

Militant

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Y TURC CALLS FOR
MASS MARCH
against the
POLL TAX

Demonstrate with
Strathclyde
Anti-Poll Tax
Federation

GLASGOW
18 MARCH

Prices up 8%

We can't afford the Tories

THE COST of living in Tory Britain is soaring. The latest mortgage increases and January's leap in rail fares will push price increases to nearly eight per cent a year.

By Pat Craven

Prices in December were already 6.8 per cent higher than a year earlier, the biggest rise since 1985. In Scotland the crippling poll tax will come just as prices are going through the roof.

And what does Chancellor Lawson propose to do about it? Fiddle the figures by taking mortgage repayments out of the retail price index!

Are people to tell the building societies they're not paying the extra because Mr Lawson says it is not a real price increase?

Lawson is to blame for the mortgage rises. He imposed nine increases in base interest rates in as many months. It's not all the fault of market forces. He deliberately raised the cost of living to cut the level of consumer spending. Now he wants to hide the evidence by cooking the books.

For working-class families, housing takes the biggest slice out of their budget. Food takes the next largest and food prices were also rising fast in December. That adds up to misery for millions.

Some better organised workers have been able to offset the price rises by negotiating wage increases. But for most public sector workers wages are not keeping pace with prices.

And for millions of the unemployed and families on income support, still reeling from last April's benefit cuts, rising prices are turning misery into despair.

Destitute

BBC's *Panorama* programme vividly showed how families are being made destitute, too poor even to qualify for a loan from the social fund, forced to turn to charity for their children's basic essentials like beds.

The gulf between rich and poor is getting wider. In 1986 the top fifth were getting 42 per cent of all incomes, compared to 38 per cent in 1979. The bottom fifth were only receiving 6.8 per cent, compared to 7.1 per cent a

decade ago.

For every family the Tories' tax and benefit changes mean that the bottom half have lost an average of £8.50 a week, while the top tenth have gained an average of £40 a week.

Low wages and high prices are threatening all the gains won by the trade unions over decades. Workers are being forced to choose between a job on poverty wages or destitution on the dole.

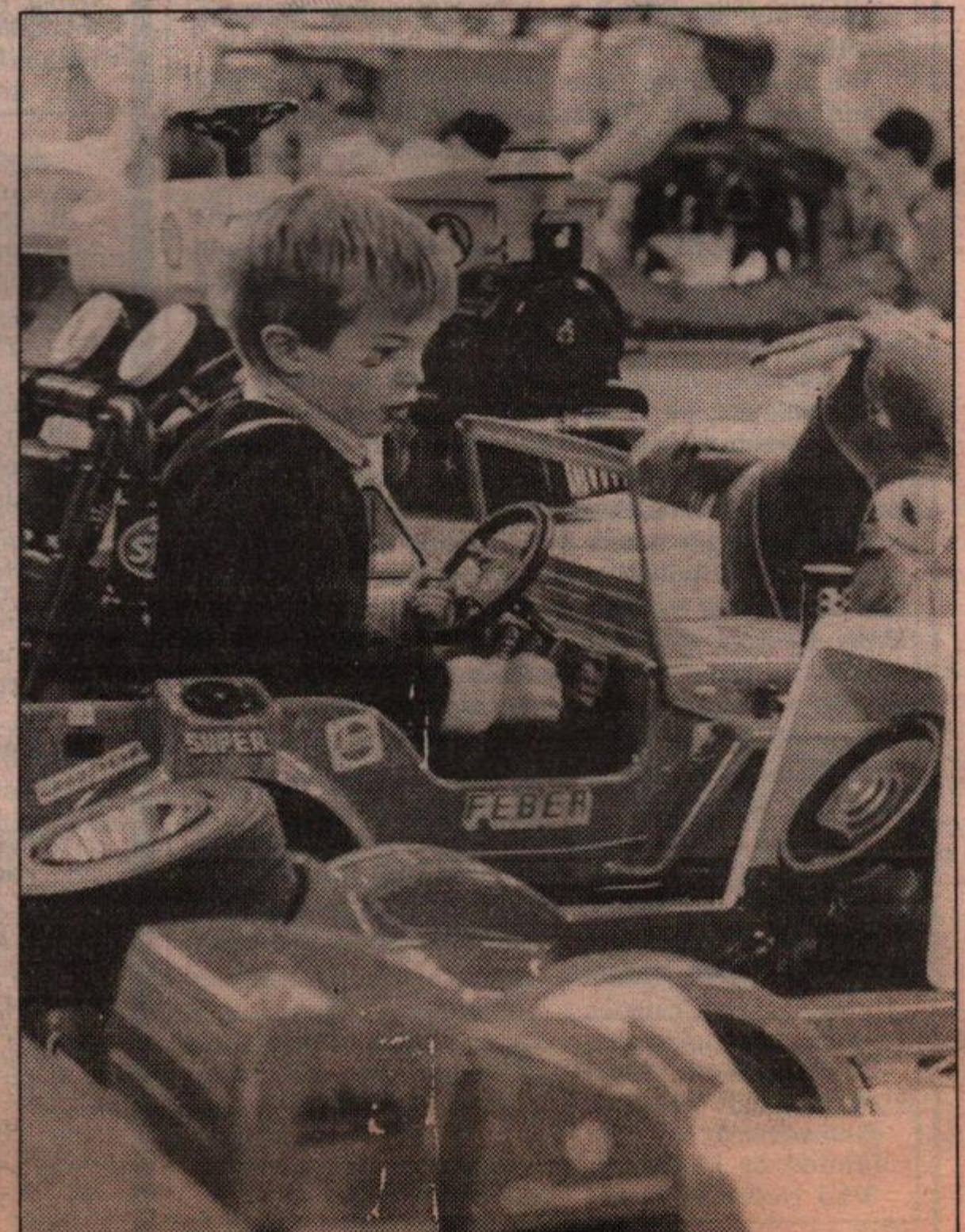
The Labour and trade union leaders must mobilise a mass campaign for a guaranteed minimum wage of £135 a week, pro rata for part-time jobs, and for all wages and benefits to be linked automatically to price rises.

We can't afford the cost of living under the Tories. It's time for them to go and for Labour to fight on socialist policies which will get rid of poverty and the capitalist system which spawns it.



Photo: Dave Sinclair.

Top: Supermarket check-out. Workers will pay with food price rises, while the rich get richer...£200 toy cars in Debenhams (below).



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jobless

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Storms ahead for Bush

THE FORTY first US president has been inaugurated, promising "a kinder and gentler America". George Bush's inaugural address plausibly talked of "the homeless, lost and roaming...the children who have nothing...mothers of children they can't care for". But mindful of the gaping budget deficit he then added: "The US has more will than wallet."

In Bush's Washington, however, there is no shortage of fat wallets. He and his cabinet are a government of millionaires and multi-millionaires.

Bush is a former head of the CIA. He was then Reagan's vice-president and is yet to account for his knowledge of the Iran-Contra gun-running deal. Contrary to his honeyed phrases he is a ruthless opponent of the rights and conditions of the working class, internationally and in America.

Temporarily his popularity has risen — above that of the departing Reagan. The dollar's value soared as he entered the White House. But how long can any honeymoon last?

His real support was shown in the presidential election itself. Only half of eligible voters bothered to vote, the lowest turnout since 1924. Bush won with the votes of just 27 per cent of the electorate.

In particular the poorest, the unemployed, those who became worse off during the Reagan years, abstained. They gave a vote of no-confidence with their feet in two capitalist candidates.

America's continued, if fragile, economic growth, falling unemployment and a rise in living standards for the middle class and sections of the working class, gave victory to Bush. As Reagan's favoured candidate, it was hoped he could maintain Reagan's economic 'success'.

But the economy could fatally undermine the Bush presidency and mobilise into action the American workers to defend their jobs and living standards. The *Independent* warned: "Mr Reagan's legacy to his loyal lieutenant (although it won him the election) may yet turn into a poisoned chalice."

The record current account and budget deficits remain fundamentally undented. As a result Bush inherits the world's most indebted nation. At two and a half trillion dollars, the US federal debt to home and abroad is twice that of the entire Third World.

Improvements in the current account (trade) are being wiped out by the renewed strength of the dollar. Its value has leapt as US statistics still indicate high consumer spending and economic activity.

International speculators have recently piled into the dollar with extra enthusiasm, pushing it up. They believe that another interest rate hike is inevitable to contain inflation and cool demand which is sucking in imports so heavily.

Bush will attempt to cut the budget deficit, estimated to reach \$160 billion this year. He is calling a 'budget summit' with congressional leaders. With Gorbachev promising a 14 per cent arms cut, he may take the opportunity to rein in Reagan's defence spending bonanza.

He may be forced to raise at least indirect taxes despite his "watch my lips" pledge not to increase taxation.

The twin deficits have been paid for by draining funds from abroad. These have had to be enticed by high interest rates, which themselves constantly threaten a run on other currencies.

But every measure to constrict the economy runs the risk of precipitating a US recession. This would seriously damage the international economy, with the vital contribution an expanded US market has made to world growth.

If, however, he devalues the dollar to rectify the trade balance he risks inflation.

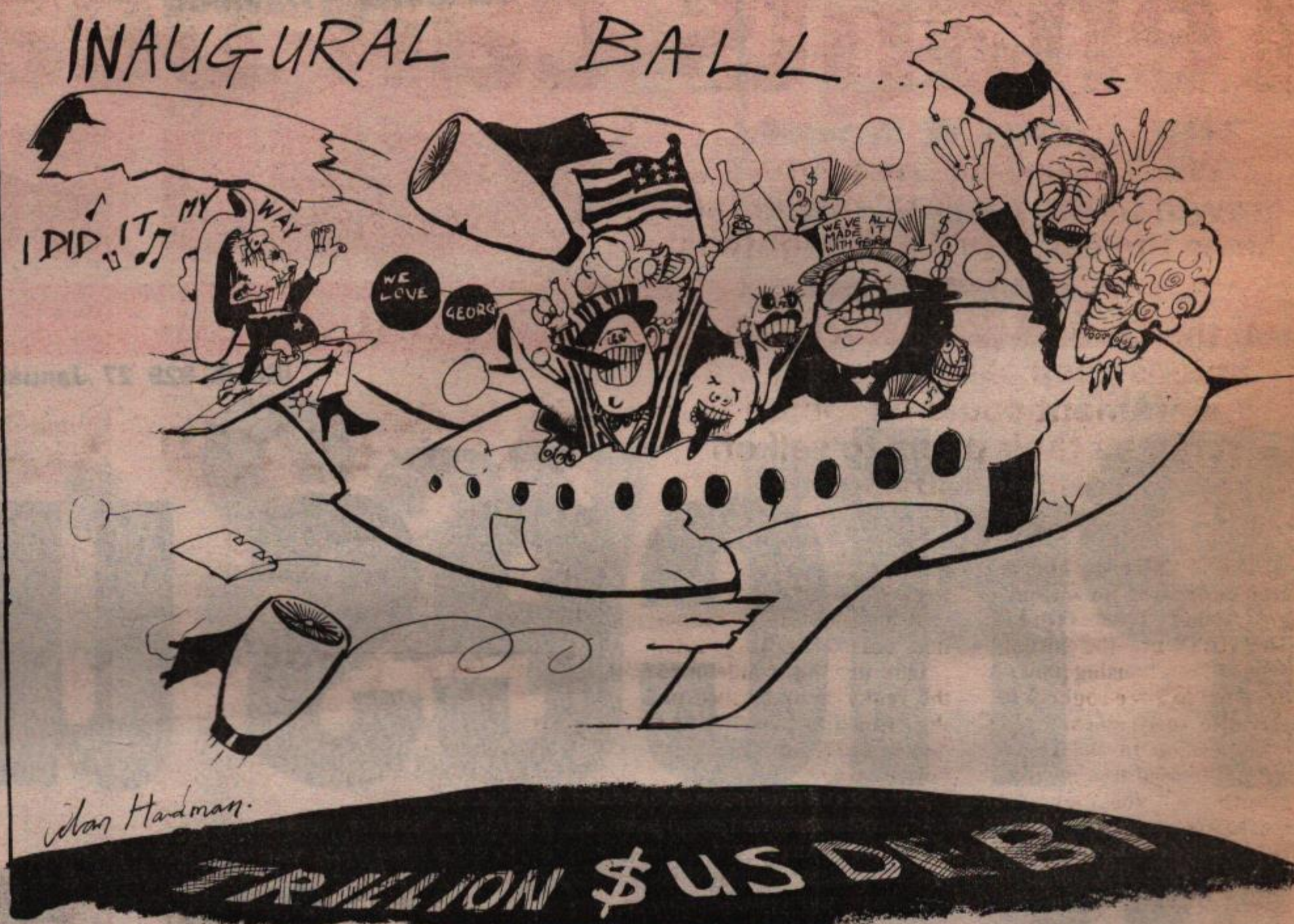
By improving the price competitiveness of US goods he would also restrict the American market for the products of international capitalism.

Either way any sense of economic well-being that helped him to power could evaporate. The debts of individuals and companies are also at record levels. Every interest rate rise means a new squeeze. A recession could bring bankruptcies for companies unable to keep up the debt repayments.

New job losses could provoke a storm of opposition. The Miami riots have already given a glimpse of the mood of desperation of the most oppressed.

The Bush presidency will not enjoy the good fortune and unexpectedly prolonged boom that Reagan did. And the very last people who stand to gain anything from it are the poor and weak for whom he has been professing such concern.

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Children of poverty

I WAS shouting at the screen during *Children in Need*, the *Panorama* programme on 23 January. It was a horrifying picture of the children who are the innocent victims of Thatcher's attack on the welfare state.

It began with the Salvation Army delivering stale bread to poor families in Easterhouse, Glasgow. Then it showed letters from Strathclyde social workers to the Children in Need charity, asking them to send cash to families for things they used to claim as of right from social security.

Now claimants have no rights. The best most can

hope for is a loan. But the Catch 22 is that the poorest families who most need the extra money are told they can't have a loan — because they can't afford to pay it back! So much for the Tories' 'targetting those most in need'.

In Glasgow many desperate families fall prey to loan sharks. One woman borrowed £140 and had to repay £250 within three weeks or see her children attacked. No doubt Thatcher is proud of these enterprising businessmen.

The most harrowing interview was with a Glasgow mother who fed a family of five on £22 a week. She only

bought the cheapest food in the supermarket and spent £5.50 on a 'meat parcel' of cheap mince and liver to last her the whole week.

Even slightly better-off workers with low-paid jobs fall foul of the system. One woman got a pay rise at work — only to find the equivalent deducted from her benefit. No wonder only 40 per cent of families entitled to family credit claim it.

Smug Tory MP Tim Yeo reassured viewers that "all families have a level of income that fits their circumstances". But the programme ended with some heart-rending interviews with

Glasgow mothers who are being denied the bus fares to visit their children in hospital every day. "Couldn't you cut down your visits to every other day?" one was asked.

Even the *Daily Telegraph* critic admitted: "Some of us comfortable middle-class armchair viewers had been visiting depths whose conditions we hardly suspected." If this is Lawson's 'booming Britain', what misery awaits these children in need when recession comes?

By Helen Watson,
Bedford LPYS

Scots students smeared

IT HAS become standard practice for the 'Democratic Left' group within the National Union of Students (NUS) to manufacture allegations of financial irregularities and intimidation every time they are defeated in a vote.

By a Militant reporter

In December, students in the West of Scotland NUS, increasingly dissatisfied with the inaction of their 'Democratic Left' leadership, passed a vote of no-confidence by 33 votes to 13 in their convenor, Gerry Allen.

This vote sent shock waves through the Labour bureaucracy. Unable to answer the political challenge of leftward-moving students, they resorted to a smear campaign.

Under the headline "Militant takeover splits students" the *Observer's* Scottish supplement on 22 January reports "serious allegations of misuse of cash grants, bullying tactics and devious political motives" by the "Militant leaders" of the West of Scotland NUS.

The allegations were made by Gerry Allen, Ian Davidson, Labour chair of Strathclyde regional council's further education sub-committee, and Malcolm Green, another Labour regional councillor.

Pat Brown, elected to replace Allen, has rejected these charges. "The Democratic Left were decisively defeated and are now resorting to smears and totally unfounded attacks", he told *Militant*.

Allen was voted out for refusing to carry out mandates, for incompetence and delays in running elections to fill vacancies on the West of Scotland area executive. The no confidence motion was moved and

seconded not by *Militant* supporters but by students who were disgusted by his role.

Since Allen was voted out, no money has been spent by West of Scotland area NUS, because cheque signatories have not been changed. In fact the only recent expenditure was a spate of payments made the day before he left office.

New leadership

Claims have also been made of money being diverted to the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign (YTURC). Again this is groundless.

YTURC approached student unions in the West of Scotland to affiliate to their campaign against YTS conscription.

As a result of the hysteria whipped up by the Labour council against YTURC, all meetings in the colleges to discuss the issue were mass meetings. Views were aired and votes taken. Most colleges affiliated. Some did not.

Strathclyde council has banned the setting up of anti-poll tax societies in the colleges and intervened to ban meetings at which South African anti-apartheid exiles have spoken.

Most disgracefully they have ruled that student unions must provide termly accounts and if the college authorities disagree with their spending they can cut the budget for the rest of the year.

The real reason for these attacks is that the Democratic Left are now threatened by students who want a fighting leadership. They will make students even more determined to back new leaders who will fight against the poll tax and loans.

Expulsion at 82?

AN 82 year-old pensioner is threatened with expulsion from Newcastle East Labour Party. Jack Rawling is one of nine being 'investigated' after a complaint by just one right-wing member.

The threat followed a successful *Militant* meeting against the poll tax in Newcastle last September. The meeting was organised by Bill Hopwood, himself expelled from the party in 1985 as a *Militant* supporter. Right-wing councillors attended and used the meeting to launch the attack. Two of the nine are not even members of the constituency party, but are still under threat.

The nine have a total of 140 years Labour Party membership between them. Jack Rawling joined in 1934. Another socialist threatened, Ken Scetheway, 68, at present seriously ill in hospital, joined the party in 1949. He has held every job in the ward and constituency parties and was a councillor for 30 years.

Tenants can beat Tories

WE ARE seeing the biggest growth of the tenants' movement since the early 1970s. It frightens the Tories.

If the tenants associations and unions keep campaigning, the government could be forced to scrap all their plans to sell off council housing.

OUR ESTATE is part of the area designated for a Housing Action Trust (HAT). The HATs are the cutting edge of Tory housing policy, designed to force councils to privatise their stock.

Opposition to the Housing Act has led to a massive growth in the tenants' movement particularly in HATted areas like Sandwell, where the unions have given £1600 to back our campaign against HATs.

We had to fight the Department of the Environment for the basic democratic right to vote on their proposals. They still haven't set a date but our campaign will go ahead, canvassing, leafletting, working for a massive 'No' vote ready for any time the Tories spring a ballot on us.

On 21 January, a meeting of 100 tenants' representatives from around Sandwell launched an all-borough campaign against the Housing Bill as a whole.

The enemy is the Tory government. But the Labour Sandwell council

has just raised rents by £5 a week to cover up a 20 per cent housing budget reduction caused by Tory cuts.

Our meeting condemned the rent rise and called on the council to join with the unions and tenants in a fight for resources.

The government have got money for housing. They planned to give HATted areas a huge amount to make their estates prettier for private takeover. We must campaign for that money to come to the council to keep rents down and really improve the estates.

Tenants won't restrict their fight to housing. As one activist said: "I'll be glad when the HAT battle's over so I can get stuck into the poll tax."

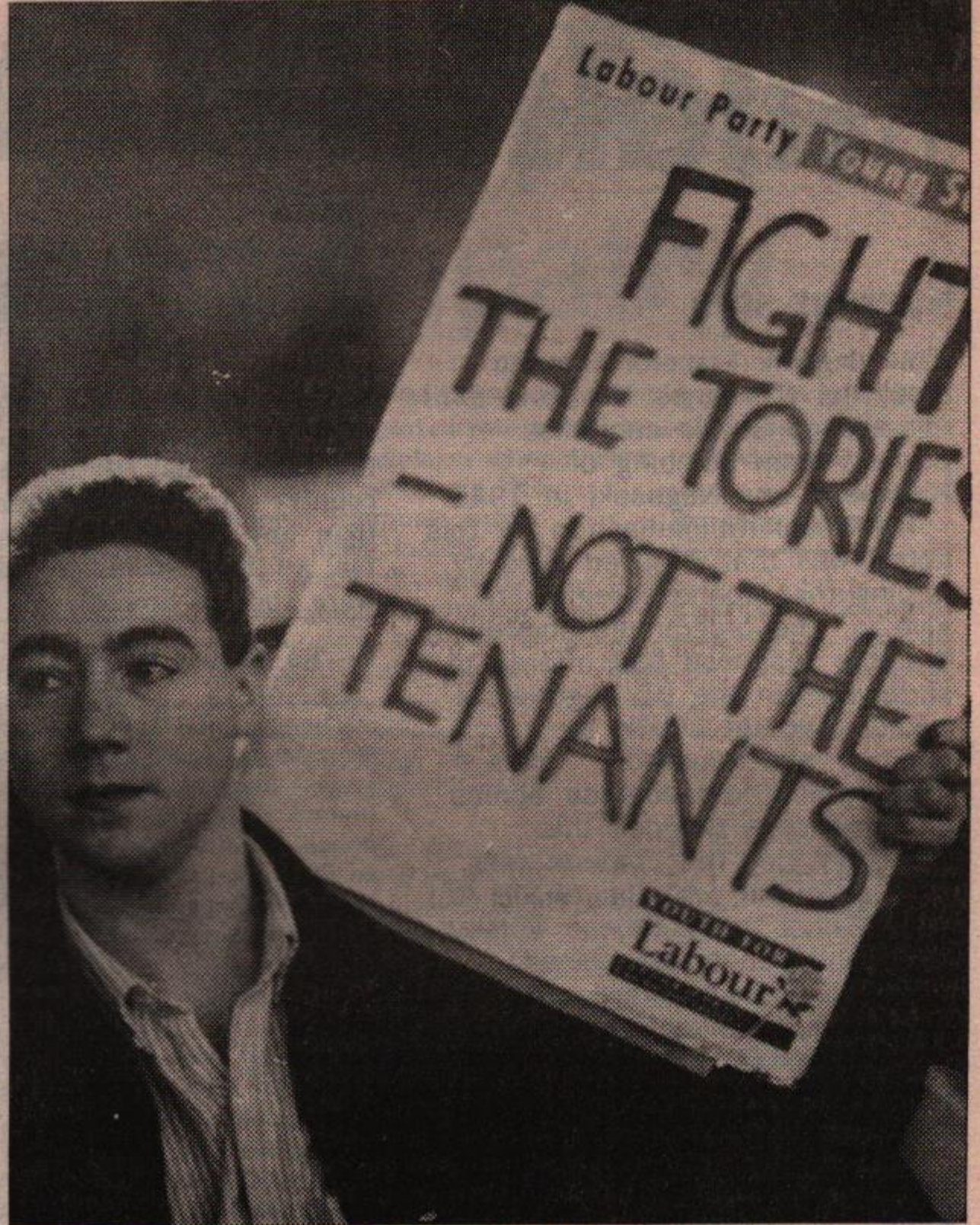
The Tories are creating a new militancy on housing and the poll tax. The labour movement must make sure that feeling is organised for victory.

By Bill Mullins

Vice-chair Lions Farm Tenants Action Committee



Tower Hamlets tenants' message to the Tories... and a message for the Labour leaders too.



COUNCIL TENANTS in the Tory-controlled Arun district, Sussex, have voted three to one against their homes being sold to a housing trust.

By Stan Natrass

The vote - 2726 to 804 - shows how angry tenants

were. It also reflects a good campaign by tenants and trade unionists. For example, Wickbourne Residents Association and Nalco organised a local meeting of 400 on a blustery night.

The Tories quote Arun as a model of what privatisation can do. What this privatisation has done

is to give councillors a bloody nose. They spent £20,000 setting up Arun Housing Ltd, seconding the housing director and altering the logos on the vans.

★ **TORBAY TORY** council has voted to abandon its plans to sell off all its council homes. They had or-

ganised a ballot which had treated anyone not voting as favouring the sell-off. This was declared invalid.

Obviously the Tories knew that a new and fairer ballot with a campaign by tenants would have scuppered their scheme - and made their name stink even more on the estates.

Labour starves its youth

LABOUR PARTY Young Socialist (LPYS) members are angry at the massive cuts in the party's youth budget, from £26,000 to £11,000.

Youth in the Labour Party aren't important, Labour's national executive (NEC) meeting on 25 January have decided. The LPYS conference is cancelled, although there may be a youth conference involving all sectors of the party's youth.

Labour students (Nols) is to have its financing withdrawn. The LPYS national committee will only meet quarterly.

They blame these restrictions on cost, but why cancel LPYS conference for yet another year when they consistently break

even? In 1986 it made £2,000 profit for the party!

Financial difficulties are a smokescreen for political decisions. These cuts are the Labour leadership's admission that they haven't built an alternative to the Marxist-led LPYS. They also show that the party's youth committee chair, Diane Jeuda, is unwilling to fight for young people.

Socialist

Ms Jeuda spoke at party conference of building a mass youth movement. This was empty rhetoric. Labour's leaders fear young people's ideas and radical socialist policies; this effectively paralyses the party's youth work.

In the year of Labour's mass membership drive, official youth campaigning will be kept to a minimum. But LPYS and Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign (YTURC) members are organising young people in a mass campaign against the poll tax.

STOP PRESS. In a victory for socialists, a move to investigate rebel Birmingham councillors who oppose council cuts was defeated. But then the NEC decided to establish a committee of five of its members, that will draw up all parliamentary by-election shortlists.

By a Militant reporter

Tremors from the earthquake

FOR THE second time in six weeks, the Soviet Union's creaking economic, social and political structure has been rocked by natural disaster.

By Clare Doyle

The tragic earthquake in Tajikistan has killed over 1,000 people and made many more homeless. It has also focused attention on the underlying tensions within 'soviet' society.

With the advantage of state-owned industries and a plan, the USSR's Asian republics are far more developed than comparable Asian capitalist countries. But Tajikistan, on the Chinese and Afghan borders, is one of the USSR's remotest, least developed republics, founded as late as 1929.

Inadequate industrialisation has left it with no jobs for the youth of its growing population. Inadequate irrigation schemes have left it short of the most basic commodity, water.

Failure to check erosion of the bare hillsides is responsible for the mudslide, five miles long and one mile wide, that engulfed at least three villages, burying hundreds of people alive.

Moscow authorities claim that Tajikistan buildings were specially constructed to keep standing in this seismically active zone. This may be true in some towns but it is no compensation to the majority still living in clay houses which crumble at the onset of an earthquake.

These villagers' lives have changed little over the centuries. The benefits of new technology that should by now have accrued from planning and large-scale public investment are only partially felt in this remote outpost.

The area has also felt the seismic tremors of turmoil in Iran, where the Tajik population has its roots. Ethnic unrest throughout the USSR's muslim areas has also had an effect.

Days before the earthquake, *The Independent* reported "serious national disturbances" in Tajikistan. The causes "ranged from anger at 'Russification' and at the arrogant behaviour of two million non-Tajiks who live in the republic, to a feud with neighbouring Uzbekistan which is accused of discrimination against its substantial Tajik minority."

This unrest burst into the open as long ago as December 1987 but a re-

cent article in *Socialisticheskaya Industriya* was the first mention in the Moscow press.

The relief operation, added to that for Armenia (estimated at £7.3 billion) will add to the central bureaucracy's headaches. Already the budget deficit is thought to be three times the figure of 11 per cent of GNP given last autumn. The USA's deficit is four per cent of GNP.

It has been aggravated by falling oil prices, lost tax revenues from the anti-alcohol campaign, the crisis in agriculture and the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster (also costing about £7 billion).

A population fearful of earthquakes and unchecked ecological disasters and of the man-made catastrophes of pollution, nuclear leaks and explosions is highly volatile. Both earthquakes came immediately after underground nuclear tests in the USSR.

A programme for a massive increase in public investment and for workers' control and management of the planned economy is the only political basis on which to transform the lives of the millions in the USSR.

When Tories cry 'freedom'

THE FREEDOM Association (TFA), the misnamed far-right pressure group, is trying to stop the International Cricket Conference (ICC) banning players who work in South Africa from playing in test matches.

The TFA claims the ICC are bringing politics into sport. No mention of the fact that South Africa's apartheid laws stopped SA cricketers playing tests against the West Indies, India and Pakistan!

The Freedom Association has an odd idea of 'freedom', even in sport. They don't oppose identity (ID) cards in football. Sir Rhodes Boyson, a prominent TFA supporter, favours ID cards for everyone.

An early Freedom Association battle was in the Grunwick dispute where they backed the boss against low-paid mainly Asian

women workers fighting for a union.

On South Africa, they defend white players' inalienable right to play cricket but executions, detentions and police brutality against the black majority worry them not a bit.

In fact John Carlisle, Tory MP for Luton North, one of the main TFA members involved in the ICC issue and a regular guest of the Pretoria government doesn't believe there's anything to worry about. In a pamphlet *South Africa and the West*, he says: "The myth that the Republic is a police state and the non-whites are an oppressed race should have been buried long ago."

The TFA don't defend freedom: they defend capitalist barbarism internationally.



reviews

MAPANTSULA

From thief to fighter

Nuclear lies

JUST BEFORE Emperor Hirohito died, the ITV series *The Nuclear Age* looked at the capitalist powers' atom bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The usual rationalisation for this horror was that it saved lives by forcing the Japanese regime to give in. The programme showed that the Japanese had offered to surrender but the US negotiators wouldn't accept unless the Emperor was removed.

After they dropped their bombs the Americans dropped this objection too. The Emperor was kept as a welcome figurehead to use against the Japanese working class and peace was signed.

It had all been a hypocritical manoeuvre! The US imperialists wanted to drop the bomb to warn the Russian Stalinists not to expand their influence in the Far East and to try to cow the working class in that part of the world.

Fun for some

LOCAL AUTHORITIES are being asked to join the Fun Eating at School Today (Feast) campaign which encourages children to eat school meals. Bradford's Tories have already joined. But they have just put the price of school meals beyond many parents' reach and cut budgets in their job-slashing, privatising plans.

It won't be the children who get the 'fun', but the private sector firms who want to take over the services.

Poverty incentive

THE LATEST *Social Trends* survey shows that the 2.3 million extra workers drawn into the labour force between 1971 and 1987 were nearly all women, with a big concentration of 25-44 year-olds. Women were still doing most of the housework at home.

But Thatcher has poured scorn on all suggestions of help for working mothers. She told *She* magazine that tax allowances to pay for child care were wrong. "There would be the most terrible abuses! Women make their own arrangements now and they can carry on doing so." Tory ministers say they won't finance state nurseries or legislate for career breaks. Bosses who had creches might get tax incentives though the women using them would be taxed!

The main 'incentive' for women to work will still probably be desperate shortage of money.

Glasnostalgia

NOT EVERYBODY is glad to see the back of the "good old days" of the Stalin era. The East German authorities have forbidden distribution of magazines from the Soviet Union they consider "subversive" because they are "too Gorbachevist".

In 1924, Stalin buried Communist Party internationalism with his theory of 'socialism in one country'. Now the East German CP advocate 'glasnost in one country'.

A NEW film made in South Africa, *Mapantsula*, captures day to day life in the country's townships better than any film released so far. All the township scenes were shot in Soweto.

By Michael Williams

The story is simple. As the struggle against high rents grows in Soweto, a mass funeral is broken up by the police. A petty thief, nicknamed Panic, is arrested: his personal life becomes bound up with the events shaking the townships as he is thrown in prison with political activists.

Thomas Mogotlane, who wrote the screenplay, plays Panic with great skill, naturalness and conviction.

He shows that mapantsulas (township boys) who are also petty criminals are a breed apart: they don't work, they steal and have style. But still they share the same poverty and indignities as the majority of black people.

This film powerfully depicts the isolation of the white-based state from the black majority.

But in prison, the warders and policemen — everyone the white state relies on to enforce minority rule — are black. Without the blacks in the state apparatus apartheid and capitalism won't survive. That's why the revolution has dealt so fiercely with black collaborators.

This film tells more about life in South Africa than *A World Apart* (a marvellous film) and *Cry Freedom*,

Richard Attenborough's saga about Donald Woods.

You see the new look shebeens (drinking dens) and the view from the bus carting black domestic slaves through plush white suburbs. A supposedly liberal white woman's racism shows that national oppression reinforces the class gulf between white society and the black working class.

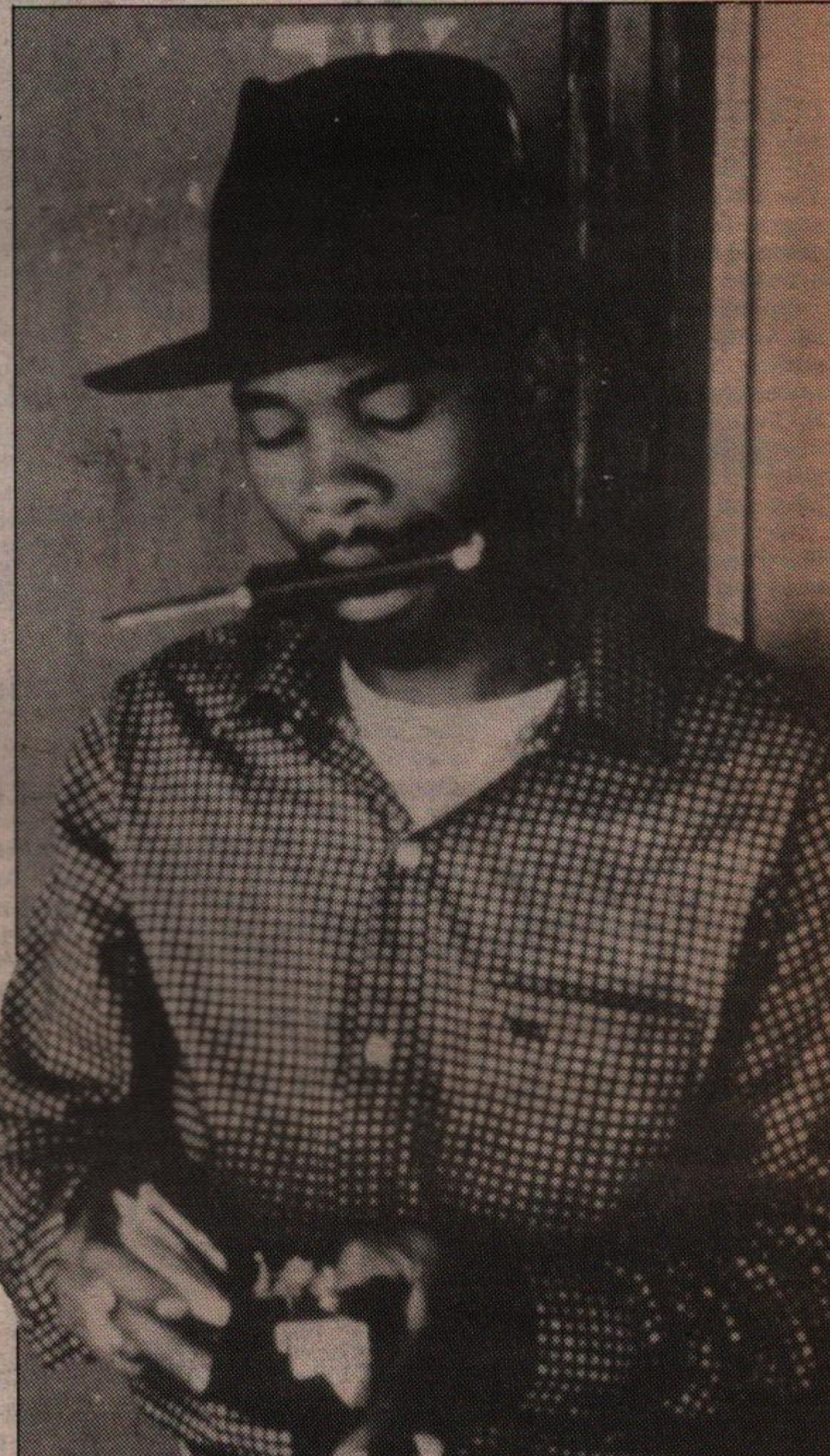
This film shows the strength of African women; Pat (Panic's girlfriend), his 'landlady', the women on the bus and in the marches and funerals. African women struggle on their own. Just surviving means fighting back against their oppression.

The funeral and demonstration scenes shows how young and old, workers and housewives, see the need for arms to defend themselves.

There is love and breaking up and a sense of revolution without preaching, even though a lot of life and humour is lost in translating the fast moving dialogue.

The young director Oliver Schmitz, a white South African, tricked both censors and government to film *Mapantsula* in South Africa. He was even allowed to use police and armed forces uniforms!

The film shows detention, torturing and killings, yet the movie is not sombre — there is humour. And Panic's last line celebrates a revolution not defeated. It brings to mind the veteran Marxist Paul Lafargue's message to oppressors: "We will open the gates of the prisons to let out the petty thieves and put under lock and key the big thieves."



SEE MAPANTSULA at the places and dates below. Socialists in London are already selling *Inqaba ya Basebenzi*, the journal of the Marxist workers' tendency of the ANC and raising money to build a mass socialist ANC in South Africa.

Every night they sell over 10 *Inqabas* outside the cinema and collect over £50. Why not follow their lead?

January:
Bristol Watershed
30 Jan - 9 Feb.

February:
London Riverside 9-11:
Warwick Film Theatre 16-19:
Cardiff Chapter 16-22:
Leicester 21-22:
Norwich Film Theatre
27 Feb-1 March.

March:
Oxford Phoenix 3-8:
London Ritz (Brixton) 3-8:
Bradford 5:
Finchley Phoenix 10-15:
Derby Metro 10-13:
Hackney Rio 10-16:
Birmingham Triangle 17-22:
Tyneside Film Theatre
20- 25:

Nottingham City Lights 24:
Cambridge Arts
24 March-2 April.
April:
Dundee Step Theatre 5:
Lancaster Film Theatre 9-10:
Manchester Corner 14-16:
Eastbourne Curzon 21:
Plymouth 26-27
May:
York Film Theatre 26:

Winter in the morning

Hamid Khayam reviews *Winter in the Morning* and speaks to the author Janina Bauman:

THIS IS the story of a young girl, her mother and younger sister, surviving the Warsaw ghetto. Janina's father, a doctor, joined the Polish Army in 1939. Only towards the end of the war did his family know he was a victim of the 1940 Katyn forest massacre.

When the war started, Janina and her mother and sister, with hundreds of thousands of other Jews were herded into the Warsaw ghetto. Life as the daughter of a wealthy doctor was shattered overnight; she had to adapt or die.

Moving from the 'aryan' side into the ghetto and finding shelter and food was a nightmare. Their later problems were far worse. Jewish people were dragged in hundreds of thousands, men and women, children and old people, to the death chambers.

For the Warsaw Jews, humanity had

ended. Janina learned that the "hardest of struggles is to remain human in inhuman conditions".

Keeping alive

This is a collection of writings of an innocent young person struggling just to keep alive. Her family ate what they could lay hands on and slept where they could, a small room with many others or a cupboard, moving from place to place as they were discovered or betrayed.

Janina was not even politically motivated in the years she writes about. She told me in an interview that it was only after the war when her family had to scratch a living in a Warsaw razed to the ground by the Nazis, that she became familiar with the word socialism.

This was the biggest turning point of her life.

Janina joined the Polish Communist Party and became a party lecturer, teaching mainly anti-Trotskyist ideas. In the inter-

view she told me she now knows better. Her husband, three daughters and herself had to leave Poland in 1968. After three years in Israel, they moved to Leeds.

Janina's experiences didn't make her cynical or pessimistic about humanity. She is a socialist. Her 16-year old grandson led a strike of some 1500 pupils in Israel against army intervention in the occupied territories.

Hitler was funded and helped to power by capitalist masters, aided by the blindness of the German Communist Party leaders. We have the task of making sure such crimes against humanity don't happen again.

If our generation do not reach socialism soon, we could all fall victim to an even worse fate than befell Janina Bauman's generation; nuclear annihilation of the world. I recommend this book.

Winter in the morning By Janina Bauman
Published by Virago Press Ltd. Price £3.95

Tories harass jobless

THE NEW Employment Bill, which forces unemployed workers to prove they are "actively seeking work" is typical Tory legislation.

Tory policies have devastated IF YOU'RE unemployed and the Jobcentre send you on a Restart course, you soon find out they're just a recruiting agency for Employment Training (ET).

By Ian Williams
Stoke-on-Trent South
Labour Party

Last summer after being unemployed for six months I was told that a Restart course would give me a better idea of what job I wanted. I thought I might benefit from it and anyway it was a change from the usual routine on the dole.

Most of the 18 people on the course had been told they had to attend or lose their benefit. This wasn't true legally - at least it wasn't then! But the Claimant Advisor could decide that by not attending you weren't seriously seeking work and stop your benefit.

The course instructor meant well but the main aim was to take people off the unemployment figures. If you had any idea what job you wanted they sent you to the Job Club. If you weren't sure you were advised to go on ET, which was pushed all week as the answer to our problems.

We were told we could decide the type of job we wanted and train for it. The snag was you had to discuss with an agency manager whether you were suitable for that kind of work and whether you were being 'realistic' - in other words what jobs were available locally where the bosses took trainees.

An advert for employers says: "Because it is organised at a local level with local employers, an area crying out for taxi drivers won't get stuffed full of taxidermists". In other words unemployed pottery labourers in Stoke thinking of retraining as airline pilots could forget it.

ET, they say, is voluntary but the course instructor thought it would eventually be made compulsory. Last summer they were

industry and jobs but they blame it all on the supposedly 'workshy' unemployed!

More and more laws are designed to harass the millions still without work to reduce the dole

figures. And as a party whose MPs have a growing number of company directorships and consultancies, the Tories welcome workers being forced into cheap labour schemes.



Photo: Dave Sinclair

Trade unionists and unemployed protest at workfare. The Tories' aim is to get as near as possible to the US workfare scheme where you work for your benefit.

sending letters out four weeks after the Restart course asking what efforts we'd made to get a job. The new Employment Bill will penalise people they decide aren't trying hard enough. This pressure could force thousands of unemployed

workers onto ET as the alternative to losing benefits. Some 'volunteering'! Not that employers will complain. ET means they can boost their profits with free labour while undermining wages and cutting real jobs.

The labour movement must take up the issue, campaigning to stop ET and make sure all training schemes are under trade union control with proper training on union rates of pay - and a guaranteed real job at the end.

Snooping on sympathy

THE GOVERNMENT go to great lengths to try to intimidate the unemployed through the use of snoopers. And woe betide any employee sympathising with claimants.

By John Brown

I used to work as a DSS national insurance inspector. I dealt mainly with large employers and also made sure self-employed people paid national insurance (NI) stamps. But I occasionally had to visit claimants who had been accused - through the usual 'anonymous letter' - of fiddling.

The notorious Special Investigators, with their binoculars and spy-cars usually harass claimants. But in two years I hadn't carried out a single prosecution.

Investigators

I was also union branch secretary, on the union area committee and a known *Militant* supporter, so the investigators were put on my trail!

I'd visited a woman accused of living with someone while getting benefit and reported she was living on her own. The special investigators, who had followed me round, then visited her and wormed a "confession" out of her - also asking why I hadn't got the information.

Then the local trades council asked for support in a strike for union recognition. As union delegate to the trades council I went along regularly.

One morning a picket was arrested. I later gave evidence in his defence in

court. The local paper described me as a "social security inspector": the investigators tried everything to prove it was me.

They contacted the court clerk, the press reporter, (sympathetic to the union) and the defence solicitor (a Labour councillor). All refused to tell them.

They then started investigating in minute detail every case I'd ever carried out. Eventually they accused me of fraud, saying I'd let three self-employed men off paying NI stamps. I pointed out that I'd never even seen one man, that I'd passed records of the second to his local office to deal with and the third was fully up to date with his payments.

Then they suggested I'd threatened to prosecute the third man for some reason unless he gave me cheap goods from his shop!

The full backing of my union and fellow workers eventually forced them to drop all investigations. As I'd never hidden my support for *Militant's* ideas, they couldn't use red scare tactics.

But their actions show how far DHSS management will go to intimidate staff they consider too sympathetic to claimants.

Your ticket to romantic places

IS MILITANT too cynical about the Youth Training Scheme (YTS), thinking the bosses use it for cheap labour? The Training Commission seems to think so.

Their booklet *Which Way?* reports that Lunn Poly Holiday Shops "tried to have a trainee in every one of its 300 or so shops".

One trainee Norman was attracted by the chance of a certificate in competence and the wonderful £28.50 a week allowance. What clinched it, though, was the chance to travel free and see mysterious exotic places.

According to *Which Way?* Norman is only in his first year of training and he has already spent a day in Blackpool!

Fund the fightback

A NEW government handbook, *Britain 1989*, shows the country's haves and have-nots.

It shows the gap between rich and poor growing ever wider. Millions of workers don't even have the living standards the book attributes to the 'typical household'.

Capitalism pressurises people into becoming part of the 'typical household' and brands them as failures if they don't.

A report on Manchester shows Thatcher's real Britain behind the statistics of affluence. The five poorest wards had the

highest death rates. One third of 170,000 households live in poverty; 10,000 could not afford to heat their living room. 32,000 didn't possess two pairs of all-weather shoes.

But the Tory attacks such as the Housing Act and the poll tax are bringing about a fightback. *Militant* consistently puts the case for socialism and reports on how workers are fighting the Tories.

We need more cash if we are to reach more people with our ideas. Follow the lead of a low-paid worker from South Glamorgan

who donated a week's income of £68 to help fund the fightback. Peter Lush gave £50 in memory of Dick Massey. R Bradley of Wakefield gave £10 and Annette Clare, a student from Bedford £5. Extras on paper sales at Littleton colliery raised £3.

Supporters around the country are organising socials to raise cash. Red Enfield raised £100. Why don't you organise and see if you can beat this? A video evening in Brighton made £10. What are you doing to make sure your area reaches its target?

Fighting Fund

Target £40,000 by 4 March

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 South West	127		1,070
2 Wales	194		2,650
3 South East	91		1,250
4 Yorkshire	229		3,950
5 West Midlands	135		3,350
6 London	183		6,200
7 Southern	54		1,830
8 Eastern	47		1,700
9 Manchester/Lancs	69		2,700
10 Merseyside	98		5,000
11 East Midlands	28		2,200
12 Scotland West	0		3,100
13 Scotland East	0		1,700
14 Northern	0		2,300
15 National	89		1,000
Total	1,345		40,000

Non-payment movement grows

Glasgow

SIX LABOUR councillors on Glasgow district council face an investigation by the Glasgow district Labour group for defying the whip and refusing to set the Tory poll tax.

The councillors, led by *Militant* supporters, read a statement to the full council meeting and then left, refusing to set the poll tax rate. Councillor Jim McVicar said: "I don't know what will happen at the inquiry but let's be clear about this, the working class of Glasgow will hold their own inquiry into why its Labour councillors refused to fight the poll tax."

The poll tax rate was set at £87 per person bringing the total for Glasgow to £350 per person for this year alone. But finance convener, councillor Jean McFadyen, has said that the next year's poll tax level will be over £400 per person once the government has withdrawn its special grant.

This option will mean financial ruin for thousands of working class people in Glasgow but it was more palatable to Labour councillors than leading a fight against the Tories.

It is in sharp contrast to the determination shown by working class people. Already this year there have been three meetings of 300 to 400 in the Govan, Anderson and Shettleston areas.

Several organisations have recently affiliated to

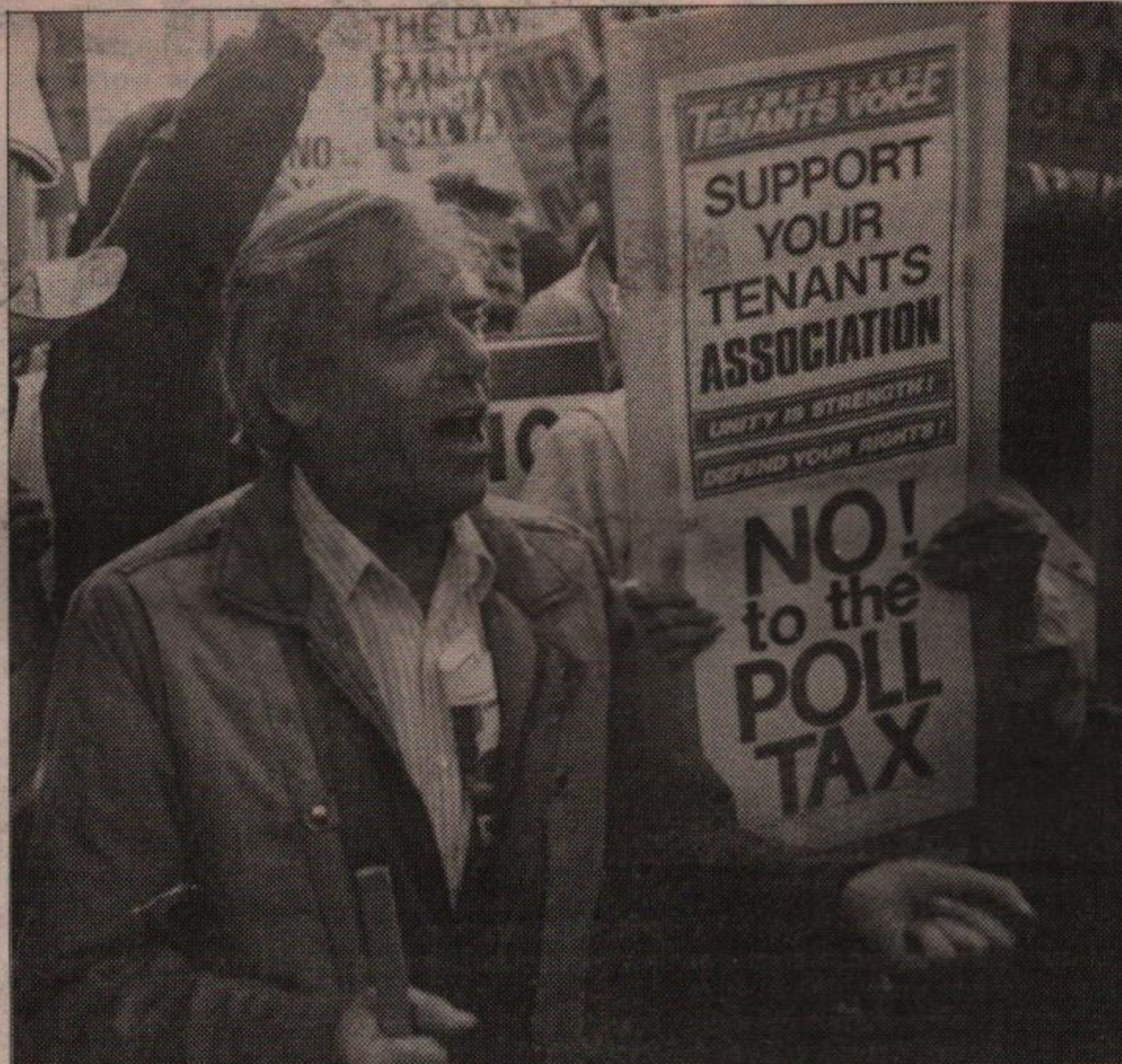
By Tony Quinn,
assistant secretary,
Strathclyde Anti-poll
Tax Federation

the Strathclyde Anti-Poll Tax Federation. These include Glasgow district council's building and works executive committee representing over 4,000 workers, the Glasgow Ministry of Defence CPSA branch, representing 500 members, and the Scottish Tenants' Organisation which represents thousands of tenants throughout Scotland.

Campaign

It has been reported that the Cambuslang and Rutherglen trades council has passed a motion to the STUC congress calling on them to lead a mass campaign of non-payment of the poll tax.

This momentum must be maintained and the Strathclyde Anti-Poll Tax Federation calls on trade unionists, youth, students and working class people throughout Britain to organise now to come to the 18 March demonstration for mass non-payment and to build local anti-poll tax unions to defeat the poll tax.



Scottish Tenants' Organisation joining the fight against poll tax.

Leicester

ONE OF Leicester's Asian community leaders, Ramesh Jani, has raised the possibility of the Asian community, a third of the city's population, boycotting payment of the poll tax.

This is the latest development in a rapidly spreading movement against the poll tax. By the end of February, seven public meetings on local estates will have been held and already those attending, many new to politics, want

to fight the poll tax all the way.

Both Leicester East and South constituency Labour parties are supporting a mass campaign of non-payment with Marxists in the forefront of this campaign.

But words have to be translated into action. Leicester East anti-poll tax committee is organising a conference on 15 April to be addressed by Eric Heffer MP, Dave Nellist MP, Tommy Sheridan and Keith Vaz MP. It aims to coordinate the campaign and take it forward on a city-wide basis.

The conference promises to be one

WHEN STRATHCLYDE regional council met to set the level of the poll tax on 25 January they were met by an angry protest of 400 anti-poll tax campaigners. 100 were allowed into the public gallery.

First the Tories cynically proposed a lower rate of poll tax, to be paid for by cutting spending on education.

Then Tommy Sheridan, secretary of the Strathclyde Anti-Poll Tax Federation, addressed the council from the gallery. To cheers he demanded that the council refuse to set a poll tax rate and support the mass non-payment campaign.

The Labour council convener then ordered the police to be called to clear the gallery. But having made their point, and the front page of the *Evening Times*, the lobbyists got up and marched as a body from the council chamber.

of the largest ever held in the city and it will show the Leicester council Labour group, who voted to implement the poll tax, what the mood of the working class is.

The city council has already sent out 110,000 registration forms (minus the city emblem as a protest!). These councillors, including some former lefts, should be campaigning on the streets rather than showing the white flag of surrender.

By Don Finlay,
secretary, Leicester East anti-poll
tax committee

WHERE TO FIND US

For details of meetings in the following areas contact:

EAST SCOTLAND
Andrea Charles
- 031 659 0574.

STRATHCLYDE
041 221 1443

WALES
0222 631471

Gabalfa:
7 Feb,
contact Chris Peace on
0222 736682.

EASTERN
Teresa Mackay
- 0473 713179

LONDON
George Roberts
- 01 739 9123

EAST MIDLANDS
Andy Jackson
- 0602 423001

HAMPSHIRE/THAMES VALLEY
0703 422841

SOUTHAMPTON
Southampton:
18 Feb, 7.00pm,
Speaker: Rob Sewell,
Art College,
East Park Terrace

MERSEYSIDE
Richard Venton
- 051 260 3111

MANCHESTER/LANCS
Mike Johnson
- 061 273 8648

LEEDS
19 Feb, 7.30pm,
Boomtown Leeds?
Rising Sun pub.

NORTHERN
Bill Hopwood
- 091 276 1736

SOUTH WEST
0272 631471

WEST MIDLANDS
Bill Mullins
- 021 552 7624

SELL Militant

HERE ARE some of last weekend's football results: Liverpool 21, Manchester City 15, Arsenal 15, Millwall 9 and Wrexham 20 in 20 minutes!

Paper sales at matches across the country have shown the widespread hostility of supporters to the Tories' ID cards.

Since weekly sales have been transformed into anti-poll tax days of action this week's football sales have seen our sellers continue to break new ground in selling pitches and techniques!

At West Ham, a young Manchester United fan gave £1 for a paper and eagerly gave his name and address to find out more about meetings in his local area. At Portsmouth one buyer wanted to know whether our sellers would regularly be at matches. Why not set up a regular sale at home matches in your area, meeting beforehand and then going to the game?

In Glasgow Alice Sheridan of Springburn sold 8 papers around local pubs and 8 were sold in a pub in Manchester. In Edinburgh 37 were sold at Pilton Muirhouse with 47 people being recruited to the local anti-poll tax union.

Don't be content with routine. With regular readers and these innovative approaches we will build a solid foundation for the further development of the paper.

By Matt Howarth

YOUTH TRADE UNION RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

YOUTH FIGHT the POLL TAX MEETINGS

YORKSHIRE

Huddersfield:
29 Jan, 3.30pm,
Mixenden anti-poll tax union,
Mixenden Community Centre.

Grimsby:
26 Jan, 7.30pm, Grimsby
anti-poll tax union,
Grimsby Central Library.

Sheffield:
7 Feb, 7.30pm,
Manor estate comprehensive
school.

Hull:
7 Feb, 7.30pm,
Hull anti-poll tax federation,
St Andrews Ward,
Constable St school.

Cleethorpes:
23 Feb, 7.30pm,
Cleethorpes anti-poll tax union,
Cleethorpes Central Library.

LONDON

Tottenham LPYS
9 Feb, 7.30pm Young Tories
debate Earlsemeade Comm.
Centre, Haringey.

Uxbridge/Hayes YTURC
6 Mar, 7.30pm,
Labour Hall, Pump Lane, Hayes.

EAST MIDLANDS

Derby YTURC
16 Feb,
Kedleston College.

SCOTLAND

Pollok Anti-Poll Tax Federation
rally,
16 Feb, 7.30pm
Crookston Castle school.
Strathclyde Anti-Poll Tax
Federation youth day of action
28 Jan.

Glasgow:
31 Jan, 7.30 pm, Speakers:
Cllr Stuart Bates
and Tommy Sheridan,
Langside Halls, Shawlands.

EASTERN

SE ESSEX YTURC/Tenants action
group, 28 Jan, 11.30am
Rising Grove Deck,
Siporex estate.
Estate Meeting 2.00pm.

Stevenage YTURC
15 Feb, 7.30pm,
Small functions room,
Stevenage Leisure Centre.

LIVERPOOL

6 Feb, 7.30pm LPYS v
Young Tories,
Transport House,
Islington, Liverpool.
Rob Owen for LPYS, Steve
Fitzsimmons, YCs.
Norris Green anti poll tax union,
22 Feb, 7.30pm,
Pirrie Labour club.

MANCHESTER

Oldham:
6 Feb, 7.30pm,
Oldham against the poll tax,
Community Centre,
Holts Estate.
Moss Side LPYS
22 Feb, 7.30pm,
8411 Club Moss Side Precinct.

WEST MIDLANDS

Rugby:
7 Feb, 7.00pm,
Rugby anti poll tax union,
St Oswalds Church Hall,
Lawford Rd.

BECOME A Militant SUPPORTER

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

Name.....
Address.....
Tel.....

Send to: Militant, 3/13 Hepscott Road, E9 5HB
or telephone 01 533 3311 NOW!

Militant

Youth

F E L S
Further Education Labour Students
National Conference

11-12 February
South Manchester Community College,
Cost: £6

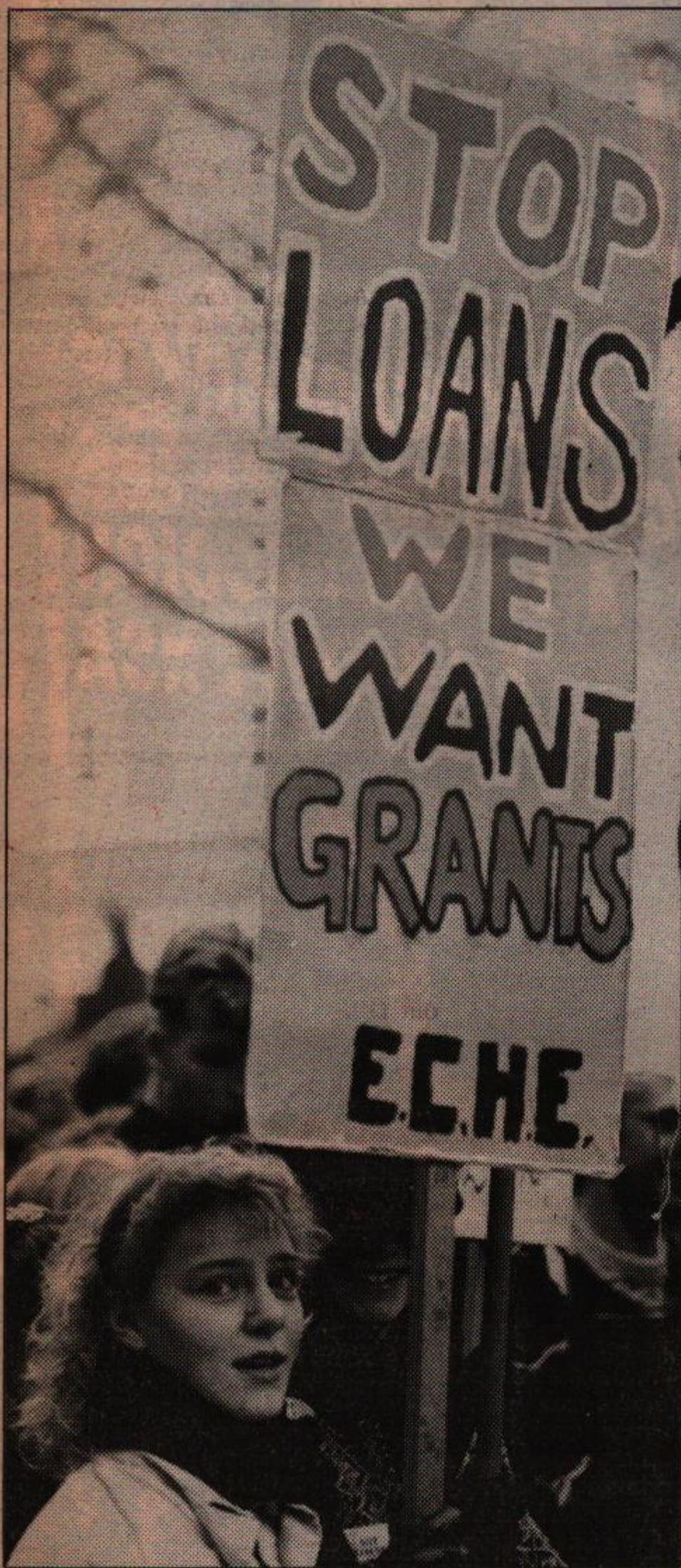


Photo: Dave Sinclair.

Don't stand a loan! Students on November's NUS demonstration.

AGITATION

in further

EDUCATION

"I'VE HEARD the Tories want to get rid of my grant. This is just one of many attacks they've flung at us while we've been at college.

"They don't want ordinary people to have an education. Since the demonstration on 24 November I've realised all students have to be united in one movement to defeat the Tories. That's why I'm going to the Fels (Further Education Labour Students) conference in Manchester on 11 and 12 February: so I can find out what other students are doing round the country and link up with them."

Thousands of FE students share the views of this Liverpool FE student. We have always got the worst deal in education: decrepit common rooms, non-existent grants, small numbers of dog-eared text books.

That was before the Tories introduced the Education Bill and turned a quarter of all FE college places over to YTS. Now FE colleges are bulging at

the seams but with less and less money provided for them. In Cardonald college, Scotland, YTS trainees on painting courses have to decorate the college.

As if all this were not enough the Tory poll tax will drive thousands of FE students out of college. It seems likely that the Tories will make students pay the full tax and leave them waiting months for their 80 per cent rebate.

"Unless we defeat the poll tax," says Frances from Cardonald college, "further education will end. It will be this part of education spending that will be hit first as councils make more cuts."

The Tories' plans for loans will end any chance of working class students entering higher education. They intend to provide a £5 million hardship fund. If this were divided among all the FE students in NUS then it would give them £6 a year!

The Fels conference will draw together FE students from all round the country to discuss how to fight these attacks. The conference will open with a rally on the poll tax, with speakers from the Strathclyde Anti-Poll Tax Federation speaking. Plans will be laid to make sure thousands of students are on the big anti-poll tax demonstration in Glasgow in March.

Other sessions will be on racism and the struggle for a fighting leadership of NUS.

Julie, who visited NUS conference in December told *Militant*: "I'm going to the Fels conference because of what I saw there. The present leadership tried to use bureaucratic procedures to stop the poll tax being discussed. We need a fighting leadership of NUS. Fels can be part of that. Make sure you're in Manchester to find out more!"

By Matthew Pledger
General secretary, Kingsway
Princeton college students union

N O F A N S F O R I D



SHOW I D T H E R E D C A R D

AROUND SEVENTY football fans, mainly from Millwall but with Charlton and other supporters as well, all agreed on one thing. They would fight the Tories' ID cards.

Everyone at the meeting in New Cross, south London organised by the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign (YTURC) agreed that ID cards were no solution to violence.

Big business would make millions in installing machinery and charging £5-£10 for each card. And the Tories would use the precedent of ID cards in football to help collect the poll tax.

Craig Broome from the football supporters' association said that the fact that supporters from different clubs were agreeing to work together showed that ID cards weren't needed.

The meeting launched a campaign to link together all the clubs and supporters around London. Loss of revenue would threaten jobs. Luton lost 27 per cent at the toll gate after introducing cards.

At the end of the meeting, the front desk was swamped with supporters giving their names to the new action committee.

By Jonas Grikielis

LOBBY LEWISHAM EAST Conservative Association (Colin Moynihan's very marginal constituency) 243 Lewisham High Street, SE13. Friday 3 February, 5pm.

FIGHT FOR A FUTURE



Stopped and searched—at age of 11

AN 11-YEAR old school student was searched by Southampton police before my very eyes.

The two of us and another friend had just left a cinema when an unmarked car sped up the alley

and two plain-clothes police officers jumped out.

They flashed ID cards and demanded to search us. When we asked why they offered the lame excuse that there had been a lot of break-ins in the city centre. Because we had stopped to look in the music shop window they claimed we might have been going to break in. They said they were looking for crowbars, screwdrivers and other tools that might have been used in a break-in.

We were scared, surprised and embarrassed as other cinema-goers emptied out past us. When we arrived at his home the lad's mother was disgusted by what had happened and wrote a furious letter to the police.

"It's like being in an occupied country," she said. "How dare they do this to my son?"

It seems Hampshire police are following some of their inner-city counterparts by taking whatever liberties they like. The two officers seemed to drip with excitement at the

thought of their already wide-sweeping powers being extended.

As they left we asked if the police were looking forward to the introduction of ID cards.

"Yes, brilliant!" one replied. "The sooner, the better!"

By a Southampton
Labour Party member

Quorum quarrel

HOW MANY people do you need for a quorum at your Labour Party Young Socialists branch?

The rules are confusing. But they do clearly state that for a business meeting you need six if you have under 25 members and eight or 15 per cent, whichever is the greater, if you've over 25. Nowhere does it say that AGMs are different.

But the party's youth and student officer, Neil Usher, 'interprets' the rules to say you need ten for an AGM. So much for Neil being keen on building the party's youth section!

The Cuban Revolution

30th ANNIVERSARY

IT IS 30 years since Fidel Castro came to power in the Cuban revolution. COLIN DE FREITAS looks back at the revolution, its significance and the development of Cuban society since then.

ON 8 JANUARY 1959, 1,500 guerrillas descended from the mountains of Cuba's Sierra Maestra and marched to seize power in Havana. Led by ex-lawyer Fidel Castro and doctor Che Guevara they brought an end to the Batista dictatorship.

For over 50 years Cuba had been the bond servant of American imperialism. At the time of the revolution, 75 per cent of Cuba's fertile soil, 90 per cent of public services, mining and oil production, 40 per cent of the sugar industry and a quarter of all bank deposits were in the hands of US interests. 75 per cent of Cuba's imports came from the US.

Cuba in 1959 seemed to live up to the dreams of America's first military commander on the island, General Wood, who in 1902 spoke of: "the control we have over Cuba, a control which without-doubt will soon turn her into our possession". This statement was made months after Cuba's independence from Spain.

Havana, the 'Monte Carlo of the Caribbean', was prostituted to the world's rich. Through his regime of terror Batista was to ensure that America's playground remained clean of revolution. In the six years before his downfall it is estimated that over 20,000 people were murdered by the state forces.

But Cuba's small and feeble ruling class, overseeing the grinding poverty of the masses, offered a weak social base for Batista's rule. His hold on society was so tenuous that in a decisive battle in May 1958, 300 poorly armed guerrillas had defeated 10,000 of Batista's well armed soldiers.

The majority of these soldiers had defected and many, including some officers, joined the guerrillas. His army completely demoralised, Batista fled, his pockets stuffed with over \$300 million.

His overthrow gave the destitute masses the prospect of a new future. Power lay in the hands of the guerrillas who had the overwhelming support of the masses.

BUT THE outlook of Castro and his supporters for shaping the future was by no means clear. He had no intention of overthrowing capitalism and described his programme as "humanist democracy".

His idea was the construction of an industrialised welfare state more akin to the USA than to Russia or China.

A year before conducting the guerrilla struggle he stood in the 1952 parliamentary elections for the liberal Orthodox Party.

At his trial in 1953 for the attack on the Moncada Barracks, Castro called for the return of Batista's 1940 constitution.

Peter Marshall, in *Cuba Libre*, which is sympathetic to the revolution, observes that at his trial "Castro appears rather as a liberal constitutionalist threatening violence only if good laws are not enacted. Significantly, it is Tom Paine who is referred to and not Marx."

Both Castro and Guevara were contemptuous of the Cuban Communist Party. Castro insisted that

Cuba was with the West in the cold war. This was in the main due to the reformist programme of the Cuban CP under Blas Roca. They were seeking alliances with the so-called progressive wing of the capitalists.

This logic led two CP members to serve in Batista's 1942 cabinet, while its leader denounced Castro in 1947 as a "gangster".

On coming to power *Time*, *Life Magazine* and the *New York Times* gave Castro their blessing.

Then, according to the *US News and World Report* Castro said he had no intention of nationalising any industries.

Nevertheless there had been a revolution. For the workers and the peasants, Castro's humanist democracy meant nothing without increased wages, jobs, land reform, health care and housing.

Within weeks peasants had moved to occupy the land. Later, strikes broke out as workers clamoured for higher wages. The masses were exerting tremendous pressure on the regime. In response Castro began by sacking some members of "the government of largely moderate and liberal middle aged men" (Marshall).

The US administration, alarmed at these developments, tried to bring the new regime to heel by cutting off oil supplies and reducing US sugar imports. But they miscalculated and Castro turned to Russia instead.

They now subsidise the Cuban economy to the tune of \$4 billion a year. Cuban sugar is bought by Russia at eight times world market prices. Cuba also has the benefit of obtaining hard currency by selling 20 per cent of the Russian oil they refine on the open market.

With ignorant bluster the US stepped up its economic confrontation with Castro. He replied by nationalising all American interests in Cuba. By October 1960 banks, foreign enterprises, large and medium sized industries were all nationalised.

Two days before the CIA-sponsored Bay of Pigs invasion, Castro mobilised the masses, declaring the revolution "socialist". Within 72 hours of their landing the invaders scurried back across the Gulf of Mexico.

In 1961 Castro announced: "I am a Marxist-Leninist and shall be until the day I die". From 1961 to 1965 he gradually merged his 26th July Movement with other support groups and the existing Cuban CP to form the new Cuban Communist Party, organised on the same basis as in Russia, Eastern Europe and China.

THUS a peculiar combination of circumstances — the weakness of Cuban capitalism, the pressure of the masses and the miscalculation of US imperialism — forced Castro to abolish capitalism and landlordism in Cuba.

At the end of 1961 Cuba had a nationalised, centrally planned economy. On this foundation, Cuba's economic growth rate quickly outstripped the neighbouring countries.

By 1965 industrial production

had increased by 50 per cent! In agriculture nearly all planting is now mechanised. Since 1959 the number of tractors has increased eightfold and the use of fertiliser ten times!

Health care is internationally recognised as the best in Latin America and among the best in the world. There is one doctor for every 400 people, nearly three times as many as in Britain.

Infant mortality has been reduced from 60 per 1,000 in 1959 to 13.6 in 1986. Life expectancy has risen to 74 years and is the second highest in the world.

Nearly all Cubans are literate. Unesco has recommended the Cuban programme for a world literacy campaign. 70 per cent of Cuban schools were built after 1959, with the number of universities increasing from three to 46.

In a relatively short period the revolution has lifted Cuba from the morass of capitalism. Its stunning achievements make it the envy of the Latin American masses.

"Batista's regime collapsed from its internal contradictions and Havana fell like a ripe peach into the hands of revolutionaries. They were moreover predominantly young middle class, urban intellectuals who had no mass following."

Castro, however, did not have a clear socialist programme or perspectives. Nor did the leaders of the Cuban revolution at any time base themselves on the working-class movement.

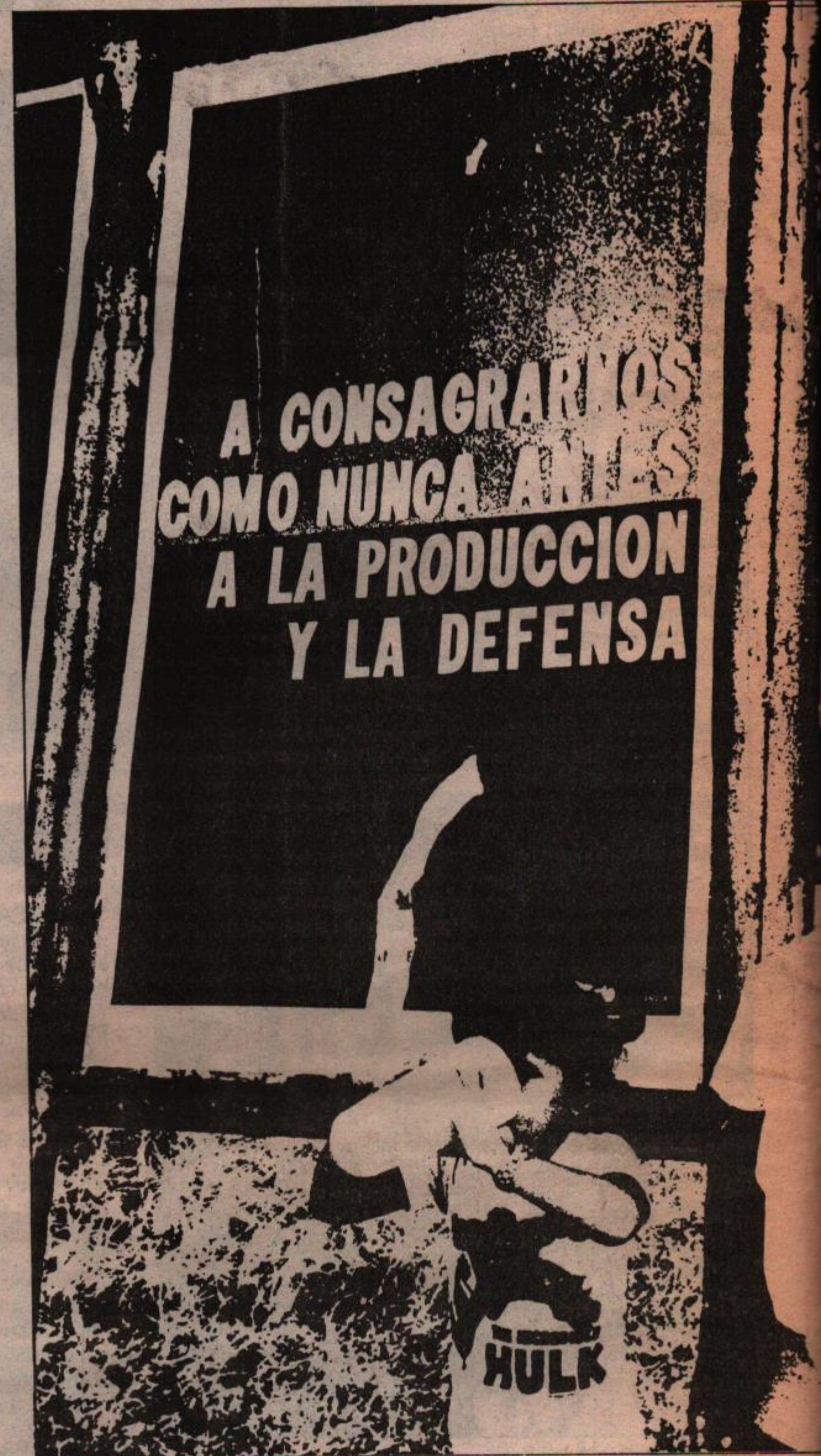
For Marxism the specific role played by the working class in production gives them a unique consciousness which sets them apart from all other classes. This prepares them for running a workers' democracy.

The Cuban revolution on the other hand was conducted through guerrilla war based on the rural population. As Marshall correctly says:

"Batista's regime collapsed from its internal contradictions and Havana fell like a ripe peach into the hands of the small band of revolutionaries. They were moreover predominantly young, middle class, urban intellectuals who had no mass following."

This small army was Cuba's new state — not like the mass councils of workers and peasants in Russia in 1917. All the maxims of the guerrilla army were transferred to running the state.

In his book *Guerrilla Warfare*,



Che Guevara declared that "the success of the guerrilla group depends on the unquestioned leadership of the jefe maximo (boss)" ie Castro. In his essay *Socialism and Man* (1965), he explains that in Cuba, "the initiative generally comes from Fidel or from the revolutionary high command and is explained to the people who accept it as theirs". Thus running society is left to the handful in the 'high command'. He develops the point further, saying: "The unchallenged leadership of the 'jefe' was more important than the whole party organisation of anonymous cadres".

Castro's Cuban CP, which was largely a rubber stamp for the decisions of the 'jefe maximo', held its first Congress in 1975, ten years after it was established!

AN UNCHECKED bureaucratic elite, enjoying vast privileges, developed. It was now like the bureaucracies of Russia, Eastern Europe and China. Although they had played no role before nor immediately after 1959, these regimes attracted Castro and his co-leaders, particularly when they were faced with the life-or-death struggle with American imperialism.

Without the participation of the working class in the management of society, Cuba's reforms have been achieved with massive overheads.

In all spheres of production there is bureaucratic mismanagement leading to tremendous waste. Castro admitted in 1970 that the average life of a tractor in Cuba was two to four years. According to Cuba's president Dorticos, it has the highest per capita consumption of spare parts in the world because of poor maintenance of equipment.

A massive project to overcome Havana's housing shortage led to the construction of thousands of units before it was discovered that they had little ventilation since they were designed for Eastern Europe, not tropical Cuba.

This system of bureaucratic 'commandism', with no democratic control by the workers, has led to the complete smothering of initiative.

In November 1979 Raul Castro cited the "presence of indiscipline, lack of control, irresponsibility, complacency, negligence and buddyism" as the major cause for the "noticeable lack of efficiency in the Cuban economy". Absenteeism reached epidemic proportions. It was outlawed in 1971 and penalties — from house arrest to two years forced labour — were introduced.

In 1979 files were introduced to keep records of every worker's behaviour. Better access to housing or to prized consumer items are awarded to reliable 'vanguard workers'. But these measures have failed to stem the problem

ution 1959



IN 1986, having burnt his fingers, Castro squashed Cuba's equivalent of *perestroika*, which he has since described as "recking of capitalism" and as "complete trash".

Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost* are a desperate attempt to diffuse the growing pressures of the Russian masses on the bureaucracy. In Russia, because of its higher economic development, the planned economy has come up against the barrier of functioning without workers' control and management.

But in Cuba the bureaucracy can still play a relatively progressive role in producing for society. According to *The Guardian*: "Cuba is the only economy in Latin America with a sustained record of growth".

Castro's opposition to *perestroika* is partly based on his last disastrous experience of 'economic liberalisation' but mainly on the fact that his regime has a much stronger basis of support than the Stalinist regimes of Russia and Eastern Europe.

The capitalist press express amazement at 'Castro's popular support' and cannot report even a murmur in support of a return to capitalism. On the other hand the expectations of Cuba's youth have been raised by the advances made by the regime.

Fifty nine per cent of the 10 million population were born after the revolution. The healthy, educated youth of Cuba are frustrated at the inefficiency and tight grip of the bureaucracy. "I'd like another system with the good things of this system" says 20-year

"The capitalist press express amazement at 'Castro's popular support' and cannot report even a murmur in support of capitalism. On the other hand the expectations of Cuba's youth have been raised by the advances made by the regime."



Castro with ex-US gangster-president Richard Nixon.

old Ernesto Rodriguez.

Senora Flores, a 52-year old mother laments: "If only the youth knew what we went through they would understand why we have to fight for the revolution". Her son Orion, aged 30 feels however: "We don't have freedom to express ourselves, to do the things we want".

The young feel choked by the weight of the bureaucracy. Although this has not as yet expressed itself politically, Cuba's rulers look with alarm at the growing problem of delinquency.

Castro's derisory remarks on *perestroika* and *glasnost* do not indicate any conflict between the Russian and Cuban bureaucracies. Gorbachev is not concerned with how Castro chooses to maintain order within his borders.

Castro's role as a close ally of the Russian bureaucracy has had the effect of holding back the revolution in Latin America and the Caribbean. His initial pronouncements on "guerrilla wars throughout Latin America" were quickly changed by the Kremlin.

These remarks expressed a desire to find a way out of the US trade embargo. Once Moscow stepped in, the Cuban bureaucracy consolidated its position and has tried to come to an accord with US imperialism.

In the new period of detente Castro has been even more ready to drop the 'radical third World' facade. The *Financial Times*, commenting on the "complete silence" of the Cuban leadership at Duvalier's overthrow, said: "Havana's hands-off attitude

reflects a more cautious and less ideological approach to foreign affairs...

"This has been evident in the way Cuba's assistance to Nicaragua has not matched the escalation in aid provided to the anti-Sandinista rebels by the US government".

On his visit to Nicaragua in 1985 Castro told the crowd: "You can have a capitalist economy." Castro advised both Jamaican prime minister Manley and Grenadan president Bishop in 1984 not to go down the road of overthrowing capitalism for fear of compromising relations with the West.

On a visit to Ecuador early last year Castro said: "I hope the men of responsibility on our hemisphere will take measures to avoid great social explosions, for if not the current leaders will find themselves in the roles of the last kings of France and the last Czar of Russia."

The gains of the Cuban revolution conclusively prove the case for the planned economy. The overhead of bureaucratic mismanagement, the costly economic zig-zags, the stifling of initiative, the limiting of democratic rights and the impeding of world revolution show the need for a political revolution to remove the bureaucracy.

This will get an enormous echo throughout Latin America and the Caribbean and signal the beginning of the socialist revolution throughout the continent and the setting up of a Latin American socialist federation.

of absenteeism.

Most damaging has been the enormous cost of the bureaucracy's arbitrary economic policies. In the early stages of the revolution Guevara, as Minister of Industry and head of the national bank, insisted on a highly centralised economy.

To reduce the economic dependence on sugar, farmers were instructed to dig up their cane-fields and plant fruit and vegetables instead. As a result Cuba's cane was destroyed and production fell by over 50 per cent. Meanwhile nearly all the seedlings died since they were not suited to the same soil conditions.

This led to severe shortages and in 1961 rationing had to be introduced. Castro declared: "Eat malanja" - a root which was the staple diet of the guerrillas. But even this was in short supply!

Guevara admitted that he had "made a fundamental error in undervaluing sugar". To overcome the shortfall in supplies the government then decentralised and introduced what it termed 'market socialism'.

Guevara called for a war against bureaucratism. This zig-zagging was a hopeless attempt to overcome the fundamental contradiction of running a planned economy without workers' control. Decentralisation produced shortages in the other sectors of the economy, particularly housing. President Dorticos then an-

nounced in 1967 "we are building communism" and to this end nationalised 57,000 bars, shops and garages by March 1968.

The economy was to be prepared for communism by the militaristic mass mobilisation of people to provide intensive labour projects in order to reach targets. This ended in disaster in 1970 when Cuba fell two million tons short of its sugar target. Castro disclosed that Cubans had a "certain scepticism about our economic plans". Shortages returned to the shops and the economic planners ordered another volte-face. Going further than before, Castro ordered the opening of markets for excess agricultural produce and encouraged self-employment in the service sector. In 1985 laws were introduced allowing tenants to buy state property.

Racketeers soon moved in to take advantage of the gaps in the economy left by its bureaucratic planners. Differentials began to increase - according to Castro a street painter earned 20 times the salary of a heart surgeon! Middlemen in the producer market were earning up to \$100,000 a year. At the tenth session of the National Assembly in July 1986, Castro announced: "We have created a class of newly rich". He and the bureaucracy were fearful of an economically powerful grouping developing from without which could in the future threaten their rule.

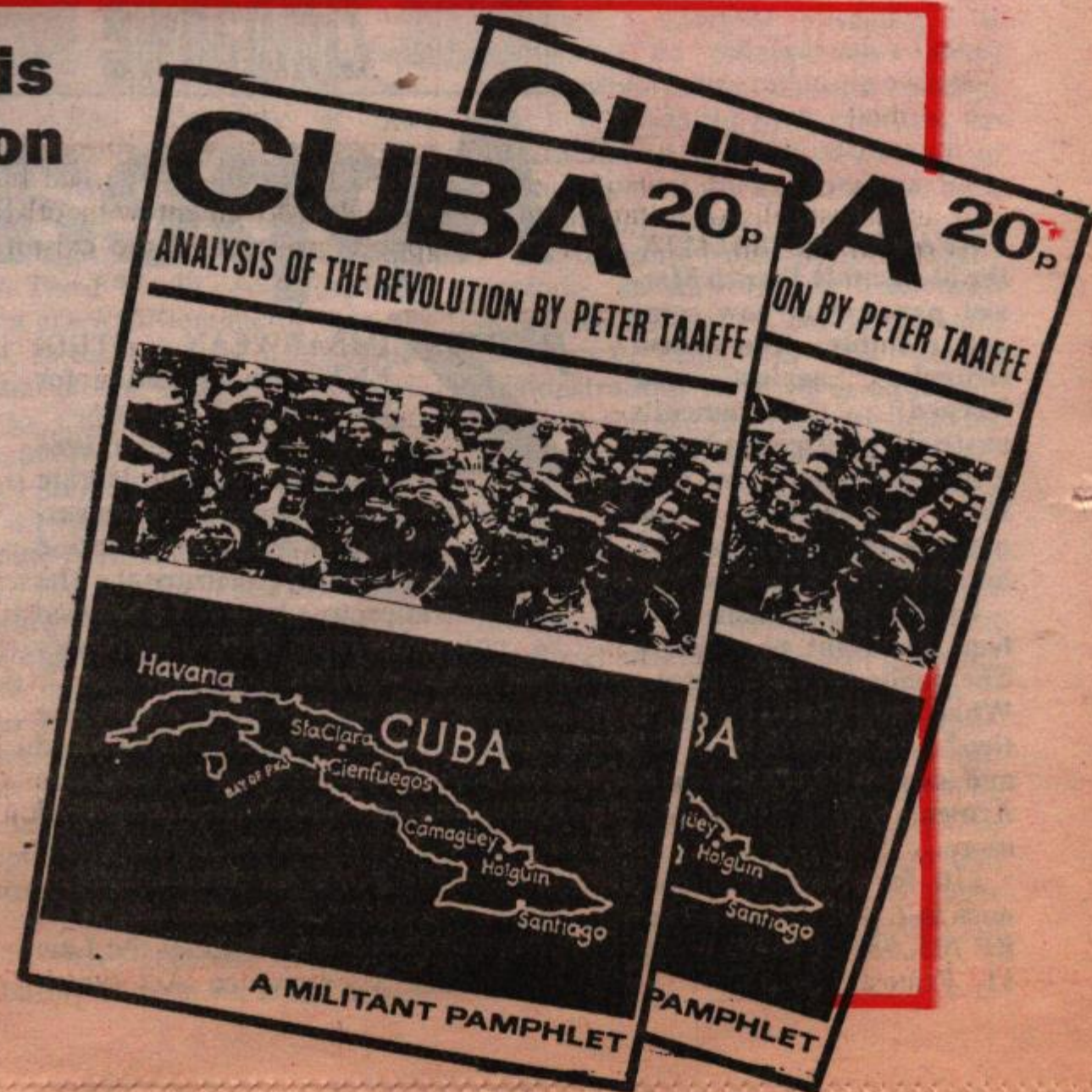
Cuba — analysis of the revolution

by Militant's editor Peter Taaffe

Price 35p incl. postage

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World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoff Road London E9 5HB.



'The corner of the

"IT IS our duty to warn that Peru has all the symptoms of a society in a pre-revolutionary stage. There is an institutional, social, moral and economic crisis and the leading class lacks faith in itself."

This was the telling prognosis by Senator Javier Riestra of the ruling Apra (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance) of the crisis gripping Peruvian society. Apart from Bolivia no other Latin American country has reached such an impasse in the recent period.

The economy stands on the point of disintegration. A strike wave has been accompanied by a surge in support for Izquierda Unida (IU - a front of the workers' parties and left groupings dominated by the Communist Party) and a growth in the support for Sendero Luminoso (the main guerrilla grouping). President Garcia's Apra government is split and in turmoil.

Fearing the consequences, sections of the armed forces are openly discussing the possibility of another military coup in the next few months. ALEJANDRO ROJAS reports.

APRA CAME to power in 1985 with 46 per cent of the vote. The IU received 21 per cent and the outgoing conservative government a mere 6 per cent.

Apra, formed in 1929, reflected the interests of a weak capitalist class opposed to the oligarchical landlords, seeking to establish a powerful economy under their own control. This led to conflict of interest between sections of the local capitalist class and imperialism, which massively dominates the economy.

Over the decades Apra's demagogic attacks on imperialism combined with the promise of reforms won it support amongst sections of the working class, middle class and students. It rapidly came into conflict with the military and was driven into clandestinity on a number of occasions.

This tradition enabled its leaders to project themselves as defenders of the Peruvian masses. However, the weak Peruvian capitalist class was incapable of independently developing society.

Such development as did take place, especially the rapid industrialisation of the 1960s and 1970s, was almost entirely due to investment by the imperialist powers. This intensified the imperialists' exploitation of

Peru - but at the same time created a powerful working class. Seventy per cent of the population now live in the cities.

Apra was therefore unable to mount a serious challenge to imperialist domination, which would have aroused a massive movement and threatened the local capitalists as well. It even backed the conservatives in the 1956 elections. As the party's founder, Haya de la Torre, put it:

"Apra will not take wealth and power from those who have it, but will create it for those who don't".

Based on Apra's chequered 'radical' tradition, Garcia's election aroused expectations that the misery suffered by the Peruvian masses could finally be ended. In reality, the government was confronting an economic disaster.

IN 1982 production showed zero growth and twelve months later fell by 12 per cent. By 1984 only 40 per cent of manufacturing industry was functioning. By 1982 foreign debt payments were absorbing \$1.5 of every \$2 earned in exports.

When Garcia took power only a third of the workforce had stable employment. Life expectancy remains at only 58 due to



Civil servants block road in Lima during a dispute.

poor diet.

These desperate conditions pushed Garcia and the then dominant wing of the Apra leadership to adopt far more radical measures than they had intended. Interest repayments on the foreign debt were limited to 10 per cent of GNP. A major US oil company was nationalised and an attempt made to nationalise the banks. These measures initially aroused massive expectations, but ended up illustrating the impotence of even the most 'radical' wing of the national capitalist class in the face of the imperialist powers. The government was soon forced to backtrack.

An austerity package trebled the prices of most household items. Inflation soared to 1,000 per cent, leaving 61 per cent of Peruvians unable to meet their weekly expenditure. Industrial production fell by a staggering 60 per cent during April 1988.

Life for the workers and unemployed in Lima's shanty towns (where a third

of its people live) has become almost unbearable. Meat has disappeared almost completely from their diet and salt replaces toothpaste, which at £1 a tube is out of workers' reach.

Even postage stamps are in short - the government can afford to print only half the number needed!



Garcia.

The working class has responded with one of the biggest industrial movements in its history. During May 1988 132 factories in the private sector were hit by strikes. In June 15,000 building workers and 18,000 telecommunications

workers took action. Miners have been involved in a 57-day stoppage and during August 30,000 bank workers came out.

Most importantly, 19 and 20 July saw the biggest general strike in Peruvian history, supported not only by the 400,000-strong CGTP trade union federation (dominated by the Communist Party) but also by the CTP, Apra's own union confederation.

To try and co-ordinate the struggles, including those by the peasants, a national delegate meeting of 3,000 established the Asamblea Nacional del Pueblo (ANP) in which the CGTP, the main peasants' organisation (the CCP) and others participated.

THE CRISIS is now approaching its decisive stages. Either it will be resolved by the working class leading the way to the socialist transformation of society, or the movement will eventually become exhausted, enabling the reactionary classes to

Photo: A.C Gonzalez/Reflex

impose their own 'solution' by the most brutal means.

Apra itself has been split. Garcia has been replaced as general secretary by the right wing, who have even established their own death squad, the Comando Rodrigo Franco, as an indication of what is being prepared by the capitalist class.

But at this stage there remains enormous potential for the workers' movement to win the mass of society. According to a recent opinion poll Garcia's support has plunged from 96 per cent just after the 1985 election to six per cent. The same poll pointed to a victory for the IU at the next election, scheduled for 1990.

If the IU offered a clear programme to overthrow landlordism and capitalism it could lead a mass movement of the working class, supported by the peasantry, to take over the running of Peruvian society. This would ignite the revolution throughout Latin America.

But the failure to take up

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Zimbabwe

Appeal for support

ZIMBABWEAN STUDENTS are appealing for international support.

On 28 September 1988 students from the Harare Poly, teachers' college and the university demonstrated against corruption in the ZANU(PF) government. The demonstration was brutally repressed by police with live bullets, rubber bullets, tear gas and beatings.

Two students were shot with live bullets and one is said to have died from injuries. More than 450 were arrested. Some have been released but eleven students from Harare Poly are being tried and are going to trial again on 31 January.

They are being tried under the Law and Order Maintenance Act which

was used by Smith during the white minority government.

This repression is being carried out by a government which claims to be socialist. In fact all its policies have been based on trying to develop the capitalist system.

The students have demanded: Remove corrupt ministers and end corruption.

No one-party state.

Stop buying planes instead of buses which are needed most.

Stop building prestige buildings - build houses.

Enforce the leadership code (which controls the behaviour of ZANU(PF) leaders)

End exploitation and capitalism.

THE STUDENTS' movement has

marked a watershed in Zimbabwean politics, giving advance notice of developing mass struggles for jobs, land, houses and other unfulfilled government promises. The Zimbabwe Trade Unionists' Defence Campaign (ZTUDC) has launched an appeal to support workers and youth fighting for democratic rights and socialism in Zimbabwe and contribute to legal costs. Already students in London and Liverpool have responded, with an excellent £186 raised at meetings in Liverpool in one day.

ZTUDC speakers are available to address students' and labour movement meetings. Messages of support and requests for speakers to ZTUDC, PO Box 77, London E8 4TB. Tel 01-241 0434.

Free



Mahmoud Masarwa

ENTHUSIASM FOR the Campaign for the Release of Mahmoud Masarwa continues to grow. Mahmoud, a Palestinian Marxist and trade union activist, has been arrested and tortured by the Israeli authorities. Workers internationally recognise the need to support Mahmoud both with resolutions and financial contributions. This week we would like

dead'

such a programme will raise the prospect of counter-revolution and the re-establishment of a military-police dictatorship. It cannot be excluded that the military could step in before the elections. Alternatively, they may wait for fear of provoking an explosion.

As in Chile under Allende, an IU election victory would arouse tremendous enthusiasm and expectations. Under the pressure of the masses and Peru's economic catastrophe it could be compelled to implement a radical programme.

However, should the leadership fail to go all the way in overthrowing landlordism and capitalism, the workers' movement would be exhausted by the burdens of capitalist crisis at a certain stage. The generals may yet conclude it is better to wait for such developments before stepping in.

Already a section of the middle class has been drawn behind the right, seeing no way out of the 'chaos' and fearing for their future. This has been reflected in right-wing rallies which, combined with other pressures, forced Garcia to drop the bank nationalisations.

GARCIA'S FAILURE has illustrated that only the overthrow of landlordism and capitalism can free Peru from imperialist domination and the straitjacket imposed by the capitalist class. But in the absence of a clear alternative from the workers' parties the Peruvian revolution could be driven forward by another, more difficult road.

Already thousands of desperate youth from the shanty towns and sections of peasants have been drawn into the main guerrilla organisation, Sendero Luminoso. Some estimates put their strength as high as 10,000, compared with the army's 70,000. Over a quarter of the country has

been placed under a state of emergency.

Sendero Luminoso base themselves on the idea that the peasantry is the decisive force in the revolution. In Ayacucho, which is dominated by Quechua speaking Indians (who are the largest indigenous ethnic group comprising 8.2m people), they have conquered support by backing the struggles of the peasants against the military. The bloody war being fought out here has given new meaning to the Quechua name for Ayacucho: Huamanga, 'the corner of the dead'.

Sendero has also succeeded in penetrating sections of the police, student organisations and some trade unions. Even members of Apra's youth wing have become Senderistas. Garcia himself illustrated the process, speaking at an Apra youth rally:

"How can we not admire them (Sendero Luminoso)? Imagine if we had 10,000 militants with the fanatical faith that these men have, who leave everything, who don't have families, who suffer tuberculosis. These are real militants. What moral authority do we have to combat them when we are surrounded by pseudo-comforts?"

Under a military dictatorship the guerrillas' support could grow further and raise the prospect that, after a bloody civil war, they could come to power. This would probably result in a regime of proletarian bonapartism, as in China — the overthrow of landlordism and capitalism, and the establishment of a state plan of production.

But without democratic rule of the working class it would require a second, political revolution to establish a workers' democracy and open the road to socialism.

The Peruvian revolution now stands at the crossroads. Its outcome depends on the workers' leadership and their policies.

they were quoting Mahmoud's view that terrorism and diplomacy are not the best way to advance the workers' struggle.

Every Nupe member will be asking whether it is the executive's policy to support only those with whose political views they agree. The PLO itself calls for the release of all political prisoners regardless of their views.

Mahmoud's trial begins on 26 February. His appeal for the trial to be public is scheduled immediately beforehand.

Pressure on the Israeli authorities should be stepped up, so please rush donations and resolutions to: Labour Movement Campaign for the Release of Mahmoud Masarwa, PO Box 524, London E2. Cheques payable to Mahmoud Masarwa Defence Campaign.

to thank the following: Tameside Nalgo £100, UCW Coventry Telecoms £5, Market Boswell LP £5, individual donations Coventry £10.

The TUC has also responded to appeals for intervention. Although not calling for Mahmoud's immediate release, Norman Willis on behalf of the TUC International Committee has written to the Israeli Embassy calling for "a fair, open and prompt trial".

Unfortunately, whilst branches of Nupe have given support, the union executive seems to be completely out of touch with the rest of the international labour movement. Tom Sawyer, deputy general secretary, claims that they cannot support the Campaign because of its alleged attacks on the PLO.

The references to the PLO were not a condemnation as such of the PLO,

New cuts threatened



PT leader 'Lula' addresses mass meeting.

Photo: Vera Z, Sao Paulo

THE NEW austerity measures announced in Brazil on 15 January were described by President Sarney as the "toughest ever introduced". They include: an attempt to dismantle wage indexing; a wage and price freeze; 17 per cent devaluation of the currency; massive cuts in the state sector including the closure of five ministries and 46 state companies and the dismissal of 60,000 civil servants, plus large-scale privatisation of state companies.

By Italo Sevastio

The 'summer plan', as it is called, also includes the introduction of a new currency, the 'new cruzado' which will entail the slashing of three zeros off the 'old cruzado' — the third change of currency in less than four years.

The plan is designed to contain a spiralling inflation rate which has reached almost 2,000 per cent. But economists fear that by raising interest rates and reducing real wages it could spark off an economic recession.

Some trade union leaders have already threatened to call a general strike. For this reason Congress, still in recess, will not vote on Sarney's measures for another month. The politicians will gauge public reaction before deciding whether to approve them. If they reject them, Sarney's economic policy will collapse.

In recent months Brazil has been hit by a wave of major strikes involving state employees, bank workers, teachers, steelworkers and others. Four steelworkers were shot dead by police last November, just before the municipal elections which saw the Workers' Party (PT) emerge as a major force nationwide, gaining over 11 million votes.

Several important industrial cities, including Sao Paulo with a population of 15 million, are now under PT administrations.

These latest and more severe austerity measures will further lower the right-wing government's popularity and increase the PT's chances of winning November's presidential elections.

However, Sarney's measures will also put the newly-installed PT

mayors before a stark choice: either administer the cuts, or refuse to implement them and mount a major campaign to oppose them.

It is possible that the PT leadership could argue that elections are just round the corner and, therefore, workers should place their hopes on a PT victory to produce a solution to their problems.

There is also a generalised feeling amongst the population that something urgent must be done to tackle inflation. The one thing that could let Sarney off the hook would be the lack of a clear lead against these measures from the leaders of the PT and the trade unions.

Brazil is the largest and most industrialised country in Latin America, with a population of over 140 million and some of the biggest car factories in the world. It has a giant working class. Sao Paulo is often referred to as the 'St. Petersburg of Latin America'. Armed with socialist policies the Brazilian labour movement will take its rightful place in the vanguard of the Latin American revolution.

China

Why were African students attacked?

THE recent anti-African demonstrations in China will have raised huge question marks in the minds of workers and youth the world over.

By a former student in Beijing

To boost their international standing the ruling 'Communist' Party have provided scholarships for thousands of African students. The repression of Stalinist society, however, has led to discrimination and open racial abuse against these students at all levels.

Under Mao Zedong the revolution destroyed landlordism and capitalism, but remained confined to China's national boundaries. The regime has perpetuated the national arrogance of China's imperial rulers.

Imperial China saw itself as the centre of the world. When Britain's George III sent a trade mission to China, he received a letter accepting Britain as a vassal state and instructing him to obey all imperial com-

mands.

Today foreigners are still called barbarians or 'devils'. Africans particularly suffer, especially as the Chinese word for Africa (feizhon) means 'evil continent'.

So when the 'Communist' regime sends out medical and construction teams to Third World countries, it is more as a gracious benefactor than as an equal. In the 1960s its propaganda taught that all the oppressed peoples looked to Chairman Mao and the Chinese people for liberation.

When I studied there all foreigners lived in separate dormitories and ate in separate canteens, much better than our Chinese colleagues who lived in appalling conditions. They were crowded eight to a room of 14 by 10 feet, with unhealthy sanitation, poor food and inadequate lighting.

The college authorities didn't like us to visit one another too much. Our visitors had to sign a book—a way of discouraging our Chinese friends, as they were afraid of being questioned later.

Most of them received only £7 a month, barely enough for basic living

expenses. Outside, society is dominated by officials who abuse their positions to get the best housing, jobs and goods for their relatives. So on graduation students often end up in badly-paid jobs unconnected with their qualifications.

The resulting frustrations can easily explode, as they did in 1986 with demands for better conditions and democracy. But, as the recent demonstrations show, it is easier for students to take out their frustrations on foreign students than on bureaucrats who are protected by the police.

Not only Chinese students are angry but workers and peasants too. Over the last year there have been some 150 unofficial strikes. These will continue as inflation — now 20 per cent — increases and conditions deteriorate, while the bureaucracy squander billions of yuan on armaments. The workers and peasants aspire to genuine socialist transformation and will increasingly turn their anger against the real obstacle: the corrupt bureaucratic regime.

Water cut off Canteen cuts cause misery

Dear Comrades,
Last week the Essex Water Board sent out 18,000 cut-off notices to its consumers. This follows 650 families who had their water disconnected last year.

In the Southend area alone 2,622 consumers, with a joint debt of £336,500, face disconnection. A large number of these are families living in private multiple occupation where the landlord, despite

making service charges, insists that tenants pay the water board directly.

In Basildon a further 865 consumers face disconnection. As with the growing rent and general rates arrears, these figures reflect the deprivation caused by the Tories' benefits cuts last April.

This misery is just a foretaste of what workers will be expected to endure when water is privatised.

Chris Webb, Basildon



Defend Labour's Youth

Dick Massey

Dear Comrades,

I applaud your articles on the Labour Party Young Socialists. I was a member of the LPYS for over six years but at our AGM I had to step down as secretary and leave because I am now 23. I have been forced to retire prematurely.

I am angry about the age limit and the removal of our regional and national conferences. The right wing are scared of the adventure, spirit and revolutionary rebelliousness of young people. Their ultimate plan is to turn the LPYS into a talking shop, full of middle-class yes-hand-raisers.

I have recently heard that *Red* magazine has now folded. It had nothing on the *Socialist Youth* paper which was making a profit. The Chester LPYS demand that they bring it back.

And what about Mr Neil Usher, the National Youth Officer? He must go! My LPYS branch nearly got a resolution through the constituency Labour Party calling on him to resign. It would have gone to the national executive calling for a ballot for an LPYS member to be elected as National Youth Officer.

I would call on all LPYS branches to send in resolutions calling for Usher's resignation and giving the LPYS back its rights, such as our annual conference.

Stephen Nield,
ex-secretary and
member Chester
LPYS

Dear Comrades,

I enclose a cheque for £50 as a contribution to the *Militant Fighting Fund* in memory of Dick Massey.

I worked with Dick in the late 1970s building support for *Militant*. I learned an enormous amount from him. His experience in the labour movement was an invaluable resource for younger comrades to learn from.

I am sure he will be missed by comrades in that area. Could *Militant* consider publishing extracts from his autobiography in the future?

Peter Lush,
Hendon South Labour
Party 1973-1978.

Dear Comrades,

At the local school canteen where my mum works, council cuts have dropped the staffing level from 12 women to seven, taking away three full-timers and two part-timers. And the hours of the part-timers are to be cut from 21 to 17.

The number of children has risen by 50 and is expected to rise by 40-50 children at Easter. They do meals for two other schools and three nurseries.

The amount of heavy lifting my mum has to do has caused her health problems. Now she is expected to do more in an even faster time. Tension, she says, is growing rapidly between the women. Recently she was nearly physically assaulted by a usually placid woman.

Mum also says the standard of hygiene is bound to drop because it is impossible to do all the important jobs with so little time and few women.

Recently my mum was suffering with a bad cold. I asked her if she was going into work. Her reply was: "I have to. There are a few of us with colds and illness, but none of us can have time off. The children would never get their meals. There is just no cover at all."

I have two children at the school and being a single parent I rely on the school meals for their nutrition and health. For a lot of

families school meals ease the pressure of bringing up children by knowing that they are getting at least one hot healthy meal a day.

But for how long? Do we have to wait till there is food poisoning or even the death of a child before the government sits up and takes notice and the cuts in education and child provision stop?

Lynn Worthington,
Wythenshawe,
Manchester

Letters

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

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

Great youth page

Notting Hill Militant made my new year

Dear Comrades,

The Notting Hill Three Defence Campaign was set up by three Labour Party Young Socialist (LPYS) members who were wrongfully arrested and badly beaten up by the police. This resulted in 15 separate injuries including a broken nose. Since the arrest, Dylan Meale has been further charged with assaulting two police officers. (See last week's *Militant*).

We would like to bring to your attention the deepest urgency of the need for

donations from the labour movement. We are appealing to all trade unions, Labour Parties, LPYS branches and individuals to send donations towards barristers' costs, etc.

This is an on-going battle against the Metropolitan police and we have to win it. Thanks very much comrades. I hope you will give generously.

Dylan Meale,
Paul Couchman and
Richard Mangan,
Notting Hill Three
Defence Campaign

Dear Comrades,

In spite of poor health, miseries of mortgage rises, murder of NHS (promised), poll tax and water and British Rail privatisation (expected), what made my new year for me? Getting my *Militant* newspaper!

Jeremy Birch's *Adoration of the market*, Ben Eastop's *Profits first and safety last*, the brilliant cartoon (as usual) by Alan Hardman - plus the sale of 27 papers here in Sittingbourne -

made the beginning of 1989 bearable for me.

I hope 1989 (the 25th year of *Militant*) will be the year it becomes twice-weekly. The workers need this paper. It is now the only true socialist paper printed. As one young fella said to me: "I'll have one of them - It ain't got the TV or pin-ups, but it's got the bloody truth!"

Anne Ursell,
Sittingbourne Labour
Party

Dear Comrades,

Congratulations on the publication of the *Militant* youth page in the first issue of *Militant* for 1989! Youth comrades need a clearly identifiable page where our views can be put forward. Keep it up!

Bermondsey Youth
Trade Union Rights
Campaign

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.

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PLASTIC SLEEVES for *Militant* sellers in all weathers, 30p each, ten or more 20p each.

Available from Fighting Fund department, 3-13 Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB. For all orders add five per cent post and packing. Cheques and postal orders payable to *Militant*

Militant International Review

THERE HAS been a very favourable response to the latest *Militant International Review*. Many areas have already surpassed their previous highest sales. Special mention must go to Merseyside, with over 250 already sold, Paisley, Nottingham, Southwark and Lewisham.

In Manchester and Lancashire a special pre-Christmas push was made to visit and sell the *MIR* to all regular readers of *Militant*. Every area should organise a similar drive over the weekend of 4-5 February, selling the *MIR* and the four

titles published by Fortress Books (see below).

Trestle table bookstalls should be set up on every Saturday morning *Militant* street sale - complete with plastic sheeting and string to allow for the weather!

Having sold the *MIR* and the Fortress books why not organise Marxist discussion groups to examine the issues raised in them? In this way the full potential of our publications can be realised and the financial base secured for our future plans.



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Rob Sewell: Germany from Revolution to Counter-Revolution, £2.50 - from us, £2.00

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Grant: The Rise and Fall of the Communist International, 60p

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£7.95.

Trotsky: Fascism - What it is and how to fight it, 80p.

Claire Doyle: France 1968 - Month of Revolution, £1.95

Peter Taaffe and Tony Mulhearn: Liverpool - a City that Dared to Fight, £3.95 (£9.95 hardback).

Benn: Out of the Wilderness - diaries 1963-1967, £7.99.

The Other Face of Terror - mole inside Europe's neo-Nazi Network, £3.50

Please add 25 per cent for postage and packing for orders under £5, 10 per cent £5-£10. Over £10 post free.

Cheques to World Socialist Books, 3-13, Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB

Chemical weapons hypocrisy exposed

"THE HELICOPTERS came at eight in the evening of 25 August and dropped gas on Nerva. Lots of people died there...Everyone is dead in Sheikhan, women, children, livestock and crops..." These were the haunting words of Kurdish refugees after the massacre of thousands at the hands of the Iraqi armed forces last autumn. This attack brought home the full horror of chemical warfare.

By Paul Wilson

In contrast to the hysteria being generated by the US and Britain against Libya and its alleged chemical weapons plant, Britain could only express "grave concern" at Iraq. There were no protests, no accusations, no F-14 jets shooting at Iraqi planes.

This in itself demonstrates that using chemical weapons does not horrify the main capitalist powers. The vicious dictatorship of Iraq defends the capitalists' oil interests in the Middle East whilst Gaddafi's Libya is unreliable.

An international conference was held recently to curb chemical weapons; United Nations resolution 620 condemns their use. But can such measures scrap these terrible weapons?

Unfortunately this century is littered with noble intentions that have come to nothing.

In 1899 the Hague Declaration prohibited the use of gas warfare. This did not prevent there being over one million gas casualties in the first world war and the use of arsenic smokebombs by British planes against the Russian Red Army in 1919.

The pressure of the working class for change and its desire for peace led to the signing of the Geneva Protocol in 1925 between many nations.

But this agreement only condemned the 'first use' of chemical weapons: research and stockpiling of weapons could continue. Despite being a signatory, it took the US 50 years to ratify even these half-hearted measures!

New and more lethal chemicals were developed. The I G Farben company



Victims of chemical warfare: father and child in a Kurdish village bombed by Iraq's helicopters.

discovered nerve gas, 15 times more deadly than mustard gas. They later produced Zyklon B, the gas responsible for the murder of hundreds of thousands in Hitler's death camps.

Uninhabitable

Britain experimented with biological weapons. In 1941 the island of Gruinard, off the Scottish coast, was infected with Anthrax, and is still uninhabitable today.

The Vietnam war was the greatest demonstration of the use of chemical weapons in the modern period. In 1967 it was estimated that there was enough anti-riot CS gas stockpiled in Vietnam to kill the whole population within a day if it were all released.

The American military

sought to destroy the Vietcong bases by destroying the environment. Agent Blue was used against crops and Agent Orange against forests. One-eighth of the whole of Vietnam was sprayed, resulting in wholesale starvation.

The rubber yield fell by 40 per cent between 1960 and 1967. The physical side effects on humans of these sprays were cancers and birth abnormalities. This was the government that condemned a Libyan chemical plant!

The American anti-war movement forced the US military to put chemical weapons into the back-ground for a while but all that changed with Ronald Reagan's election. He demanded \$8 billion to be spent on developing chemical weapons. Spending has recently been run-

ning at over \$1 billion per year.

Today's chemical weapons make treaties impossible. The US's new plaything is the 'binary' weapon. Here, two relatively safe chemicals are stockpiled and then loaded into separate chambers in a missile or shell. It is only when the weapon is fired that the chemicals mix and form a deadly weapon.

Imperialism

Proof of chemical weapon production is therefore impossible as any advanced chemical industry in the world can produce the ingredients for such a 'cocktail', claiming complete innocence.

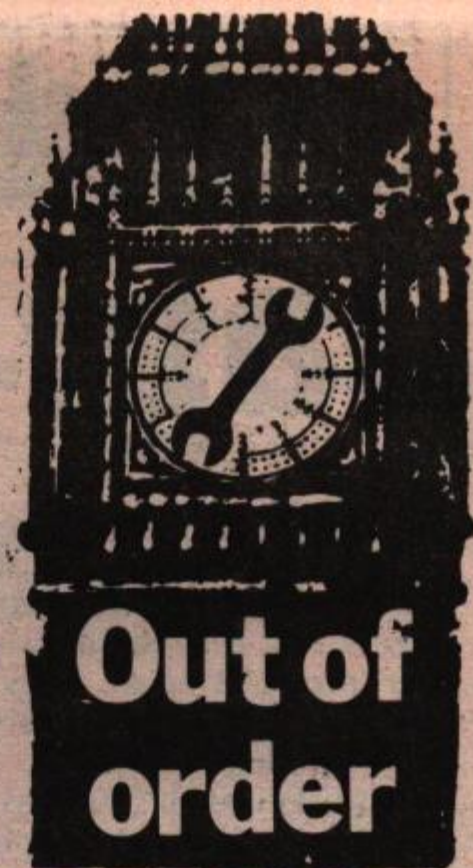
The history of chemical weapons agreements is a history of broken promises.

Workers internationally can place no faith in any new solemn declaration signed by imperialist gangsters and by the ruling elites in the East.

The scientific knowledge of chemistry and biology does not mean drugs to stamp out disease under capitalism, only more ruthless methods of slaughter.

The conscious infection of 'the enemy' with malaria and other diseases are now part of the military's plans in time of war: yet for decades we have been trying to stamp these diseases out!

Such mad logic can only end with the end of this system and the development of a harmonious world plan of socialist production where chemicals are put to their proper, humane use.



Out of
order

Satanic Verses

THE PUBLICATION of Salman Rushdie's novel, *The Satanic Verses*, has caused deep controversy amongst the Muslim community.

Some Muslims in Bradford have called for the book to be banned. Copies of the book were publicly burned at a demonstration in the city. WH Smith in Bradford originally withdrew the book from their shelves.

But some MPs in their desire to be seen as protecting the Asian community, have demanded the extension of the blasphemy laws to cover the Muslim religion. The blasphemy laws as they stand have been used by reactionaries like Mary Whitehouse in effect to impose censorship.

Pat Wall, MP for Bradford North, has issued a statement in response to several letters he has received from Muslim groups.

"I've opposed racial attacks on Muslims and their religion for many years and I was one of the few public figures in Britain to denounce the campaign against halal meat," the statement reads.

"I would of course defend your right to be sharply critical and even deplore the book.

"As a socialist MP I defend the right of people to live according to their beliefs and to practice their religions without interference.

"However, Britain has recently been reeling over the attempt by this government to ban the book *Spycatcher*. The outrage at this attempted repression ran deep and in any case the ban was not effective and resulted in a colossal increase in its sales internationally.

"I also feel that the proponents of a ban will see it rebound on themselves. The very right to expect toleration and respect is threatened and undermined by those who seek to proscribe any views they may be offended by. Seeking to ban this book would very likely result in other groups demanding action in retaliation against Muslims and the Muslim religion, with racist repercussions.

"Religious belief is for the individual concerned. I will defend their rights to practice and have respect for their religion. I trust you will respect my view on democratic rights."

Frank Field's nightmare

"THERE IS a world shortage of Frank Fields"! So says Murdoch's *Sunday Times*, which also described Birkenhead's right-wing Labour MP as "a very welcome presence in these pages today". They see it as their mission to defend Field from the possibility of deselection by Birkenhead Labour Party members.

By Richard Venton

They even make an appeal for the SLD not to stand against Field if or when he brazenly opposes the democratically selected Labour

candidate in a by-election. By your friends we shall know you, Frank!

Contemptuous

But Frank seems confident that he has the backing of even higher powers than Mr Murdoch! In a local church magazine he declares: "We need to rediscover confidence in believing that we've been given the greatest message that mankind has ever been given - and act accordingly".

Is this what guides him in his contemptuous treatment of Labour

Party members who won for him his position (and his substantial salary) as an MP?

In the same interview Field displays his support for Tory policies - this time on the opting-out legislation for schools.

Contrary to Labour's traditions of campaigning for a separation of church and state and for education whilst defending the right to religious worship, Field favours more church schools: "The opting-out possibility from state education offers an enormous opportunity for the church to go on the march. A church needs to aim to have a

primary school in every parish."

This of course would reintroduce divisive selective education as well as reintroducing sectarian divisions in areas like Merseyside where the Labour movement has fought hard to overcome them.

So concerned is Frank that he confesses to a nightmare involving "waking up as a parish priest with no school. How would I go about my business?" Birkenhead Labour Party members may wonder if he ever dreams of waking up as a careerist MP without a seat.

Jag: 'an offer we can't afford'

JAGUAR CAR workers are set to ballot on whether to take industrial action over management's pay offer of four per cent this year and four per cent next. They have already voted to reject it by an overwhelming margin.

A worker at the Browns Lane plant in Coventry spoke to *Militant* about the background to this rejection – the enormous pressure which has built up on the workforce.

"Sickness is a big issue at the moment. In their drive for profit, there are cases where they've refused to accept doctors' sick notes. They've even sent letters to the long-term sick, asking them to make an appointment with the company doctor. It's as if they're trying to frighten everybody into thinking 'I've got to come back to work or I lose my job'.

"One day, a bloke was feeling unwell and went to the factory surgery. 'We think you've got mumps,' he was told. But he was refused permission to go home and told to return to his job. Mumps is a contagious disease!

"The markets and exchange rates are really bad. One week it's the dollar, next week it's the Deutschmark. Every time the exchange rates change sales are affected and, as the cars have to be altered depending on which country they're destined for, our job descriptions change as well. For example at one time 74 per cent of sales were for the US, now we've just been told it's to drop to 54 per cent.

"Last April they speeded up the track to cope with extra demand, they said. We virtually went on strike then and were only stopped because we were promised an increase in the bonus – which we never achieved anyway!

Survive

"Then, only eight weeks after we got the higher track speeds sorted out, Egan announced a big slash in profits, which meant 1,200 redundancies and a cutback in production! 'What's going on?' we were asking each other. Incidentally, although the workforce is shrinking, the number of foremen is actually increasing!

"In order to pay for my holiday, I had gone on nights, which gave me an extra £45 a week. Men on nights with families would come home after work, give their kids breakfast and take them to school because often the partner had a full-time daytime job. With house prices and mortgages where they are now a family can only survive if both partners can work.

"The production cut meant that the nightshift was cut. We were given one week's notice of being put back on days. Imagine what that means for a family man. He has one week to work out new domestic arrangements and to work out a budget on £45 less per week!

"Some families were further hit when one of the partners found they had no alternative but to



Car workers face increasing pressure as the bosses step up the drive for profits.

give up work so that the kids could be looked after in the mornings.

"In Coventry you're looking these days at a £40,000 mortgage, even for a first-time buyer. The repayments work out at about £80 a week. I knew one of the blokes on nights who bawled his eyes out in front of management, begging them not to let the chop fall on him by putting him on days. He'd only heard that the nightshift was being cut – he'd not even been told that he was one of those affected. That's the strain some

are under.

"I reckon that since September alone the average mortgage repayment for a Jag worker has increased by £60 per month. Everybody's saying to me that the deal we're being offered doesn't cover this increase, let alone provide any new money. It's alright saying that Jaguar workers are highly paid. But we gear our lifestyles to our wages, just like anybody else would.

"Nobody can afford to go on strike because they'll fall behind on the repayments – that That-

cher told them to get! But even more so they can't afford to accept this deal either.

Bluff

"The unions are looking for ways to prevent strikes from taking place but management seem to want a strike. They've told our leaders: 'Only 70 per cent rejected the offer in the ballot. That means that the other 30 per cent don't want to take action.' It's as if they want to call our bluff."

Ilea

six teachers are victimised

THE FORCED movement of six teachers from Highbury Quadrant school in north London marks yet another shameful chapter from the 'socialist' Inner London Education Authority (Ilea).

By Bob Sulatycki,
Ilea, personal capacity

In their effort to out-Tory the Tories they drafted in temporary and less experienced teachers as replacements at the start of the term.

This has undermined completely the "delivery of the curriculum" at the school – precisely the crime for which the teachers stand accused.

Highbury Quadrant parents, who were previously overwhelmingly happy with the old teaching staff, are now, ironically, extremely dissatisfied. This is despite the rumoured £20,000 spent on maintenance and cleaning at the school since the start of the term.

But Ilea's actions were not really about improving the quality of education at the school. They were aimed at striking a blow at teacher trade unionism and appeasing the Tories.

The authority's actions followed a campaign in the gutter press over a school assembly commemorating Nelson Mandela's 70th birthday. Such an assembly was

unremarkable. In fact many were held in London, conforming with Ilea's anti-racist policy but, unbeknown to its employees, this anti-racist policy has changed somewhat along the line. Ilea capitulated before a hostile press campaign and sent a letter to the Department of Education and Science (DES) attacking the assembly.

Ironically, school inspectors sent in by the DES concluded last November that the school needed "a period of stability" – hardly a recommendation to move out experienced teachers.

Mismanagement

Yet Ilea, by telling the postholders that they were collectively responsible for the difficulties and therefore had to be moved, did not even give the teachers the chance to hear what they were responsible for, let alone to reply.

Inconveniently for Ilea, the school governors have fully supported the teaching staff, recognising that the school's problems are rooted in Ilea mismanagement. The school has had seven heads or acting heads in three years.

The teaching staff were certainly not responsible for the difficulties in any way. Indeed, they have held the school together.

This vicious, unwarranted

attack on the teachers is linked to an overall strategy of dealing with schools 'at risk'. The message to the Ilea workforce is clearly: "Highbury Quadrant first, you next, unless you watch your step."

However, an unpublished report by a senior staff inspector which Ilea used seems to identify "staff militancy" as the real reason for the movement of these teachers.

The role of the NUT in this episode has been extremely weak. Instead of supporting the staff through industrial action spread across London, they have not even called a one-day strike. This is simply not good enough. Even their boycott of the vacant posts has now been lifted.

Unfortunately, the union's prevarication has strengthened Ilea's hand and it will be much more difficult to secure the reinstatement of the Highbury Quadrant teachers at their original school.

Nonetheless it is crucial that this campaign is continued because it has such wide implications for teachers everywhere.

NUT members must pass resolutions demanding support for these teachers and send them to the NUT and Inner London Teachers' Association. Labour Party members should invite speakers to their branches.

Calling all Trade Unionists! P&O Strike Anniversary – One Year On

Saturday 4 February 7.30am,
Picket Line, Eastern Docks, Dover.

Speakers at 9am include Brian Ingham (*Militant*)
and Terry Burkett (victimised miner).

Rally, 2pm, Eastern Docks, Dover.

Speakers include Sam McCluskie (NUS), John Prescott MP.
Benefit evening, 7pm, Dover Town Hall.

Save Walton hospital

THE SEFTON area health authority has agreed to close Walton general hospital – then to 'consult' with those affected. Its facilities and staff are to be merged into Fazakerley hospital, over two miles away. The authority claims that the one site could provide the same service at a lower cost.

Mike McEwan, Cohse shop steward and secretary of the joint staff-side unions, poured scorn on this claim at a lobby of the health authority where the proposals were approved.

He said: "At least 260 beds – approximately 10 wards – will be lost if the sites are merged, if not more. They said that 'only' 50 jobs will be lost through natural wastage though we don't believe them. With that many beds going there are bound to be many more lost.

"We haven't been consulted as promised. They decided to close Walton hospital first, then carry out the consultation exercise. The staff are unanimous against closure."

The campaign against closure kicked off with 150 lobbying the area health authority at short notice. The unions are meeting this week to discuss their strategy and will be working with the local LPYS.

Messages of support to Mike McEwan, Cohse shop steward, c/o Walton hospital, Rice Lane, Liverpool.

By Josie Aitman

Shopworkers' union set to turn left

THE SHOPWORKERS' union Usdaw has just entered one of the most important election periods in its history with the start, this week, of voting for the union's presidency and sixteen executive council seats.

By George Williamson,
Chair,
Udaw Broad Left

The presidential election is being contested by the Usdaw Broad Left who have nominated Audrey Wise MP for the president and are increasingly confident of winning this key position from the incumbent right winger.

The election will be hard fought, but an added importance has been injected by the fact that nominations have been called for to elect the general and deputy general secretaries (DGS). The election for DGS is taking place because of the retirement of the current deputy. The

Udaw Broad Left is supporting Bill Connor, Usdaw national officer, who stood for general secretary in 1985 and was runner-up.

The election for general secretary, though, has come as a surprise to most activists in Usdaw.

Under the Tories' recent trade union laws, this position would have to be re-elected by June 1990 by a secret postal ballot.

However, the Usdaw general secretary has found a loophole, whereby if the position is re-elected before July of this year, he can avoid a secret postal ballot and hold the election on the basis of the branch block vote system instead.

When the DGS announced his early retirement, the general secretary quickly brought forward the election for his own position to run concurrently with this election.

The executive council decided just before Christmas to open nominations for both positions - leaving

union activists with virtually no time to consider an alternative candidate to the present general secretary, and many are angry at the unseemly haste in his actions to secure another five years in office, without a proper election where the membership could judge him on his term of office to date.

However, the Broad Left is confident that its candidates for both president and DGS will be elected.

Confident

Voting has now commenced for president and executive council and will continue until 27 February. Usdaw members will receive ballot papers through the post and should return their votes for Audrey Wise MP by this date. The election for DGS will begin in mid-February and members must attend their Usdaw branch meetings to cast

their votes for Bill Connor.

A victory for the Broad Left in the elections for these two positions will be an enormous step forward for all Usdaw members. It would mean an end to the right-wing stranglehold on the senior positions in the union over the past 40 years.

It would be a step towards turning Usdaw into a fighting, campaigning union which is prepared to support its members in struggle. The implications for the wider movement too are important. It would mean that Usdaw would move towards support for socialist policies in the TUC and the Labour Party.

All Broad Left supporters must make sure that the support for these and other left candidates standing in the union elections is maximised over the course of the next six or seven weeks.

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

A tale of two Ridleys

THIRTY ONE people died in the escalator fire at Kings Cross in 1987. After the official inquiry admitted that management cost-cutting was to blame, the chair of London Underground Ltd, Dr Tony Ridley, resigned his position.

But he hasn't been punished - or slunk away in shame. Far from it. He has been made joint managing director of the Channel Tunnel project where he may earn even more than the £60,000 year he got on the tube. He has also kept his perks from the LUL car drive offices and may receive a pay out.

A rail worker can come in late one day, get the

sack and never work again. The boss who lets the system degenerate until 31 people are fried is allowed to resign.

Marxists don't wish to crucify anyone for a mistake but Ridley is obviously being rewarded for carrying the can when Nicholas Ridley, John Mitchell and Paul Channon should have followed him out. The Tories' huge cuts in subsidies for maintenance caused the fire.

Can workers or passengers feel safe in an underwater tunnel with people like the two Ridleys in charge of safety?

By an underground worker

Newham school strike

HUNDREDS OF teachers, school students and parents marched last Tuesday in protest at Newham council's plans to close schools. The teachers struck for half a day.

By John Hird

Many of the school students joined the school students' union which is having its inaugural meeting at 3pm on Sunday 29 January at Durning Hall, Forest Gate.

According to Imran, a student from Stratford school: "This is a direct attack on our education. I am appalled that the

Labour Council is supporting Tory plans and doing their dirty work when they've been elected to oppose and defend our education. So far we've been doing all the fighting. I want unity amongst everyone. I implore all pupils from all schools to unite. We have nothing to lose but Tory cuts."

When protestors were finally allowed into the council chamber they heard one councillor attack teachers' "vested interests" - their own jobs! While some tried to justify the cuts on educational grounds, another was more honest: "This decision is financial".



Hull buses

THE TWO major bus operators in Hull are both continuing their attacks on the trade unions.

East Yorkshire Motor Services (EYMS), after disciplining over 30 drivers for supporting a sacked shop steward in a recent dispute, are now threatening legal action against the branch secretary Colin Souter and the TGWU over the original ballot which led to the two-week lockout.

At Kingston-upon-Hull City Transport (KHCT) in the run up to the annual wage negotiations the branch secretary, Alan Middleton, has been

summoned to a disciplinary hearing on 6 February to face charges all relating to articles published in the union branch newsletter.

Alan is already on a final warning after a series of disputes following privatisation and pressure must now be exerted on the six Labour members on the board of directors.

These attacks are now a concerted effort to smash the effectiveness of trade union organisation at these two bus companies and must be defeated.

By Alistair Tice

Confed claim

LEADERS OF the Engineering Employers' Federation (EEF) have said that any cut in the working week for engineering workers will have to be "phased in over three or four years".

And yet the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (Confed) have made an unprecedented offer to the EEF to radically restructure the agreement covering pay, working practices, collective bargaining agreements and hours. This is a desperate attempt by the union leaders to accommodate the bosses.

Far from offering a radical plan of action to the two million workers

in the engineering industry to secure a 35-hour week and a substantial pay increase, the Confed will be allowing the employers to call all the tunes.

Confed leaders, and in particular Bill Jordan, seem to be saying that they will accept a three or four year pay deal. In return they will be expected to do the bosses' dirty work for them.

For example, the EEF want a no-strike agreement if the deal goes through. This has to be resisted strongly by union members.

The Confed leaders must fight for implementation of a 35-hour week this year along with a one-year pay deal.

Social security jobs fight

GOVERNMENT PLANS to computerise the social security system will mean the loss of thousands of jobs. Indeed, according to the National Audit Office, 20,186 jobs will go to pay for the £1.7 billion cost of this 'operational strategy'.

Faced with such an enormous threat, unity amongst staff in the Department of Social Security (DSS) is crucial. The fight to save jobs must be linked to the campaign against the closure of 21 London DSS offices. CPSA and Nucs members showed their anger at this announcement last week by walking out at a number of offices.

The section (SEC) and national union leaderships must give a direction to this anger if thousands of jobs are not to disappear.

Selective

The 'Communist' Party-influenced Broad Left 84 leadership of the CPSA in the DSS have adopted a programme of selective and regional rolling strike action.

They will ballot for a period of paid selective action in offices in the North West and Scotland (the first areas where the operational strategy is to be introduced) and then a series

of unpaid strikes around the regions on a week by week rolling basis.

Militant supporters will be arguing for a massive 'yes' vote in the ballot. However, this tactic is the very same one which was rejected by CPSA members at a special conference last July on the grounds that it would be insufficient to force the DSS to back down.

It is the same plan as that used by the right-wing national leadership in the 1987 pay campaign - a plan which led to the collapse of that battle.

If this tactic does not succeed in forcing a retreat

then we must demand the SEC carries out conference policy. This would mean a national one-day strike and a short period of selective strikes in the pilot offices to build towards national all-out strike action.

We are not opposed to new technology. On the contrary, we should demand that it is used to abolish delays for claimants and generally to provide a better service without a massive blood-letting of jobs.

By Tony Church,
CPSA DSS section,
personal capacity

Communication Workers' Broad Left
3pm, 28 January,
Brighthelm Centre, Brighton.
All UCW members welcome.

Militant

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth 30p

Inside

- Football ID cards - page 7
- Poll tax news - page 6
- USSR earthquake - page 3

CPSA: Say no to YTS

CPSA MEMBERS are voting on whether to accept Youth Training Schemes (YTS) into the civil service. Civil service workers understand that YTS is a cheap labour scheme, an exploitation of youth and are increasingly saying no to YTS.

But disgracefully the union newspaper *Red Tape* carried a banner headline 'Yes to YTS', which would possibly have made Eric Hammond blush. Right wing general secretary John Ellis claims that the deal is 95 per cent conference policy.

As one worker responded: "John Ellis is quite right. Unfortunately the conference policy that the agreement meets is that of the Tory Party!" Following their election in May 1988 the right wing national executive immediately called off the YTS campaign as "an act of goodwill".

Members were told to sit back and admire the negotiators who after their negotiations produced...a YTS scheme. As usual the leadership of the right wing has failed to win concessions. Their weakness invites attack.

Union policy which demands trade union rates of pay, a guaranteed job for trainees, high quality training, additional staff to provide training and supervision and trade union approval and agreement, was ignored.

In my department the union found a leaked

By Larry O'Callaghan,
chair, Home Office
section, personal
capacity

management circular on YTS. The circular made it clear that YTS would be "a flexible resource" and that trainees would be allowed to do the work of vacant posts.

YTS was rejected by CPSA in 1984. It is even more imperative that it is again rejected in 1989 with the background of government legislation which means that 16 and 17-year olds will lose unemployment benefit if they don't go on schemes.

Civil service workers are asking if the deal is so excellent, why does it not stand or fall on its merits. Instead the NEC use scare tactics stolen from the Tory government 'accept the offer or face endless strikes'.

This message even appears on ballot papers, such is their desperation. The truth is whilst membership strength may well prove necessary, at this stage a massive rejection by union members must be used to renegotiate the scheme, this time based on CPSA policy.

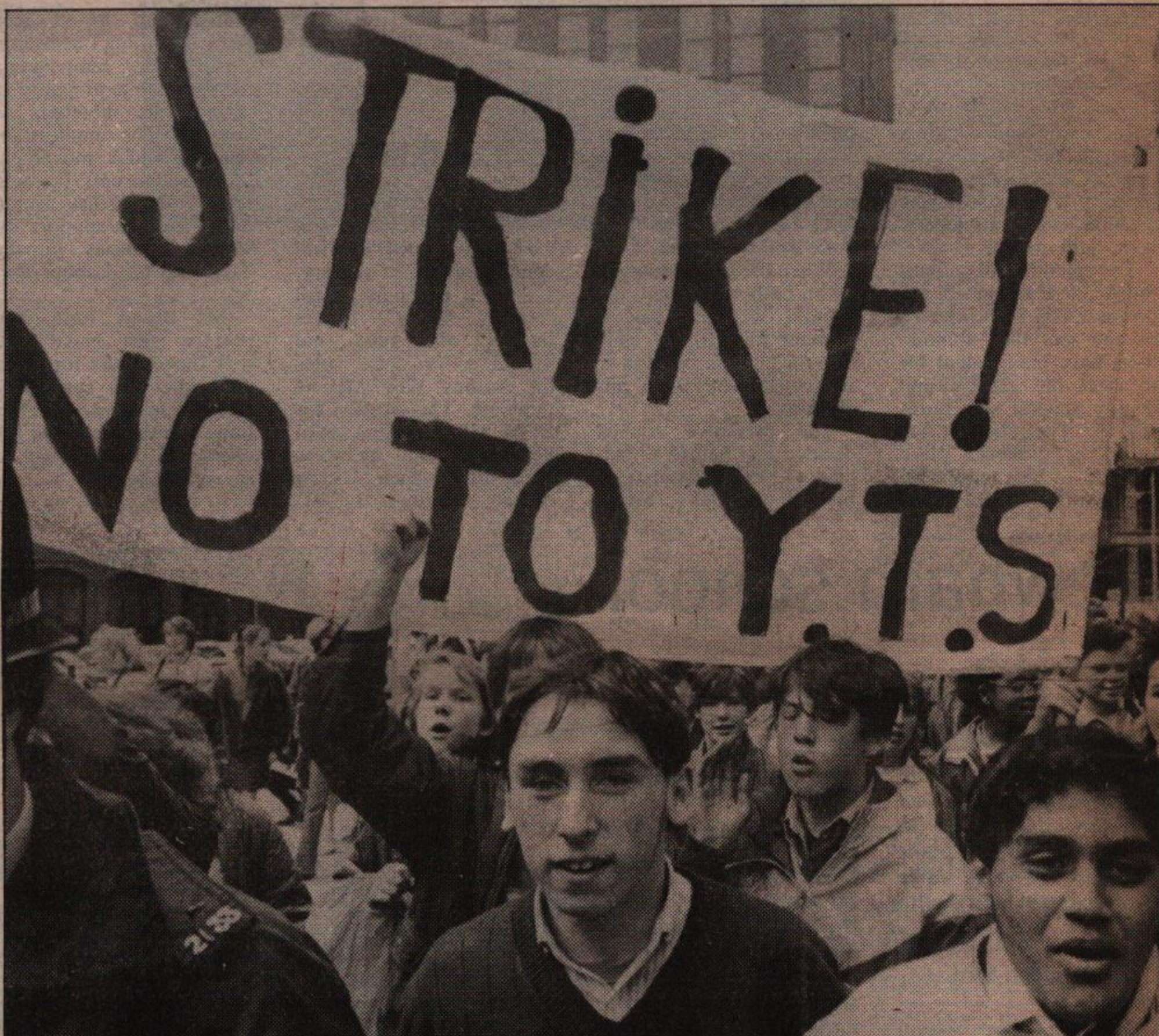


Photo: John Smith (IFL)

School students demonstrate against YTS. Civil servants should fight for proper jobs for youth, and to stop their own working conditions being undermined.

Unions have a responsibility to our young people at school - to give them a permanent job with trade union rates of pay. They also have a responsibility to fight for real jobs with career prospects and a decent living wage for their own members.

YTS must be rejected.

"AT 25 years old, I am typical of thousands of young civil servants left with less than £5,000 a year. I take home about £370 a month. These wages are low enough. If they bring in YTS, wages will be driven down further."

I was really shocked to discover that the union had negotiated YTS without even getting the guarantee of trade

union rights and rates of pay and with no permanent job at the end of it.

I would advise all civil servants to vote no in the coming ballot. We need proper jobs for young people in the civil service with decent pay."

A young CPSA member from
Caerphilly

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- 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.
- 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 a nuclear holocaust.
- Workers' management of nationalised industries. These should be run on the basis of one-third of the places on the management board coming from the unions in the industry, one third from the TUC representing the working class as a whole and one third from the government.
 - Nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies, including the banks and insurance companies which control 80 per cent to 85 per cent of the economy. This should be through an Enabling Bill in Parliament with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need.
 - A socialist plan of production democratically drawn up and implemented by committees involving trade unions, shop stewards, the unwaged and small business people.
 - Opposition to the capitalist Common Market the EEC. For a socialist United States of Europe as a step towards a World Socialist Federation.