

FOR A MASS
SOCIALIST
LABOUR PARTY

Tory prices fraud



PRICES ARE soaring up once more. The official inflation rate is 5.7 per cent, and could be over 7 per cent by the end of the year. Mortgages, rents, fares, electric have all gone up. Lawson's budget tax cuts are just a memory.

Not just the poorest, but every working class household will be facing the old agonising question - where is the money coming from to pay the bills.

But Thatcher came to power in 1979 pledged to control inflation. Workers had to pay dearly for her obsession, with the destruction of 20 per cent of manufacturing industry and the trebling of unemployment to three million. Public spending was slashed, local councils were crippled by cash limits.

"Unemployment may be an un-

By Jeremy Birch

palatable consequence of fighting inflation," she warned in 1980. The medicine may be bitter but it was all for our own good - to control prices.

And where are prices now - heading back to the same level as when she was first elected.

Tory economic policies are in tatters. Imports are flooding in (partly because of the savaging of British industry in the early Thatcher years), credit is out of con-

rol and the money supply is increasing at twice Chancellor Lawson's target. And once again it is ordinary people who must pay the penalty, with rampant inflation.

Even the Tories' new policies of forcing up interest rates has only added to the inflation rate, with crippling mortgage repayments for hard pressed home-owners.

Now Tory ministers are insisting that wage claims must not try to compensate for inflation. Presumably workers should just meekly sit back and see their living standards hammered.

But in no way are workers' wages responsible for price rises. Inflation is a product of the chaos of the capitalist system and the

zig-zagging of Tory policy. Even the government's figures show that while manufacturing workers' earnings rose 9 per cent after overtime and bonuses, due to the extra productivity the worker's created, unit labour costs were only up 0.2 per cent. So how can that have led to 5.7 per cent inflation?

Executives' pay

Of course company directors have more than protected themselves against any price rise. Their average pay rose 46.3 per cent in the last 12 months. Most top executives are on over £100,000 a year.

Here is Labour's opportunity

to go on to the offensive. Bring forward party policy for a minimum wage and put a figure on it of at least £135 per week. Make it clear that the Labour Party wholeheartedly backs groups of workers fighting for wage rises to defend and improve their lifestyles. Raise the demand that Labour believes all wages and benefits should be automatically linked to rising prices. Why should workers suffer for the anarchy of the bosses' system?

More than that Labour should explain how a planned and publicly owned socialist economy could eliminate inflation and allow for a massive increase in the standards of life for millions.

Poll tax - the fight goes on



Lobby outside recall Scottish Labour conference. See page 2.

Palestinian socialist on hunger strike

MACHMOUD Masawra, the Palestinian socialist arrested by the Israeli regime, has gone on hunger strike. This is his brave protest against solitary confinement and the way he has been treated.

Since his arrest on 18 July:- he has been beaten up; he has had false confessions extracted from him; his own lawyer has been prevented from taking up the case; he has been denied family visits; there has been no publication of the charges and his trial is to be held in secret.

He has been on hunger strike now since 12 September. And on 16 September his family was once again refused permission to see him.

The Israeli state fears this ordinary trade unionist because he is committed to fight for the unity of Arab and Jewish workers and for the socialist transformation in Israel-Palestine. Workers throughout the world must defend their persecuted brother.

(See page 10 for details of campaign)

Inside
TGWU and
Labour -

**Defend
Labour's
youth -**
pages 8,9.

Militant

Editor: Peter Taaffe
Militant, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB
Phone: (01) 533-3311

Abdication of leadership

THE REFUSAL of the right wing leadership and those who wield the trade union block votes at the recall Scottish Labour Party conference to conduct any non-payment campaign against the poll tax will have significantly disappointed many workers looking for a national lead to defeat Thatcher's flagship.

This complete abdication of leadership at the conference by those in Scotland who take their cue from Neil Kinnock, is the culmination of months of pouring cold water on any idea of a successful non-payment battle.

A recent opinion poll in *The Scotsman* indicates a certain decline in the number prepared to support illegal non-payment, down from 42 per cent to 37 per cent of all voters. If those figures are accurate they are entirely due to the baleful effect of the miserable and cowardly stance of the Labour leaders in Scotland.

But the same poll demonstrates the enormous potential still present for mass defiance of the poll tax. 24 per cent of all voters are still "certain, very likely or fairly likely not to pay." That represents nearly one million prepared to go into battle, a mighty force, which if it stood firm with a determined leadership, would finish off poll tax once and for all.

If the official leadership of the movement are deserting the field of battle just as the armies are assembling, it falls to the left and the Marxists in the anti-poll tax unions to take up the challenge.

Such is the opposition to the poll tax that many who have gone along with other attacks on socialist principles have opposed the right wing's position. A 'committee of 100' who refuse to pay has been formed. This is a welcome move if it is to be linked to a campaign for mass non-payment.

But *Tribune*, which advocates such "a group of volunteers including Labour politicians, leading trade unionists, but also church people, academics, artists, entertainers and other community leaders" who refuse to pay, does so on the grounds that it would be "the dramatic gesture" that would be the centrepiece for the campaign.

Yet it was *Tribune* that falsely decried *Militant* in the past for "gesture politics!"

Grand gestures are no use to working-class families who cannot pay. They need a campaign which will win. Unfortunately *Tribune* and some left-wingers believe the right wing's assertion that this is impossible.

George Galloway MP told the *Glasgow Herald* that the tax would not be stopped unless the campaign was successful beyond his wildest dreams. Scottish miners' leader, Eric Clark, told the recall conference: "No one organisation, however powerful, can defeat the poll tax. This is what the STUC understands so well." He argued for a continuation of the STUC's 'broad-based' strategy, which has so far failed to mobilise workers properly and more than that failed to involve actively any forces outside the working class that are supposed to be so vital.

But the same weekend that the leadership forced through Labour's Scottish conference a policy of capitulation, opportunistically the SNP conference reaffirmed its support for non-payment, although they are only talking of organising 100,000 to refuse to pay. And they have collaborated with the tax in the one district council they control.

The Labour leadership, however, have allowed the nationalists to appear to many as the only party with a non-payment stance.

Labour faces a by-election in Govan. The SNP hope to pick up votes there, especially if Labour stands a pro-payment candidate. This is one reason why the right wing spent so much time attacking the nationalists at the special conference.

But in the final analysis they would rather lose votes in Govan than lead a mass campaign.

The labour movement is enormously powerful, especially in Scotland. If the right have ducked out of a fight, the left must take up a campaign for collective mass non-payment and non-collection.

Workers and tenants will continue to organise in anti-poll tax organisations. They must go to the Labour Parties, trade unions and workplaces to convince them to back non-collection and non-payment. Organised workers have the power to defeat the poll tax.

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Scottish Labour Party poll tax conference

The fight goes on

THE SCOTTISH Labour Party special conference on the poll tax was stormy and impassioned, a dramatic change from most recent labour movement events.

By Tony Cross

Speakers were cheered and booed. Some left-wingers who have been slipping to the right began to sound like left-wingers again. Above all, genuine political debate replaced the demoralised torpor and witch-hunting of recent party conferences.

Tragically the conference accepted the leadership's position of opposing the poll tax in words alone, in reality a policy of complete surrender.

But this was entirely because right-wing union officials delivered their block vote to the Scottish executive (SEC). Constituency delegates overwhelmingly showed they favoured mass non-payment of the tax.

The SEC received such a pasting in the morning session that one delegate commented: "If it had been a boxing match the referee would have called it off."

The shadow Scottish secretary, Donald Dewar, opened the SEC's case, arguing that if the labour movement broke Tory laws, the Tories would break the law under a Labour government.

"A party that takes this course forfeits respect," he said, not elaborating on whose respect he did not want to lose: "Non-payment would put councils in the firing line and put councillors in a most unpleasant position."

He implicitly ruled out any refusal to collaborate in imposing the tax. The task he set the Labour Party was to "look with understanding of the problems of those unable to pay" and make sure they get rebates.

The bulk of Dewar's speech purported to be an attack on the Scottish National Party (SNP) but veiled references to "shrill invective from other quarters" made it clear that his real target was Labour's advocates of non-payment and particularly *Militant* supporters.

Bob Thompson, who moved the SEC statement, was less subtle. He raised the conference's temperature several degrees by calling the strategy of non-pay-



Lobby of the conference by anti-poll tax unions.

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

ment a disgrace, and its main supporters Scottish Nationalists and Trotskyists.

A successful 'Don't Pay' campaign would harm local authority services and leave people facing fines they couldn't pay, he said.

The mover of the first composite against paying the tax, Bob McLean of Lothian Regional Labour Party, was cheered even before speaking. Labour respecting Tory laws, he said, would not make the Tories obey Labour ones.

Militant supporter and Govan delegate, Alan McCombes, was also enthusiastically received. He moved a composite calling for a labour movement campaign for non-payment and support for local anti-poll tax organisations.

Reminding conference of the impending Govan by-election he said: "If we go into Govan and tell people they are to go without essential food or clothing to pay the poll tax, we will not receive a warm welcome."

In answer to Bob Thompson's argument that local services would suffer he asked: "How many times have members of your union Nupe been vilified on those grounds when they strike?"

Scottish T&GWU chair Tom Connor won a standing ovation when he conveyed his union's support

for non-payment and reminded the right wing that the labour movement owes its existence to breaking Tory laws. Their strategy, he said, is "a recipe for doing nothing while the Tories systematically dismantle the NHS and local government".

Long-standing opponents of *Militant* were driven to protest at the right wing's dishonest arguments. "If being a 'Trot-Nat' is putting forward a strategy that will defeat the poll tax," said Susan Deakin of Edinburgh District Labour Party, "then I'm proud to be called a 'Trot-Nat'".

Defeatism

But the overwhelming dominance of speakers for non-payment in the morning was blatantly reversed as the vote drew near. In the afternoon a succession of well-known right-wingers was called to argue for payment.

They unceremoniously ditched Dewar's argument about keeping within the law and concentrated instead on defeatist propaganda, saying that a non-payment campaign could not beat the Tories' legal apparatus.

They failed to mention that the unions could prevent this means of coercion from functioning and that a million Scots refusing to

pay would mean a desperate constitutional crisis for the Tories.

But despite the REC's terror of leading a campaign, they did not dare to forbid party members from doing so: "We recognise that there are people and organisations that wish to go down the road of non-payment and we will not set ourselves against them," said Mark Lazarowicz, an ex-left doing the SEC's dirty work of replying to the debate.

After the summing up, George Galloway MP moved to suspend standing orders so that the conference could be extended. This was defeated, but delegates were furious at the way the afternoon session had been stage-managed to stifle opposition to the platform. The whole debate had been crammed into two hours and forty minutes.

The fight against the poll tax will go on with or without the permission of the Labour leaders. Hundreds of Scottish Labour activists will be involved in that fight and *Militant* supporters will continue to play a crucial role in it.

Many activists will be bitterly disappointed at the conference's decision but the defiant mood of the rank-and-file delegates heralds a change for the whole labour movement as it is forced to decide how to fight the Tories' tax.

We won't pay

OVER 500 people responded to the Strathclyde Anti-Poll Tax Federation's call to lobby the conference. As delegates went in there were continuous chants for non-payment. Local people were joined by coaches and mini-buses from the Lothians. There was a banner declaring 'UCW members won't pay the poll tax'. Speakers called on the

conference to listen to the lobbyists' demands. Then, while the conference was in session they marched round Govan, their ranks being swelled to two or three times as local people joined in.

Then it was back to Govan town hall to hear the bad news of conference's decision... and to resolve to keep up the fight.

Stop it?

BRIAN WILSON MP is chair of the 'Stop It' campaign, supposedly set up by the Labour Party to fight the poll tax. At the Scottish Labour Party conference he spoke against non-payment and in favour of "carrying the debate outwards into the country". But many delegates wondered what sort of debate he meant. In the previous week this 'opponent' of the poll tax had an article in the *Glasgow Evening Times* under the heading 'Why you must pay'!

Unionise trainees

AFTER TUC conference voted to withdraw from the slave labour Employment Training Scheme (ET), Tory 'employment' minister Fowler announced that the Training Commission, (TC) which runs ET, is to be wound up.

By Mark Meredith,
Youth Trade Union Rights
Campaign national chair

The TC runs all government training schemes; its 600,000 low-wage earners made it Europe's biggest employer. The Tories are transferring the schemes to the Department of Employment.

Right wing union leaders who support involvement in the TC claim they can use it to improve conditions from within. But most TC schemes are just slave labour with the worst health and safety records in industry. ET is the worst yet, offering dole pay plus £10 for 40 hours work.

The unions should be organising the workers on the schemes, not organising the schemes' operation. The TUC decision gives unions a chance to fight alongside the unemployed.

The union boycott will make the government's aim of attracting 600,000 long term unemployed - very difficult. The TGWU and local government unions Nalco and Nupe oppose ET and won't allow it on workplaces they cover. This will affect every local authority.

the NHS and much private industry.

ET is virtually compulsory. If you're unemployed and refuse a scheme, dole may be stopped or cut by 40 per cent for six months. 'Other benefits' are cut. If you have an unemployed spouse, housing benefit will be cut because you earn £10 a week. If your spouse gets work you could end up with £10 and no benefit.

Fowler called the TUC decision a "blow against the long term unemployed." The unions must counter-act this propaganda with a massive recruitment drive of ET and YTS trainees.

Real jobs

They must fight to improve trainees' conditions, while campaigning for real jobs and quality training/apprenticeships, schemes with union rights, rates of pay and proper health and safety conditions.

Replacement of the 20 plus schemes with ET will be devastating for the 269,000 people on community programme schemes. Their wages will drop and they will work much longer hours - 40 per week, compared with two-three days a week for £67 on average previously.

The unions must step up such campaigns as the TGWU Link-up campaign and start a sweeping recruitment drive. Union officials should be briefed on the issues and then go out in the tradition of the union pioneers

to convince trainees to join the fight for better conditions.

LPYS and YTURC members should help organise trainees. Over half on these schemes are under 24. Approach the unions for joint activity, with young eloquent speakers going along to convince young people to join the unions.

FE colleges should also have joint union activity. We should fight for agreement to speak to all trainees officially in their classes, with union displays to show the benefits of joining up and joint union/student union/Labour Club committees to improve conditions for trainees in colleges.

The Tories want to involve local authorities, and "any trade union organisation which would like to be involved" in their schemes. Union members must steer their organisations clear of these waters and local Labour authorities should be convinced by resolutions etc to reject ET.

Tory authorities with the scheme should be shown up. We should argue for industrial action if improvements are not forthcoming.

Hundreds of thousands of youth will pass into these schemes. The labour and trade union movement must organise workers into the battle to kick out the Tories and give young people proper training and real jobs.

SDP



TGWU anger at Hattersley vote

MEMBERS OF the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) are angry and mystified at their 'left' union executive's unanimous decision to back the right wing Kinnock-Hattersley ticket for Labour leader and deputy.

After all, members had voted that executive into office to fight for their union's left policies in the highest reaches of the labour and trade union movement.

The TGWU's right wing have been crying foul ever since a left slate won a majority in last year's executive elections.

They have tried to discredit the left, particularly trying to unseat

Steve Riley, who defeated former right wing chairman Brian Nicholson in the elections, on the flimsy grounds that Riley was 48p in arrears at the time.

This culminated in a walkout by 17 right wingers from the 18 September executive meeting when the executive ruled that Riley's

eligibility for election was not in doubt.

Many TGWU members believe that the left were persuaded not to vote for John Prescott as deputy on the grounds that the press would deride any other vote than Kinnock-Hattersley as 'unfair' after the walk out!

But the Tory press will

general secretary calls a "constitutional crisis," as the right wing try to destabilise the union. They will only be able to resist this challenge if they show that, unlike the right, they are prepared to fight for their members' interests.

TGWU members will be demanding that the delegation at October's Labour Party conference decide their vote on the basis of the union's conference decisions.

Militant has consistently supported the candidature of Benn and Heffer, but TGWU rank and file members should decide - and judge the candidates on who supports fighting policies.

On that basis, how can the TGWU back Roy Hattersley? TGWU conference has repeatedly opposed the right wing's support for nuclear arms, wage restraint policies, nuclear power etc. The union must reject Hattersley, who has the media's support precisely because he backs these right-wing policies.



Ron Todd, TGWU general secretary.

always belittle any victories for the left; their ideal union leader is scab organiser Hammond. A 'left' executive which always bends one ear to the wailing of the press barons will capitulate on each and every major issue.

The left executive faces what Ron Todd, TGWU

NI workers strike against sectarianism

ABOUT 5000 members of the Northern Ireland Public Services Alliance (Nipsa) in Northern Ireland's DHSS offices have gone on strike to stop sectarian threats.

The strike started when an article in *Ulster*, the paper of the loyalist sectarian Ulster Defence Association (UDA) made accusations against workers at Holywood Road DHSS office in East Belfast. It said that Catholics "from the Provo-Republican ghettos had infiltrated the office" and claimed some employees had IRA sympathies.

The Holywood Road office employs both Protestant and Catholic workers. They took the article, designed to incite violence from loyalist bigots, as a threat to all the staff and went on strike. The dispute rapidly spread to other offices.

Threats

DHSS workers have had to take industrial action against sectarian violence before. In 1986, workers in Lisburn struck against a loyalist paramilitary threat. And on 26 April, workers

in Derry walked out when the INLA threatened DHSS staff.

The Nipsa members deserve the support of all workers. The unions organise workers from both Catholic and Protestant areas. The labour movement's leadership should build on the class solidarity shown here to combat sectarian violence and build a united working class opposition to capitalism, which has given Irish workers nothing but unemployment, poverty and bloodshed.

Gerry Parr

TRAGICALLY, GERRY Parr died on 13 September after playing football. Gerry leaves behind his wife Lindsay and three teenage children, Chloe, Sarah and Sam.

By Derek Hatton

The entire family have given their whole-hearted support to the battles of Liverpool city council from 1983 to 1987.

It only seems five minutes ago that I sat in primary school with Lindsay. Now Lindsay and everybody else has to face life without Gerry, a comrade who was always there, willing to do the essential things.

He was not one for publicity. We will remember him as an activist who helped transform the local

Labour Party in Woolton into an active campaigning unit. We will remember him as one of the best amateur football players, and above all we will not forget that without good solid working comrades like Gerry - unnamed and unsung in the records of the Liverpool struggle - we would never have been able to achieve anything.

Example

Thinking of Gerry always makes me think of a game we played with Duncan Mackenzie (one of the best players Everton ever had). Duncan scored a spectacular goal. I always argued that my pass had laid on the goal, he always insisted it was his pass!

I'm sure that if someone had asked Gerry what

would be the best circumstances to die in, he would have replied scoring the winning goal in the match. This is exactly what he did on the tragic day.

All our thoughts go to Gerry's family in these hours of sadness but our consolation is that Gerry's work in the labour movement gave the basis of pride and hope particularly for the youth besieged by poverty, unemployment and the dreadful lure of drugs. Gerry's part will not be forgotten. We will ensure that his memory and example lives on.

The family have requested that no flowers be sent and that all donations be sent to the Liverpool 47 Defence Fund, c/o Trades Council, Hardman St, Liverpool 1.

Bowing before the market-god

**LABOUR
POLICY
REVIEW**

LABOUR'S POLICY review group have produced a draft report entitled *A Productive and Competitive Economy*. If it were a school economics essay, it might just scrape a C+. But as a document intended to provide a framework for a socialist economic policy, or indeed any economic policy, it is inadequate and shallow beyond belief.

There is not a single statistic and not a milligram of socialist programme or perspective. Indeed, except where it mentions "socialist colleagues in Europe" (note: not 'comrades') the word socialism does not get a mention: the entire document is based on the perspective of the continuation of capitalism. Its theme is that Labour can manage capitalism better than the Tories.

It opens with a paragraph of breath-taking banality: "Labour's aim is to develop a talent-based economy for the 1990s and beyond." What does that mean? Barring the first word, it could have been written by Thatcher, David Owen, Paddy Ashdown or the Archbishop of Canterbury.

'Key words'

Dozens of trendy 'key words' occur throughout, to give the impression of great learning. For example: "This combination of macro-economic policy and attention to building micro-economic, supply-side strength, are the characteristics of the Medium Term Industrial Strategy which Labour will implement to improve competitiveness in foreign and domestic markets."

This sentence, which would make most Labour Party members scratch their heads, is not quite gobbledegook, but characteristic of the whole document, is an attempt to mask the most right wing, market-oriented policies in a smokescreen of key words.

By John Pickard

Under capitalism a tiny number of people in the boardrooms of big business and the City make economic decisions that affect the lives of millions. But the class nature of society – the real world – is a closed book to the authors of this document.

In their make-believe world everyone, bosses and workers, rich and poor, powerful and humble, are lumped together into one homogeneous 'we'.

'We' must make it happen... 'we' are quite simply failing to prepare... 'we' must not repeat past mistakes... unless 'we' can match what other countries are doing... 'we' must use the technological revolution... 'we' cannot just live for the short term, etc.

This is not 'we, the labour movement', but, as the line of argument makes clear, an imaginary all-embracing 'Britain' that has to 'compete' to survive. Glossing over class divisions is not new; it is a means long used to persuade workers to make sacrifices 'for the greater good of the nation'. The document therefore is already hinting – in code at this stage – at counter-reforms under a future Labour government.

Tory policies have produced the deepest class divide in society since the inter-war years. There are up to 17 million living in poverty: unemployed, pen-



Derelict textile factory – industry ravaged by market forces, which Labour's right want to rely on.

sioners, single parents and low-paid, for whom the 'boom' has no meaning.

Yet none of the real experiences of the big majority of the population are even dimly reflected in the policy document. It is impossible to detect even a hint of indignation at what the Tories have done.

Issues

The authors will protest that the document covers such issues as investment, education, training, full employment, the inner cities, regional imbalances and so on. But in so far as these issues are mentioned, it is simply that... a mention. The authors do not know the difference between policies and platitudes.

The document is based on the idea of the market, although, as with everything else, it is carefully phrased and sufficiently overlaid with verbiage to disguise it.

Clause Four of the Party constitution, embodying Labour's historic, socialist aims, is deliberately misinterpreted. Having said that "common or social ownership is not limited to state ownership", there is the ritual mention of "municipal enterprises, workers' collective share schemes, worker cooperatives" and "a new role for pension funds."

Whatever government intervention there may be would have to be "fair to existing shareholders", in fact implying a repeat of

what was the worst mistake of 'Morrisonian' nationalisation – lavish over-compensation for wealthy shareholders.

Real aims

The real intention of Labour's right wing, the authors of this document, is to shuffle aside any serious commitment to public ownership, however slight. Although they say that "change cannot be left to the vagaries of the market", that is precisely the basis of the document.

The big banks, insurance companies and big corporations that control the economic destiny of the populations will be left in the hands of the same people whose policies are

determined solely by profit and whose stewardship of the economy has led British capitalism into crisis. The document represents no more than a pious hope that they will be induced to cooperate by the wringing of hands and the pleadings of a Labour government.

The appearance of this disgraceful document is yet another symptom of the attempt by the right wing to turn the Labour Party into a party of capitalism. The claue of yuppies, so-called advisers to the leadership who are responsible for its production, are acting as a transmission belt to foist Thatcherite, market-oriented ideas onto the labour movement. Their policies and this document should be utterly rejected.

Echoes of grotesque chaos

THE FOLLOWING letter by surcharged Liverpool councillor, Tony Muhearn, was published in the *Liverpool Echo*.

"I couldn't help but notice the blanket of silence concerning Brent council's decision to send redundancy notices to 1,100 of its workers and end the school meals service and day nursery provision in the borough.

When Liverpool Labour council was forced tactically to issue 90-day redundancy notices the *Echo* lambasted the leadership of the council even though they knew we had no intention of making anyone redundant.

At the Party conference that year Neil Kinnock at-

tacked us saying: "You can't play politics with people's jobs and services".

I wonder whether at this year's conference Brent Labour council will be attacked as ferociously as we were?

After all I am led to believe Mrs Kinnock is actually employed as a part-time teacher by Brent.

Anyway, if not, I am sure we can look forward to an editorial in the *Liverpool Echo* contrasting the record of the 47 in creating jobs, building six new nurseries, freezing the meals on wheels prices and building houses with that of the 'grotesque chaos' now taking place in Brent."

Disaffiliate the EETPU

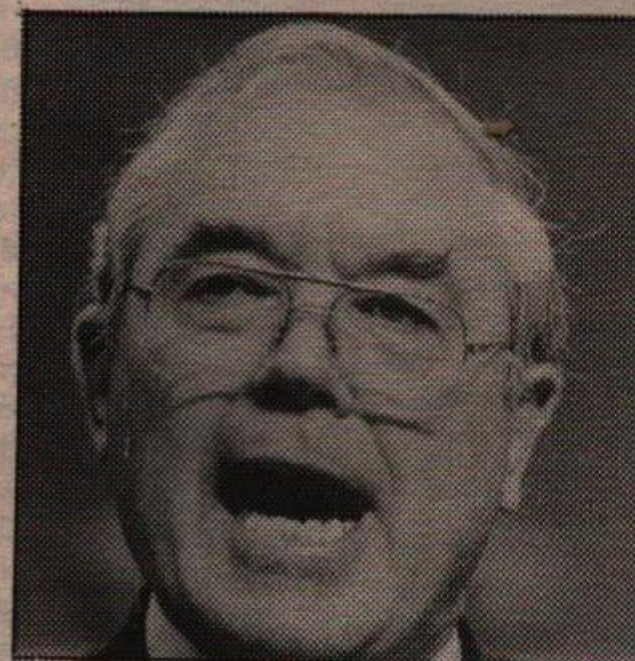
THE SCABBING activities of the leadership of the EETPU did not end with their organised picket-busting at Wapping. During the recent postal strike they were prepared for their London membership to deliver electricity bills.

By Jeremy Birch

Now Tory minister, Fowler, having abolished the Training Commission with its TUC representatives, wants to still involve the EETPU leadership in administering slave-labour schemes like Employment Training.

The electricians' leaders are nothing more than stooges for the employers, prepared to trample on every fundamental principle of the working class movement. For their crimes the EETPU has been expelled, if belatedly, from the TUC. It must not be allowed to retake its place until the membership have purged the union of the present rotten leadership.

But how in a week's time can Hammond be allowed to speak from the rostrum of the Labour Party conference? How can he be allowed to cast the union's block-vote to decide the leadership of a party in which he



Eric Hammond.

should have no place? It is like the SDP traitors (one of whom is the EETPU's head of communications) who stayed in the Labour Party to vote against Tony Benn for deputy leader in 1981 and then left.

Yet Labour's right wing national executive and a number of leading union officials are prepared to allow the EETPU to remain affiliated to the party. Even the *Economist* suggests the Labour leaders oppose disaffiliating the union because "then it would not be able to vote for Neil Kinnock at

conferences."

So those in Liverpool who led the fight against Tory cuts, or the anti-poll tax fighters in Glasgow Pollok are not wanted in Neil Kinnock's Labour Party, but Eric Hammond can remain a member.

The EETPU leadership cannot be tolerated in the Labour Party any more than they can in the TUC. The union should be disaffiliated while its ordinary activists, who are trying to reclaim their union, should be allowed to remain individual party members. But there can be no right to membership for anyone who organises strike-breaking.

Labour's rules should be tightened so the national executive, under instruction from the conference, should decide what trade unions outside the TUC are 'bona fide' and so eligible to affiliate. Those whose leaders' behaviour puts them outside the labour movement can be excluded.

At the very least the EETPU should be immediately suspended from the Labour Party and debarred from attendance at the conference, pending a party investigation into their behaviour and the necessary amendments to Labour's constitution.

FACING A NIGHTMARE

THE THOUSANDS entering university or polytechnic this year face a nightmare of attacks on education and students. If the Tories continue with their Education Reform Act (ERA) and introduce student loans, then for many this first year could be their last.

The ERA will mean that as the polytechnics are taken out of local authority control, my polytechnic, Newcastle, will lose the subsidies it receives from the City Council.

This has meant that the college authorities are attempting to push social science students to a poorly equipped out-of-town campus. This would mean extra travelling costs for courses up to ten miles away. There are numerous accommodation problems, no library, no creche and no provision for the extra students being moved there.

Students already suffer enough. The grant is totally inadequate and the prospect of loans is even more frightening.

Certain vital books cost £30-£40 and the cuts mean that the library cannot afford sufficient copies. If a student bought all the required

books it would cost £300 or more.

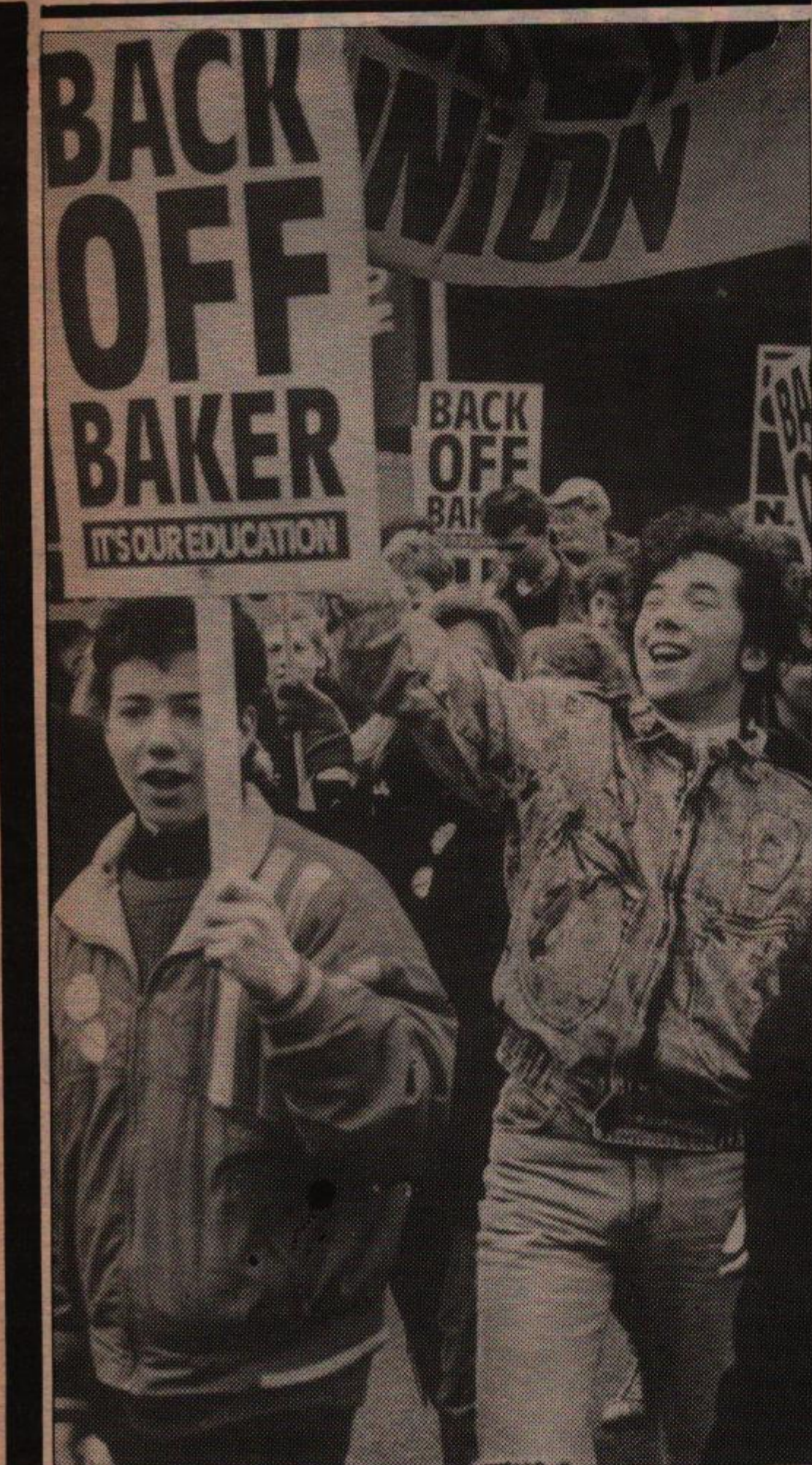
Books are a luxury when even decent meals cannot be afforded. Dinner can consist of a bowl of soup with as much bread as possible to make it more substantial.

My rent this term is £300, half of my grant. The housing benefit cuts mean that I get only 58 pence rebate after an 18 pence stamp. On top of this, the Tory Housing Bill will allow our landlord to ignore any repairs. Our house is rapidly beginning to look like the set in 'The Young Ones'.

Despite all this Militant supporters at Newcastle Polytechnic are confident. Last year, plans to move Business Studies students to a 'ready to be privatised' business school were defeated through our intervention.

A strategy of linking with workers, building for a mass general meeting and a march of 300 people defeated these plans. The college authorities have been warned - the same will happen this year.

Paul Heron,
Newcastle Poly Labour Club.



Advance for further education students

THE MARXISTS have unexpectedly won a majority on the Further Education National Committee (FENC) of the National Union of Students (NUS), after the collapse of the Kinnockite 'Democratic Left' in this sector of the union.

A vacancy on the FENC, a body which represents 750,000 further education (FE) students, has been filled by the co-option of Caroline Austin, President of Erith College students' union.

She is a member of Further Education Labour Students, whose members, Rod Alexander and Cheryl Varley, have been left on the committee to run the last two meetings.

FENC is elected every year by the FE sector con-

ference of NUS to carry out mandates passed by the conference. Every year anger is directed against the committee for not carrying out the mandates passed by the previous conference.

Initiatives

But since the election of Marxists onto FENC, it has been the only sector committee to organise initiatives, such as the YTS lobby in Manchester in 1987, or indeed meet for the full set of meetings.

However the NUS leadership has made it virtually impossible for FENC to implement any initiatives, even to produce a leaflet, because of the right wing's

fear of a movement of FE students that they cannot control. Such a movement would mean NUS having to confront the Tory Government, something they are incapable of.

They cannot even use FENC as an advisory body now that the advice comes from Marxists!

At the FENC meeting on 13 September it was agreed to launch a unionisation campaign amongst YTS trainees in the colleges, jointly with the TUC.

FENC also urged that the conference the NUS executive is organising on the poll tax be held in Scotland.

And it agreed to support the Sussex Area NUS 'Beat The Blues' lobby of Tory

Party conference on 13 October, despite the refusal of NUS Executive to do so. It was proposed that publicity should be produced, but John Dee, the Further Education Union Development officer claimed there was not enough money for this.

The committee also agreed that Graeme Jones, the sacked apprentice from Plymouth, should be asked to address the meeting.

A resolution condemning the NUS leadership for doing nothing to build support for the postal strike or to stop students strike-breaking during the dispute was passed unanimously.

It was agreed that whilst action continued the NUS

should campaign in support of the postal workers. They should follow the lead of the Marxist-led Merseyside Students' Organisation, who produced leaflets and press releases on why students should not scab and were constantly on the picket line.

Pressure

FENC has always been a thorn in the side for the 'democratic left' and subject to far more pressure from the radicalised working-class sector of NUS. The introduction of parity of representation for part-time students at conference will completely transform the class composition of NUS in favour of working-class students.

This will mean more pressure on the NUS leadership to launch a fight to defend student living standards. There is no doubt that the NUS leadership will attempt to stifle the activities of FENC and even attempt to close it down, blaming the Marxists for their own inactivity.

All Labour students should fight to defend FENC and its right to initiate campaigns such as the ones above. The building of campaigning Labour Clubs are the key, to explain to the mass of students the need for a socialist leadership of NUS.

By a Militant reporter

Plymouth victory

THE CAMPAIGN for the democratic right to organise political activity in Plymouth college has achieved a major victory.

The new college principal has told the Students Association (SA), who previously prevented any political activity in the college, that he sees no reason why political societies such as the Labour Club cannot be set up. The SA representatives have meekly agreed to this.

The Tory-controlled local education authority, under the pressure built up by the campaign, have been forced to look into the legality of the college's 'no politics' clause. But the campaign is not over yet. The Board of Governors has yet to meet to give the final decision whether to drop the

clause.

The immediate task for the Labour Club, once set up, is to campaign for the reinstatement of Graeme Jones, the young apprentice from Plymouth dockyard, sacked on the last day of the college term, in a clear attempt to prevent the campaign in which he was involved being built in the college.

Support

He has received enormous support from the labour movement locally and nationally. Even an editorial in the local *Evening Herald* said: "Being a political activist is no grounds for a sacking."

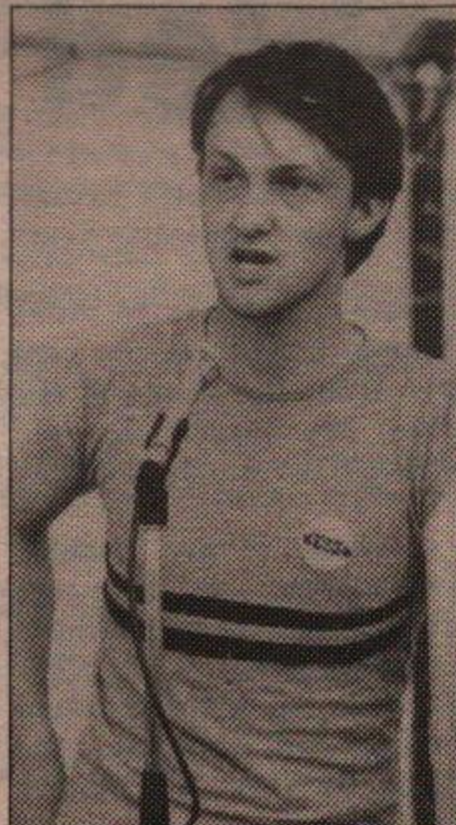
Now the new principal has offered Graeme Jones a place back on his old course and is keen to disassociate

himself from the decisions made by his predecessor.

The campaign now has to be linked to the need for a campaigning, fighting union within the college. The sacking has touched a nerve amongst student and trade union activists and the issue will blow up again in the student movement.

FENC (see above) for example have agreed to organise a Lobby of the Civil Service Appeals Board when Graeme Jones's case comes up. All union activists are urged to join in the campaign for his reinstatement.

Send letters of support to Graeme Jones Defence Campaign, c/o 59 Palmerston Street, Stoke, Plymouth.



Graeme Jones.

Militant

STUDENT BULLETIN

INSIDE:

NUS Inquiry - Pages 4-5
Lesson of Kent - Page 6,7,8
Lesbian and Gay Rights - Page 10,11
Poll Tax - Page 12

Issue Number 1, October 1988 Price 30p

Stop the Tories - Defend Education, Defeat Loans

DURING THE normally peaceful third term a wave of occupations broke out at Middlesex Polytechnic, North East London Polytechnic, Polytechnic of North London and others. These occupations were indicative of the mood that is ripe amongst students in Britain.



Militant Student Bulletin

Latest issue now available from 3/13 Hepscott Road London E9 5HB. Price 30p. Bulk orders available



Olympian heights

IF ACCUMULATING obscene wealth was an Olympic event, Britain would have at least an outside chance of medals. There are a dozen British entries in *Fortune* magazine's top 120. Her Majesty the Queen is number four in the world with £5.1 billion. That's up one place but she's still just short of the bronze medal mark.

Another feudal relic, Gerald Grosvenor, the Duke of Westminster, has hit the top ten with £3.6 billion. Gold medal winner is the Sultan of Brunei who is 'worth' £14.7 billion.

TNT blows up

THE WONDERS of free enterprise. As a test of the efficiency of the vultures waiting for privatisation of the mail, BBC North West sent a parcel by Murdoch-linked TNT. It cost £32, compared to £3 normal service from the Post Office. It was supposed to be next day delivery, but a few days later, TNT admitted that they'd lost it.

Striking lucky

STRIKE RISKS Management was set up in May to insure firms against strikes by third parties. It has issued "policies worth a six-figure sum" since it started operating. But they won't have to pay out a penny over the postal dispute.

When a company insures itself against strikes, it has to specify what suppliers it wants covered. Nobody took out insurance against a postal dispute.

The increased tempo of strikes this year has put premiums up. A real sign of advance will be when some bright spark offers insurance against socialist revolution in Britain.

Insecure advice

THE DEPARTMENT of Health and Social Security didn't do much for the security and health of their retired staff when in 1986, they invited financial adviser David Gray to advise employees how to invest their lump sum pensions. He recommended Barlow Clowes, the investment firm which collapsed this year.

The Department of Trade granted the firm a licence even though they had been warned about the problems there. Seven months later the DHSS held a pre-retirement course glorifying Barlow Clowes' name.

The Tories tell the DHSS to harass social security claimants and save tax for the rich. Will they be so keen to act against a rich parasite like Clowes to save the pensions of the DHSS staff?

Nuclear family

TORY ENERGY Minister Cecil "Fast Breeder" Parkinson has a new ally in his battle to make nuclear energy popular. Gavin Laird, AEU general secretary, shared a platform with him to support Trade Unionists for Safe Nuclear Energy. (Is Cecil really a trade unionist?)

Having flouted Labour Party and TUC policy on nuclear power, will Laird be taken to Labour's constitutional committee? Over to you, Neil.

A future for the deaf

THE MILITANT rally in June used sign language interpreters to allow deaf people to participate in a marvellous event. Deaf people can only gain from the ideas of socialism, they suffer severe discrimination.

By a deaf Militant supporter

The blanket term 'deafness' covers a wide range of hearing loss affecting 10 million people in Britain. Some are helped by hearing aids, lipreading and residual hearing.

People who are profoundly deaf from birth or early childhood usually prefer to use sign language to communicate rather than speech. This group, often insultingly called 'deaf and dumb' suffer most.

Deaf people have organised to win reforms in Sweden and Denmark, such as free interpreter services, deaf communication terminals and sign language and subtitling on TV programmes. In USA, France, Italy and Spain mass demonstrations have demanded an end to discrimination, and the official recognition of sign language.

In Spain the deaf are still classed as 'mentally defective' and not allowed to own their own homes. Italy restricts the kind of car deaf people can drive. Japan bans all deaf drivers.

Japan though does have many deaf communication terminals. America has a 'Silent Network' TV channel. Russia has sign language interpreters on TV programmes including on prime time TV news broadcast.

Discrimination

There is discrimination in Britain. Deaf people with the right qualifications for teacher training have been turned down on 'medical' grounds because they couldn't hear an ordinary conversational voice at 20 feet.

Teachers of deaf children have to qualify first to teach in hearing schools. Deaf trainee teachers have to do teaching practice in schools for hearing children. This effectively bans deaf people from teaching deaf children and denies these children adult deaf role models.

Last year, four deaf workers at Senior Coleman engineering in Manchester were amongst hundreds who went on strike over sackings. The deaf people's families were



Sign language interpreter at Militant rally.



Disabled people protest at social security attacks (See article below). Photos: Dave Sinclair.

TWO PEOPLE applied for a deaf communicating terminal, a machine which allows deaf people to type phone messages, in 1984. Their applications were turned down as "desirable but not essential". Their appeal took until March 1988 – and was turned down. Now the Ombudsman has criticised the delay and upheld their right to the machines.

contacted by phone, (which the strikers themselves couldn't answer) and told to get back to work or else they would never get another job because of their handicap.

A woman deaf from childhood worked as a cinema usherette for 25 years. A new manager thought she was a

safety risk and sacked her. A tribunal won her some financial compensation but she is still unemployed.

Many deaf workers get no explanation of the aims and benefits of a union when they start work. Labour movement meetings should try to get sign language interpreters. If they

are not available, deaf people find it difficult to take part in meetings.

How many deaf people miss out on medical treatment, family planning and ante-natal facilities, or benefit rights – because they don't understand what's going on? Many thousands.

To end this isolation and hardship, deaf people must join the struggle for socialism, taking the ideas into the deaf clubs. We need to fight together with the labour and trade union movement for our needs to be met.

Disabled need a living wage

BEING DISABLED in Thatcher's Britain isn't much different to our plight sixty years ago.

Yes, there are laws nowadays to make sure employers take at least three per cent of their workforce from the ranks of the disabled, but they are largely ignored because disabled people are harder to make a profit from.

That is why so many of my disabled friends have never had a job. They are quite capable but no employer is willing to give them a chance.

One or two get on low-paid government schemes but when they end, it's back to the dole queue to 'look forward' to another scheme.

Some of us get a 'proper job'. I work for a company, Remploy, which employs 9,000 disabled workers in several different trade groups from knitware to printing.

As with other companies, if we don't make a profit, we get sacked. The major difference is that my employer pays me £29 below the trade rate to maximise profits.

fits.

We are told we should count ourselves lucky. I suppose in an odd way, there's no reason why we should be less exploited than other workers. That's presumably Thatcher's idea of equality.

But it costs more for a disabled person to live. A workmate and his wife are both epileptic, he takes home £85 a week, his wife is too ill to work. Since April's rule changes, they have had no state benefits, even his rent rebate has gone.

They have to buy medicine to control their epileptic fits, that's £12 a week. The doctor won't give them more than one week's supply because his wife has tried to kill herself. The drugs reduce body temperature so the heating is on 24 hours a day – the gas bill is £200 a quarter. There's not much left after rent and food.

We are trying to improve wages but in our 1987 pay negotiation, Remploy told us the government wouldn't allow us a rise above inflation unless we increased productivity.

Some of us knew that many workers had walked down productivity road before and the skeletons of their jobs littered the roadsides but it was agreed.

In 1987/88 production rose 68 per cent at the Leicester factory. The CBI say it's one of Britain's fastest growing companies with £1.5 million profits. But at the next negotiations they told us we could get another £1.58 but some of our 96 factories would have to close.

We are now linking with other factories to fight for a future. Social workers often say disabled people should fight for easy access to hotels, cinemas, sports clubs etc. Yes, we need that, but hotels at £60 a night and sports clubs at £250 a year are outside our range.

We need to fight most of all for a living wage. Thatcher's government and her system can't give us that. That's why I'm fighting for socialism.

By Mark Prendergast (Sogat)

Lambeth tenants oppose

DESPITE hardly any publicity, over 400 Lambeth tenants came to a meeting called by the council to hear how the Housing Bill will affect them.

Two Housing Action Trusts (HATs) have already been announced in Lambeth and about a third of the meeting were tenants from those estates: Loughborough Park and Angel Town.

The first speaker, former MP Nick Raynsford, gave no indication of how to defeat the Bill, in fact some tenants had to add to his speech because he had left out some of the most obvious points.

Yet Raynsford works two days a week for Lambeth Council as a housing consultant for £25,000 a year!

The councillors who dared to speak attempted to defend the record of their council, which has just cut £60m from its budget.

Throughout the meeting tenants attacked the Labour council for bad ser-

vices, particularly in housing, but everyone realised that a private landlord would mean higher rents or eviction.

When a Tory councillor tried to speak a quarter of the meeting left in protest, so the Tory had to give up.

Tricked

A man who voted Tory in the last elections shouted that he had been "lied to by the Tories" and "tricked into voting for them", "Now you're going to steal my home and make me homeless".

The tenants' association leaders from the two threatened estates were the best speakers. They were absolutely determined to defeat the Tories. They had already met Ridley, the environment secretary and

HATs

lobbied the House of Lords.

They demanded that the Labour council give them more support. That demand went unanswered.

Militant supporters got a warm response when they demanded that the council refuse to co-operate with prospective buyers of the estates.

One dangerous element evident at this meeting was the role of the 'trendy' left and black section supporters, who had called a separate meeting on the Housing Bill for blacks the following week.

John Denning, a representative of the Lambeth Association of Black Tenants (LABT), of which

nobody had heard, tried to explain why he thought the Housing Bill was racist but was shouted down. In fact the separate black meeting was one of the first questions raised from the floor. At least a third of the meeting was black and hardly anyone could understand why it was being organised.

No division

The Labour councillors at first tried to defend it, claiming that it was their right as blacks, but as 99 per cent of the meeting was obviously against the racial division, they began to make excuses such as "It was organised before this

organised tenants want to boycott.

By the end of the meeting there was uproar, with the blacks calling on him to leave: "Traitor, get out!" Order could not be restored and many people left.

Instinct

This meeting showed how it is workers' instinct to fight together. It particularly showed that the way the 'trendies' try to solve black workers' problems through separation and black sections will be given short shrift when major battles have to be fought.

But it also shows how the attempts at false division on the lines of colour can cut across movements if they are not tackled properly.

Out of the meeting a united campaign of all Lambeth tenants was set up to fight the HATs and the Housing Bill.

Edinburgh meeting success

MILITANT SUPPORTERS in Edinburgh gave the STUC a lesson on how to organise meetings by holding the biggest gathering in the city on Tuesday 13 the day of action.

By Eddie Donaghy

During the day approximately 100 attended the STUC's eleventh hour protest in the city centre, involving mainly union and Labour Party officials, whilst 200 youth and workers from

the local housing schemes attended a Militant public meeting in the evening. Bob Wylie was given a resounding reception as he took up the Labour leaders' lack of preparedness to organise a fight back.

Dawn Rose, a single parent from Craigshill, Livingstone and an anti-poll tax union activist, spoke of her mother who as a pensioner will be crippled by the poll tax: "My mother has worked all her life. She has been

saving for ages to buy a warm winter coat and still can't afford it. The poll tax means she can forget the coat. Yet the Labour leaders say you can't break the law, we must wait till the next election. I say no way."

After the meeting an older worker commented that they hadn't been to a meeting like that since his days in the Young Communist League when the Communist Party fought on class politics. For him it was

an inspiration to hear a fighting socialist speech on the way forward instead of apologies for socialist ideas from the Labour leaders.

The meeting was also attended by a number of FE students from Stevenson college who took part in their own day of protest by organising a meeting of 150 which was addressed by Gary Smith of the LPYS. At this meeting 40 signed up to join an anti-poll tax union in the college

WHERE TO FIND US

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

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

STRATHCLYDE
For details of meetings contact: 041 221 1443.

WALES
For details of meetings contact: 0222 736682

Bellshill:
Anti-poll tax meeting
Lawnmuir primary school 7.30pm.
Thurs 29 Sept
Speaker from Strathclyde anti-poll tax federation.

Newport:
Fight the poll tax,
22 September
Maindee Junior School,
Chepstow Rd 7.30 pm

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

EASTERN
For details of meetings contact Teresa MacKay 0473 713179

Sunderland:
27 September
Polytechnic Library
7.30 pm

SOUTH EAST
For details of meetings phone 01 533 3311

Newcastle:
29 September
Scrogg pub, 7.30 pm

HAMPSHIRE/THAMES VALLEY
For meeting details phone 0703 422841

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

LONDON
For details of meetings contact George Roberts - 01 739 9213.

SOUTH WEST
For details of meetings ring 0272 631471

Hayes:
Fight the poll tax
6 October Cranford Park School 7.30 pm

YORKSHIRE/HUMBERSIDE
For details of meetings contact: Henry Gregory - 0709 371250

Hackney:
Fight the poll tax
22 September Chats Palace,
Brooksby Walk 7.30 pm

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

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

Deptford:
Fight the poll tax
22 September
The Albany Douglas Way SE 14 7.30 pm

Scotland sales climb

MILITANT'S DEMAND for mass non-payment of the poll tax is continuing to generate some of our best ever sales, especially in Scotland. The response to our sellers in Edinburgh should worry the Tories and send a clear message to Labour leaders about their campaign so far.

During the Scottish TUC's week of action over 270 were sold, including 95 in Niddrie and 100 in Leith. Gary Clarke from Stevenson college showed the benefit of a bold approach by selling to four of his seven classmates on his first day, including one to his lecturer! This laid the basis for a successful anti-poll tax meeting of 150, with 12 becoming regular sellers of the paper.

The campaign is spreading to England. On an estate sale in Walker 15 papers were sold at 18 doors. Sellers were invited into one home to explain the affects of poll tax to the whole family!

In London 40 papers were sold door to door in Manor Park using an anti-poll tax petition. 56 were sold in Basildon.

Only Militant has faith in working people's ability to beat Thatcher on the poll tax.

By Matt Howarth

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 works 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.....
Address.....
Tel:.....
or telephone 01-533 3311 NOW!

NEXT WEEK Labour Party Conference has on its agenda the second wave of proposals (see bottom page 9) attacking the Labour Party Young Socialists. On these pages former leading LPYS activists explain the motives for these attacks and the history behind them.

NOT FOR five decades has Labour's national executive committee launched such an assault on its youth wing. Half a century separates the 1930s right-wing leadership from the new right wing of today, yet the driving force behind the attempted destruction of Labour's youth wing is the same — fear. Fear of an organised campaigning left wing youth movement holding the party leadership to account.

By Frances Curran

Labour's right and ex-left wing have a 29:4 majority on the NEC, they have the support of most union leaders. Yet they feel this seemingly strong position is threatened by the existence of the Labour Party Young Socialists.

The banner of socialism is proudly carried by LPYS members. When the Labour leaders embrace the share-owning democracy, oppose strikes, support workfare and Kinnock tells youth that the idea of a guaranteed job is "impossibilist", the LPYS is the major section of the party defending its socialist aims and supporting the struggles of our class.

The only consistent record of recruiting young people to the Labour Party is held by the LPYS, not an easy task when after 10 years of Thatcher the question is frequently asked "What has the Labour Party ever done for us?" Despite this the LPYS has continued to campaign and recruit.

Many ordinary members inside the labour movement recognise this work, a swift full-scale closure would have provoked massive opposition, even from those politically opposed to the ideas of the LPYS. Not confident of carrying that through, the method of death by slow strangulation was chosen.

Last year, under the guise of consulting party organisations on how to improve Labour's youth work, the process was set in motion. Proposals from the NEC to cut the LPYS age limit, abolish regional committees and close its newspaper were sent out for consideration. The rank and file replied with a resounding no.

The right wing lost the consultation but using the same 'democratic' methods with which they have imposed parliamentary candidates and closed down local parties they put their proposals to Labour Party Conference anyway. With Diane Jeuda, from the shopworkers union, stating from the platform that the changes were necessary to help recruit youth, the proposals were passed.

So far they have been very selective, implementing only those proposals which attack the YS. The proposal to "organise a major national youth political and cultural festival, using the example of our sister parties in Europe and Scandinavia" which Diane promised the conference, we are still waiting on. Conference also agreed a campaign against compulsory YTS to culminate in a mass demonstration and lobby of Parliament. One year on, the only national initiative to attract youth was a one day poll tax school in Leicester which was attended by a grand total of 15. This is how the right 'recruit' youth.

In contrast the 2,000 strong LPYS annual conference was cancelled by the NEC, in defiance of the party's constitution.

The vast majority of young people in the party are members of the LPYS and support the ideas of Marxism. The NEC have concluded that they cannot win on the battleground of ideas and have resorted to organisational methods to gag the youth. The real problem facing the

right-wing is their inability to build a base for their ideas amongst youth. They have tried using Red Wedge, videos with Tracey Ullman, Neil Kinnock interviews in the *New Musical Express*. The main message is play down the politics, play up the image.

The Youth Campaign Pack sent to constituency Labour Parties includes such gems as "give attention to the middle class youth vote" and "do not emphasise the role of politicians and trade union leaders, except for Neil Kinnock." This when Kinnock's standing in the polls is at its lowest ever and well behind that of the party itself.

The Kinnockite National Organisation of Students (Nols) is a living illustration of the failure of this approach. This organisation, whose leadership fall unquestioningly into line with every move to the right of ex-lefts Sawyer, Blunkett and Kinnock, have actually presided over a fall in membership of 2,000 over the last four years, bringing it to 5579 (only 40 per cent of these are Labour Party members).

During that time they led the National Union of Students (NUS) which represents 1.2 million youth and yet failed to convince students to join the party. While in office they didn't defeat one major attack on education, resulting in the loss of their majority on the NUS executive in April this year.

The 1988 Nols conference was the smallest for at least ten years. Around 100 registered and political debate was shortened to two and a half hours. In contrast to the obstacles placed in front of the LPYS, this organisation has the full backing of the leadership and the resources of the party.

Earlier this year full time party officials came together to hold a secret consultation on youth. Their report shows a glimmer of understanding as to their failure. It states:

"It was agreed that the Labour Party urgently must produce a clear and attractive statement of all our youth policies and that these had to be sharp and radical. It is clear that this is where YTURC (Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign) is picking up ground very successfully."

Dilemma

This exposes their dilemma—they admit radical policies are needed to win youth, yet continue to condemn such policies as 'impossibilist'.

Before the last election all sections of the party agreed the main plank of the campaign for the youth vote was the £27 a week grant Labour would introduce for all those over 16 in full time education. This would gain support from youth and their parents, allowing all young people, not just those from well-off families, to continue in education.

Two weeks into the election an LPYS request for a leaflet incorporating it was blocked by Kinnock's campaign. The commitment had been ditched. Such opportunism merely increases the scepticism of youth both inside and outside the party.

The number one priority of the NEC on youth work is outlined in their own report from their full time officials March 1988: "All four working groups on youth particularly focused on the effect of Militant."

But the right have chosen the wrong decade to use organisational measures to try to drive a wedge between the youth of Britain and Marxist ideas.

Maybe in the 60s, maybe even in the 70s they could have had effect, but not in the 80s. 50,000

DEFEND LABOUR'S



YOUTH

young people in London are homeless; this month 78,000 16 and 17 year olds are being conscripted onto YTS, 18-24 year olds are facing the prospect of working for their benefit and poll tax will cripple youth. The cry is going up for jobs, houses and a future.

Thousands are seeking an alternative to what is being offered by capitalism. Young people everywhere are being thrown into struggle against this system, which cannot provide for their needs. It is this process which will convince this generation of young people that society must be changed.

The socialist transformation of society is now on the agenda.

Despite the organisational straight jacket which the right wing will try to fit, LPYS members everywhere must turn their heads to face those fresh layers of youth and campaign for them to join the movement for socialism.

The present right-wing leaders are only the temporary custodians of the working class movement. The youth have the energy, enthusiasm and audacity to return this movement to the task it was created for — that of transforming society, abolishing the wealth and privilege of the few and using the science, technology and talent we have available for the benefit of all.

"Thousands are seeking an alternative to what is offered by capitalism"

Major issues affecting youth	LPYS proposals	National Youth Campaign Committee response
YTS conscription	Demonstration and lobby of Parliament to oppose legislation	Did nothing
Social security cuts	In December asked for press conference to oppose and highlight the proposals. Asked for guidelines to be sent out for local parties to organise 'Know your rights' days for youth.	Did nothing
Poll tax	Produced a leaflet, pamphlet and video to help campaign against it and for a mass campaign of non-payment.	Support youth paying poll tax. Held a training day with 15 people and refused to allow a Scottish speaker.
Employment training	Asked for joint campaign with Nupe, TGWU and Nalgo against it. Demanded NEC instruct labour councils to refuse to co-operate.	Refused to take a vote because they said they had to wait for the NEC to decide its position. NEC supports ET.

History of attacks by right

ATTACKS ON Labour's youth are nothing new. Neil Kinnock is following the tradition of Labour's right in trying to curb the leftward-looking youth.

In the early 1920s, contrary to the wishes of the right-wing NEC, Young Labour Leagues developed locally. However with the establishment of the Young Communist League and pressure from the ranks they were forced to set up the first League of Youth.

From its inception "care was taken not to over-emphasise the political side." There was no national conference. League branches could have representatives on constituency Labour Parties—but they couldn't vote.

Even when the NEC was forced to allow the League a national conference they appointed its National Advisory Committee and ran its paper.

During the 1930s a strong left wing developed, demanding rights. This horrified the NEC. Its 1936 report complained that League members thought that they "should be free to register opinion hostile or otherwise upon the policy of the Party."

League of youth

The NEC cut the age limit to 23 and again to 21 and by early 1939 had closed the League altogether.

By 1946 the NEC had set up the second League of Youth with similar restrictions to the first. They directed the League towards social activities (see photo). As the recruitment poster put it:

"Film groups, drama groups, don't-muck-us-about groups. We have them all — including let's-just-sit-in-the-sun-groups."

It needed pressure from the 1948 Labour Party Conference to force the NEC to raise the age limit to 25 and allow the League a conference. As Ian Mikardo MP put it when moving the resolution:

"I want to warn the executive that they will go wrong if they start to do things for young people instead of with young people."

Instead the League was stifled and closed by 1955. It was only after three election defeats that the NEC looked once again to building the youth section in 1959. (Although this is an improvement on today's NEC who after three defeats want to close the LPYS!)

At the 1959 Labour Party Conference a delegate from Wimbledon explained:

"The NEC destroyed them (the League of Youth — Ed) because it was afraid of the spirit of adventure of youth. We have to make it clear to the executive that if we are going to build a youth movement we must have respect for youth, faith in youth and we must encourage them to say what they have to say."

That was the last thing the NEC wanted. In an article entitled 'Who are the YS — what do they do?' they explained:

"We are not Dismal Jimmies who spend every night of the week plotting the revolution. We have our fun — dances, barbeques, bowling, parties, trips abroad — and if the truth were known we are probably just as good a marriage bureau



2 Common interests and ideals make for good companions in the Young Socialists. Or is it just Boy meets Girl?

Fighting socialist campaigning of the right-wing dominated Labour youth in the early 60s. as the Young Conservatives."

Under fire at the 1960 Labour Party Conference Anthony Greenwood MP, replying to the debate for the NEC was forced to admit:

"There may be somewhere in the background an inclination on the part of the NEC to gag our young comrades in the Young Socialists"...They are going to pass resolutions that older people will not like. If you are not going to be tolerant, if you are going to be repressive towards them, if you are going to be paternalistic towards them, then the YS will fail—and we have got to make sure that the YS succeed."

But it has been supporters of this paper, starting with small handfuls, who patiently rebuilt the YS, first at local level. By 1970 Marxists had won a majority on the LPYS National Committee.

It was this and not constitutional infighting that won back all the democratic rights that had been taken away — including the right to elect a representative onto the NEC.

During the last few years the NEC has returned to repressive measures to halt

the growth of the LPYS. Last year the NEC pushed through a cut in the LPYS age limit to 23 as a desperate measure to damage the LPYS. When the Young Socialists was initially set up (by a committee led by James Callaghan MP) it stated:

"We found difficulty in fixing the upper age limit for membership of the YS and were fairly evenly divided between those who wished 25 years and those who wanted to make it 30. Finally we agreed on 25, leaving for future consideration the possibility of highering it. There must also be national and regional organisation."

The history of Labour's youth shows that the NEC proposals are not new. But history also shows that the youth will always come back fighting. This time we have a worthy leadership. One that will direct our energies into building the LPYS and the influence of Marxism amongst youth.

By Paul Ursell
former-editor *Socialist Youth*

Young, gifted and under attack



JANICE GLENNON, LPYS National Committee member and vice-chair worked for bakers' union for six years and staffed youth office at Labour Party headquarters during 1987 general election. Now facing expulsion by the National Constitutional Committee.



Rod Alexander, member of Bow and Poplar LPYS, elected to represent students in further education. Under investigation.

Helen Clay, school student, secretary of Bradford North LPYS, was investigated for joining the Party at the age of 14.

NEC proposals

1. Unelected National Youth Campaign Committees will now be responsible to the NEC for youth work in the party—not the democratically elected YS National Committee. There is no age limit for this committee.

2. The YS will no longer be automatically allowed an annual conference where political resolutions are discussed. In its place will be an Annual Youth Conference with workshops, exhibitions, cultural and sporting events. It will involve the LPYS, Nols and young trade unionists. There will be no age limit and there is no idea how delegates are to be selected.

3. The Annual Youth Conference will be the body that elects the youth representative on the Labour Party NEC through an elected college. The proportions for this have not been decided yet.

4. The number needed to set up a YS branch will go up from five to ten. The quorate for the YS will go up from five to six or eight, or 25 per cent, whichever is greater, if there are over 25 members. The catch is that everyone in a constituency Labour Party under 25 will be counted as YS members whether they are interested in the YS or not.

Army clampdown in Burma

AS WE go to press the army appears to be re-establishing an uneasy control over Burma.

The military takeover provoked the expected reaction from the students, monks and young workers, who armed themselves with numerous ingenious makeshift weapons. In many areas they raided police and army depots for arms, large and small.

By Keith Dickinson

Overnight curfews were immediately defied by thousands marching through the streets. Courageous barricade battles have been fought, with some of the most determined resistance put up in working-class districts of the capital, Rangoon. At least 500 are estimated to have been killed.

This 'coup' with Saw Maung, the defence minister and armed forces chief at its head, is the last serious throw of the old Ne Win-led bureaucracy to save themselves from the wrath of the Burmese people.

The only reason the army has largely held together is the failure of the opposition leaders to come together with a programme and an organisation capable of presenting itself as a serious alternative for the army ranks to turn to.

Undoubtedly it was in preparation for this coup that the bureaucracy tried to give the army an image of impartiality, more or less instructing all army and civil service personnel to resign from the ruling Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP), and ending the status of the BSPP

as sole political party.

They have also promised to go ahead with the general election within six to twelve weeks, providing "the situation has returned to normal".

In defiance of opposition demands for an interim government to organise the elections a new cabinet has been announced, made up of eight generals, one admiral and one civilian as health minister.

Saw Maung is now also prime minister and foreign minister. He became defence minister when his hated predecessor, Sein Lwin, was made president to replace Ne Win. He is also on the list of those the students demanded should be brought to trial.

Intimidation

Whether the campaign on the streets can continue and succeed now depends on the leaders' willingness to keep up the pressure and their ability to show a way forward. If they show a lack of confidence, a feeling of intimidation will begin to spread.

Many of the students and young workers, including rank-and-file leaders, appear to have gone underground. It is reported that many have left the capital, Rangoon, and headed for the Thai border where they could regroup with the intention of a resurgence in a month or so.

The ground is being prepared for civil war between the regime and the guerrilla forces of the national minority groups as well as opposition groupings amongst the Burmans who form two-thirds of the population. Generalised struggle along these lines could lead to the break-up of the country.

Meetings have been held



Demonstration in Rangoon before the coup.

between groups of students and some of the national minority armies in the border regions. They have been promised arms and training.

However, guerrilla struggle on this basis would mean throwing away the prospect of mass action

now among the Burmans by isolating those activists from the urban movement of workers and youth. They will need a socialist policy and programme directed at solving the problems of the Burman masses and of the country as a whole.

It is overwhelmingly the Burmans in the cities and towns who have been demonstrating on the streets day in and day out for months. The prolonged general strike continues, but cannot last for ever in a situation that cries out for a strong lead and an appeal to the army.

The former pro-capitalist leader U Nu has announced that he is going underground. Of the nationally known opposition figures, Aung San Suu Kyi has announced the formation of a political party with Aung Gyi and Tin Oo, but declares that "unity must be maintained within the army".

'Anarchy'

She then asks: "How will they get the government moving? It's an absurd situation - do they think they can shoot people back to work? The army talks about avoiding anarchy, but it is creating anarchy."

She says: "The soldiers don't want to be butchers". Of course they don't, but they also don't want to be butchered themselves. If they mutiny they will be. Consequently they have to be convinced that the opposition is prepared to go all the way, overthrowing the old leaders and tackling the country's debilitating economic problems.

This is the key to the revolution in Burma. The economy is already overwhelmingly nationalised. The local committees that have sprung up, and initially took over the local administration in many areas, could provide the basis for a workers' democracy.

★ THE FEATURE on Mexico, advertised for this week, will now be appearing in a forthcoming issue of *Militant*.

Jamaica devastated

HURRICANE GILBERT has wreaked havoc on the island of Jamaica, claiming 38 lives and destroying 100,000 homes.

By Colin De Freitas

Jamaica's poor, already reeling from attacks by the government of Seaga's Jamaican Labour Party (in fact the Tory party), were hit hardest. The island's weak infrastructure was further undermined as schools, hospitals and roads suffered severe damage. In many poor districts, the water supply has been completely cut off.

The agricultural sector is in ruins. "The banana industry has gone", said Seaga. Farmers estimate that Jamaica's Blue Mountain coffee industry will take five years to recover.

The citrus farms have also been completely flattened. It will take at least a year before any export fruit is available.

Seaga says that the most urgent needs would cost about \$400 million. This alone is equivalent to three years' earnings from bauxite, Jamaica's largest export.

The black market which has flourished under Seaga has been boosted by the tragedy. Within four days of the hurricane striking, prices of fruit and vegetables have risen by 300 per cent!

The hurricane has exposed the feeble nature of Jamaican capitalism. The economy had stagnated for



Kingston airport, Jamaica, after the hurricane.

ten years before experiencing some growth in 1986 and 1987. The Jamaican capitalists are less able than ever to take society forward, leaving the poor in even greater misery. Seaga declares: "Many will have to live in tent cities."

With elections due in the next six months, the Peoples National Party (the main workers' party) must go on the offensive, using the JLP's responsibility towards hurricane victims

to expose its bankruptcy. Unfortunately Seaga, trailing in the opinion polls, has hoodwinked the PNP's right-wing leadership under Manley into adopting a 'non-political' stance to the hurricane crisis.

Suffering

It is precisely the policies of the Seaga government which have caused undue suffering by Jamaican workers in the aftermath of

the hurricane. With proper housing, hospitals, communal facilities etc., the effects of Gilbert would not have been nearly as hard, and recovery from the hurricane would have been easier.

Hurricane Gilbert clearly demonstrates the need for the PNP to embrace a full programme of socialist transformation on entering office to establish a speedy reconstitution and take Jamaican society forward.

Support grows for Machmoud's release

ANKER JORGENSEN, former Danish prime minister and Social Democratic Party leader, has agreed to sponsor the campaign for Machmoud Masawra's release. With Machmoud on hunger strike it's even more necessary to step up the demand for his release.

Machmoud's trial on 18 October will still be held in secret despite hundreds of protests Israel has received from all over the world.

The Israeli courts refused to accept Machmoud's original lawyer, so a new lawyer will have to be appointed. This will involve huge legal costs. Finance is urgently needed!

Machmoud as an activist has only the international labour and trade union movement to fight on his behalf. Show the strength of this movement by rushing donations to: Campaign for the Release of Machmoud Masawra c/o PO Box 448, Emma Street, London E2. Cheques payable to the Machmoud Masawra Defence Campaign.

Further sponsors this week include the Dockers Union of Aarhus, Denmark; Oscar Derner, president of

the association of former Sachsenhausen concentration camp prisoners (Danish section); the Union of Students in Ireland; the General Federation of Greek workers (Greek TUC); the General Federation of Public Employees (Greece); Shahida Jabeen, secretary of the Central Co-ordination Committee of the women's wing of the PPP in Pakistan; and the Alberta Federation of Labor in Canada.

Lobby

The Miners Federation of Australia have written in protest, as have the National Union of Students executive in Britain. Amnesty International have now taken up Machmoud's case.

A number of Emergency resolutions have been passed to go to this year's Labour Party conference.

On 29 September at 8.30am there will be a further lobby of the EI office in Regent Street, London, to highlight Machmoud's case and protest against the arrest of four of those peacefully petitioning two weeks ago.

Haiti - behind the coup

SUNDAY'S COUP was a reminder that the Haitian revolution is still far from exhausted.

By George Collins

The previous week Duvalier's former executioner-in-chief and mayor of Port-au-Prince, Franck Romain, had boasted: "I am the most popular and best-beloved politician in the city." Days later he was in exile together with Namphy, and crowds in Port-au-Prince were hunting down his supporters.

The coup was led by non-commissioned officers "revolted by the way the government was being conducted". They wanted to prevent the Namphy regime from dragging the country back into a nightmare of Duvalierism (see box).

Contradictions

Yet the situation is volatile and full of contradictions. The new ruler, General Avril, had been a trusted servant of the Duvaliers with a key responsibility - looking after the \$500m they had stolen from government funds.

He was reportedly installed because the coup leader, Sergeant Joseph Heubrey, was reluctant to step into the presidency, and because Avril was considered 'honest'. In fact he is a multi-millionaire - but has been forced to promise a redistribution of wealth.

The coup represents the enormous pressure of the masses on the lower ranks of the armed forces, combined with the fear of the ruling elite that Namphy's provocations would prepare a new explosion of mass struggle.



June 1987: barricades go up in Port-au-Prince as demonstrators demand free elections. (Inset) Namphy.

Avril hinted at this when he declared that the aim was "to save the country from anarchy and chaos". An additional reason for toppling Namphy was the hope of regaining US aid, which the Reagan administration had been forced to cut off after Namphy's crackdown on last November's election.

But Avril will be no better able than Namphy to solve the country's problems. The capitalist economy is in ruins. On the other hand, workers and youth will see the overthrow of Namphy as a signal to press forward their demands. New mass movements in the future, and new splits in the armed forces, are inevitable.

TWO AND a half years of turmoil in Haiti have demonstrated again that without Marxist leadership to take a revolution to completion, the masses are faced with a prolonged period of sacrifice, setbacks and struggle in the search for a way of implementing their demands.

The revolution began in February 1986 with the overthrow of the bloodstained Duvalier dictatorship.

Under the Duvaliers 200 millionaires flourished in Haiti, the poorest country in the western hemisphere. One per cent of the population took 44 per cent of national income, but paid only 3.5 per cent of taxes. 70 per cent of the country's six million people could only have a cooked meal once a week.

Blood was one of Haiti's main exports. Rich in anti-bodies from rampant disease, the slum-dwellers' blood could be sold in vast quantities to US hospitals until the spread of Aids ended the trade.

An estimated 50,000 were murdered by the Duvaliers and their killer gangs, the dreaded Tontons Macoutes.

The revolution represented an enormous upsurge by every section of the working people, determined to break out of their living hell. Duvalier fled for his life while many of his supporters were hunted down and killed.

All the conditions existed for the overthrow of capitalism, except one: a Marxist party to lead the working people to power. As a result, a military regime headed by the 'honest' General Namphy stepped into the vacuum.

Trying to reimpose stability on the rotten foundations of capitalism, it came into growing conflict with the workers and youth. Increasingly Namphy fell

back on the repressive machinery of the Duvalier regime. Thousands of Tontons Macoutes were welcomed into the army.

Forced to promise elections, the regime was terrified of handing over to an elected government under mass pressure. On election day, 29 November 1987, troops went on the rampage to prevent a vote. Rigged elections in January put a stooge government in office. But in June it clashed with the regime and was turfed out, leaving Namphy in control.

Strikes

At every stage the masses fought back. The regime's first threat to interfere with elections led to five weeks of strikes and protests. January's rigged election was met with a general strike.

But without a clear programme and leadership, this power could not be galvanised to change society. As the crisis deepened, the Tontons Macoutes openly resurfaced.

A week before the coup, a Tonton Macoute gang invaded St Jean Bosco church in the slums of Port-au-Prince to murder the radical parish priest. Twelve people were shot or hacked to death, and 75 wounded. Interviewed on TV, the killers brazenly declared: "This is only the beginning."

For some of them it was the end. The anger and revulsion sparked among the masses by this savage act put pressure on the army, and set the scene for the coup. Four of the thugs responsible for the massacre at St Jean Bosco were reportedly caught by activists and put to death on the spot.

Swedish elections

Prosper while boom lasts

IN A weekend of coups and hurricanes the result of the parliamentary elections in Sweden would hardly register one point on the political Richter scale.

By Clare Doyle

The ruling Social Democrats were returned to power with their customary junior partner, the Swedish Communist Party. The Social Democrats' vote slipped fractionally to 43.7 per cent. The Communists reached 5.9 per cent, confounding forecasts of their elimination from parliament.

The Greens have come in with 20 seats—one less than the CP. Widespread predictions of the Green Party holding the balance of power failed to materialise. The result was greeted by an immediate rise on the Swedish stock exchange.

The stability of Sweden's Social Democracy has become a legend. It has ruled since 1932 with just one interruption by a right-wing coalition from 1976 to 1982.

Memories of this period are of a massive budget deficit (compared with almost zero today), inflation at twice the present rate, the biggest labour conflict since the 1930s, and coalition parties continually squabbling amongst themselves.

The parties of the right—the Liberals, Moderates and Conservatives—are still failing to present a viable alternative to Ingvar Carlsson's Social-Democratic

government. They have suffered their worst result since 1944, their combined vote falling from 48 per cent to less than 42 per cent.

Most of the right's vote loss went to the Greens. Unlike its German namesake, the Green Party of Sweden does not stand staunchly to the left of the Social Democracy. It is ambivalent on state intervention or nationalisation to control pollution, and stands for tax cuts and less subsidies. With a presence in about half the local councils it has supported cuts and privatisations.

Economic boom

In recent years Social Democratic governments have presided over a burgeoning economy that has benefited from growing world trade and lower oil and commodity prices. Unemployment at 1.7 per cent is the second lowest in Europe. Industrial production has increased 20 per cent in six years, with industrial investment rising on average 10 per cent a year.

Direct taxation is at the highest level of any country in the world—on average 52 per cent. But the high taxes finance a very high level of social welfare and 55 per cent of the electorate depend on the public sector for their livelihood.

More than half the adult population own summer cottages, and more than a quarter own a boat. Everyone has apparently been doing very well under the Social Democracy, and a convinc-



Concern about pollution of the environment was the biggest concern among voters in the run up to the election.

ing victory should have been assured from the beginning of the campaign.

Yet pundits spoke of Sweden's miraculous stability coming to an end, and double the usual number of voters were undecided right up to the time of the election. The 83 per cent turn-out was extremely low by Swedish standards.

A spate of 'summer scandals' has shaken confidence in the Social-Democratic leaders. They have been shown to be up to their necks in illegal arms deals, nepotism, decades of undeclared but publicly financed spying in the SDP itself, and commissioning friends rather than official bodies to inquire into the murder of the last Prime Minister, Olaf Palme. The Justice Minister was forced to resign on this issue.

Voters' fears for their immediate future have been heightened by a number of recent disasters. Contamination from Chernobyl's fallout devastated the economy of Lappland, totally dependent as it was on herds of reindeer. Acid rain has been killing the lakes and forests, threatening the idyllic environment in which so many holiday homes have been built.

Pollution

The same goes for the sea-coasts, blighted by freak strains of algae and a virus that has not only killed 75 per cent of the seal population but now threatens humans as well.

Ecological concerns for the first time since the 1960s pushed unemployment from first place in the preoccupations of the electorate in the run up to the election. A healthy socialist party would have combated any threat from environmentalists with a full-blooded programme of controlling industry, and eliminating the domination of profit in all

decision-making through nationalisation of the monopolies under workers' control and management.

Instead, record profits and billions of pounds of liquidity have been accompanied by wage restraint, inflation (in spite of a feeble and temporary price freeze), privatisations, cuts and even a housing shortage putting new homes beyond the reach of many.

There have been sporadic but significant outbreaks of labour unrest. A private sector strike earlier this year was the biggest for 40 years. The 'Dala Rebellion'—a protest movement of shop stewards from around the country—represented an attempt to challenge the leadership of the trade union movement.

Such processes are as yet in their early stages. But when the 'luck' of the Social Democrats runs out, when an economy massively dependent on foreign trade is hit by world recession, new convulsions will be on the order of the day, whatever party is in power.

The new government in Sweden will be trying to maintain the capitalist dream of unending prosperity against all the odds in the future. Their vaunted 'Third Way' will founder on the rocks of capitalist crisis. Already the *Financial Times* warns of the need to take 'unpopular measures' to deal with economic difficulties. In this context the programme of genuine socialism comes once again into its own.

We're fighting against the poll tax

Dear Comrades,

I work in the Department of Social Security (DSS) at Parkhead, Glasgow. We regularly deal with people on the baseline Income Support of £26.05. Their fuel bills will be £9 and after that they have a pittance to pay for clothing, food and day-to-day living expenses.

The poll tax on top of that will absolutely devastate them. I think in their eyes we in the DSS would be even bigger bastards than we are now when it comes in.

It will put a great many of them over the edge and the crime rate will soar. What other way is there? Parkhead has got no proper jobs. It's OK for the Labour leaders to say "Don't break the law to fight the poll tax" but many people will be driven to break the law to pay it.

Gerry McMahon, CPSA member

Dear Comrades,

While canvassing against the poll tax, I met a young Scot who had just moved down from Scotland, having been signed by Coventry City Football Club.

He agreed to sign our anti-poll tax petition, telling me that of course the poll tax was coming in to Scotland even sooner.

I said: "And they are certainly putting up a fight

up there. That Tommy Sheridan seems to be making a name for himself." "Yes, he's the militant isn't he," he replied.

Football may dominate the mind of this lad as he tries to build his career, but it hasn't stopped him realising who is really putting up a fight on behalf of the working class.

Dave Griffiths, Coventry

Dear Comrades,

While canvassing on the poll tax, some comrades were stopped by a policewoman in a patrol car. She quizzed them about what they were doing. By the time we caught up the comrades had already started a conversation about the poll tax.

She definitely did not agree with the tax or with many other policies Thatcher is coming up with. We joked with her and asked her if she'd sign a pledge not to arrest us if we didn't pay. She agreed and bought a pamphlet.

Police and prison officers

who get rate relief on crown property at the moment will be poll taxed. So they may not be too happy about putting us all in jail.

As to remaining within the law to fight the tax, one tenant gave a blunt answer: "If people pay the poll tax they'll either have to work on the side or rob to pay other bills. They won't be able to avoid breaking the law."

Dunnachie, Maxton and Kinnock should take a lesson from this. Their comfortable salaries insulate them from such realities.

Rob Windsor, Coventry



Photo: Dave Sinclair.

On the Glasgow rally against poll tax on 10 September.

Dear Comrades,

MPs who refuse to pay the poll tax may become liable to disqualification from Parliament. A professor of Scots law has written to *The Scotsman* claiming that consistent refusal to pay could result in anyone who has 'a valid claim' petitioning for sequestration of the debtors.

An award of sequestration disqualifies an individual from being or standing to be an MP, he says.

Several Scottish Labour MPs have said they will not

pay the tax. This is a welcome gesture, especially if it is tied to a campaign of mass non-payment.

It remains to be seen whether the Tories would pursue them with the vindictiveness they employed against the 47 Liverpool councillors who stood up to Tory law.

It also remains to be seen if the MPs will stick to their guns with the same outstanding courage as the Liverpool 47.

Pollok Militant supporter

Appalling housing in the private sector

Dear Comrades,

I was pleased to see an article in issue 911 on privately rented housing. Working for inner-city environmental health departments, I see appalling conditions arising from the conflict between people's housing needs and the landlords trying to maximise the return on their investment.

Little can be done for private tenants, with the feeble powers and pathetic resources council health inspectors are given by the government. We certainly don't have the power to prosecute landlords who harass their tenants.

Some councils do have specialist officers to deal with this problem; others seem to rely on their legal departments. I've never seen harassment being given a high priority. Private tenants tend to be unorganised and don't have the political muscle to force councils to take the issue seriously.

No individual officer or department can solve the housing crisis within the framework of capitalism. We should fight for housing to be owned and democratically controlled by working people, as part of a socialist society.

John Baston, Tower Hamlets Nalgo

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

15 in an hour We're all exploited

Dear Comrades,

On Saturday with a few friends we got talking about how many people have heard of *Militant* nowadays and want to read it. To prove the point we went down into a shopping street and sold 15 in less than an hour.

Two of the buyers were Asian women who obviously recognised the name of

the paper. Another was a young bloke who started off saying "Not this time thank you". But after a short discussion he agreed that the Tory media had probably given him a very distorted picture of *Militant* and bought a paper to see what we really stand for.

Pete Metcalfe, Southampton

Dear Comrades,

I am writing about the problems of high-paid workers. You may think my problem is my ever expanding beer gut. But the facts are that in London and the South East, due to the struggles of the past, groups of workers are earning relatively high wages, myself included, as I often pay more in tax than many get as a wage.

But the other side to that is the cost of living. You cannot exist in London on less than £200 a week. Housing is the most expensive item. With the councils' failure to join with Liverpool and expand the housing market, houses for workers are non-existent.

Private houses are beyond the means of workers. The land speculation has seen the conversion of the warehouses, such as the one my old man worked in, into luxury flats for up to and over a million quid. These houses are for yuppies, not workers.

Now Bryan Gould has moved on to the river front, when there is a perfectly good tube service between Dagenham and Westminster to enable him to live with the workers he represents.

But even skilled workers cannot hope to pay that sort of money. This has led to workers buying houses outside London. At my depot one train driver has moved to Doncaster. What state of



Bob Law (left) campaigning in Bermondsey with Labour candidate John Bryan (right).

mind he is in at the end of his shift I dread to think.

We now have the phenomenon of migrant skilled workers from all over Britain, earning fortunes, camping out on the building sites. It is a nonsense to suggest that these workers have been bought off and won't fight.

High-paid workers are exploited in the same way as everyone else. The stress on these workers can become intolerable. One mistake, one illness and they're sacked. And often the skill they have is useless outside that

section of industry.

I for example can drive a train, but if I lose my job, no-one else needs train drivers. Skilled workers will always fight, as they have more to lose in a bosses' offensive such as Wapping.

It is true that these workers can be tinged with racism, sexism and many other prejudices capitalism uses to divide the class. But when the time to fight comes this prejudice is swept away.

In 1968 Enoch Powell's 'rivers of blood' speech led to a reactionary strike by some Bermondsey dockers.

I only recently learned that my father and many others refused to strike for a Tory. They went in and came out the next day to show they weren't scabs.

Yet in 1972 these same dockers who supported Powell were at the forefront of the struggle at Midland Cold Store which paved the way for the killing of the Industrial Relations Act.

This is just one example. There are many more, for the most prejudiced and highly paid worker is still exploited by this system and will be won over to the fight for socialism.

Bob Law, Bermondsey

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.

Wanted Co-op and Green Shield stamps (old and new) in books, part or loose. All proceeds to Fighting Fund. Send to Militant Circulation, 3-13, Hepscoth Rd, London E9 5HB.

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.

South Africa's revolution in song 'Toyi-toyi'. £3 per tape. 5 tapes or more, £2.75 each. Order from Salep.

Militant Fighting Fund Collecting Tins in red plastic. £1.00 each. 10 or more 75p each. Available from Fighting Fund Dept., 3-13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB. For all orders add 25% P&P. Cheques & Postal Orders payable to Militant.

Militant Fighting Fund Stickers available in rolls of 250 - "Fight the Poll Tax", "Smash Apartheid - For a socialist South Africa". £2.50 per roll. New sticker - "£35 a Week Grant for all school leavers" "Militant for Labour & Youth" enamel stud badges - £1.00 each. Militant Rally Commemorative Tee-Shirts. 3 Designs: Trotsky Design, size XXXL only; "Militant Rally", size XXXL, XXL; "Militant", size, XXXL, XXL, L, M, XXXL, XXL, £6.00ea. L, M, £5.00ea. A3 size posters of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, and Luxemburg 30p each. All five for £1.00.

Unions—the next step

THE CAMPAIGN to re-arm the trade unions with fighting socialist leadership is now urgent. This has been highlighted graphically once again by the role of the UCW leadership in the postal strike.

By Brian Ingham.

This strike took the PO management and big business totally by surprise. The fantasy that the unions are crushed has been absolutely confounded. Postal workers have displayed the finest traditions of solidarity.

Murdoch's *Times* fumed: "The Union of Communication Workers objected to the Post Office offering supplementary payments to recruit workers. It staged a limited one-day stoppage. Less than a week later practically the entire mail service is at a standstill because PO management brought in a few temporary workers.... There can be no excuse for such a rapid escalation.... management does not seem to have appreciated the strength of feeling amongst its workers to the extra staff."

The union leaders were mere passive spectators. Once it started they should have placed themselves boldly at the front of the action instead of searching for some mythical middle way.

"We think it is impossible to imagine a distinguished general without boldness," wrote Clausewitz, the Prussian military theorist, "we look upon it as the first requisite for such a career".

The general staff of the UCW failed this test abysmally.

They signed a return-to-work agreement before any of the issues—jobs, pay, belligerent management and the future of the industry—were settled. The strike was biting. It was a "damaging and costly dispute and one the economy could well do without", according to Richard Pine of the CBI.

A determined confident mood existed on the picket lines. In certain areas, principally in the North West, rank and file activists were beginning to come together to take the action forward.

The media screamed at Tuffin that the strike was out of his control.

The return-to-work deal left each area to settle individually. The limitation on overtime working gave local branches little alternative but to accept casualisation and/or other management moves against agreed working practices. And, by agreeing that diverted mail should be handled, UCW leaders effectively instructed sorting offices to do the work of offices still on strike.

Following the 1971 strike caution towards strike action existed for some years. But this recent strike was only round one. Postal workers have returned with their heads held high. They have the experience of this action under their belts.

Management are trying to impose an even more restrictive regime.

Round two could develop even before the end of this year. One thing is certain, the next national strike will start where this one finished.

No-one on the left should underestimate the generalised disgust at the role of the national leadership. On the contrary the left must strive to give the discontent positive expression.

That is the task for the left in all the unions. The working class has paid a heavy price for the defeatist ideas of 'new realism'. Fowler, the Tory employment minister, recently said that union members do not want the unions "to lead them into self-defeating strikes or inflationary pay claims which destroy jobs. Instead they

will look to the unions for help and advice on such matters as training, pensions and health insurance."

Parrot-fashion, right-wing union leaders echo those words constantly as they lecture activists against militancy.

Certainly there are less workers involved in strike action than in the heady days of 1979 or 1984. In the 12 months to May 1988 815,000 workers were involved in strikes which led to the loss of 2.1 million working days. This compares with 2.1 million workers and 29.4 million working days lost in 1979 and 1.2 million workers and 27.1 million working days lost in 1984.

The mood below has not been fully reflected in action. This is partly because average earnings have tended to keep ahead of inflation; they rose last year by 8.5 per cent. But it is above all due to the baleful role of the union leaders.

Hesitancy at the top, failure to lead, and to organise solidarity has produced an inevitable degree of caution. At the same time the employers are encouraged to go further on the offensive. Workers are prepared to fight back. The 1987 ACAS Annual Report revealed that 90 per cent of all ballots on industrial action are in favour, usually by massive majorities.

Pressure

But Ford showed mandates for action are often only used as negotiating cards. Leaders can also wear out the mood by repeated ballots and by suggesting that nothing more can be won.

The employers are stiffened by Thatcher and the apparatus of the state. Before taking matters into their own hands many workers ask: "Weighed down by these leaders, can we win?"

Nevertheless, under the same pressure-cooker atmosphere which produced the UCW strike, throughout industry the conditions are being prepared for an explosion of discontent.

Production is now back to the peak of 1974, but with 2.5 million workers less.

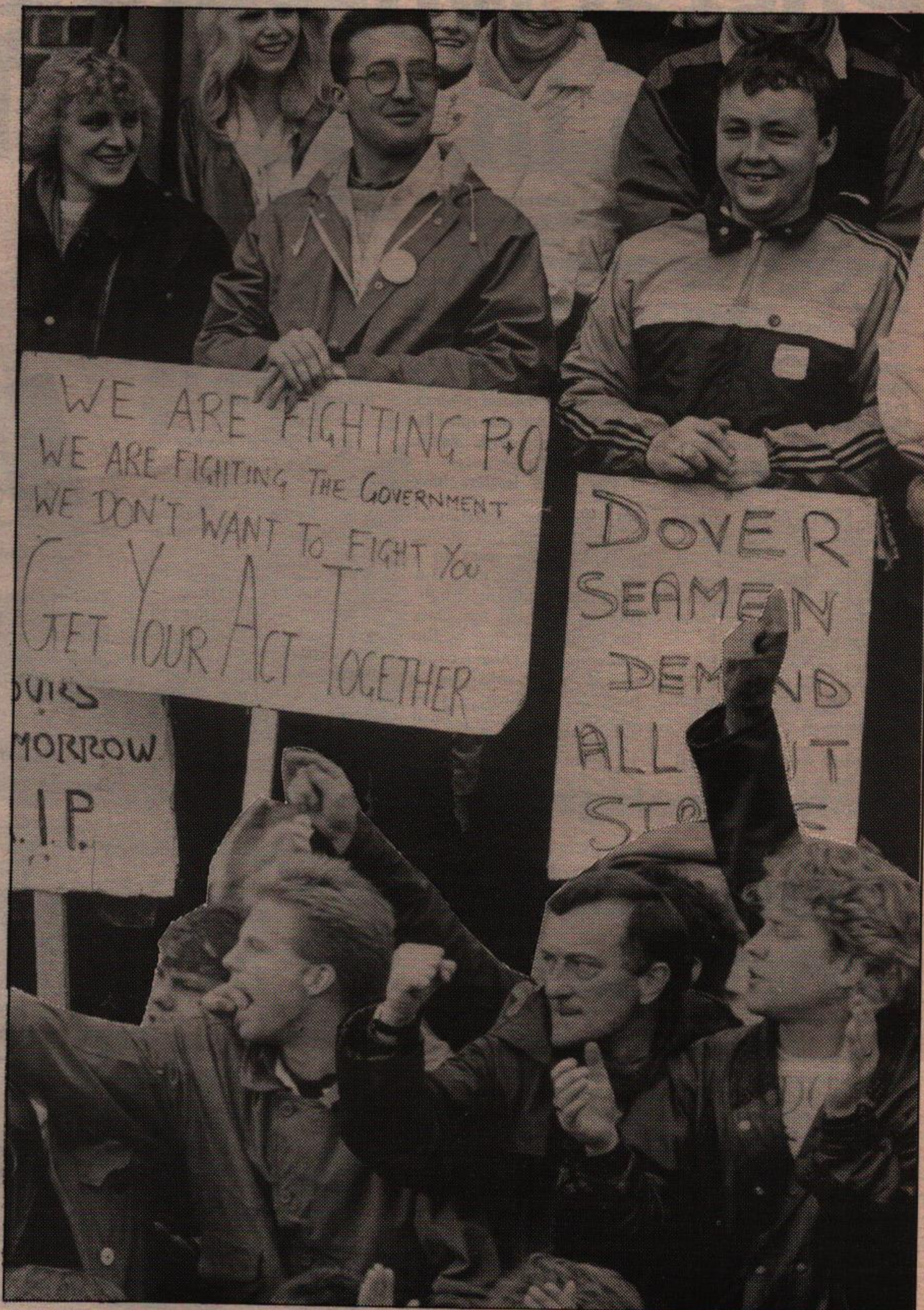
The increase in investment is in no way sufficient to account for this. More and more value is being squeezed out of less and less labour. An ACAS survey of private firms showed one-third had brought in shift work with another fifth following suit.

In 1981 26.6 per cent of the workforce worked an average of 8.2 hours overtime. Now 38 per cent work an average 9.4 hours. By October 1987 the average working week had climbed to 43.1 hours with blue collar males working an extra 1.6 hours a week and blue collar females and extra hour. All of this while company profits have risen by 15.9 per cent in the last year and with directors achieving staggering increases on already opulent salaries.

Sudden explosions of discontent are inevitable. All the recent disputes developed from below, most in the teeth of resistance from reluctant union leaders.

New realists say "it is not like the 1970s". But in the struggles against Heath's Industrial Relations Act, leaders like Jones and Scanlon played a central role articulating the anger of their members and giving confidence to normally hesitant workers. The Communist Party still had a network acting to an extent as the organised focus for resistance at rank and file level.

The CP has now all but



Photos: Militant.

Increased pressure on workers has provoked such marvellous struggles as the P&O strike

disintegrated and, with the exception of Arthur Scargill and John Macreadie, no national union leader attempts to give a consistent fighting lead.

The working class has been renewed. Many of the old layer of activists became jaded, some merged into the union bureaucracy.

New younger workers have been made to bear the brunt in the sorting offices and on the production lines. They may not have developed as yet the general socialist outlook common among activists in the 1970s, but they have already proved they are second to none when it comes to initiative, flair and a will to win.

Bureaucracy

As new young activists are forced forward by events they will be determined to arm themselves with socialist ideas and theory.

In some ways struggles today are already on a higher level. Each new dispute automatically draws on the experience of other recent battles. In Barrow and Dover support groups and food kitchens were rapidly established. Health workers improvised their own ad hoc strike committees.

80 per cent of union members are at present in 24 unions. This figure will shrink in the months ahead. *Militant* supports mergers where unity is strengthened, provided this is not at the cost of union democracy. Union leaders,

however, are pursuing union mergers frantically at present principally to protect their own position.

In a giant bureaucracy most hope to isolate themselves even further from the pressure of the members.

The government's new anti-union laws are designed to frustrate the election of rank and file fighters. Elections for senior union positions must now take place by postal ballots, removed from democratic internal union processes.

But, despite all these manoeuvres, all the ingredients are in place for major volatile swings in all unions which will be reflected at the highest levels.

Where the leaders do succeed in insulating themselves then, over and over again, their members will attempt to take action independently from below.

In 1933, commenting on the British unions, Leon Trotsky wrote: "The trade union apparatus has attained for itself great independence from the masses. The bureaucracy is capable of retaining its positions a long time after the masses have turned against it."

"But it is precisely such a situation, where the masses are already hostile to the union bureaucracy but where the bureaucracy is still capable of misrepresenting the opinion and of sabotaging new elections, that is most favourable for the crea-

tion of shop committees, workers' councils and other organisations for the immediate needs of the given moment."

In Britain, both in the current weak upturn and—far more dramatically—in the recession that looms ahead, all kinds of ad hoc and rank and file organisations will spring to life: broad lefts, local action committees, industry-wide stewards' committees, etc.

While the ranks are moving left the TUC leadership has marched further right.

Battles

The CPSA right had already removed John Macreadie from the general council. Now, with the removal of Arthur Scargill, for the first time ever there is no miners' representative on the general council.

Under the pressure of big business, the leadership will try to dissipate the energies of rank and file workers. Nevertheless, at times, under the pressure of their members even the most unlikely right wing leaders will be forced to head titanic battles.

Rank and file workers are beginning to gain the measure of their leaders. In the waves of struggle that lie ahead it is up to the left wing activists within the unions to win support for the only possible credible alternative: a fighting democratic socialist leadership.

Postal workers - 'knife in the back'

A MASS meeting of strikers in Liverpool voted by two to one to accept a local return to work deal, a similar majority to that of Manchester.

This reluctant return to work is a warning for management that young workers in the Post Office do not consider the fight to be over.

Postal workers are angry and bitter at being let down by their national leaders

THE NATIONAL return to work agreement was a knife in the back of solidarity amongst postal workers willing to fight a draconian and ruthless management.

The union leadership reneged on their role to lead. They left local areas to settle a national dispute.

Cardiff workers refused to go back until Newport's dispute had been sorted

and are determined to build a fighting leadership.

Local leaders in Liverpool, Manchester, Coventry, Cardiff and Newport were allowed by the EC to become isolated. These branches were forced to accept return to work agreements which contained elements of casual labour. The blame for this must be placed firmly with Tuffin and the EC.

The UCW leaders have out. We were determined to keep casuals out of our workplace. We stuck to a policy of full-time jobs. But our proud tradition of fighting for jobs for our class has been blemished by the leadership. They capitulated and sold us a package which they negotiated with local management incorporating 10 casuals.

Even at the beginning of negotiations, management

shown themselves to be out of touch with the rank and file of the union. At rules revision in November, activists will have the opportunity to democratise the union.

The campaign must now begin in earnest for a leadership worthy of its fighting members.

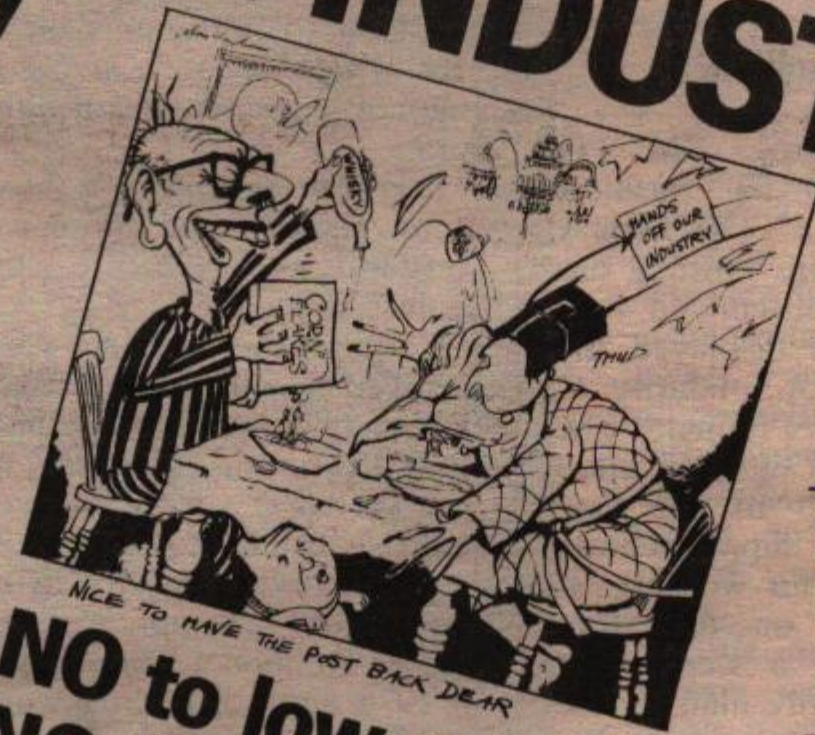
By a postal worker.

only asked for three casuals, to which the union branch replied that the work could be done by three full-time workers.

Although Cardiff workers refused to go back until Newport's dispute had been sorted out, isolation, without a fighting leadership resulted in our branch accepting the deal by a vote of about four to one.

By Newport post worker.

Militant
Postal worker
**HANDS OFF
OUR INDUSTRY**



Order this poster from: Militant Postal Worker, 3/13, Hepscott Rd, London, E9 5HB. 10 posters for £1.

★ NO to low pay
★ NO to casualisation
★ NO to privatisation

PAT MURPHY and Lynne Woosey, two Labour Women activists in Liverpool Broadgreen, and six UCW members volunteered to collect in the city centre on a Saturday morning in the strike.

The postmen had never done anything like that before. But Pat and Lynne

got things going with a donation of £30 from stall holders in Church Street. They also collected outside an Everton home match. By the end of the day they had collected nearly £400.

Postmen said they wouldn't have done half as well

without Pat and Lynne. This sort of class solidarity does more to get postworkers to join the Labour Party than all the enquiries into Broadgreen Labour Party.

Bank staff: safety last

THE DAY after the armed raid on the Preston Natwest bank it was business as usual. Staff were told to work normally. The bank were more concerned with profits than with the health of the staff.

By Andy Walsh, Bifu NEC member, personal capacity.

The banks say they are concerned about staff safety. Yet all the major clearing banks are removing the protective screens around counters to create open-plan offices.

The screens were erected after union pressure to stop acid and ammonia attacks. Amazingly, the banks are now using the fact that these attacks stopped to justify taking the screens down again.

Whilst the screens have been present, armed raids have increased by over 300 per cent. Last year there

were nearly 3,000, excluding wages snatches from outside banks.

At Bifu's annual conference this year, the staff safety debate was one of the most heated. Delegates came to the rostrum claiming banks were more interested in decorating the boardrooms than looking after staff interests.

Conference demanded an end to the removal of the screens and for further measures including closed circuit TV.

Bifu must call for maximum compensation for all staff concerned at Preston and for access to counselling and medical advice. The bank must offer transfers for all staff if they so wish. Bank raids will continue to be a threat to workers' lives as long as the industry is run in the interest of profit, not the interests of staff and customers.



Photo: Militant.

The Tories have withdrawn teachers' negotiating rights.

Baker imposes teachers' pay

EDUCATION MINISTER Kenneth Baker has announced the imposition of a 5.1 per cent cash limit on next year's pay increase for teachers.

The £385 million set aside for the increase will not be enough even to keep pace with inflation. But worse, there is the implication that specialist pay rates will be introduced.

The Interim Advisory Committee, a government-appointed quango with no union representation on it, could decide on higher rates for shortage subject areas like maths and physics. This would not only mean other groups of teachers getting less than the 5.1 per cent but an end to the unity of teachers' pay rates.

By Tommy Carroll.

The National Union of Teachers currently has a claim for 40 per cent. Where does this claim stand now?

Scandalously, NUT leader Doug McAvoy's answer to the problems with our pay has been replacing our right to strike with binding arbitration. And this was done without even reference to the union's executive.

The NUT should mount a campaign to fight for our full claim. This should be linked with the demand to restore negotiating rights for teachers. Then it will be possible to link in the other attacks facing us for a generalised fightback.

By Bob Sulatycki, ILTA.

Nalgo vote on first national strike

LOCAL GOVERNMENT union Nalgo is currently balloting its membership on this year's pay offer of 5.4 per cent. Besides being an appalling offer, the employers are also wanting talks to scrap national pay scales in favour of regional pay bargaining.

Nalgo members have already seen the links between their dispute and the postal workers', particularly on the issue of flexible pay.

For the first time, Nalgo are calling for a national strike. Members can see that only industrial action can influence the employers.

Over 20 per cent of Nalgo members earn below the TUC's low pay definition. Already the police, whose pay comes from local authority coffers, have been given 8.5 per cent.

Inflation is rising, mortgages continue to rise and our members see the continued erosion of their living standards as the government stiffens up on its attacks on local government.

It is essential that all activists work for a 'yes' vote in the ballot, supporting the demand for a one day national strike on 5 October, followed by two day regional strikes.

The mood amongst the membership is beginning to bubble up. Initial apprehension over our first national strike is being replaced by the realisation that we have got to fight.

The fight on low pay must be won if privatisation is to be stopped. Some union bureaucrats argue that we cannot win tenders unless we accept cuts in pay and conditions of service.

The opposite is true. With the confidence and morale boost of a successful national pay strike, we can show the Tories that we mean business and start the battle against privatisation.

* Vote yes for a decent pay offer.
* Vote yes for national pay scales.
* Vote yes to defeat privatisation.

By Paul Holmes, Nalgo NEC member, Personal capacity

Chelsea girl strike

IN BELFAST, 32 Chelsea Girl shopworkers have been sacked. With the recent introduction of Tuesday late night shopping, management informed staff that they were expected to cover late night with no extra pay or benefits. The staff refused and were promptly sacked. All are female and members of the shopworkers' union USDAW.

Picketing has left the shop virtually empty since the dispute began on 13 September. The pickets face constant harassment from the RUC and one young girl was kicked by a scab.

Chelsea Girl have reduced all prices by 10 per cent but they have failed to entice more than a handful of customers to cross the picket line. But if the strike is to be successful, the 32 will need all the help they can get. Resolutions of support, particularly from Usdaw members and donations to the strike fund to: Chelsea Girl strike fund, Leicester House, 61/ 63 Royal Avenue, Belfast BT1 1FX. By Benny Adams

George Davies Ltd

LORD VESTEY, one of Thatcher's friends, will save himself £4,737 a year on the poll tax. Also owner of the well known Dewhurst butchers chain, he has sacked 23 lorry drivers from George Davies and Sons Ltd, a haulage firm, and one of the many companies of the Vestey empire.

These men have now been out for nine weeks against the premeditated plan of management to smash the organised drivers in Liverpool.

The work previously done by drivers will be contracted out to save money for the millionaire who is

best known for dodging £1 billion in taxes in 1981.

Redundancy money, which has been paid directly into bank accounts by the company, will not be touched while the dispute continues. In the words of one striker, "We don't want to sell our jobs. We don't want the money. We want our jobs and the fight goes on."

Another said: "Up Mill Street every other person has been sacked by Vestey. Bus drivers, dockers, lorry drivers. You name it, he's sacked them."

Industrial reports

Council leader's strike ban threat

DICK KNOWLES, Labour leader of Britain's second city, recently warned strikers in the education department that if they did not return to work they would face the sack.

By Peter Miles.

At the same time he issued a letter threatening disciplinary action to all the council's 7,500 Nalgo members if they participated in a planned one day strike.

The tactics of Birmingham's Labour leadership towards their workforce makes the 'macho management' of the Post Office look like a load of wimps. Labour Party and trade union activists were waiting with baited breath for Neil Kinnock to mount an attack on Dick Knowles' redundancy notices.

Knowles' threats were continued by a covering letter from the director of personnel who points out that the strike threatened against council cuts was illegal and that any employee engaged in strike action or refusing to cross picket lines would be in breach of contract.

Anyone striking was warned: "You will not be allowed to resume work until you have signed a declaration". That would have amounted to a no-strike agreement.

A mass meeting of Nalgo members voted to accept



These Nalgo members were fighting a Tory council. But Labour cuts are just as bad.

the recommendation of regional union officials, in a close vote, to call off the strike action on the understanding that no disciplinary letters would be issued by council leaders. There were boos when the regional officer was moving this position.

The actions of Knowles have galvanised discontent amongst Labour Party and trade union members. They

are increasingly calling for the leader's resignation.

This great statesman, who ridiculed the great struggle of Liverpool city council from 1984, argued that he could solve the financial problems facing the council within the law. He now finds a growing groundswell of opinion against his programme of cuts.

The Nalgo vote

represents only a temporary setback. Militant council workers are now calling for the mounting of a massive campaign against the cuts in the pipeline. The left councillors must link up with the unions representing 53,000 council workers and the community as a whole. The call for Dick Knowles' resignation must also be taken up.

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

Debfor women

WOMEN AT six Debfor lingerie factories in the Derby area are threatening to ballot for all-out strike action if the company don't come up with a better offer.

The workers, members of the Tailor and Garment Workers' Union, are paid a miserly basic rate of £2 an hour. They want an increase in the fall-back rate and improvements in waiting time.

The company spent £16.5 million on takeovers alone last year yet is refusing to increase the basic rate. They also

refuse to pay average earnings for periods between work and when machines break down. Workers are continually being pressured to increase their output.

The response from the previously unorganised workforce has been tremendous. The women have organised hour-long sit-ins in the canteen at a cost to the company of 500 production hours on each occasion.

Maureen Brown, senior steward at Debfor, spoke to Graham Lewis.

Broadgate dispute

BUILDING WORKERS on London's Broadgate site downed tools when they heard their hours were being cut.

One of the contractors, Couple, told their subs to reduce the men's hours from seven 12 hour shifts to five 10 hour shifts, knowing full well that these men need to do as many hours as possible - the majority have come down from the North.

They receive no digs money so they have to pay for lodgings in London as well as keeping their families back home.

The men were told that Bovis, the main contractor on site, owed Couples a large sum of money, hence the cut. However, although not unionised, the men took action and forced the truth out of the bosses. Couples had overspent on their budget and were using the men as tools in their fight with Bovis.

Of course, it's only the workers who will suffer. This shows again the need for complete unionisation of all sites with proper representation and a fighting leadership of the building unions.

By Martin Carlin.

New threat to tube workers

LONDON UNDERGROUND Ltd (LUL) have offered trackmen 14p an hour extra on the basic rate, taking weekly earnings up by £4.92p.

I'm just about to go out and celebrate but before you get carried away with how generous they are, remember that LUL did make record profits this year. And they haven't forgotten about new working practices which they say will be imposed if they can't get agreement with the union (NUR).

These conditions will mean a return to a five day working week, with no

more half day Thursdays for permanent way staff. But the main change in our working agreement is the taking away of the home station agreement which means that each permanent way gang has one regular station where they book on and off.

Now, management want gangs to book on and off anywhere within a zone. This could mean anywhere between Epping and Cockfosters, or between Cockfosters and Upminster for example.

The result could be up to two or three hours a day extra travelling - 15 hours a

week - for no extra

Worse, it means I would have to take all my overalls with me at night and in the morning. Can you imagine what that will be like? Have management ever tried getting on to a train during the rush hour?

Stubborn

It's hard enough to get yourself on a packed train, let alone with two or three bags full of boots, wellies, a donkey jacket, overalls and wet weather clothing.

Last October, management called a meeting to introduce these working

conditions. But permanent way staff told them where to get off in no uncertain terms.

But management are a stubborn lot and if we don't react they'll walk all over us. If they go ahead now we must take action straight away.

We've also got to fight to make sure that trackmen get at least £3 an hour and that contractors are kept out.

By a LUL permanent way worker.

It's official

UNIONS IMPROVE your conditions at work. You may have suspected this. But now it's official!

In what is described as a "piece of comprehensive academic research" just published by David Metcalf, Professor of Industrial Relations at the London School of Economics, it is shown that wages are higher in unionised workplaces. In closed shops they are 10

per cent higher.

The report also finds that the less skilled and lower paid, women and particularly black workers gain from union membership compared with their brothers and sisters in non-union companies.

Perhaps Thatcher was wrong and 10 million trade unionists were right all along.

By Tim Harris.

Sacked for miscarriage

TRICIA JENNINGS, now the mother of three month old Shelley, has won an important victory over Burton's Menswear in Edinburgh. She was sacked for taking time off with a threatened miscarriage. Tricia had suffered one miscarriage already.

She won her tribunal and was awarded £3,560 after refusing to accept reinstatement. Tricia could not use the normal unfair dismissal laws which have been systematically eroded by the Tories as she had not been employed long enough.

Instead, she resorted

to the Sex Discrimination Act and was supported by a campaign run by the Citizens' Rights Office.

Unfortunately the union representing the Burtons' workers refused to support the claim. Usdaw regional officer Rab Knox said that he thought that the picket organised by the campaign was counterproductive, jeopardising his other members' interests.

Burtons are appealing against the tribunal award.

By Russell Taylor, AEU Pilton branch committee, personal capacity.

Drop charges on P&O strikers

SIX NATIONAL Union of Seamen activists in the Dover dispute were arrested two months ago, concerning an alleged fight at the Foresters pub in Deal, which left P&O scabs with minor cuts and bruises. (See Militant 907).

The police who are bringing the charges have offered no clear evidence against those arrested. The strikers were hauled out of their homes between three and five o'clock in the morning two days after the fight and kept for 30 hours in the police

cells.

Draconian bail conditions have now been lifted. The strikers were under curfew from nine in the evening until nine in the morning and were not allowed to go within half a mile of the Eastern and Western Docks. This effectively stopped their active participation in the P&O dispute, yet the alleged fight in the pub occurred over two miles from the docks.

However it is likely the trial by jury will not be heard before January 1989.

Protests at the arrests should be sent

immediately to the Director of Public Prosecutions, c/o Dover Magistrates Court, Maison Dieu Road, Dover, Kent. Phone 0304 203329. Copies to Deal Support Group, Magness House, Bell Hill, Deal, Kent. Phone 0304 367840.

The six arrested are Andy Cozier, Sue Haines, Terry French, Chris Weston, George Pratt and Paul Sherville.

By Eric Segal

Inside
Students for socialism - page 5
Trade unions - the next step - page 13
Coups in Burma and Haiti - pages 10, 11

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth 30p

We can't pay the poll tax

THE FIGHT against the poll tax goes on, despite the decision of the Scottish Labour Party conference not to lead a campaign of defiance.

By members of Niddrie/Craigmillar Anti-Poll Tax Union

Working-class people must fight the poll tax because they cannot afford to pay it.

'Brutal' is how Maureen Fraser described it when she found out what it would cost her. She pays no rates at present. If the poll tax is introduced she will pay £421 or £103 even with a full rebate.

She lives in Niddrie/Craigmillar, one of the largest working-class housing schemes in Edinburgh. Under the poll tax the average household in the area will lose £155 a year. Households in Tory Cramond on the other side of the city will gain £223 a year.

Disgusted

Craigmillar used to boast of eight breweries to provide jobs for local people. Now there is only one left, providing only 40 jobs. The largest employer in the area now is the Craigmillar Festival Society, a registered charity involved in community work.

The poll tax for the McGuire family will be £1,684. Maria McGuire is

to be made redundant from the hospital where she works because of privatisation. Her husband Jim is disgusted with the Tories, but also the Labour leadership for their lack of fight.

Their daughter Lisa, 22, says: "People all over Niddrie won't be paying because they can't afford to and many will refuse to pay. The Labour Party should stand at the head of the campaign, not cheer from the sidelines."

George McCallum lives with his parents. There are five adults in the house. The rates are currently £573. Under the poll tax they would have to pay £2,005 a year.

His reaction is angry: "How are people to live on £58 a week and find all that too? How can people on social security afford that? It's really shocking. Someone's got to do something. We have to stop this. I'll go to prison first."

Some Labour MPs have had the luxury of debating in the press whether or not they will pay their poll tax. That luxury is not available

to the people of Niddrie, most of whom simply won't be able to pay.

Church bells and the tooting of car horns did not enthruse workers to fight. What will be a mass non-payment campaign, which will take place, with or without the Labour leaders. One worker said: "If 13,000 people in Niddrie don't pay their poll tax, and they won't, what could the Tories do? After all, the jails are full up anyway."

Posters

Workers in Niddrie are looking for a fight on the poll tax. 'Pay no poll tax' window posters can be seen on every street. Supporters of *Militant* sold 100 copies of issue 912 on the estate. This weekend they have hired an open-top bus to take the campaign on to the streets with loudspeakers, posters and banners.

'Brutal' is the name for the poll tax and *Militant* will become the word for fighting it.

- see page two.



Photo: Dave Sinclair

Anti-poll tax protest at Scottish Labour Party conference on 17 September.

'Red' Saturdays

THE POSTAL dispute again showed the urgent need for cash to build *Militant*. Supporters who know of our permanent need for cash made special efforts to bring money in by hand into our London office to keep the work going and pay for the extra leaflets and posters we produced for the UCW strike.

£136 pledged at the rally by P&O strikers Andre and Sue was brought in by hand. Michelle O'Neill from Durham sent down £32 to redeem pledges from YTURC conference and the WEG summer camp, plus an extra £12. R Leiois from Birmingham donated £50 and £22 was raised by Birmingham supporters on a day trip to Blackpool.

At a Hounslow Labour Party meeting to discuss the Benn/Heffer leadership campaign over 20 papers were sold and £21

was raised for the Fighting Fund—an example of what can be done in every area.

The Fighting Fund is our lifeblood. It finances both the day-to-day work of *Militant* and our plans for a workers' daily £6,000 a week is what we need, so help us reach our target by sending your donation today.

Make every Saturday a 'red' day in your town - campaigning against the poll tax using stickers, tins and petitions. Capture the overwhelming opposition to the Tory tax and turn it into cash and sales of *Militant*.

Last Saturday £40 was raised this way in Swansea, £30 in Newport and £81 in South Yorkshire.

We want Saturday 8 October, after the Labour Party conference, to be a national 'red'

This Week £1936 £50,000 by 5 November

Fighting Fund

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 Northern	256		2,350
2 South West	123		1,200
3 Scotland West	284		3,000
4 Merseyside	427		5,080
5 Southern	162		2,050
6 Yorkshire	376		5,060
7 West Midlands	242		3,730
8 Eastern	136		2,140
9 Scotland East	147		2,500
10 East Midlands	120		2,520
11 London	302		7,100
12 Wales	104		3,680
13 South East	24		1,500
14 Manchester/Lancs	36		2,900
15 National	381		5,100
Total	3,120		50,000

day of action to raise cash for the Fighting Fund. We urge all supporters to organise special public sales, activities and socials. How much can your area raise?

Thanks to Tower Hamlets jumble sale, £50; Robin Edwards, Brighton, £10; Paisley Social Work Department staff, £10, and Andy Allum, £20.

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