breaking down the doors

when management refused to see them.

This movement has found its reflection within the traditional organisations of the working class, especially the trades unions, most of which have been dominated by the right wing for decades.

In Melbourne the Trades Hall (similar to British trades councils but with 400-500 delegates) recently elected a militant leadership and now has a left majority for the first time in 120 years! On 6 July it called a successful statewide 24-hour general strike.

The Federated Clerks, which led a right-wing split from the Australian Labor Party (ALP) in the 1950s, and then re-affiliated to support Hawke's leadership, now has a left-wing majority following recent elections. A majority of the 'left' dominated unions have decided to call a national 24 hour strike on the wages question.

Such a strike, as the Australian Marxists have argued, should be the first in a series of actions to unify

all the different layers of workers in struggle, to oust the Liberal government of New South Wales and halt the pro-capitalist stance of the ALP leadership nationally.

These industrial upheavals mark a new stage in the struggle. Central to the way it will develop is the question of the ALP, the traditional mass party of the Australian working class.

Many workers have been so repelled by the policies of the ALP leadership that some union branches at state level—such as the telecom workers in Victoria—have disaffiliated. The Miners' Federation has discussed disaffiliating at national level.

Mistake

Understandable as this mood is, breaking with the mass political movement of the working class would be a serious mistake. A far better tactic is being followed by sections of trade unionists in New Zealand, who are going into the Labor Party precisely in

order to defeat the leaders' right-wing policies (see *Militant* 8 July).

As the Australian Marxists demand: "Workers, reclaim your party and fight for socialist policies!"

Despite temporary swings in the mood among workers, during the next period increasing numbers will be forced to the conclusion that there is no alternative to this.

Already, divisions are beginning to appear among the labour leaders. Should the movement develop further, the ruling class may at a certain stage try and split the Labor Party to form a 'national' coalition of capitalist politicians and Labor right-wingers. Should this happen, there is every sign that Hawke, his right-wing finance minister Keating and others would be prepared to tread this path.

With the unfolding crisis Australian workers are beginning to return to their best traditions of struggle, reflected in the powerful movement at the beginning of the century headed by the Industrial Workers of

the World (IWW).

The conquest of the eight hour day in the 1850s, the election of the world's first Labor government in 1899, and the establishment of a Labor Volunteer Army in the 1930s to protect workers' meetings from fascist attack are high points in the history of the Australian working class which illustrate the nature of the period now lying ahead.

During these battles the programme of Marxism, explaining the way to victory, will gain increasing support as workers seek a way out of the crisis.

Socialist plan

The necessity will be highlighted for labour in a period of capitalist decline to put forward a socialist alternative, to break the power of the monopolies and introduce a socialist plan of production.

Once the Australian labour movement moves into struggle with this perspective and programme, they will create a genuine "land of wonder"—a workers' socialist republic.

Armenian crisis inflamed

"AS YOU know, we have lately more than once encountered attempts to use democratic rights for undemocratic purposes. There are some who think that in this way any problems can be solved—from redrawing boundaries to setting up opposition parties."

In these few words, delivered at the recent 19th special conference of the Russian 'Communist' Party, Mikhail Gorbachev dashed the hopes of the population of Armenia as well as the predominantly Armenian population of the enclave of Nagorno Karabakh in neighbouring Azerbaijan.

A tumultuous, unprecedented movement has unfolded throughout this region over the last six months. Mass demonstrations on a scale not seen since the Russian revolution have unleashed shock waves throughout the 'Soviet Union'.

A series of general strikes have paralysed the capital of Armenia, Yerevan. A virtual general strike has continued for three months in the capital of Nagorno Karabakh, Stepanakert, where the 'soviet'—an organ of the bureaucratic elite—has voted unanimously to link up with Armenia. The

By Kevin Parslow

Armenian 'soviet' has voted to support such a secession.

Now the 'Presidium of the Supreme Soviet' has dismissed the claims of the Armenian population, in violation of the USSR constitution which formally accords the right of self-determination to all peoples within the federation.

Despite Gorbachev's claims to rest on the 'national policy of Lenin', his policy is exactly the opposite. The young workers' state in 1917 not only defended the right of self-determination, but Finland separated from the former Tsarist empire.

The Armenian population of Nagorno Karabakh has been driven to take the step of demanding secession because of historical grievances, aggravated by the policies of the Azerbaijan bureaucracy who are ferociously opposed to the



The 'Presidium of the Supreme Soviet': dismissing the Armenians' demands.

slightest alteration of 'their' territory.

Thus, until the recent period, a special permit was needed for Armenians in the Karabakh to visit Armenia itself. In the schools, the teaching of Armenian history was denied.

On the basis of a genuine socialist federation the antagonisms built up through the historical crimes committed against the Armenian population would have been gradually eliminated. Under the grip of the bureaucracy, however, national antagonisms not only would not disappear but would be bound to grow.

The Kremlin bureaucracy have sided with their Azerbaijani counterparts precisely because they fear the repercussions of concessions to the Armenians. Already massive demonstrations of 100,000, 60,000 and 80,000 have taken place in Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. Joint meetings

between workers in these areas and Armenian representatives have taken place.

While prepared to give financial and other concessions, the bureaucracy refuse to alter the borders of the existing 15 'republics'. But rather than undermining national movements, this will have the opposite effect. It will inevitably lead to further demonstrations, and possibly to open revolt in Armenia and Stepanakert.

Real power

Roy Medvedev, a 'dissident' historian, has pointed out that there are more arms in the region than in any other part of the USSR. *Pravda* recently admitted that the 'Communist Party' in the region had lost control. Real power was exercised by the network of committees that covered Stepanakert, and vigilantes—workers' militias in effect—patrolled the

city.

Conscious that they were unable to control the situation in any other way, the Kremlin bureaucracy deployed troops. This led to a clash at Yerevan airport in which demonstrators were killed and injured.

The use of television subsequently to indicate that the demonstrators were armed was obviously a means of preparing for the possible use of the military against 'anti-state' forces. Instead it inflamed the national feelings of the Armenian people. A movement which began with illusions in Gorbachev's perestroika has begun to take overtly nationalist lines with the growth of anti-Russian sentiment.

Armenia and the whole of the Transcaucasus is a tinder-box waiting for one match to ignite it. Possibly, after such a protracted period of demonstrations and general strikes a semblance of 'normality' could return. But the underlying

problems have not been solved, and are bound to explode again.

An elementary democratic right which would be automatically granted by a democratic workers' state, would be for the population of Nagorno Karabakh themselves to decide their own fate. This could be done on the basis of a referendum organised through the setting up of workers' and peasants' councils, as *Militant* has suggested from the outset.

The bureaucracy, which dominates the USSR, is incapable of this. The right of the masses to decide their own fate on this issue would lead to further demands, which would threaten the rule of the bureaucracy.

Nevertheless, the decision of the presidium can only fuel the movement in Armenia. It could lead to an explosion in the area and detonate a movement throughout the USSR.

Muriel Browning

MURIEL BROWNING, Marxist, trade unionist and Labour Party member for almost half a century, died peacefully at home in Llanelli on 14 July after a relatively short illness.

For a Marxist, the struggle against the Tories and their decaying capitalist system comes almost as second nature. The battle against Labour's right-wing witch-hunters we take in our stride.

But to write an obituary about a comrade who was respected in the labour movement, inspired all those fortunate enough to have met her and was loved by many in an extremely daunting task.

Muriel's record in the labour movement of Wales stands second to none. A tireless fighter for the rights of the working people, she was a TGWU shop steward in Morris Motors (later BL) for over 20 years.

She was a delegate to national and regional committees of the union, Swansea Trades Council and Llanelli Labour Party general management committee (GMC), where she held most positions, including President when Denzil Davies MP was selected as candidate for the constituency.

However it was her contribution in the Labour women's movement, in which Muriel stood out as an uncompromising defender of Marxism, which impressed supporters and drew the begrudging respect of opponents.

Many local campaigns were instigated by Llanelli Women's Council, of which she was the secretary for many years. During the miners' strike it came as no surprise to see Muriel elected as chair of the

Cynheidre Miners' Support Group. She raised thousands of pounds and was always prominent on the picket lines at 5 o'clock on those freezing mornings.

Despite her impressive record in the movement, steps were being taken by Llanelli's right-wing witch-hunters to expel Muriel because of her links with *Militant*.

Some, with just a couple of years' membership, were claiming that Muriel was trying to infiltrate the party—after 40 years' membership!

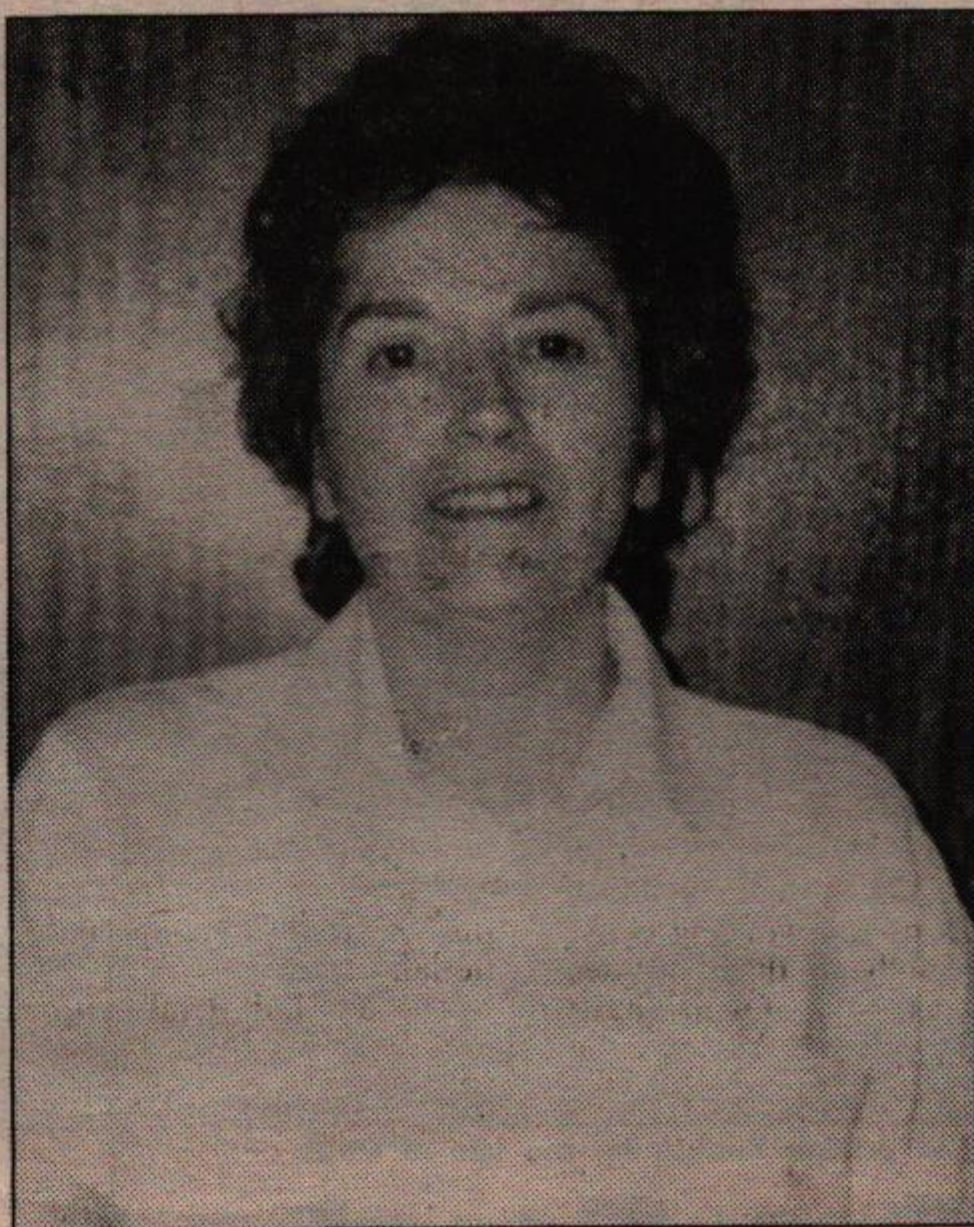
Right-wing careerists who use the movement for personal advancement will never understand the power of the Marxist ideas which inspire comrades like Muriel.

In her sixties she could still be seen every Saturday morning in Llanelli town centre selling *Militant*. She participated regularly on estate sales and was the first to encourage younger comrades to go with her on an early-morning factory sale.

Even though Muriel spent the last 18 months of her life fighting her expulsion threat, she had the satisfaction of knowing that those who really counted had not forgotten the role she had played in the movement.

It was significant that workers who had been in struggle defended Muriel. On the Llanelli GMC, NUM, NUR and TGWU delegates were the most vociferous in their opposition to the attacks on her.

If she had been able to see it through to the end, Muriel was confident that the witch-hunt would have been defeated. She remark-



ed at the time: "I'm certainly not demoralised. It makes me want to fight all the more. This witch-hunt

has strengthened my belief in Marxist ideas."

As a number of her opponents and even some

SALUTE TWO GREAT SOCIALIST FIGHTERS

Dudley Edwards

DUDLEY EDWARDS, who was active in the labour movement for more than 60 years died peacefully on his birthday, 8 July.

He was born in Reading, but spent most of his early life in Southall and Ealing. In his early teens he joined the Independent Labour Party Guild of Youth Cycling Club, which brought together two passions that were to stay with him for the rest of his life—the labour movement and the countryside.

As he was later to admit, in those early years he did not understand the class nature of society. The General Strike of 1926 changed that. Dudley was in Southampton, looking for work: "I saw Oxford and Cambridge students driving down to scab on dockers. I saw armoured cars and soldiers protecting them."

After the slump of 1929, Dudley became involved in the battles of the unemployed, organising branches of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement in London, Brighton and Oxford.

He joined the Communist Party in 1932, after Ramsay MacDonald had deserted Labour to lead a Tory-dominated National Government.

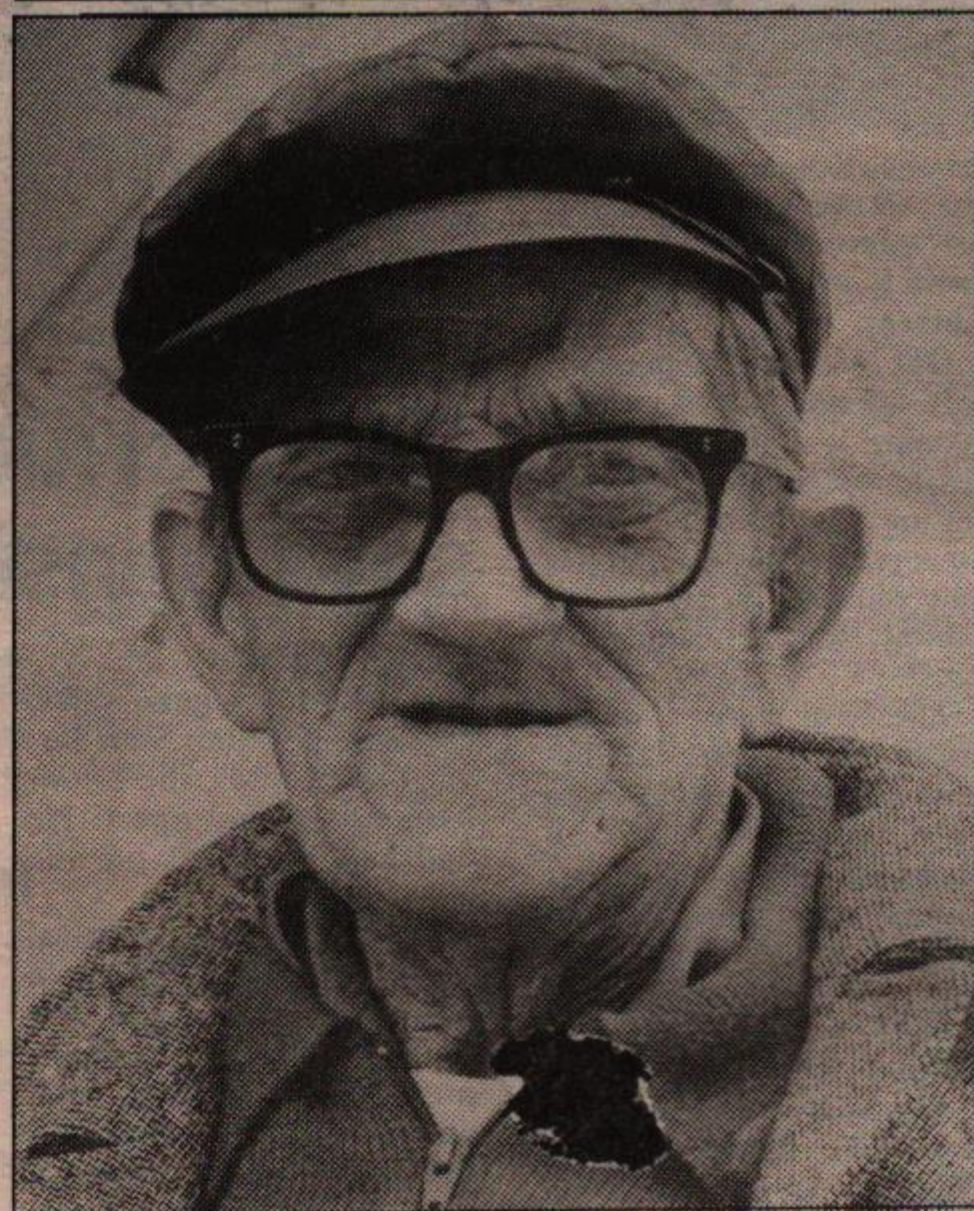
In Brighton he also became involved in the fight against the Mosley's fascist blackshirts.

He particularly remembers when in 1934, William Joyce (who later became notorious as 'Lord Haw Haw') was booked to speak at the Dome. Several days before the fascist rally, anti-fascists got into the building and an electrician carried out a few changes to the public address system.

When Joyce arrived to speak, the International blared out of the loudspeakers and the fascists were blockaded inside by protesting workers!

Dudley saw the meaning of fascism for himself on a visit to Germany shortly after Hitler came to power. There were still stirrings of opposition among the working class and Dudley later concluded that if a correct lead had been given by the Communist Party, Hitler could still have been defeated.

Just before and during the second world war, he was secretary of Oxford Communist Party and a member of the AEU district committee. He worked for the Pressed Steel firm, attached to the Nuffield car works at Cowley, but was sacked for union activity



and became a full-time air-raid warden.

In the 1950s and 60s, Dudley was convenor at an engineering factory in Park Royal, West London, where he led a strike for union rights.

He had become increasingly disillusioned with the Communist Party, but delayed his final break with Stalinism because there seemed to be no alternative.

"I didn't finally leave the Communist Party until

1958" he said: "It was a long process—Hungary, the 20th Congress and Khrushchev's secret speech showed me the true nature of Stalin's regime.

He joined the Labour Party "to avoid being cut off from developments", but it was not until after he had moved back to Brighton in 1964 that Dudley found the full-blooded socialism he had been looking for.

He met a group based around the new *Militant*

Muriel Browning's chapter in working-class history is guaranteed

Militant supporters have experienced, a tongue-lashing from Muriel was the verbal equivalent of a machine-gun assault. Class compromise was dealt with particularly sharply. Sloppiness, cynicism and pessimism had no part in Muriel's vocabulary.

This hard exterior hid an extremely soft and caring centre. Comrades visiting Muriel's home never went away hungry, although sometimes they came out drunk after a few glasses of her home-made wine. She literally brought up some of the best Marxists in the South Wales and British labour movement, organised, educated, fed and clothed them.

For the thousands of *Militant* supporters at the South Wales Summer Camp, Muriel was as much a permanent feature as Ted Grant. She was always responsible for the catering and comrades remember camps not always for the success of the speakers but more often by the strength of Muriel's curries.

She was the first to acknowledge that much of what she achieved would have been impossible without the support of her family. Harry, her husband, an active trade unionist in his own right, was an invaluable ally along

with the patience and understanding of her daughters Cheryl and Dianne.

The life of a working-class woman under capitalism is difficult enough. For a wife, mother and grandmother to play any kind of role in the labour movement would have been impossible without their support.

Muriel was fortunate that even after Harry was taken ill, she had a family who understood her loyalty not only to her own family but also to her class.

We send deepest condolences to Harry, Cheryl, Dianne and Muriel's grandchildren and family. We thank them for allowing us a share in her life.

When answering her right-wing critics 18 months ago, Muriel said: "I'll be in the Labour Party when these witch-hunters are long forgotten". Those political minnows are already forgotten, whereas Muriel Browning's chapter in working-class history is guaranteed.

We salute the passing of an outstanding Marxist. Farewell Muriel—comrade, friend and class fighter. Forward to socialism!

By Alec Thraves

IN A marvellous tribute to Muriel Browning, £1,861 was donated to *Militant's* Fighting Fund by friends from the labour movement at a special *Militant* meeting following her funeral.

Anyone wishing to commemorate Muriel and her contribution to the struggle for socialism can make a special donation to the Fighting Fund 'in memory of Muriel Browning'.

newspaper which had discussion meetings in The Eagle pub. He was still taken in by what he often called "the Stalinist falsification of history" and had still to be convinced of Trotsky's ideas—"I was hostile at first and argued, so I was invited to speak at the next discussion group, where my arguments were completely knocked down."

From then until his death, Dudley was an active supporter of *Militant*. He particularly saw the need to share his experiences with younger comrades, in Britain and internationally.

During the last decade of his life, he went on many speaking tours in Europe, particularly Sweden and Germany, where he became almost as well known as in Brighton.

Dudley's special interest was in the history of the working class. He wrote pamphlets on the Levellers and the Oxford militia mutiny. But he regarded history not as something to learn, but to learn from.

For a long time he refused to write his political memoirs, saying: "That's a way of saying that you've reached the end of your political life and I intend doing a lot more."

In a way Dudley proved himself right on both counts. He did write his memoirs when he realised

his health was failing, but he never became the type of 'veteran socialist' who only appeared from time to time to speak at a meeting.

He remained actively involved in the Trades Council, which made him a life member in 1982 and in the struggle of a new generation of unemployed in the 1980s.

On the day of his death, Dudley had been invited to the opening of a meeting room at Brighton Unemployed Workers' Centre which was to be named 'The Dudley Edwards Room'. The opening ceremony took place sadly without the guest of honour.

There is no doubt that Dudley's biggest regret would have been not living long enough to see socialism in Britain and throughout the world. But as he said once at a meeting in Brighton:

"Even if I knew that socialism would not come in my lifetime I'd still be a Marxist. That's because the work that we do now and the work that's been done by every generation of Marxists will make it easier for the working class to transform society in the future."

By Bill North,
Vice President, Brighton
Trades Council

Expensive slums

Dear Comrades,
Having just finished working as a labourer on a building site, I feel I've been given a new insight into the property boom.

With house prices the way they are down south, building companies are almost falling over themselves to build houses and sell them off for as much profit as possible.

Hence I've been helping to build on reclaimed land, or more accurately reclaimed clay. It is so unstable that 15-20 ft concrete pylons are needed to secure the foundations.

I was repairing the houses before they had even been finished. Every builder on the site could list a catalogue of faults which would be ignored because there wasn't time to do the job properly or because

there wasn't money available.

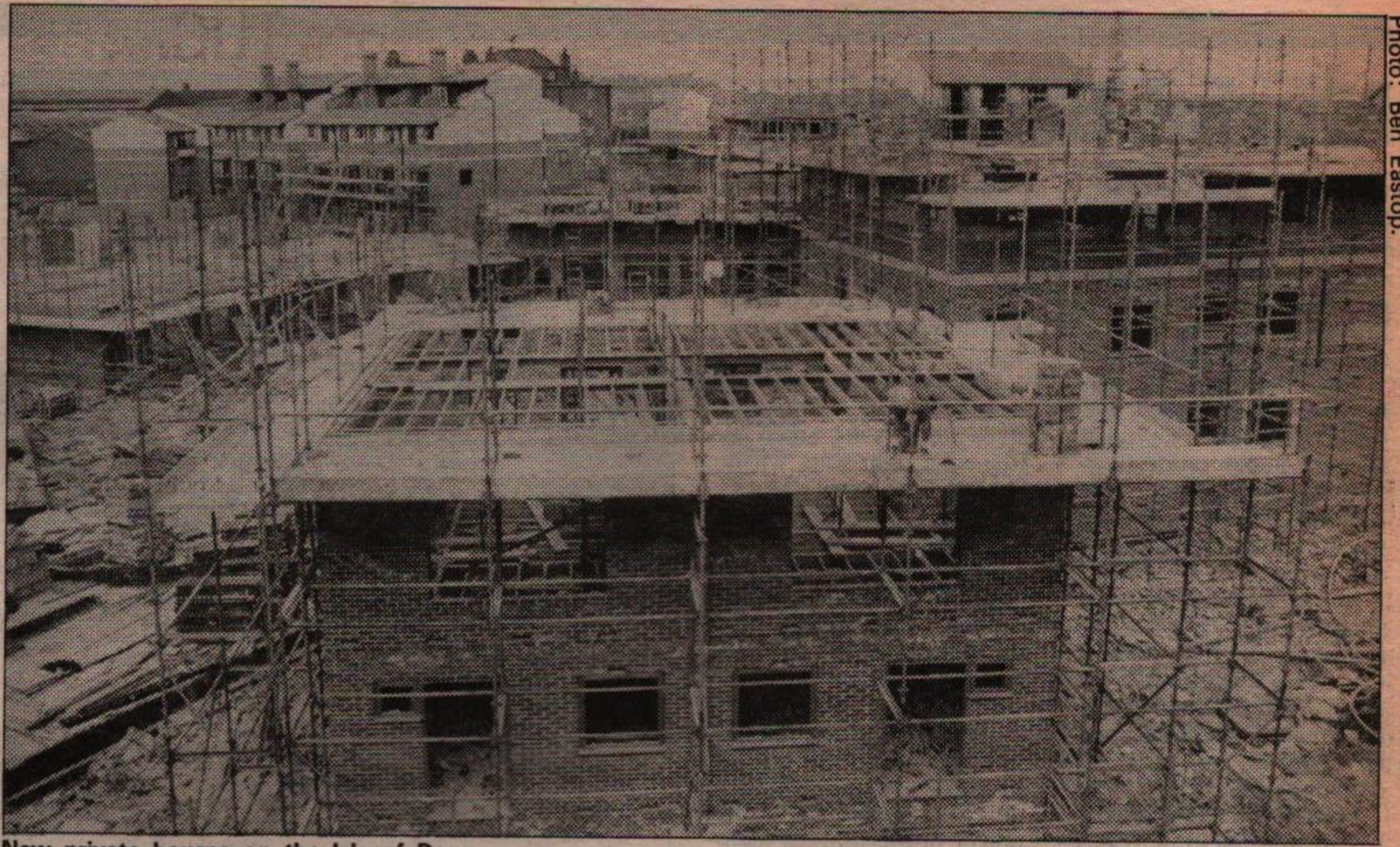
Basically you meet the deadline or you're fired. Everyone on the site except the bosses agreed that we were building expensive slums.

No worker I met took pride in what we were doing. Everyone, given the chance, would have taken the time to do the job properly and make sure that we built decent homes.

Instead you're forced to work at breakneck speed and do only enough to ensure the maximum profit, or else you're back on the dole.

Even during a property boom, capitalism can't provide decent houses. It's just one more reason why the system has to go.

Stewart Cogan,
Portsmouth



New private houses on the Isle of Dogs.

Yesterday struggles

Dear Comrades,

A few weeks ago during a speech, Mr Kinnock said, in defence of his brand of future socialism, that "yesterday was gone" and "yesterday was dead".

So we should forget the

bitter struggle for trade unionism and democratic rights. How Mr Kinnock's words must have pleased those who would like to forget that ordinary people have rights.

Roy Cousins, Cardiff

Tapes for blind

MILITANT WAS first published in 1964. In those 24 years we have covered current national and international events and provided theoretical articles to guide workers in struggle.

We hope also in the near future to produce cassette tapes of the major articles in each issue to help blind or partially sighted readers and those with reading difficulties or for whom English is a second language.

We are asking for any readers, in the London area especially, interested in helping to run this service to contact us. Although initially we will be taping articles in the paper, we hope to get new Marxist pamphlets and books on to tape as well.

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.

Comrades! Do not miss your Militant if you are on the Isle of Wight for a holiday! Come to Ryde High Street from 11 am to 12.30pm on Saturday.

Stickers available in rolls of 250 - 'Fight the Poll Tax', 'For a Socialist South Africa', £2.50 per roll. Militant Rally Commemorative Tee-Shirts still available, various designs. 'Trotsky picture': sizes; XXXL, £6.00 each. Militant Rally '88: sizes; XXXL, XXL, £6.00 each. Militant: sizes; M, L £5.00 each. XXL, XXXL, £6.00.

Militant for Labour and Youth enamel stud badges - £1.00 each.

For Militant sellers, transparent Plastic Sleeves 30p each. 10 or more 20p each. A3 size posters of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, and Luxemburg. 30p each. All five for £1.00.

Militant Fighting Fund Collecting Tins in red plastic. £1.00 each. 10 or more 75p each.

Available from Fighting Fund Dept., 3-13 Hepscomb Road, London E9 5HB. For all orders add 25% P&P. Cheques & Postal Orders payable to Militant.

Fortress

Have you read this Marxist bestseller yet? *Liverpool - A City That Dared to Fight*. £6.95 plus 90p postage 5 copies for £25 post free.

France 1968 - Month of Revolution. Read Clare Doyle's book on the lessons of the general strike. £2.50 5 copies for £8 post free. Order from Fortress Books, PO Box 141, London E2 ORL.

Tower Hamlets LPYS benefit for seafarers. Oxford Hse, Derbyshire St., Friday 22 July, 8 till 2pm! Disco live bands and cabaret. £3.00 (£2.50 concs).

Oldham Militant supporters welcome Sonny, born on 23 June 1988 (just missed the rally) to Donna and Tony.

CPSA Broad Left Disco. Friday 29 July, 7-midnight. Florence Nightingale pub, Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1. Tickets £2.50 (£1.50 unwaged). All socialists welcome

Commemorative tapes of the Militant Rally '88

If you missed the rally, or want to hear the main speeches again, then order your tapes now:

Tape 1: Opening remarks, John Macreadie (CPSA), Sue Haines (P&O striking worker), Lyn Martin (Health worker), Peter Taaffe.

Tape 2: Entertainment, closing ceremony.

Tape 3: Jeremy Birch, Tony Mulhearn, Ted Grant.

Tape 4: Veronika Volkov, Esteban Volkov (live link-up), closing remarks.

£2.00 per tape, £6.00 for set of four tapes. Order from Militant tapes, 3/13 Hepscomb Road, London E9 5HB.

Profits before lives

Dear Comrades,

My recently retired father worked for a marine engineering firm in Edinburgh. While listening to news reports about the oil

rig disaster in the North Sea and how safety was a major concern of the oil companies, he got quite angry.

He told me that he had

done work for an American oil company on parts of North Sea oil rigs. He and his fellow workers felt it was important to take their time over this job to get it done

properly, but the American company reps told them not to bother, just to get it done as quickly as possible as time is money.

This incident just goes to show the attitude of the bosses, putting profits before lives, as in the case of the *Herald of Free Enterprise*. Only when industry is run by the people who work in it, for need not greed, will things improve.

Julia Firth,
Edinburgh

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.



Dole scheme fraud

Dear Comrades,

This government has found many 'enterprising' ways to reduce the unemployment figures without creating any jobs.

The Enterprise Allowance Scheme is probably one of the most insidious. An 'awareness day' brought home to me the extent of its dangers.

Out of the 24 present, only 4-5 had sussed out the system, ie not having the hassle of signing on and getting an extra £7 a week for a year. The only catch is that you need to get £1,000 capital for a couple of days!

The rest were a mixed bunch - two or three middle-class ex-professionals who were going to set up businesses anyway but just wanted the handout and another couple who were going self-employed and not going to say no to an extra £40 per week.

The final group were the ones that frightened me. This 15 or so were going for it with a childlike enthusiasm. They were going to land themselves with crippling debts, spending their redundancy money, remortgaging their homes and working for the money-lenders.

They were all going to start up in retail or services, the very sectors which will be dealt a severe blow by the next recession.

The odds are stacked against them. All this incentive and willingness to work is being cynically used to reduce the dole figures.

By a Militant supporter.

Bell backs sell-off

Dear Comrades,

Listening to the radio, I was amazed and enraged by the comments of my local MP about the government's plans to sell off British Steel.

Stuart Bell, Labour member for Middlesbrough (a steel-making town) said he could see no reason why the BSC should stay in public hands. As long as there was a package similar to those for other privatisations, then it was OK to sell it off.

When pressed by the interviewer that surely this flew in the face of Labour's

commitment to public ownership, Bell replied that "Clause four, part four socialism is as dead as a dodo".

Tell that to the thousands of workers who have lost their jobs in British Steel and other industries slimmed down for the Tories to sell off!

Obviously Bell, the self-styled 'poor millionaire', has no need for Clause four, but thousands of working-class people in his constituency are crying out for it.

Andy Walker,
Middlesbrough

'Hypocritical bitch!' says pensioner

Dear Comrades,

One of my regular sales, old-age pensioner Stan Jarvis, answered the door looking sad and upset. He had just switched off the TV.

"The bloody hypocritical bitch", he said, "dressed in black visiting the survivors of the oil rig disaster, pretending to be concerned about their health when untold misery and suffering is being inflicted on millions of working-class people by

her and her government."

Stan, a lifetime Labour supporter, has been a reader of *Militant* for three years. Asked his views of our paper, with tongue in cheek he replied that he didn't really know: "A bit extreme. But Kinnock's doing bugger all; the only ones are the militants". £10 for the Fighting Fund.

Thanks Stan!
Tony Davison,
Beverley

Reps' earnings cut

Dear Comrades,

In another attack on textile workers, management of a subsidiary of Coats Viyella have stopped all commission paid to sales reps, resulting in some £3,000 a year lost earnings.

Increased paperwork has led to an average of 60 hours a week being worked instead of the official 37 hours 30 minutes.

Management have also instructed reps to close all accounts spending less than £500 per year. Nationally, this will result in one third of all accounts being closed and a loss of £100,000 a year in turnover.

Reps have also been instructed to visit psychiatric and geriatric as well as general hospitals to sell them cheap knitwear.

No section of the work-

Music and Marxism

Dear Comrades,

I'm glad to see that *Militant* is noticing the link between music and socialism. Groups like the Housemartins, Redskins (ex-SWP - we're not all perfect) etc. have all cut political songs.

The Housemartins are purely a left-wing band; all are Marxists but belong to no organisation that I know of.

Music helps build the bridge between young people like myself and 'boring old politics'. Before I supported *Militant* I was listening to the Housemartins. Their lyrics made me think and eventually turn to Marxism, *Militant* and the LPYS.

I'm now quite active in the LPYS, poll tax events, paper organising, etc. and don't find it at all boring like I did when I was sitting on the fence.

Now I feel dedicated to socialism and have had a few run-ins with the boss at work, but the struggle must go on. My fight for socialism will continue no matter what.

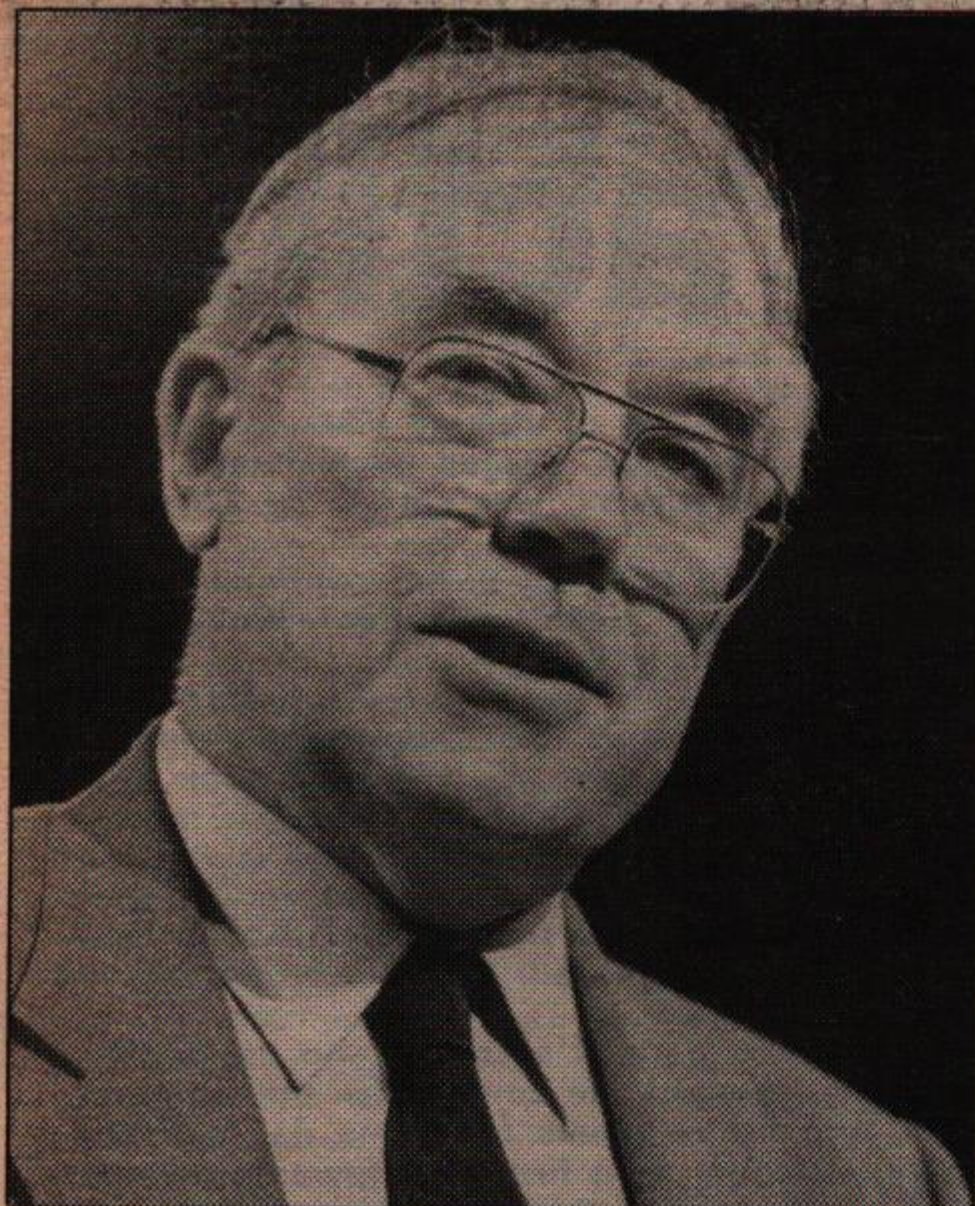
Stuart Craig,
Musselburgh LPYS

force is safe from attacks in the drive for increased profits. When boom turns to slump, these attacks will be magnified.

Links must be built between all sections of the industry to defeat these attacks and to fight back to establish a 35-hour week and a minimum wage of £135 for all.

Mike Henderson,
Dundee LPYS.

As electricians' union is suspended from TUC....



Right wing EETPU general secretary Eric Hammond.

Photo: Militant.

WITH THE electricians' union (EETPU) ballot going in favour of the leadership, expulsion from the TUC looks certain. Some activists in the union have raised the question of leaving.

Jim Carty, a long-standing member of the union from Basildon, has written to us supporting that viewpoint. Below, we print the relevant section of his letter and a reply from Pete Jarvis:

DEAR COMRADES,
With reference to your industrial report in issue 902. All activists in the EETPU must feel downhearted at the prospect of our union being either kicked out of or leaving the TUC.

Our natural reaction would normally be, and in fact has been over the last 20 odd years since the forces of the extreme right took over, to stay and fight. However, there does come a time in every battle for the losing side, and believe me we've been the losing side for over 20 years, to call it a day, enough is enough.

Both of your contributors mentioned that the other unions would be willing to snap up our membership and I believe this to be the case also. I would like to appeal to all members of the EETPU not to go off at half cock into another union. If and when the EETPU are out of the TUC there will be born a new and democratic EETPU under the protective umbrella of the TUC.

Yours in the certain knowledge that we'll win in the end,

Jim Carty, EETPU member 23 years.



EETPU members protesting at the bureaucratic closure of a branch. Photo: Militant.

Why socialists must stay and fight

MILITANT WELCOMES the letter from Jim Carty. For Marxists an understanding of the trade unions is essential in determining the correct policy towards the working class and the struggle for the transformation of society.

By Peter Jarvis.

The EETPU has been moving towards this showdown for years. The scabbing role during the Wapping dispute for many placed the leadership of the union beyond the pale. They have signed single union, no-strike deals behind the backs of other unions.

Militant supporters call for the expulsion of the EETPU from the TUC. Nevertheless, while doing so, our supporters will fight inside the EETPU to change its policies and the current leadership. In the current ballot we oppose the rule change which will allow Hammond to take the union out of the TUC.

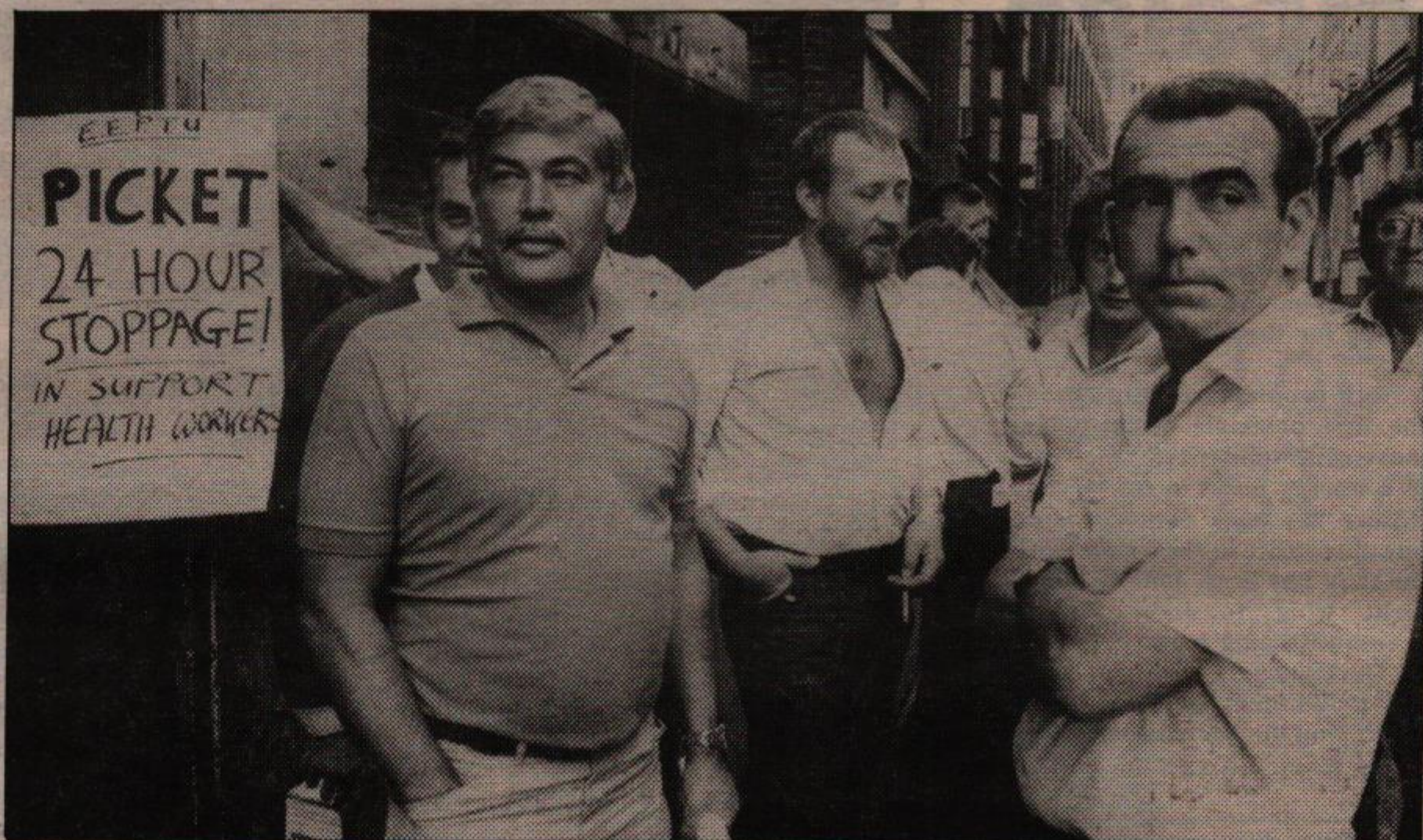
Jim Carty considers that after 20 years of fighting the right-wing there "comes a time in every battle for the losing side, and believe me we've been the losing side for over 20 years, to call it a day, enough is enough."

That may be understandable but it is not correct. Lenin, in his classic pamphlet, *Left-wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, replying to some German 'lefts', re-states the fundamental Marxist position: "To refuse to work in the reactionary trade unions means leaving the insufficiently developed or backward masses of workers under the influence of the reactionary leaders, the agents of the bourgeoisie."

This will be the result if "a new and democratic EETPU under the protective umbrella of the TUC" is formed. Such a move would abandon hundreds of thousands of EETPU members still in the clutches of Hammond and Co.

Those who do decide to join this new union would be the best fighters and those under their influence. If 50,000 were to leave, that would still leave 279,914 inside the EETPU. Are we to write off these workers from the class struggle?

This is not the first time Militant has debated working in undemocratic unions. In issue 4 of the *Militant International Review* we answered a similar letter concerning the controversy at Pilkington Glass and the creation of the Glass Workers' Union.



Fleet Street picket during strike in support of the health workers.

Photo: Militant

The letter asked: "How do you fight inside the GMWU?" The argument about the character of the regime was nearly identical: "It is impossible for the workers in any shop to choose even the mildest progressive as steward and, since they have no access to the branch, the latter becomes a self perpetuating clique. From this level up, the GMWU is like the army: branches can be organised and their officials ... deposed by the regional officer, who in turn is appointed by Lord Cooper."

Pilkington

Under the advice of some 'lefts', some members left and formed their democratic union. It died a death, isolated from their previous colleagues and with some of its leaders ending up on the right.

The GMWU, now GMB, in the following years was radicalised. The right-wing bureaucrats were forced to recognise strike after strike.

If those lefts inside the GMWU had remained, then they could have become the focal point and the catalyst changing the right-wing leadership.

This union falls well short of the democracy we would fight for in the trade unions. There is still a large amount of central control. Some members would say that its structures, even today, are less democratic than the EETPU. But would anyone argue to abandon it?

An article published in the *Morning Star* for the left-wing

Flashlight group explains how undemocratic the EETPU has become but draws the wrong conclusions. It explains how the election of officials has ended, branches have been closed and a very powerful organisation put into the hands of the full-time officials.

This will be a major factor in ensuring the overwhelming majority stay with Hammond. The machine will ensure that the majority are not given any option. The voting figures for the last general secretary election further proves this point.

So does this weeks ballot result. With a massive campaign behind him, Hammond won 128,400 votes. Over 50 per cent did not vote—will they join a new union? The answer will be no!

Part of Hammond's strategy is to capture the new high tech industries. Thatcher declared that investment in this sector would lay the foundation for our future prosperity. Yet, relative to foreign competition, British capitalism is falling further behind even in this field.

A new recession will mean a change in the bosses' attitude even to 'business' unions. They will give no favours as they attempt to rationalise production. The existence of two hostile unions covering the same areas will give them ideal conditions to divide and rule.

Under the hammer blows of events even the most inactive sections of workers will be forced to move. Eventually, workers under no-strike deals will be forced to look for more effective ways

to solve their grievances. First, they will try their own organisation. No workers lightly give up their organisation without trying to change it. The same processes that took place in the GMWU will develop in the EETPU.

Flashlight

Since receiving Jim Carty's letter, *Flashlight's* proposals for the creation of a new union have been further developed. These involve a three phase plan for setting up the new union.

*Members will be asked to join TUC affiliated unions and be placed in special sections.

*A federation of electrical and plumbing sections will be established.

*A new union will be created and the other unions with ex-EETPU members will transfer them.

Many unions will only be too willing to recruit ex-EETPU members. Whether they would give them up again is very doubtful.

Unions like MSF and TGWU are already arguing that they are the best to represent ex-EETPU members. With the present state of many union finances it would be very unlikely they would give up the opportunity for raising extra revenue.

The EETPU do not have a monopoly of members in the areas they organise. Many plumbers are members of Ucat which would be unlikely to hand back any substantial gains.

John Aitken recently said: "5,000 would be a good start".

Even with ten times that, it would still be a mistake to leave.

Flashlight are opposing Hammond on the basis of "a loyalty vote to the TUC". It has been the continued attempts to compromise and the failure of the general council to respond strongly to continued flouting of trade union principles by the EETPU that has allowed the mess to develop.

Many trade unions could well ask: "Has the TUC been loyal to us?" Train drivers, print workers, miners and seafarers wanted and needed TUC aid, but it was not forthcoming.

Militant supporters would not change their attitude to working in the EETPU just because it was outside the TUC.

In the recent history of the EETPU there was a mistaken attempt by a section of the London Press branch to join Sogat. Not everyone transferred and had the Bridlington Agreement not been invoked, it would have resulted in disaster. The split would have enabled the bosses to play one section off against another.

It is now proposed that, whatever happens, all Press branch members should stay together. It may be possible for them, as a body, to join the new union or a TUC affiliate. But for many other sections this will be impossible.

You could find workers in different factories of a combine in different unions. In other workplaces, workers in different unions could end up fighting each other, with the bosses laughing all the way to the bank.

The course of development will depend on the shop steward and whether he is for or against leaving the EETPU. But the majority of members will not be given the option.

Rather than laying the basis for a new union the left should be organising meetings to bring together the best activists to launch a new offensive against Hammond's grip on the union.

The bosses, through their newspapers, will do everything to support Hammond. We must appeal directly to workers questioning the role and direction of the EETPU. Proposing a new union can only act as a diversion in the next few months.

Hammond would want nothing better than the best militants to leave. Militant will be demanding the left stay and fight. We want to defeat Hammond and the best way is to drive him out of the union.

Industrial reports

P&O strikers call for action

JUDGE MICHAEL Davies has interpreted the Tory anti-union legislation so as to cut the Dover picket from hundreds to a maximum of six.

This will have enormous repercussions for the trade union movement as a whole. If he does not consider that the National Union of Seamen (NUS) has followed his directions, then a further six figure fine, possibly £250,000, will be added to the £1.3 million already incurred by the union in fines and legal fees over the past six months of the dispute.

The strategy of 'new realism' adopted by the TUC, trade union and Labour Party leadership has allowed the heroic struggle of the

Dover P&O strikers to drift without any direction from 'Admiral' McCluskie and his high command.

Judge Davies has given the NUS 49 days in which to lift the mass picket. The union is back in the High Court on 25 July.

On Monday afternoon, the NEC met to discuss the dispute. A resolution from Leith NUS, McCluskie's stamping ground, called for the lifting of the mass picket.

This fuelled the opinion of strikers that dirty deeds were being done. The NEC voted 10-3 to distance itself from the mass picket but to still give 100 per cent support to the dispute. Even the journalists from TVS were con-

fused!

If the sequestration is not lifted on Monday, the resolution from Dover will be discussed at the following day's NEC. McCluskie has said publicly that he will put the resolution to his members. He has also said that he will resign, but he has said many things over the past six months.

As one picket said in relationship to what is going on at the top: "Think of all the worst deals possible, of all the wheeling and dealing that could be done, stir them all up, pick out the most unlikely one and that's the deal that's being hatched."

By Eric Segal

AT MONDAY'S mass meeting of striking P&O workers in Dover, the following resolution, backed by Militant supporters amongst the strikers, was carried by 220 votes to 40:

"This meeting demands that the picket continues and that the general secretary and national executive maintain their full support for the mass picket.

"We consider that the mass picket is essential as a daily show of strength. Any attempt to withdraw the mass picket is an attempt to end this dispute by the back door.

"As the general secretary has said, the union is more than filing cabinets and buildings. This dispute is the most bitter in the history of our union. If we lose, it will affect all workers in our industry. The hundreds who have lost their jobs will remain unemployed. Rather than ending the dispute, it must be stepped up.

"We demand that the general secretary and executive committee campaign around the country for the active support of rank and file members for a one day national strike on Friday 5 August as a first step towards all-out national action and victory in this dispute."

Defend Graeme Jones campaign

FORTY PEOPLE, including many dockyard workers, packed into the first public meeting organised by the Defend Graeme Jones Campaign at Devonport Guildhall.

Graeme, the local Labour Party Young Socialist (YS) secretary, has been victimised for his political and trade union activities and sacked from his apprenticeship in Devonport dockyard.

His case was keenly discussed at the meeting, with Linda Douglas, the YS rep on Labour's NEC, among others, raising the wider political issues facing working people and youth.

Graeme is trying to organise visits to Rosyth dockyard and other workplaces with AEU members in order to win support.

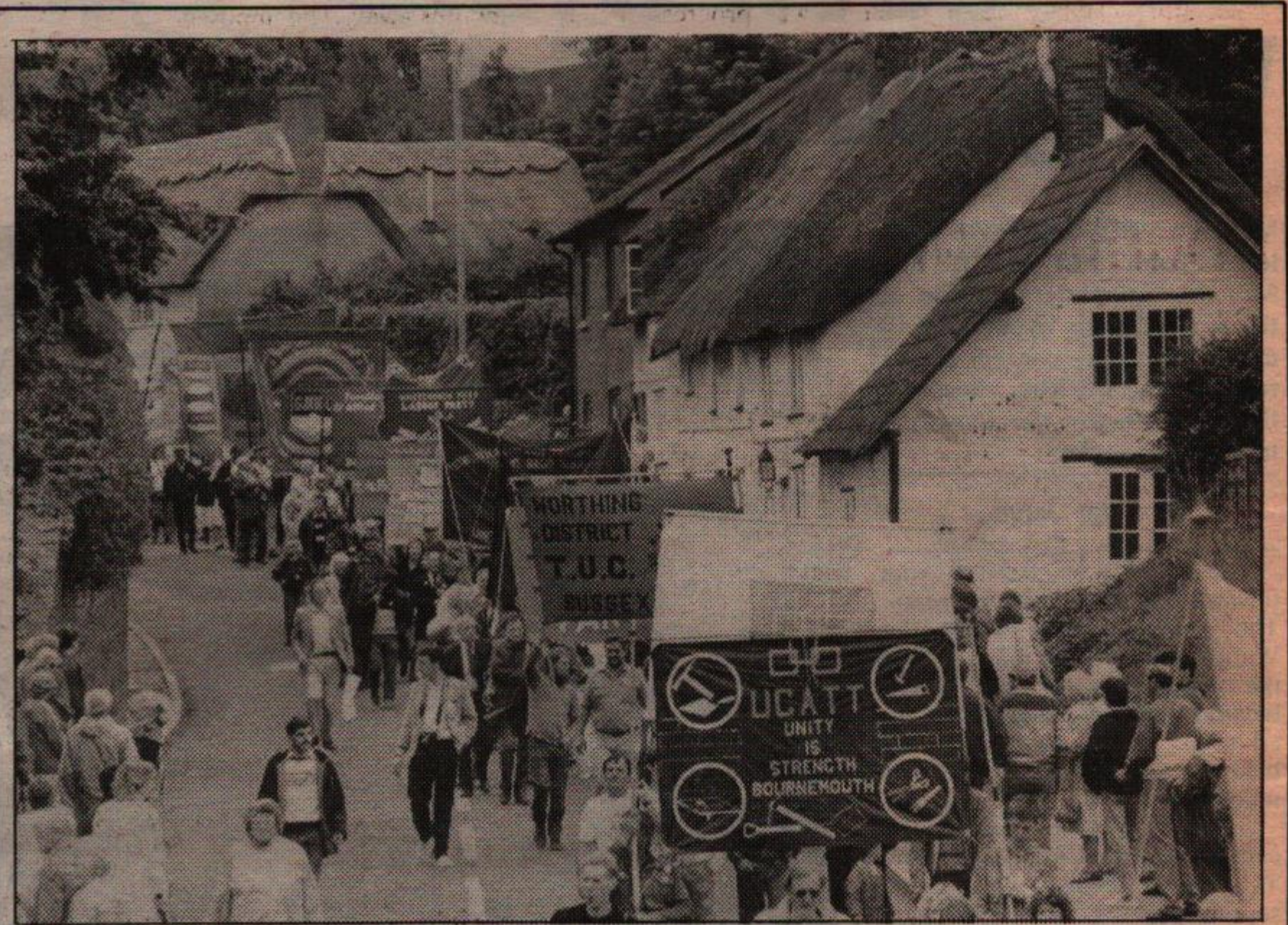
Outrageously, right wing witch-

hunters have chosen this time to attack the YS and kick Graeme in the teeth. Constituency chair Peter Telford publicly condemning the YS involvement in the meeting in the local press and calling for the YS to be disbanded.

Such people have little time for the first principle of the labour movement—solidarity. However, as a worker put it in the meeting, "More has been done to defend one apprentice in this campaign so far than has been done by all the right wing to fight for the thousands being made redundant at Devonport."

Witchhunters like Peter Telford won't stop the YS from campaigning in Plymouth's estates and factories.

By Chris Parry



Part of last weekend's Tolpuddle March, commemorating the Martyrs' struggle for union rights. 154 years on, workers like Graeme Jones are still having to fight. Photo: John Harris (IFL).

British Library site shut down

FOR THE second time this year, work on Laing's multi-million pound British Library is at a virtual standstill. A contractual dispute between the brickwork subcontractors, Vogue Developments, and Laing has led to the laying off of 120 brickies and hod carriers.

In reality this means conditions and rates of pay

won by the workers were not to the liking of management so the subbie was thrown off. A new one was taken on and the blokes were rehired through the new subbie on less wages.

Rousing cheer

Of course, stewards and union activists need not ap-

ply as it is obvious that Laing are once again attempting to wreck any attempt to organise effectively on site.

However, management's plans have come unstuck this time. The first day of the action has seen around 60 pickets on the gate, turning materials back. To a rousing cheer from the crowd, the men working for

a smaller subbie all walked off after a brief meeting.

Fears are that the union organisers will try to cobble some sort of deal together but fortunately the lads on the gate seem far too astute to settle for anything less than total victory.

D. Walsh,

UG 296, London region
Ucatt

Camden building strike continues

THE SIX week strike by Nalگو members in Camden council's building department has taken a number of turns. Labour Councillors John Wakeham (staff and management chair) and Ken Hulme (housing chair) tried to break it by getting tenants' associations to assist management in having repair orders processed.

This was necessary accor-

ding to Hulme because "We have a legal obligation to carry out repairs for the most vulnerable people in our community which are a matter of life and limb".

Unfortunately, his enthusiasm for strike breaking is matched only by his ignorance as an unpaid emergency service is being run by the strikers precisely so that vulnerable tenants

will be protected.

This latest move has also resulted in 200 staff, members of Nalگو in the housing department, refusing to touch repair orders in sympathy.

However, even if some tenants' associations did assist council management it would be a waste of time as the building workers' unions decided last week not to do anything to jeopardise the administrative workers' dispute.

Ucatt branch secretary, Vic Heath, said: "Most of our members have not been receiving work because work orders are not coming through. But we have decided to support the ad-

min workers in their dispute and call upon the council to negotiate."

Over 350 Ucatt members had decided unanimously not to take repair orders except from the usual channels at a mass meeting.

As David Eggmore, Nalگو branch secretary said, "If the councillors could show the responsibility which these council officers are demonstrating, the whole dispute could be over within 24 hours."

Joe Stewart,

Camden no 1 branch,
London region Ucatt

Oppose 'charter for ghouls'

UNDER THE terms of the Local Government Act which forces councils to put a whole range of services out to tender, it has become clear that even grave digging and burial of the dead will be exposed to market forces!

Waiting in the wings are the funeral directors who have been attempting to gain a foothold in this area recently.

We are talking big business. Whilst the Co-op is responsible for a quarter of all Britain's funerals, monopoly capitalism is well to the forefront with three large companies, H.Hodson Holdings, J. Kenyon Ltd and the Great Southern Group, controlling 10 per cent of all funerals.

The small establishments continue to be gobbled up. How lucrative this business can be is shown by the fact that the average funeral parlour is worth £600,000.

Of course, for the working class trying to give a loved one a decent burial can be a nightmare with bills approaching £550-600.

Now Thatcher and Ridley

want to extend the grip of these ghouls who exploit other people's misery. The attitude of Thatcher and the ruling class is well demonstrated by the 'pioneering' rabid right wing council of Westminster who sold three cemeteries to property developers for 15 pence!

A less well publicised scandal followed a cost-cutting exercise by Tory Dudley council which led to a bereaved family collecting the ashes of their loved one in a black plastic bag due to a shortage of urns!

A future socialist Labour government must be committed to the repeal of the Local Government Act and a massive boost to local authority spending, returning the cash stolen by the Tories since 1979.

We must also demand nationalisation of the funeral directors to stop rank profiteering and give workers dignity in death that capitalism denies them even during their lifetime.

By Alan Shadforth,
treasurer, Hull city
council JSSC, personal
capacity

Militant Builder
Issue number 4
30p a copy

Order from 3/13 Hepscoth Road
London E9 5HB.

Industrial reports

Central Office staff suffer

DEMOCRACY ISN'T the only thing that's been wiped out in the DHSS Newcastle Central office (NCO) branch of the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA).

Since the branch was suspended by the right wing national executive of the union, members are not afforded the immediate, confidential service they are used to. We're being told to put it in writing for consideration.

We organised the branch by allocating the eight branch officers their own specific area in order to take up the members' problems.

Since the suspension of the branch, not one of these representatives has been approached by the imposed headquarters officers in order to hand over their responsibilities, despite offers in writing.

Bernie Williams, the HQ

officer acting for union general secretary, John Ellis, in his reply to my offer of a handover, stated: "Where problems arise, we are consulting other unions and this has proven a very satisfactory way in which to action the membership's business".

Casuals

What a disgrace! How can another union possibly represent CPSA members, no matter how good their intentions. Surely it begs the question, why have a union in the first place? And why pay these characters over twice the salary of members?

It is an absolute nonsense to have NUCPS deciding how we progress issues when often we don't have common policies. What's Bernie Williams saying--will we have imposed branch policies as well as imposed

branch officers?

There are many major problems facing our branch, such as casuals and YTS. The introduction of casuals in the branch for the first time for 15 years tells its own story. Over a fortnight ago, YTS trainees were slipped onto the site without a murmur from CPSA.

Bernie Williams promised to act on instructions from the NEC. Instructions from the NEC arrive daily to the office but obviously YTS cannot be a priority for these people. The Central offices face 5,000 job losses through technology and in fact NCO will be involved in the pilot schemes for the Operational Strategy, a matter of months away. The imposed officers' response? Nil.

Management have announced their intention to transfer work from NCO computer installations to

Washington Child Benefit Centre. The officers' view? Guess!

The staff survey in the same area has recommended a reduction of a significant number of posts. Again, silence.

No faith

I have no faith in these people to do a job but the crime, of course, is that the members are suffering as a result.

We don't intend to let that happen. We are continuing to raise issues and keep members informed. We need support, both moral and financial.

By Terry Martin, Newcastle Central Office Defence Campaign.

NCO Defence Campaign, c/o Bill Thurlaway, 1004 Warwick Court, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear. Phone 091 478 5798.

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



News in Brief

Girobank, Bootle

DESPITE TORRENTIAL rain, 70 people turned up to Bootle YS Girobank Defence Campaign rally which marked the stepping up of the campaign.

Terry Farley, NCU secretary, said that it was a waste of time trying to defeat privatisation in parliament: "We need action outside of parliament, starting with a mass meeting of all NCU and UCW workers."

Tony McNulty told the meeting that with 50 per cent male unemployment in that ward alone, Giro closure would lead to more misery, families splitting up and poverty. He told how one girl on the gate had said: "I hate working here. I couldn't care if the place burnt down," and explain-

ed the need for workers' control and management.

Terry Fields MP said that despite narrowly losing the ballot for a one day strike, it was nevertheless by striking that jobs and conditions would be defended.

An enthusiastic response greeted NCU steward Steve Soper. "I'm sitting here with two lads from the Post Office. We've got the full support of Post Office workers for our action. We should go to the government and demand assurances on jobs and conditions. If we don't get them, we should organise industrial action."

By Tony McNulty, secretary, Bootle YS Girobank Defence Campaign.

Durham Miners' Gala

IN CONTRAST to the 1987 Durham Miners' Gala, in the wake of Labour's general election defeat, last weekend's was buoyant.

This was reflected in the fact that more than 250 copies of Militant were sold and £80 raised for the Fighting Fund.

The line-up of speakers, including Arthur Scargill and Dennis Skinner with Tony Benn in attendance, was a major attraction. Speeches were constantly interrupted with rounds of applause. The biggest cheers were reserved for any speaker who attacked 'new realism' or called for nationalisation.

Dennis Skinner warned Neil Kinnock against removing clause four, part four, the socialist clause, from the Labour Party constitution.

By Ged Grebby.



Part of the massive Durham miners' Gala procession. Photo: M Pinder.

Easterhouse day of action

THE GLASGOW day of action in support of the strike at Easterhouse Department of Employment (DE) was a tremendous success.

Workers at Easterhouse, one of the integration pilots, have been fighting

for more staff and the day of action was called to put pressure on management to re-start negotiations.

Out of the 30 offices balloted, 28 voted in favour of striking. The margin, amongst CPSA members, was 360 to 48. The NUCPS vote

in favour was also convincing.

At the rally of 140 strikers, branch secretary of Easterhouse, John McNally called for escalation of the action if management still failed to respond. Support was of-

fered from members in Edinburgh and from claimants' groups.

By Gerry Croale and Ian Nisbett, Easterhouse strikers.

DHSS—right's 'realism' beaten

AT THE special new technology conference of the DHSS section, CPSA members confidently backed the strategy of all-out action proposed by the Broad Left. In doing so, the programme of rolling action recommended by the right wing section executive (SEC) was soundly rejected.

Management intend to implement new technology via the Operational Strategy with the loss of 18,500 jobs. Compulsory redundancies and compulsory transfers are not ruled out.

Conference began with an important victory for the Broad Left, reaffirming the 'no overall job loss' position

and non-co-operation with the Operational Strategy.

Many delegates made the point that while the SEC called for more negotiations, it was management who were closing talks just two weeks after the right were elected. The only alternative now open to CPSA members was to fight.

Enthusiasm

Another delegate told the SEC that if they attacked the Treasury with the same enthusiasm as they attacked the left in CPSA we would be in a far stronger position.

During the main strategy debate, the right wing again

argued that the members were not prepared to fight but this found little echo among delegates. Indeed, the debate was cut short by the chair as he could find no more delegates to speak in favour of the SEC's position.

A Broad Left motion calling for action at six pilot offices affected by the Operational Strategy, with supportive action across the section, and an all-out ballot no later than February 1989, was then carried by 25,140 votes to 19,817.

At the end of the day, Broad Left policies had been endorsed in every debate. Only two months after their election, the right wing executive failed

to win the membership over on their first major campaign. The promise of gains for members without the need for struggle has been exploded.

Nearly every delegate stayed behind at the end of the conference to hear a striker from Merthyr Tydfil who had been ordered back to work by the national executive. 98 names were collected on a petition to re-instate the largest branch in the union, Newcastle Central office.

By Jarred Woods, CPSA DHSS Central London office, personal capacity.

Top secret: BT offer

BRITISH TELECOM (BT) have refused to make a pay offer to the National Communications Union (NCU) unless the union's national executive agrees not to publish details of it to the membership!

BT are also insisting that the re-patterning (re-grading) exercise still hanging over from the 1986 pay deal be completed in all districts before an offer is

made. It is, of course, BT who have been dragging their heels on this issue.

The Broad Left NEC must start an immediate campaign amongst the membership and prepare for a ballot on industrial action.

By Dave Gorton, NCU West End District branch, personal capacity

Unions unpopular?

IN THE light of the government's plans to further restrict the rights of trade unions and their members two recently published reports, those of Acas and the government's own Certification Officer are particularly interesting.

According to the reports just six trade unionists out of a total union membership of almost 10 million complained about the conduct of secret ballots while only seven complained about

political fund ballots.

In addition, 90 per cent of ballots on industrial action went in favour with turnouts averaging 75 per cent. These figures show that the Tories' new anti-union legislation has nothing to do with "giving the unions back to the members" but is dictated purely by hostility on the part of themselves and their big business backers.

By Andy Walker.

Radio Newcastle

LAST WEDNESDAY, a one day strike of BBC local radio employees took place nationally. The strike was solid in the North East where at Radio Cleveland and Radio Newcastle only management crossed picket lines.

Tory cuts demand that ten per cent savings of £420,000 have to be made in local radio in the North East. While 'economies'

have been made elsewhere, management in the North East are determined to meet their quota through job losses. Six are threatened at both Radio Newcastle and Radio Cleveland.

"We're fighting to keep local radio intact," a determined NUJ official at Radio Newcastle said.

By Ed Waugh

UCW strike ballot

Vote 'Yes' for action



UCW members on the picket line in Harrow this month. Their victory shows the Post Office can be beaten. Photo: Militant.

THE STRIKE ballot in the Union of Communications Workers (UCW) must return a massive 'yes' vote in favour of industrial action over regional pay supplements.

The Post Office is deliberately trying to split union members by starting payments known as Dras (Difficult Recruiting Area Supplement) in so-called high employment areas such as London and Thames Valley.

They claim they are helping their employees in these high-cost living areas. UCW members will easily see through this lie. What the scheme does show is that Post Office pay is so low that workers will not

By John Johnson,
WDO C&CS branch
personal capacity

take on the job if there are other alternatives.

If the union allows the introduction of Dras, it would lead to a divided union, with some areas, particularly in the south, getting higher pay. The scheme also allows management to divide local workforces.

UCW members should

be quite clear that the paying of these supplements is not a pay rise but a management bribe dependent on 'good behaviour', disciplinary record and work performance. This will be the criteria used by management to pick and choose who they reward.

They are telling us "towards the line or we'll cut your money". Also young workers under 19 will get nothing under the new scheme.

The Dras proposals have one aim, to soften up and weaken the union so they can later try to impose regional pay bargaining and privatise our industry.

In recent years, Post Office profits have grown enormously while UCW members' take home pay has reduced. It's time we had a proper share of those profits.

Mass meetings

The union policy of supplements as a right for every new employee until they qualify for the maximum bonus must be supported and fought for, using the full strength of the membership. *Militant* and Broad Left supporters have pointed out in the past the dangers of soft-peddling in our dealings with Post Of-

ice management.

The executive council's failure in the past to mobilise UCW members over RRP, pay and the shorter working week, has only encouraged management to greater attacks. These mistakes must not be repeated over Dras.

The recent Harrow dispute involving 5,000 postal workers shows the Post Office can be beaten. The union executive must immediately step up the present campaign for a 'yes' vote, calling mass meetings nationally, starting in London and Thames Valley areas, to explain the issues.

This must be followed by a clear, effective plan for industrial action. Any district or regional action, used as a warning to the Post Office, should ensure a complete shut-down of all services. Past tactics, of instructing other UCW grades to cross picket lines, must cease if we are serious about winning this dispute.

To be successful, area action must be quickly followed by a national day of action as a prelude to all-out strike if necessary. It's time we stood up to the Post Office. Make sure you vote "yes" before Tuesday 9 August.

Sell

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

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Return to the Circulation Department, *Militant*, 3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB. Make cheques payable to *Militant*.

Stickers for socialism

ON THE Nelson Mandela march last Sunday, everywhere you turned people were wearing our bright red sticker 'Smash Apartheid—for a Socialist South Africa'. Thousands were distributed and many sellers collected well over £10 in their tins.

By Nick Wrack

A seller from Peckham sold 25 *Militants* and raised £54.85 for the Fighting Fund! "It's easy to sell the paper and collect at the same time," she says, "in fact selling stickers helps sell the paper and vice-versa."

"When I got home and emptied my tin I counted 30 pound and 20 50p coins. There was only £1.50 in copper. One man bought a sticker for a pound, then asked for another for his girlfriend and

gave me another pound. I could hardly hold my tin it was so heavy."

Let us know how you did on the march or on any other activities.

The success with the stickers can be repeated in every area. At Durham miners' gala over £70 was collected using 'Fight the poll tax' and 'Smash Apartheid' stickers. Ann McKeon, who had never collected before, raised £14.32.

Door to door

This week why not go door to door with the paper and stickers against the poll tax? Draw up a petition and ask for a donation to help our campaigns. In Grimsby a few sellers raised £14 in an hour with a petition on an estate sale.

Thanks to David Subacchi,

Target £50,000 by 3 Sept This week £735

Fighting Fund

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 London	1292		7090
2 South West	219		1270
3 East Scotland	187		2150
4 Manchester/Lancs	232		2900
5 South East	120		1570
6 Southern	163		2020
7 West Midlands	260		3960
8 Yorkshire	370		5950
9 East Midlands	115		2530
10 Merseyside	226		5000
11 Eastern	85		2260
12 Northern	137		3270
13 West Scotland	87		2520
14 Wales	99		3510
15 National	713		4000
Total	4305		50,000

Llangefan, £10; Colln Jones, Blackwood AEU, £25; David Lewin, Brentwood LP, £10; a barbecue in Dover, £15.24;

delegates and visitors at MSF conference, £258 and supporters in Wakefield, £24 from the sale of badges.