

Militant

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Save Our Schools

SCHOOL STUDENTS are fighting back; teachers are fighting back; parents are incensed. The Tories are devastating our education system, and they must be stopped.

Tory education secretary, Kenneth Baker, has taken away the right of teachers to negotiate their own wages and conditions, unless they are prepared to voluntarily give up the freedom to strike. **No wonder the teachers' strikes have continued.**

Baker has dictatorially imposed on teachers his own pay and conditions package. And for this teachers will be compelled to cover for absent colleagues, work longer hours and be subject to increased arbitrary powers in the hands of the head teachers. **No wonder morale amongst teachers is at rock bottom, which must adversely affect the pupils.**

The Tories have deliberately picked on the Inner London Education Authority, which has been given no extra money to fund Baker's package. They are out to get ILEA because up to now it has achieved relatively high

spending, staffing and conditions. But in the face of these cuts, the ex-left Labour leadership of ILEA has capitulated. It is savagely cutting teacher numbers in London. Teachers who ILEA admits are "doing valuable work", are being forcibly redeployed to other schools. **No wonder London school students are striking to keep their teachers and to protect the standard of their education.**

Amidst this chaos, the government is trying to introduce the new GCSE exams on the cheap. Three quarters of schools have received less than 50% of the necessary funding for these courses, according to the teaching union, NAS.UWT. Money is being filched from library funds and playing fields to pay for the new exams.

The Tories are creating havoc in our schools. And just on this issue alone, with a fighting socialist alternative for education, the Labour Party could be forging ahead in the polls.

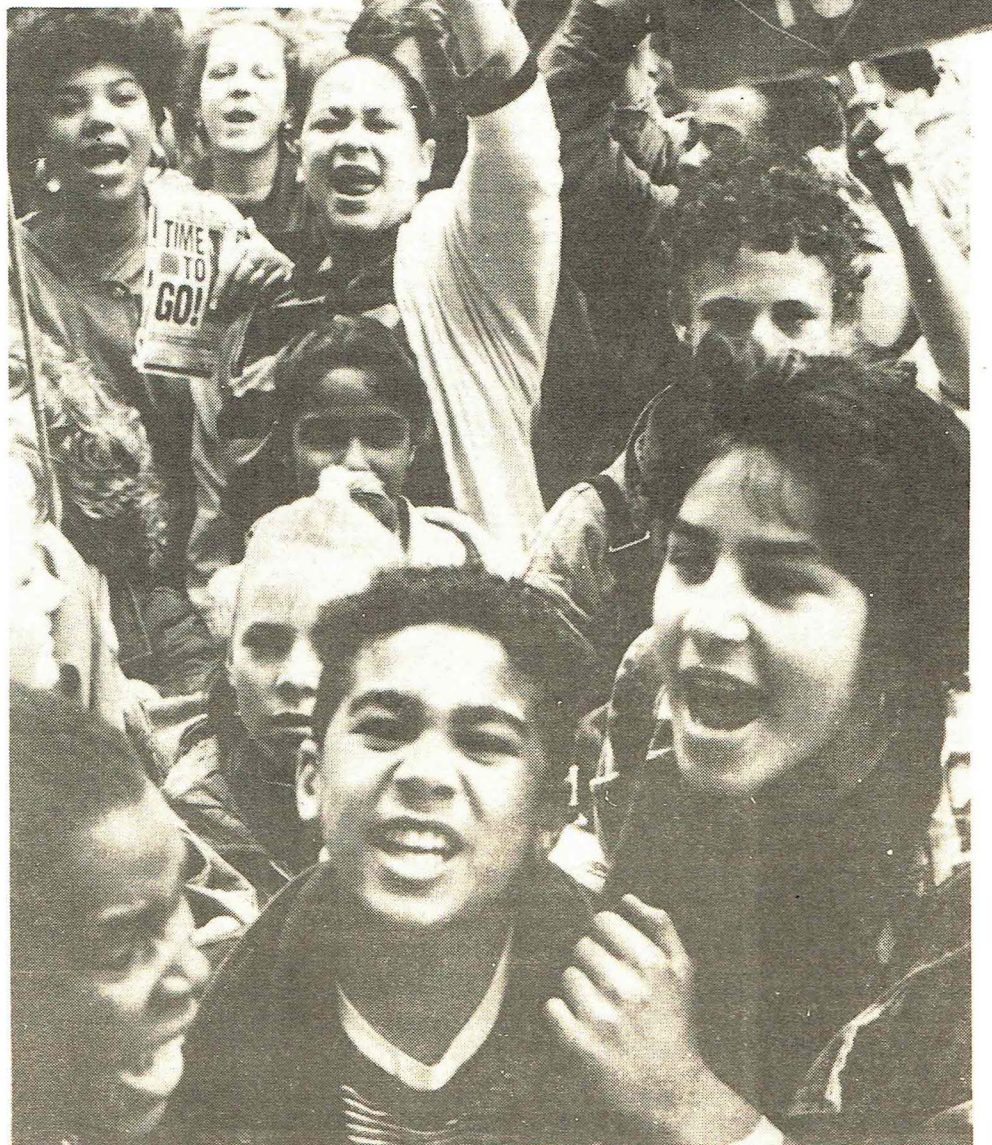
Labour must unreserved-

ly back the militant action of the school students and the teachers. The shameful threats from ILEA to discipline teachers who encourage school students to join demonstrations for their future, must be withdrawn. Labour school governors and Labour education authorities must prevent any victimisation of teachers or students.

In conjunction with further mass action against Baker by the teaching unions, Labour local authorities should refuse to implement his diktat, and not discipline teachers who refuse to cover.

If Labour campaigns to restore all Tory cuts, and to dramatically boost education spending on training and employing more teachers, on school building and equipment, it could win enthusiastic support. If it gives the commitment to return basic trade union rights to teachers, and to recognise the rights of school students to organise and take action, it could cement their support.

Labour has the opportunity to really teach the Tories a lesson: 'interfere with the free education system that the working class fought for generations to establish, and you will get a caning on election day.'



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Militant

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How Labour can win

LABOUR PARTY members are alarmed. In by-elections and opinion polls, support is sinking perilously close to the level of 1983. The party is haunted by the horrifying prospect of a third Thatcher government.

Yet, as Eric Heffer pointed out at the weekend, "Labour can win the general election—but it can only do so if it stops retreating from socialist policies which were agreed at Labour's annual conference, and if it totally ignores advice from a hostile press which in reality does not want Labour to win".

The fall in Labour support stems not from any revival for the Tories, whose support is remaining static. But the Alliance is undoubtedly gaining at Labour's expense. The Labour leadership have been unable to convince many uncommitted voters that they have the policies and the commitment to make a fundamental change in their lives.

That is the price the Labour leaders are paying for not heeding Eric Heffer's advice. Under the pressure of the Tory press, policies have been watered down. Specific commitments demanded by party conference have been abandoned in favour of vague talk of "a plan for national revival".

Assurances that all Tory anti-union laws will be repealed and that surcharges and disqualifications of Labour councillors will be reversed have been refused.

A guaranteed job for all who have been on a YTS scheme has been dismissed as 'impossibilist'. Even the removal of Cruise missiles has been put in doubt by Kinnock's willingness to keep them while any super-power talks are taking place.

Yet Hattersley has promised to reverse the income tax cuts in Lawson's budget. The whole programme has been pared down so that it can be fitted into the narrow confines of a capitalist system which has been proved incapable of providing even the most basic needs of working people.

Rather than concentrate on spelling out what a Labour government will be able to do, the leadership have concentrated on warning how little can be expected given the economic climate in which they will be governing.

They have been seduced by the idea that it is their 'image' which matters. Every action has been judged by its impact in the media. The result has been a disaster. They have ignored the obvious fact that an 'image' depends upon a sympathetic medium to promote it.

In Britain, the media is owned by and serves the interests of the rich and powerful. They will use all their resources to keep out of power any Labour government which threatens to challenge them. They have embarked on a dirty campaign to force Kinnock to abandon any radical measures.

And he has obliged; only to find that far from congratulating him, the press has turned more hostile than ever. They have kept up a relentless barrage of lies and distortions about 'loony left' Labour councils. They collaborated with the American press to discredit the admittedly futile attempt to reassure President Reagan that the party's non-nuclear defence policy will not undermine NATO.

Having got him to dilute his policies and therefore lose support, the press are now trying to write off Labour's election chances.

But it is not too late to turn the party's fortunes round. The Tories are highly vulnerable to an economic disaster as the capitalist world heads towards a new recession. That would make a mockery of Lawson's claims to have achieved a recovery.

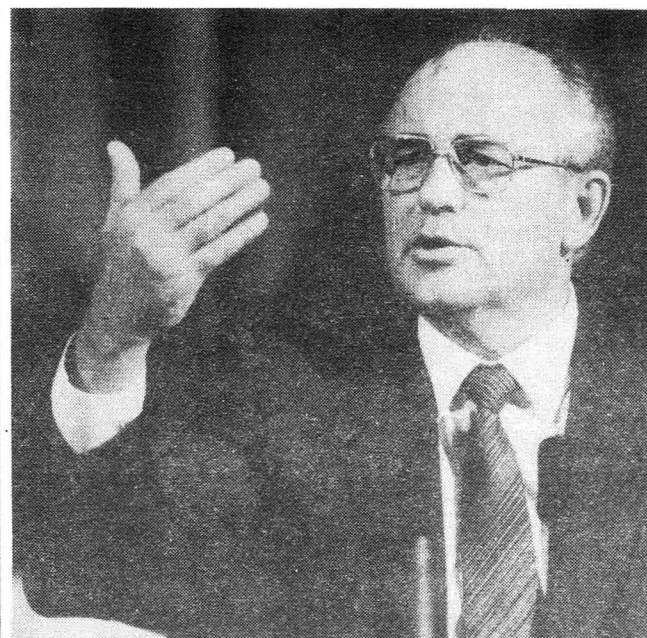
The anger of school students and teachers and the youth protest against YTS show the potential for an explosive anti-Tory movement.

The Alliance parties can be exposed for the disguised Tories they are. But that depends on Labour clearly differentiating itself from their policies.

That means doing the opposite of what the press demands and standing for a socialist programme to take the wealth and power out of the hands of the industrial and financial monopolies they speak for, and put the planning of the country's resources into the democratic control and management of the workers who create the wealth.

With a democratically agreed plan of production, it will then be possible to provide jobs for all, decent wages, an expanded and improved service of health and education and greater opportunities for leisure. With a promise of real improvement like this, Labour can inspire hope in those voters who are waiting to be convinced and win the next general election by a landslide.

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Thatcher's visit to Moscow aimed at British electorate

THATCHER'S VISIT to Moscow was a public relations exercise from beginning to end, but one full of irony and hypocrisy.

The 'Iron Lady' supposedly went to discuss reducing tension and arms limitations with Gorbachev. She was 'standing in' as leader of the western world, while the Russian bureaucracy rehearsed its own arguments for disarmament.

But Thatcher's single minded aim was to raise her prestige in the eyes of the electorate in Britain and give credence to her argument of 'negotiating from a position of strength'.

Propaganda

She used the opportunity to push the Tory propaganda line while hypocritically playing to the natural sentiments of workers throughout the world, by saying that people everywhere wanted 'peace, freedom and justice'.

The visit was designed for

But press get knives out for Labour leaders in US.

maximum press and media exposure. One reporter in Moscow commented that "its a far better reception than she would have got in Manchester." That was an understatement. Thatcher couldn't go 'walk-about' in any major British city without a virulent demonstration of opposition.

The British prime minister would love to come away from Moscow with at least something positive on arms reduction to establish herself as a world leader and a tough negotiator. Britain and the US, as other capitalist countries, want controlled and limited arms reduction for economic expediency. This also suits the Stalinist leaders anxious to reduce the burden of arms spending. Such considerations overshadowed Neil Kinnock's visit to Washington.

The Tory press delivered what was expected of them.

Thatcher's meeting was described in the *Star* as an "historic step towards reducing tension and nuclear missiles in the world". Undoubtedly if Kinnock had been to Moscow, the press would have accused him of being a pawn of the Kremlin!

"Bum's rush"

Kinnock's American trip was, predictably, played up as a disaster. The *Sunday Mirror* claimed that a *Daily Express* correspondent phoned his London office and said: "Its all shaping up. He is getting the bum's rush".

But what did Kinnock and Healey expect? The press will inevitably put Labour in a bad light, especially over its policy on nuclear disarmament which challenges US imperialism. No promise of more 'moderate' and 'reasonable' policies will

convince the press to be kind to Neil Kinnock.

Kinnock and Healey went to Washington with the decision of persuading the US leaders that Labour's anti-nuclear policy was 'acceptable'.

Workers expect their representatives to be capable of negotiating with world leaders. But 'ambassadors' Kinnock and Healey should have gone as ambassadors of British workers. They should have appealed to the workers in Britain and America, over the head of Reagan and the press corps. They should have exposed the criminal expenditure on arms while spending on housing, health and education is being cut back.

The Labour leaders should have exposed the US record on peace—the Libyan bombings and the Irangate scandal of arms to the contras. On this they were silent, but both issues could have generated widespread popular support for Labour.

By Ben Eastop

No to Nuclear power

THE CENTRAL Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) say that the accident at Hartlepool Nuclear power station on 17 March was the most serious at any of Britain's Advanced Gas Cooled Reactors (AGR).

As a result of almost a tonne of water escaping from a burst water pipe, six of the sixteen motors which cool the reactor were put out of action due to the water causing electrical faults in the motors.

CEGB officials have acknowledged that the damage was more widespread than in the accidents at the Hinkley Point B power station in 1985. Despite the fact that the CEGB have denied that there was any risk of fire as a result of the motors being short-circuited, and also assurances that the public are in no danger, the power station has been completely shut down.

The CEGB said that the closure of the number two reactor was for "planned refuelling and maintenance" and there was no connection between the close-

Reactor accident threatens Teesside

down and the accident on 17 March!

The secrecy surrounding nuclear power stations, and the lateness in making public this accident, serves to reinforce the fears of the general public.

In an area like Teesside which has many industries surrounding the power station (including petrochemical plants which need around the clock monitoring) a full scale nuclear leak would be an absolute disaster, not only in terms of fall out but also because of potential 'spin-off' disasters which might take place because of the evacuation of industries like ICI, Monsanto and other petro-chemical firms.

The labour movement must phase out all existing nuclear plants and stop the construction of new nuclear stations. This latest accident serves to underline the unanswered questions about the nuclear power industry, the answers to

which will never be forthcoming from the CEGB, whose interests don't include the workers and the general public who are most at risk from the pursuit of government policy.

A socialist energy policy which utilises existing fossil fuels, combined with massive investment into alternative forms of renewable energy (eg wave and solar power) is the only way the nightmare dangers of nuclear power stations can be overcome.

Obviously such a policy must include the nationalisation under workers' control and management of all the energy industries in order to use gas, coal, oil and electricity in the best interests of society as a whole.

By Andy Walker
(Redcar LPYS)

NUCLEAR TIME BOMB OR A SOCIALIST ENERGY PLAN?

Militant pamphlet available from World Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB. Price 60p including postage and package.



Liberal turn the clock back..

SINCE THE disqualification of 47 Labour councillors by the unelected House of Lords, a Liberal junta have taken control of Liverpool City Council.

They have tried to combine honeyed phrases about moderation with extreme cuts in services.

After four years of denouncing Labour as liars, they now admit that Liverpool has suffered £500 million cuts in grants from the government. They are pleading for extra resources through various urban aid schemes, in the hope of bribing the electorate.

The Liberals, Tories, church leaders and the rabid *Liverpool*

Echo call for an 'all party' approach, in the vain hope they can lull Labour voters to sleep after four years of strenuous struggle to defend Liverpool from the Tories.

Unfortunately, some of Labour's leaders have assisted this propaganda.

According to the *Liverpool Daily Post* 13 March: "Mr Kinnock meanwhile suggested the Alliance should assume temporary control until the elections—trying to get maximum support for a city which has got grave difficulties."

But within days of taking office, the Liberals have applied the knife to major programmes planned by

Labour. A resolution from Sir Trevor Jones was passed by the Liberals and Tories at the council on 23 March which includes:

- 1) Cancellation of Urban Regeneration Strategy programmes agreed by Labour on 10 March worth £25.2 million.
- 2) Retrospective cancellation of other URS capital programmes worth £14 million.
- 3) Cancellation of vehicle replacement—about half of it involving cleansing waggons worth £2 million in total.
- 4) Cancellation of a repayment phone system in council buildings worth £1 million

5) Cancellation of education capital programmes, improvements to school buildings etc worth £1.6 million.

As former Labour council leader Tony Byrne explained: "They have frozen around £50 million worth of projects. That will probably affect about 4,000 jobs directly and indirectly, for example construction jobs on a one year basis, but also employment in the motor industry, engineering, local retail, small shops etc. And all this has been decided by a body with absolutely no mandate from the people of Liverpool."

The schemes affected by the

Liberal axe include about 20 new-build sites which Labour had committed but not yet started, involving over 400 houses and bungalows, and a further 15 new-build sites approved on 10 March to build about 350 houses and bungalows.

This is entirely consistent with the Liberals' past record. They didn't build a single council home for rent from 1979 to 1983. And it is a dire warning of what a Liberal council would mean and why workers must mobilise to keep Liverpool Labour.

By Richard Venton

...but Labour MP says don't vote Labour

FRANK FIELD the Labour MP for Birkenhead has reached new depths in an article in the *Financial Times* last week.

Field has in the past supported council house sales and wage restraint, opposed unilateralism and has right wing views on abortion rights. He was reselected as Labour candidate after threatening to stand as an independent.

His latest article says the electorate in Liverpool local elections this May have "an unenviable choice." ... "So far the national Labour Party has made only token expulsions..." "Labour voters need to come to the rescue of the national leadership. The logical conclusion of Mr Kinnock's expulsion policy is for Labour voters to withhold support from known Militants on May 7."

This is nothing new for Field, who joined the *New Statesman's* tactical voting chorus in 1983 and called for Labour voters to abstain where Militants stood in the 1986 local elections.

He told the last Birkenhead Labour Party general management committee meeting that he felt more optimistic than at any time since 1979 because the rise of the Alliance meant the Tories might not get an overall majority. No mention of Labour being third in some opinion polls!

Field shows the contempt of a career politician for the stand of Liverpool's councillors and working class

against the Tories, claiming that "for too long Liverpool has dined out on the belief that it is not only the premier city but one with the political clout to take on central government."

His alternatives are an "urban alliance" and amazingly an extension of power for government controlled bodies. This MP, renowned as a 'radical liberal' suggests that the Merseyside Development Corporation could "assume some of the local authority's functions."

Whose objectives?

He even says that "an enhanced audit commission could play an invaluable role. More money could be made available on condition that the local authority achieved clearly defined objectives." Whose objectives other than the Tories would be achieved by the use of these organisations? The government have built them up since 1979 precisely to batter down opposition to cuts, redundancies and rent rises.

Field is one of the new right MPs who have no confidence in the working class's ability to struggle and see some Labour/Alliance pact as the only alternative to Thatcher. Now is the time for workers to "come to the rescue" of the Labour Party by fighting for a mass socialist party which is prepared to give a socialist lead to workers' aspirations.

By Richard Venton



Photo: Tina Carroll.

Militant pays tribute to the 47

AROUND 400 people attended *Militant's* tribute social for the Liverpool councillors on 27 March. They raised a total of £448.63 for the Liverpool Defence Fund, despite the councillors and their families being let in free.

Actors Ricky Tomlinson and Tony Scoggo from Brookside said they felt humble on the platform beside the

councillors. Ricky Tomlinson, himself a victim of Tory class law as a trade union activist in the 1970s, announced he would be organising his own 'do' for the defence fund.

Councillor's wife Chrissy Fogg, speaking in public for the first time said she was still stirred up by their visit to the House of Lords for the appeal hearing. She was angry that the

press heard the result before the councillors and secondly at a confrontation with Labour spokesman Jack Straw whose reaction to the Lords' decision was to berate the stand taken by the 47 councillors.

Send your donations to support the councillors to Liverpool 47 Defence Fund, Account No. 502 111 95 to 7 Gambier Terrace, Liverpool 1.

...But Today distorts the picture

THE RAPIDLY fading Tory rag *Today* hit a new low this week with a series of attacks on Derek Hatton, former deputy leader of Liverpool Labour council by the former leader John Hamilton.

The *Today* articles gave as distorted a view as their infamous colour photography, repeating allegations that

Militant has answered time and again.

Militant supporters have always backed John Hamilton, with his long history of struggle and fought for his reinstatement against attacks from the outright right wingers in the party. Other victimised councillors expressed their sorrow that John Hamilton's

political activity had ended by giving false ammunition to the Tories and Alliance.

Achievements

Tony Mulhearn one of the Liverpool 47 said: "Unfortunately John's allegations are just one long moan based on gossip. It is a shame to see someone like John

Hamilton with years of service to the labour movement collaborating with personal attacks on Derek Hatton and by implication all the councillors who have been removed from office for carrying out their election promises. Personalised trivia is being used to hide the great achievements of the council since 1983."

The sins of Liberals blamed on Labour

TODAY ALLEGES that Derek Hatton suppressed a report which criticised the city council's housing policy towards black families.

John Hamilton is quoted as saying: "When Hatton saw the report he scooped up all the copies and said, 'We can't have this'. No one ever saw it again. Later another report, complimentary to the council was produced."

It is very doubtful whether any such statement was made by John Hamilton, because he would have known that the report in question related to the housing policy of the previous

Liberal administration.

The report by the race relations adviser, Sam Bond, was commissioned by the council as a response to a Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) report on the council's housing allocation policy between 1979 and 1982, before Labour came to power.

Liberal racism

The CRE report confirmed that housing allocation under the Liberals discriminated against black families.

By the time this report was

published in 1984, Labour had already scrapped the old racist allocation policy and replaced it with one that treated families on a strictly date-order system.

The paper produced by Sam Bond acknowledged the CRE's criticism of the old Liberal policy and advised the new administration to act on the CRE's additional recommendations, which had still not been implemented.

This report was never suppressed, except by the media, who refused to publicise it because it attacked the Liberals and not Labour.

The *Today* article further alleges that Derek Hatton did not want blacks to visit the municipal buildings. This is a lie. Before Labour came to power there were virtually no black faces to be seen in council offices. Now thanks to Labour and Sam Bond more blacks work for the council and thousands of others have expressed their support for them.

This growing support for Labour amongst blacks has worried the capitalists and media hacks, but no amount of lies and slander will undermine that support.



Many of our regular readers won't recognise this back page headline from last week. We produced two alternative back pages, the one above mainly for sale in Scotland. This allowed us to give the fullest coverage to demonstrations in support of Senior Colman in Manchester where we sold 100 papers and Caterpillar (above) where 200 were sold. Keep up sales and fighting fund to allow us more regional specials.

Killingworth sales triumph

USING LAST week's centre page article on *The class divide* which had a feature on Killingworth New Town, sellers have been able to produce dramatic results. Final results showed a massive sale of over 300 papers in and around Killingworth.

Ged Grebby from Newcastle reports: "Afterwards in the pub, sellers spent the whole night discussing the brilliant mood we had encountered on the door step—no one could understand how the Tories are ahead in the opinion polls—everyone we had talked to were Labour supporters and there was a real hatred for Thatcher."

Another supporter relates how he went out to sell, knocked on 13 doors and sold 10 papers. Ged describes the mood around the estates: "Again on Saturday morning comrades couldn't believe the response our ideas were getting on the doorsteps; by 1 o'clock 55 papers had been sold. That is an average of 18 papers per seller and we'd only done 600 out of Killingworth's 5,000 houses."

One in five

"The fact that 1 in 5 people brought the *Militant* shows that all the lies and distortions of our ideas in the media won't stop working class people listening to our ideas. On the contrary they wanted to know more about us—10 people had expressed a wish to buy the paper regularly."

"We sold the paper in a revolutionary fashion, not just saying: 'Do you want to buy a copy of the *Militant*?' Comrades were convincing people that here is something which affects you—'you've got to read this' was the usual patter! You could visibly see the confidence and enthusiasm of comrades growing with the number of sales. The original sales target of 20 was raised to 50 and sellers began to compete with each other. They were fighting to get to the doors first!"

"During Saturday's canvass we began to pick up a mood on the doorstep that the Labour councillors should be doing something to improve the shopping centre which is virtually derelict and we would therefore like *Militant* to feature a follow up article which will receive a brilliant response. We've organised a public meeting to campaign for improvements in the shopping centre with Dave McGarr (local Labour candidate) putting forward a Marxist view of what should be done on this pressing local issue."

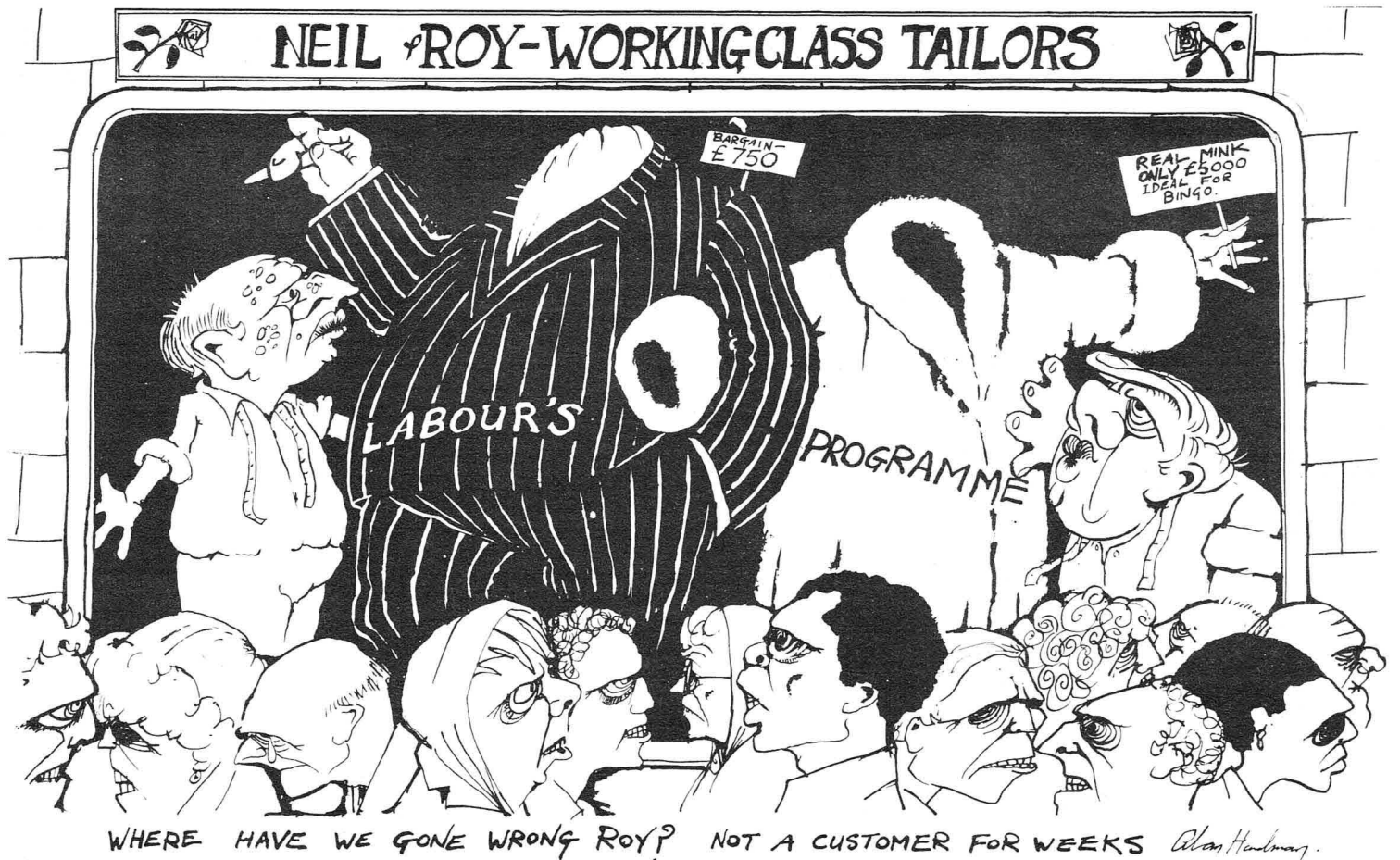
"On Sunday, a canvass of a private estate produced tremendous results. Although the number of Labour supporters was slightly lower than on the council estate the ratio of paper sales was still 1 in 6. What a refutation to all those who say *Militant* policies have no public support or popular appeal!"

"As you can imagine the sales drive has given every seller a real boost—they've been able to grasp first hand what the opportunities are going to be like during a general election. Forward to a daily *Militant*! Next week!"

Well we don't know about next week, but the sooner the better. Ged's letter says it all. Take your lead from these sellers in Newcastle. With sales like this in every area we could treble our sales immediately and move forward to a twice weekly paper in preparation for the election and for kicking the Tories out!

By Ruth Campbell

Next week in *Militant*: Killingworth shopping scandal.



Labour leaders must turn their fire on Tories

WHEN LABOUR'S national executive (NEC) should be concentrating on winning the election and ending the eight year Thatcher nightmare, unfortunately every meeting seems to concentrate on expelling or disciplining party members.

Instead of mobilising the party's youth section to go out and inspire young voters, the NEC is stepping up its attack on the LPYS, who have been campaigning in the party and the trade unions against plans for reorganisation. John Evans, right wing chair of the youth committee, asked the party to investigate where the money came from and other organisational questions. The LPYS (Labour Party Young Socialists) offered to save time and money by explaining there and then. Instead they decided that general secretary Larry Whitty should investigate Linda Douglas, the LPYS representative on the NEC, and LPYS chair John Ellen!

Linda Douglas moved a resolution, seconded by Dennis Skinner, opposing the Tories' youth conscription plans and calling for the conference policy of a £27 a week grant for young people to stay in education. Neil Kinnock argued for no figure to be given in the manifesto; the right wing leaders claimed that the youth vote would not suffer from the dropping of the specific demand!

Last week's NEC also discussed



Josie Aitman—off panel.

a report on Liverpool Broadgreen party, which they shut down last September. The report said the party should start operating again because it is a marginal seat! Even David Hughes admitted in his report that Broadgreen was an active campaigning party.

Unfortunately they also decided that Josie Aitman and Elaine Bannister, who had allowed expelled members to say 'goodbye' at the party AGM should be taken off the panel for candidates for local elections; this was passed despite Larry Whitty warning the 'loony right'



Linda Douglas—investigation.

they could be acting illegally. One delegate, Jack Rogers of UCATT, called for 'all Militants' to be taken off the list.

Eddie Haigh moved a resolution confirming the party's opposition to black sections. But the loony right wanted blood. Roy Hattersley moved an amendment threatening disciplinary action against anyone who supported the black sections' alternative Labour Party manifesto.

Hattersley has already played a central role in a move to expel supporters of black sections in his local

party. His own vote at the NEC was decisive in upholding the expulsion of Kevin Skally and Amir Khan, though they were later readmitted.

Militant supporters have always argued for socialist campaigning, not black sections, as the way to improve the position of black workers and youth.

Labour's leaders, however, were silent on what policies they would pursue to improve black workers' lives or encourage blacks and Asians to join the party. Hattersley's amendment was passed.

The meeting finally got down to politics and the general election. But this too foreshadowed a possible further attack on policy. John Evans called for a special NEC to discuss defence policy, which he claimed most workers oppose.

Although Neil Kinnock rejected this, saying it was going too far, the right wing feel themselves to be completely in the driving seat. The witch hunt against *Militant* has been widened alarmingly and many party activists feel that the time has come to fight back against the rightward drift of policy which has come in its wake.

Open season for attacks on Militant sellers

WHEN *Militant* supporters were selling papers outside Northwich Labour Hall one Saturday last month, Bob Mather, a local right-wing councillor, appeared with a fire extinguisher and sprayed it into the face of Hilda Unwin.

Her husband, Kenny, and two younger comrades were also attacked. It is a tribute to the maturity of the young comrades present that no-one retaliated after such a senseless attack on two older and well-respected comrades.

Incredibly however, despite a confession from Mather, the police have decided only to caution him. A police officer told witnesses to the attack that there had been "mitigating circumstances", that there were internal problems within the Labour Party and that people selling *Militant* "could be seen as a provocation".

This effectively gives the green light to right-wing thugs to beat up *Militant* sellers.

This physical attack follows a series of organisational manoeuvres against *Militant* supporters in the Tatton constituency Labour Party.

This disgraceful incident will not go unanswered by decent Labour party members in the area. *Militant* supporters are backing the

demand by Kenny and Hilda Unwin for a written apology, including a recognition of the right to sell *Militant* in the streets. We will take this demand to every trade union and Labour Party branch in Cheshire.

It is the growth of support for Marxism in the Northwich Labour Party which has frightened Mather into this vicious attack. But *Militant* supporters will not be cowed, but will use the incident to make their position impregnable by building support for Marxism.

Photographic evidence

IN THE neighbouring Mid-Cheshire constituency of Eddisbury, the Labour Party executive committee have recommended an investigation into nine party members and the suspension of the LPYS.

Amongst those to be investigated are Hilda and Kenny Unwin, victims of the attack in Northwich, Pete Naylor, who was expelled and reinstated last year and Karen and Winnie Murphy, who were also investigated last year.

Letters of complaint had been received from

some right wingers, some of whom had even gone to the trouble of sending photographs. Obviously some of these people have nothing better to do in a general election year than to snoop around with a camera prying into the affairs of loyal party members.

One of the intrepid photographers was Peter Caswell, a member of the North West regional executive committee of the Labour Party.

The most disturbing aspect of this case is that six of the people to be investigated were either victims of or witnesses to the attack by Bob Mather. Five members of the executive committee are standing for election to the same council as Mather this May.

It is criminal that with the general election so close, Eddisbury Labour Party are restarting the internal strife which wracked the party last year.

Last time there was a witch-hunt in Eddisbury, the result was a trebling of support for Marxism in that constituency. That was nothing in comparison to what will happen this time. *Militant* supporters will go to the tenants, the youth and the trade unions to build the party and oust the witch-hunters from the leadership.

In the Labour Party

WHEN THE editor of *Militant*, Peter Taaffe, appealed against his expulsion from the Labour Party in 1983, he said: "This attack on us is a political attack, not just on *Militant* but on the swing towards the left, on the demand for greater democracy within the party that we have seen over the past three or four years".

This prediction has been borne out. *The Independent* reports that "an authoritative party source" has said that the Labour leaders

are considering moves to prevent constituency parties from reselecting their MP in the event of Labour not winning an overall majority. This is justified as necessary to preserve discipline in the Parliamentary party at a time when it might be forced to deal with the Alliance and other minority groups!

Members' fears that the hard-won democratic gain of the mandatory reselection of all MPs is under threat will be reinforced by the national executive committee's con-

sultative document on *Party franchise and reselection of party candidates*.

This document claims that its proposals would "further develop the accountability of Labour MPs". Members would welcome any proposals to make their MPs more accountable, but *these* proposals have not been designed to achieve this. They are a move to safeguard the position of MPs from reselection.

MPs must be accountable

THE EXPERIENCE of the 1974-79 Labour government provided the stimulus for the campaign for greater democracy within the Labour Party.

After adopting a left wing manifesto, that government let unemployment double, real wages fall by a tenth and public spending be cut by £8 billion.

In the minds of many activists, this raised the question of the accountability of the Labour MPs who had sustained this government. It led to the adoption of reselection in 1981.

The right wing fought hard against these proposals and have never been reconciled to the loss of their 'divine right' to remain as MPs in 'the best club in the world'.

On policy, they have succeeded in forcing the leadership to carry out a 'counter-revolution'. They are now trying to complete the job by wresting democratic control from the rank and file over their reselection.

The document proposes eleven options, but the real debate is between those who want to maintain the present system and those who wish to move to 'one member one vote' (OMOV).

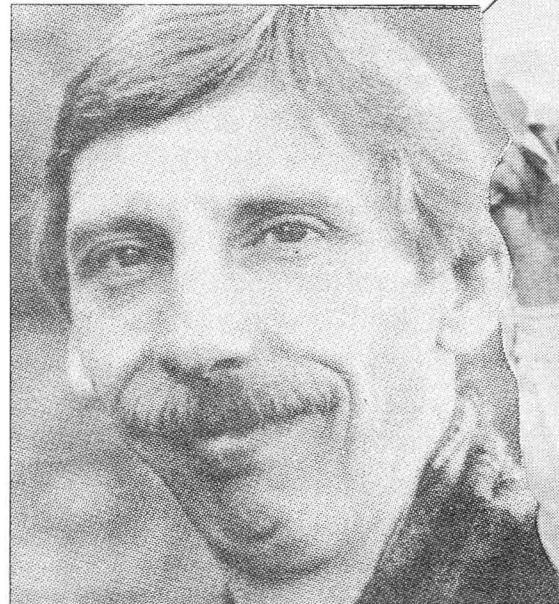
Collective voice

Opening up the selection process to every party member appears very democratic. No member will oppose that principle. But what these proposals would mean is the *disenfranchisement* of the most important section of the movement, the trade unions. At a selection conference an individual member would have the same voting strength as a union delegate representing thousands of workers, who would thus lose their collective voice in the party.

The present system of parliamentary selection does in fact give a vote to every party member in their ward or union branch. They then democratically elect delegates to the general management committees (GMCs), which not only select the parliamentary candidate, but meet every month, receive reports from, are consulted by and can question the MP. That is democracy in practice.

If these proposals were adopted, any time a right-wing MP was threatened he could ignore the views of his GMC on the grounds that it was not they but 'the members' who selected him. But apart from the GMC, those members would have no body in which to express their collective view.

When the reselection conference was drawing near, the press would rush to his defence and distort or ignore the arguments of the GMC. The active members who do the work to get the MP elected would be bypassed. Not only would the



Labour by-election candidates: George Howarth, imposed in Knowsley North (above), Deidre Wood, defeated in Greenwich (below). Democracy in action—delegates at party conference (right). Photos: Report.

capitalist press be helping to select their own Tory representatives, but ours as well.

The document even considers the option of postal ballots, which would mean members not even hearing candidates speak and answer questions.

As former Labour Prime Minister Clement Attlee said in *The Labour Party in Perspective*: "The vitality of the Labour movement depends on the members of the local Labour Parties and the Trade Union branches. If they fail in energetic action the movement may tend to become mechanical. The driving force of a democratic movement must be derived from the sum of the enthusiasm of the members. If this is wanting no efforts from above can replace it."

The clamour for OMOV has reached a new pitch in the aftermath of the Greenwich by-election defeat. Some right wing 'democrats' have adopted the view that in by-elections there should be 'one member no vote', but that candidates should be im-

posed by the national executive.

Austin Mitchell MP said that the lesson of Greenwich was that "the national executive should claim emergency powers where a Labour seat falls vacant, or a by-election falls with no candidate selected, and impose its own choice as it did, successfully, in Knowsley."

Tribune

The Labour Co-ordinating Committee and *Tribune* have supported the proposals for OMOV. *Tribune's* editor until recently, Nigel Williamson, let the cat out of the bag when he wrote:

"I reluctantly conclude that Labour's national executive was right to impose George Howarth" (in Knowsley North). "It's not surprising, then, that senior Labour figures should be considering extending that practice to all by-elections. But such a move is excessively centralised and authoritarian. Far better for Labour's left, as the professed true democrats of the party, to

openly embrace a change in the selection procedure to allow one member, one vote".

OMOV is thus justified as a 'democratic' way of ensuring the selection of right wing candidates to stop the leadership imposing them anyway!

Improvement in the present system may be necessary to ensure that all members, especially in the unions and workplaces, really are involved in the selection process. And local parties should have the right to reselect at any time. But in general, the present system of selection by the GMCs is the best way of ensuring that MPs are made accountable.

Local parties and affiliated organisations have until 31 July to submit their views on this document. Make sure that Walworth Road is deluged with demands for the maintenance and extension of democracy and accountability within the Labour Party.

By Davy Brown

Adviser's disloyalty

RICHARD HELLER, an adviser to Gerald Kaufman, was recently forced to resign after writing an article in Rupert Murdoch's *The Times* attacking the party's defence policy.

Like former Prime Minister James Callaghan's speech in Parliament on the same theme, this was an act of conscious sabotage of Labour's election prospects.

In 1982, when employed as Denis Healey's adviser, Heller was revealing his political leanings in his role as unofficial 'whip' for the secret right-wing caucus (a party within a party?) on Labour's national executive committee.

A circular dated 6 December 1982, signed by Heller, addressed to Healey, stated:

"YOUTH COMMITTEE: 3-30 Tuesday 7 December 1982 Committee Room 8. Main task for this is to *kill* the reprinting of the LPYS pamphlet on Northern Ireland. This is the usual Trot trash and its closing pages oppose and disparage official Party policy(!)

"The budget shows a welcome improvement, since there is no provision for LPYS campaigns, and there are some extra resources for NOLS. Moreover the budget for *Socialist Youth* is halved. (But why have it at all?)"

After leaving Healey's employ, Heller went to Hollywood as a script-writer. His only luck was writing the dialogue for *Cycle Sluts v The Zombie Ghoulies*. Is that what qualified him to work for Labour's right wing? He also once wrote to *Labour Weekly*: "How about some straightforward tit and bum?"

It is a measure of the right's political bankruptcy that they look to such people as this for their advice.

By Laurence Coates

New Ogmore purge threat

THE LEADERSHIP of Ogmore constituency Labour Party have been waging a war on supporters of *Militant*. They have referred Ian Isaac, former leader of St John's NUM to the National Constitutional Committee for alleged 'membership' of *Militant*.

Now, despite the prospect of a general election and the proximity to the winnable Tory marginal seat of Bridgend, the general management committee has passed a highly divisive resolution. It states that the party has the right "to protect the integrity of the constitution" and that "membership of the *Militant* tendency is evidenced by among other things, activity which promotes or supports the *Militant* newspaper".

It then lists the other points defining 'membership' as: "(i) selling the *Militant* (other than in a recognised retail outlet);

(ii) making financial or other contributions to *Militant*;

(iii) organising or participating in meetings or events on behalf of *Militant*;

(iv) being employed by *Militant* or its affiliates."

After thus defining 'membership' to cover almost anyone who even looks at *Militant*, the resolution calls on the CLP to take "disciplinary action under the new proceedings" in the event of "breaches of the party constitution".

Supporters of *Militant* will not let this most serious threat to the left pass without a fight. It opens the door for a wholesale purge of the left within the local party. The campaign will be taken to every factory and college until every expelled socialist is reinstated.

By a Militant reporter

Decades of rights for women under threat

A YOUNG mother of two in south London told *Militant* how the Tories' proposals to abolish maternity benefit could have affected her.

"If my baby had been born a month later I would have got no benefit at all - just the £80 grant, even though I had paid national insurance contributions when I was working.

"Before the pregnancy I was getting unemployment benefit. But under the new rules that wouldn't qualify me for maternity benefit. It means I would have lost £30 a week for 18 weeks.

"As it was, we've hardly bought anything for the new baby, most of it has been passed on from the last one, or given to us. Without the benefit it would have been an impossible struggle.

Nothing

"If it had been the first baby it would have been worse, we would be starting from scratch. What can you buy with £80?

"A friend of mine will get nothing at all, not even the grant, because her baby is due on 9 April, three days after the new rules come into force. She was denied benefit, but she won't get the grant either because she's not on social security.

"I can't believe the Tories could win the next election. It makes me sick".

This will be the fate of thousands of women on low incomes, and who don't qualify even for the £80 grant.



Maternity-letters from working women

JANE HARTLEY reviews *Maternity—Letters from working women* collected by the Women's Co-operative Guild, to coincide with the Tories' attack on maternity benefits.

THE WOMEN'S Co-operative Guild, set up in 1883 to organise the wives of co-operators, developed into a vigorous campaigning organisation of 32,000 working class women before the out-break of the First World War.

Campaigns were organised for a minimum wage for co-op employees, women's suffrage, better housing, maternity and divorce law reform.

One of the major campaigns was on welfare for pregnant women which led to the implementation in 1913 of maternity grant of 30 shillings, which was included in the National Insurance Act as the mother's own property.

The Guild sent out an appeal in 1914 for personal experiences which could be used in the continuing campaign against the Liberal government and the local authorities. 160 accounts out of 400 sent in were published on the understanding that these were the lives of the "more fortunate working class mothers". The letters give a glimpse of life in late Victorian Britain, whose values the Tories are so keen to recapture.

One mother with one child and who has suffered one still birth, with wages of 24 shillings coming in recounts:

"Then came the shortage of money. I began to stint myself to provide for the little one. Many a time I have had bread and

dripping for dinner before my husband came home, and said I'd had my dinner as I couldn't wait."

This experience was very common. It was hard for many women to make ends meet with no extra for maternity, and often they would deprive themselves at the very time that they needed a good diet. Another woman with seven children, and who'd suffered four miscarriages and three still-births, wrote:

"I could cry for the girl who endured so much for the life that was wasted."

"I looked after my husband and children well but I often went short of food myself, although my husband did not know it. He used to think my appetite was bad and that I could not eat... you may guess I was always scheming and planning to make ends meet, which was not good for me or my unborn child."

Poverty together with frequent pregnancy and large families was a constant drain on the health of the mother. The feeling of hopelessness was common.

"I always prepared myself to die", writes a mother of four, with three still-births and one miscarriage, and with 21 to 30 shillings in wages coming in. "I think this awful depression is common to most", she goes on. "And when bothered by several other children, and not knowing how to make ends meet, death in some cases would be

welcome, if it were not for the dread of the children... when I look back on my early married life I could cry for the girl who endured so much for the life that was wasted."

Another woman sums up her experiences: "I had seven children and one miscarriage in 10 years and three months. This left me at the age of thirty a complete wreck... How I look back on those days and wonder how I did live."

In Victorian Britain the idea of 'ignorance is innocence' dominated. There was no sex education or preparation for motherhood. This led to a fatalistic attitude amongst many women that pain and illness had to be put up with. One woman writes: "In my early motherhood I took for granted that a woman had to suffer at those times".

Most working class families lived a precarious existence; strikes, short time working and unemployment could tip the balance. On top of this drunkenness and gambling were an eternal nightmare. There was also the physical labour of doing the housework—washing, scrubbing and so on. Many women did hard labouring work right up to childbirth, and then at it again only days afterwards.

Of the 348 who gave details there were 1,396 live births, 218 miscarriages, 83 still-births, and 122 deaths within one year.

In the Labour women's sections and councils today maternity has again become a campaigning issue. It must be given full prominence to prevent even an echo of these experiences returning.



TERRY FIELDS, Labour MP for Liverpool Broadgreen, told MPs during the Budget debate of his meeting with an old man in his sixties he had known by sight for many years who he thought had been ignoring him for 12 months:

"He wasn't ignoring me. That man has been virtually blind with cataracts for 12 months.

"Recently he went to the hospital to implore the doctors for treatment. They told him to come back in the middle or at the end of 1988.

"In desperation, his family considered going private—so for a fee of £50 for a five minute interview with a specialist, he was told that he could be done on the following day. The specialist, probably trained by the National Health Service, told my friend to come back the following week. But it would cost him—£1,500 for one eye and £3,000 for both eyes. In addition he would be charged £20 a day or £120 a week for in-patient care."

"This man was absolutely desperate" Terry told *Militant*: "Because of his condition, he could not raise the money and now he has to wait on a diminished health service to get his sight back."

Terry pointed out to him that even in the 'wicked' Soviet Union they are doing 400 such operations a week on a sort of conveyor-belt system. "Yes" the man said: "this is Thatcher's Britain; this is what we have got to put up with here after the contribution we have made to the wealth of this nation".

Left and Right

LET'S HAVE no nonsense about jobs for youth, or proper education and training. If they start complaining and get out of line flog them!

That apparently is the aim of right wing Tory MP Warren Hawksley who has tabled an amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill which would bring back flogging. He also shows an intimate working knowledge of the subject. The birch rod which would be used on young offenders, he says, should be "not exceeding nine ounces" in weight, no more than 40 inches "from the end of the handle to the tip of the spray", and the handle should be 15 inches in length.

Another Tory MP taking an interest in crime and punishment is Sir Ian Percival, also moving an amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill, calling for the return of the death penalty. Sir Ian would like hanging replaced with painless injections. "I don't know

what the state of the art would offer. But I want to see the most speedy and humane method", he says.

In Thatcher's poverty-stricken, class-divided, and crisis-torn Britain, not surprisingly, violent crime is rising sharply. No doubt Sir Ian wants the problem to disappear painlessly so he doesn't have to worry about it any more.

You might think Labour MPs would naturally support trade unionists in struggle. Perhaps this is why Derek Foster, Labour's chief whip (Neil Kinnock's choice), approved an early day motion from Labour MPs including Dave Nellist and Terry Fields supporting a London teachers' demonstration against compulsory redeployment. But isn't this going against ILEA's soft-left leadership? Needless to say Derek then backed an amendment from John Evans deleting all the offending parts.

In Defence of October

Marxist Studies pamphlet

5 for £2.00 post free

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

Workers fight for patients' rights

On strike for the old

ELEVEN STAFF at the Sutcliffe Rhodes nursing home in Southport walked out on strike this year over conditions faced by their patients.

By Ann Bannister

Many problems are not unusual for private nursing homes; the unusual thing is that the staff are members of a union. Most staff in these homes have no union to complain to and fear losing their jobs.

Most bosses rely on their staff not wanting to leave their patients at risk. Staff at Sutcliffe Rhodes had complained to their own bosses and the health authority before but nobody took any notice. So their union NUPE took a ballot and struck.

Sutcliffe Rhodes is typical of a home run for maximum financial gain. The patients complained to the staff that they were starving. Lunch consisted of one joint to feed 34 patients, there were hardly ever fresh vegetables. Tea was four small sandwiches, if you were lucky, salmon with one tin going round all 34 patients.

All the food was locked up, so staff could not increase the rations. When light bulbs went, everybody sat round in the dark while they found a replacement from another lamp; there were never any spare. Toilet rolls were date stamped inside to make sure they were not used too fast!

Shortages

One day the tea bags ran out and there was no tea until the manager came along in his car to buy some. There were never enough bedclothes; many nights they had to dry sheets on radiators so that sheets could be changed.

For this luxury, residents pay between £170 and £240 a week. Anything extra goes on their bill, including incontinence pads which they should get free. The residents' pension books are taken off them when they are booked into the home so they hardly have any money for buying things like cigarettes and papers; often the



NUPE members on picket line.

Photo: Militant.

staff buy them out of their own money.

One day when a patient died in the lounge there was no way he could be taken back to his upstairs room. So firstly he was left sitting in a chair with a blanket over his head; then a blind lady was moved into the lounge while the dead man was layed out in her room. This may sound like *Fawlty Towers* but lack of staffing and facilities causes this insensitivity.

Since the strike started, conditions seem to have improved a bit. The patients who come out and talk to the pickets say the food has improved and the temperature is now too hot rather than too cold! Workmen are now making improvements to the home and new carpets are going in.

Why has it taken a strike to improve conditions? The home is now under regular inspection and the owners are afraid the residents may

leave. But in Sefton borough there are 1645 people in private homes and 686 in council establishments, but only two inspectors.

Local authorities and health authorities need to have a full programme of community and residential care for old people.

Minimum standards

Where there are private homes, they must instigate a proper system of inspection, which is frequent and without notice. But this must also be linked to legislation for minimum standards in both private and public sectors on number and size of rooms, baths, showers and toilets per patient, wage rates, care programmes and staff training.

At present, the residents of homes have no rights of tenancy. If they or their relatives complain, they could be thrown out immediately. Most homes have

waiting lists and individuals have no idea whether a home is good or not. The choice is usually decided by where there is a place available or by a doctor's referral.

Sutcliffe Rhodes' owners are two GPs who refer their own patients to their own home! Local authorities need to produce a register of all establishments with a list of what is available. The labour movement must campaign for homes which do not meet the required standards to be taken over by the local authority or health authority and the staff re-employed.

Very few homes are closed down and local authorities like Sefton claim that many more apply for registration than are accepted. But there must be no repeat of the situation where the owner of Sutcliffe Rhodes had a home closed down and then reopened it under a relative's name.

For care or for profit?

BY THE end of the century, the number of people over 75 years old is expected to rise by 700,000. Private residential care is already a growth industry, aided by Tory cuts to local authorities and the closing of geriatric wards in NHS hospitals in the guise of a non-existent community care.

The 1980 Social Security Act allows the DHSS to take responsibility for those who need residential care in the private sector when no alternative is available. Many investors, who do not necessarily have any concern for the elderly, are attracted because of the high rate of return. They are also able to protect their investment through the Small Firms Guarantee Scheme which protects 80 per cent of all debts up to £75,000. Banks encourage such investments.

Care in the community can only be an option if full back up facilities such as free, non means tested meals on wheels, home helps, health visitors, day centres, aids and adaptations for the home etc are available. Otherwise as at present the burden falls on relatives, in particular women. A well financed public residential service is also vital.

More training

Old people are just forgotten at present. If they go into care it is assumed they will just go downhill, especially in homes where only their medical needs are attended to. More specialised training for all medical staff, care assistants etc would help. An old person in care needs regular assessment to ensure they are progressing or at least, living to their full potential.

Capitalism uses workers to make profits and then tosses them aside; it can not commit the resources to make their retirement happy.

The labour movement must follow the example of these NUPE members in fighting for the interests of the weakest in society and fighting for a socialist planned economy where people's needs don't have to play second fiddle to the profit grasping fingers of private shareholders.

Letters of support and financial donations to Martin O'Donnell, NUPE branch secretary, 50 Poulton Road, Southport.

Fighting Fund

This week £2324

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 South East	1066		2250
2 South West	570		1900
3 London	2306		9350
4 Southern	735		3050
5 Eastern	580		3200
6 Wales	711		4800
7 East Midlands	456		3250
8 West Midlands	564		4750
9 Yorkshire	929		8300
10 Merseyside	746		7500
11 Northern	467		4600
12 Manchester	305		3850
13 Scotland East	79		2800
14 Scotland West	88		3500
Others	6273		6900
Total	15875		70000

Quarter ends 2 May

THE ROYAL Family did all right out of Lawson's budget last month. Quite apart from the £5 million allocated to them in the Civil List, the rest of their running costs will top £70 million.

While you are worrying about your old banger, the Queen's Flight is getting two new jets; the bill will be picked up by you and me. The Royal Yacht is having another £10 million facelift (last year's cost £6 million). Even the phone bills of £100,000 a year end up on our doormats.

This is in a country where the government are cutting spending on the unemployed and the 16 million who live below the

official poverty line. If that makes you militant, you will want to help spread the ideas of Marxism.

But we don't expect to be given a few million in the next budget for a more frequent *Militant*; we rely on the pennies and pounds of our readers.

Make sure you use your tins and ask every reader for the £1 solidarity price. Swansea sellers have raised nearly £18 in the last week from this, Manchester sellers raised £11.60 while two strikers from Suttons bakery in Coventry including Mahmood Sadiq have paid the solidarity price.

A mere four weeks remain in this quarter; we

need to raise the full £70,000. Draw up a list of all sympathisers you can approach for a donation. Organise a social now to round off a successful quarter. Get out and raise the cash for a twice weekly *Militant*. Good luck!

Thanks also to London LPYS conference £347; Welsh LP conference £367; Patrick Graham Stockport TGWU £5; Stan Allison Stockport NUPE £5; S Andrew Clydebank NALGO £4; B Blackstock Glasgow APEX £19.20 B McCrossan Glasgow NALGO £7.40; MG Griffiths Wakefield NUPE £10.50; Bradford readers meeting £15; Skipton social £28.

By Maggie McGinley

ON 26 MARCH over 1,500 London students' struggle will be a major



...and it's not just in Britain

THE MOVEMENTS of students and school students in France and Spain forced their governments to back away from attacks.

Now a massive movement of youth, and in particular of school students is beginning to spread across Europe.

In France the events of last November and December successfully forced the withdrawal of proposals for reinforcing selection between school and university.

Now French school and university students have organised national delegate meetings to formulate their demands for a transformation of the whole education system. The 'Etats Generaux' of secondary school students and university students is a totally new development.

French youth want to press home last year's victory and take further steps to radically improve conditions in education. Meetings demanded increases in university places, cuts in entrance charges, increases in grants, and better and more housing.

Another conflict is developing in the young workers' hostels which house tens of thousands of youth. Discontent is growing against proposed rent increases which go well beyond the rate of inflation, and a general worsening of conditions inside the hostels.

There was a demonstration of 1,500 in Paris last weekend, and the movement is growing in strength. Following the example of the students, the residents have elected a National Co-ordinating



Spanish school students march through Madrid.

Committee to organise the spreading of the movement. The plan is to prepare a national rent strike as soon as sufficient support has been mobilised.

In Hanover 15,000 school students marched through the town shouting 'Madrid, Paris, Hanover', as thousands struck in schools throughout Lower-Saxony in response to the Federal Government's attempts to experiment with shorter A level courses.

Further strikes have been called North Rhine Westphalia on March 30 and Hamburg on 1 April with thousands expected to take part. The strikes have been called by regional school student committees.

In Copenhagen, Denmark between 20 and 30,000 14 to 16 year olds demonstrated on 10 March. On the same day demonstrations took place in all the major Danish cities against cuts in education.

16 to 19 year old school students have called a demonstration on 9 April, unless the government backs down on their so-

called education reforms, amongst other things mean class sizes.

In Sweden a similar movement has developed. "The s can't take any more cuts. I we need more resources government has to retreat proposals to cut 500 r Krone." This message from school student union Stefan Johansson met with and applause by a 30,000 school students march in G burg on 12 March.

One week later the gover had retreated. 80 per cent cuts were abandoned. The wing Social Democratic gment feared the developm a Spanish style national ment of youth.

The Swedish school st organisation called the stri by sending one letter to school in the Gothenburg This indicates the mood de ing amongst youth even formerly prosperous count Sweden.

Students from Stoke Newington School:

We have come to fight for the teachers. We won't get any individual help if we don't do anything about it and I don't think they should just come and tread on us. There's 27 of our teachers being transferred from our school.

Quite a few people are already in the SSU (School Students' Union) in our school and more and more are joining now. I'm about to join myself; you can't do anything individually, it wouldn't do any good just one person standing up and shouting about it. It's things like this that make them sit up and notice.

I hate Thatcher and what she does. She's too busy buying bombs to notice us.

The YTS schemes are just a load of crap. Slave labour. My step brother used to be on one. He was at the Post Office and all he learnt was how to take apart a car and put it back together again, it was one of their vans.

Students from Kidbrooke school:

Well some teachers are with us but we can't say any names; they'd get done for it. But the others are frightened of getting the sack so they're not going to fight are they?

We have got the SSU in our school now. We went on strike on Monday and we got a better turnout than today.

But we got letters from the headmaster saying that we couldn't strike. He said that he would count it as truancy. But we've come up here anyway. He's trying to threaten us saying we'd get suspended for 10 days.

We're trying to stop them from grabbing our teachers and all he's doing is give us truancy letters. More kids wanted to come but everyone's scared of getting letters home and things.

My mum's behind me all the way.

Thatcher is an old cow. Get her out. She hasn't got any right to be in the government she doesn't know what she's doing. They want to get another Prime Minister, someone from the public in there.

Anthony, Islington Green School:

I think the YTS are a load of shit. For £26 you might as well sit at home and be on the dole.

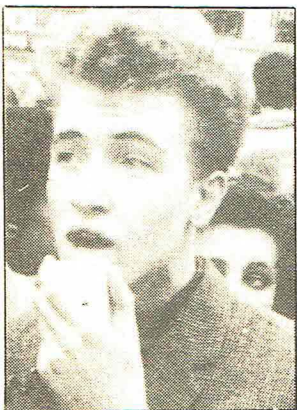
Interviews by Soraya Lawrence

I want to be an electrician when I leave school. I could work with my brother but I want a good education. It's all right for people like Frances Morell (leader of the Inner London Education Authority). She's got her qualifications, she's got her job, but we want our jobs.

I think the SSU is good. It gets all the students together rather than striking on their own.

Nellie, Stoke Newington School:

Our teachers have been very good about the strike. But at Skinners, that's the school near us, all the gates were locked. We were allowed to get out but some classes couldn't get out. They locked them in.



Dave Sirockin, secretary School Students' Union.

Samantha and Leeann (14), Islington Green School:

We've come here today for our teachers. We haven't got enough as it is! We've got a good school and we don't want it closed down.

When we go to lessons we either have supply teachers or have to go home. Why can't they just leave our schools alone?

Clifford London Nautical School:

They're going to shut down our school and there's going to be no nautical school in London and everyone's going to be sent to other schools and split up. We want it to be kept open, we're leaving this year but we still want it to be kept open for the younger ones.

YTS? Most people are going to be turned away at the end of the year. And for £26 a week you might as well be on the dole. £26 a week just isn't enough.

We haven't got a

union in our school but I'm going to set one up I think the SSU are the only ones now to do anything about education; no one else is. I think it's up to the students now.

There are about 40 of us from my school and every time there's a march we'll be down here.

Jonathan Stoke Newington School:

I don't agree with what they're doing. If they're cutting teachers there's less chance for us to get O-levels and A-levels and good jobs and things. They're scared of letting us take over from them and build a better world for us. So we've got to try and help ourselves; they won't help us.

I think there should be proper jobs. YTS are just like temporary jobs and don't get a lot of money.

My parents think the strike's great. They were going to come themselves but couldn't 'cos they work in schools themselves.

I think there's too many people unemployed there's a lot of jobs that could be done, but they just don't want to pay other people to do it. So they just leave things to rot.

Tony

I bet Thatcher's at home now having a cup of tea and biscuits. She's not worrying about this, she is probably watching *Play School* or something. They should get more teachers into the schools and get more classrooms.

YTS schemes are just conning people. They're trying to get people off the dole, but once they're off the dole they're paying them less money.

Whenever there's a demonstration I'll be here. They locked us in school today some kid nicked a key off the caretaker and opened up the gates.

Students from Islington Green School received a warm welcome when they visited North Star House (ILEA divisional office for the Islington area).

When the woman they were discussing with found she couldn't answer their questions she left the room, locking them in. She then called the police!

The students decided they weren't going to be held prisoner by their own education authority and left by the fire escape.

By George Williamson

(Hackney North Labour Party and Greater London Labour Party personal capacity)

Compulsory redeployment condemned

HACKNEY NORTH and Stoke Newington Labour Party formally censured the two constituency members of the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) on 26 March for voting in favour of compulsory redeployment of teachers.

By 34 votes to 12 with a large number of abstentions, Bernard Wiltshire and Stephen Benn were told that making the teachers pay for the authority's education crisis had made the general committee delegates, some of them teachers and school governors, angry.

The members had ignored the policy of both the constituency party and London Labour Party; a policy they had promised to abide by when they were selected before last year's ILEA elections.

Their policy had managed to do what Tory shire authorities had avoided; alienating all sides, the unions, the parents and now the

school students. And they still hadn't gone far enough for the government.

The party delegates suggested that the ILEA members should try to mobilise the support of all these groups into united action against the government. When the Tories are at their most vulnerable and image conscious, just before an election, the ILEA could launch a very successful campaign to defend education in the capital.

Both members were mandated to submit an emergency resolution to ILEA's next Labour group to end compulsory redeployment and begin negotiations with the unions.

h school students came out on strike and demonstrated against education. They made their views clear (see interviews left). The theme of LPYS National Conference (see below).



Photo: Militant

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ne
es

M assaged
S tatistics
C ommission
—the 20th
century
press gang

THE NEW Job Training Scheme (JTS) has shown up the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) for what it is, the Tories' main weapon for massaging the unemployment figures.

The MSC hope their new scheme will have pressganged 110,000 participants by the autumn; the national kick off date is 1 April. The main candidates will be the long term unemployed aged 18 to 24.

The six month scheme is modelled on the American 'Workfare' idea where the unemployed work for their benefit. It is obviously an attack on the unemployed; it is also more subtly an attack on civil service trade unions.

The scheme will be very cheap to run for the MSC. It will cost approximately half as much as the Community Programme (CP) scheme, which will be cut back. 1000 places have already been cut in the Lothians area.

The JTS will be run by "managing agents" who will do all the administration work. Within the next year or so they will be given full rein to run JTS

and YTS with virtually no monitoring of schemes.

This will mean a cut in 400 executive grade posts in the MSC. Coupled with the cut in CP schemes and computerisation of other work, 800 clerical and executive jobs could vanish.

The MSC is moving further and further towards the idea of private companies "administering" the unemployed. Processing the long term jobless will lead to big profits. John Pardoe, a Liberal MP and director of one of the biggest MSC agents "Sight and Sound" said: "I am a businessman. I'm involved in YTS because I make a profit from it."

Presumably when he finds out he can rent out JTS trainees to other companies for as much as £50 per head per week, he'll get straight into that as well!

The MSC is also 'contracting out' Job Clubs to private firms. For around £20,000 to £25,000 a year the private profit makers can 'help the unemployed understand that their unemployment is their own fault.' 13 companies have

already been approved to run the clubs in the East of Scotland.

Contracting out employment services poses a threat to the jobless and the civil service unions. Private, non union, profit-seeking firms will use the unemployed to make a fast buck. A coordinated campaign must be started up at local and national level to fight it.

The campaign could include: local joint union committees including civil service and local government unions to coordinate action. The campaign would have to discuss unionising trainees, the boycott of JTS and private job clubs and fighting for a decent employment and training policy from the Labour Party.

As one young Jobcentre worker told me recently: "People come in, I tell them about JTS, YTS etc but they're not really interested. They want the one thing we can't give them—a job."

By Jim Bennett
(Chair, Scotland East MSC-CPSA)

6.2 MILLION YOUTH FOR LABOUR
Labour Party Young Socialists

SOUTHERN LP conference saw a major victory for the YS campaign against the NEC proposals when it voted for a deferral of the decision, despite a Nupe amendment calling for the setting up of campaign bodies in line with Sawyer's proposals.

Significantly one of the speakers opposing the proposals, had moved the resolution increasing the age limit from 21 to 26 at the 1946 LP conference.

TGWU branches in Manchester and

Brighton, a Brighton NUPE branch, and ASTMS 577 Bedford General are among the latest unions supporting the YS. Ward and Constituency Labour Parties continue to pass resolutions for postponement of the consultation and against reduction of the YS age limit to 21.

Graveney ward in Tooting and Tooting CLP, Worsley and Salford East constituencies in the north west and Swindon in the south west have all backed the LPYS in this way. Also three wards in Exeter and Birtley ward in Blaydon are supporting us.

Send submission

Every LPYS branch must discuss the proposals and send in their submissions to Walworth Road. The following YSs have recently done so:

Tynebridge, Wallsend, Blaydon, Benton, Middlesbrough, South Middlesbrough, Newham North West and the Newcastle District YS Liaison Committee. The Manchester District YS Liaison Committee has also passed a resolution to the Manchester City Labour Party for discussion there.

It is easy to raise the money required for the campaign if we ask at every meeting. Collections are being taken at the Regional Labour Party Conferences and trade union branches have donated from their funds. YS members should ask individual party members for donations at ward and GMC meetings as well. If this is done, we can maintain our campaign, turn defence into attack and score an excellent victory in our campaign to win working class youth to Labour and socialism.

LPYS conference '87

Come to
LPYS
National
Conference
17-20 April



Friday 17 April: "Young workers for Labour" rally. Speakers include: Ron Todd (General Secretary TGWU), Diana Jenda (USDAW), Linda Douglas (LPYS)

World trade crisis

Trade wars loom

TODAY ALL the capitalist powers are fighting for markets. Thatcher threatens a trade war against mighty Japan; Kinnock argues for 'agreed' trade barriers to protect the weaker capitalist states. MICK BROOKS shows that the increasing strangulation of world trade cannot be regulated by agreement; it is a stage in the rundown of capitalism, threatening world-wide catastrophe.

THE EXPLOITATION of the working class was the basis for the huge increase in production under capitalism in the past. But the development of the world market, and the constant search for new trade outlets, has been indispensable to growth.

Bigger markets made possible an expanded scale of production, the use of new techniques, and a further search for new sales outlets.

The expansion of capitalism was thus linked with the development of unfettered free trade throughout the world, uprooting or sidestepping local barriers to its growth.

Not all capitalist spokesmen have supported free trade. The banner of free trade, first raised by Adam Smith in the late 18th century as a point of principle, only became generally accepted in Britain after the industrial revolution made British goods unbeatable for price.

Protectionist wave

It is ever the case that powerful capitalist nations argue for free trade while the weaker seek the respite of protectionism.

Crisis calls forth the competitive struggle with particular viciousness.

Thus the 1930s saw a crisis beginning in production reflected in world trade. A protectionist wave, starting with the Smoot-Hawley tariff walls in the USA culminated in tariff walls (taxes on imports to make them more expensive) being built around the world.

As Marx put it: "as soon as it is no longer a question of sharing profits, but of sharing losses, everyone tries to reduce his own share to a minimum and to shove it off upon another".

These 'beggar-my-neighbour' policies dried up world trade, and hit every capitalist nation, intensifying the effects of the crisis.

During the post war boom (1950-1975) world trade leaped ahead at rates of 12 per cent a year, buoying up even the weaker capitalist economies.

Successive rounds of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) opened up the capitalist countries to each other, and fed the development of vast multinational corporations.

Since the mid-1970s, stalked by crisis, the capitalist powers continue to meet periodically at economic summits and solemnly swear 'never again' to trade war.

In fact, protectionist measures have become far advanced. Over one half of world trade is now 'managed' in one way or another.

The first underhand substitute for outright protectionism is what are called "voluntary trade restrictions". The best known example is the restrictions imposed on Japanese car imports by the Reagan administration.

The reason US consumers were buying Japanese cars was because they were \$1,500 cheaper than the equivalent US model.

Japan was leaned on to cut its



Japanese cars lined up for export to the West. The US and European car industries cannot compete, and resort to demanding protection.

Since the mid-1970s, stalked by crisis, the capitalist powers continue to meet periodically at economic summits and solemnly swear 'never again' to trade war.

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exports to the USA. The Japanese car manufacturers put up their prices and pocketed the super-profit—which was ploughed back into production as new investment, laying the basis for a bigger assault on US markets later on.

The next step along this road is the formal imposition of quotas. The Multi Fibre Arrangement, for example, is basically a system of quotas on textile exports from low-wage economies in the third world.

The response of Hong Kong capitalists has been to relocate in countries such as Sri Lanka in order to dodge the quotas.

'Free-trading' Thatcher has negotiated 'voluntary' agreements on footwear (to take just one commodity) with South Korea, Taiwan, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Romania. None of this has saved jobs in Northampton.

The next stage in government skulduggery is "non-tariff barriers".

Take beer. The German pure beer law of 1516 is a fine thing. It doesn't even allow sugar to be added to beer, let alone matter such as potato starch, favoured by British brewers. But it is also used to restrict the importation of beer into West Germany.

Devious controls

Likewise, the Irish bureaucracy insist on Gaelic inscriptions on imported furniture.

The European Economic Community, supposedly a free trade area, has frontier delays involving the filling in of a six-page, 50-clause form at each stopping point. This adds five to ten per cent to the costs of exports, and ten hours' waiting time to 26 hours' driving time between Rotterdam and Naples.

Other devious restrictions on trade by all national governments could be catalogued forever.

Another extension of state interference comes through "aid and trade" policies. Much so-called foreign aid is, in fact, aid to domestic producers.

The institutionalised over-production of West European and North American agriculture is dumped in third-world countries in their respective spheres of influence. So insatiable has the

'farm lobby' in both the US and the EEC become that each is now encroaching on the other's dumping grounds, threatening an agricultural export war.

Governments use their monopoly buying powers to featherbed big business at home. The result is higher prices for the consumer. In Britain, subsidies cost £4 billion in 1980, according to the right-wing Adam Smith Institute.

World trade has increasingly become a dirty game of 'you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours', with all sorts of subtle diplomatic pressures, even among supposed friends and allies.

Counter-trade and bilateral deals—one-off swaps of oil or melons for computers, outside the formal framework of world trade—are on the increase. Such deals may already cover more than 10 per cent of real international trade.

Similar is the problem of trade within the multinationals that straddle the globe.

35 to 40 per cent of US foreign trade is 'in-house'—i.e. between branches of the same multinational. These corporations can use transfer pricing to salt profits away to where taxes are the lowest, simply by issuing bogus invoices to themselves.

They can defer payments to other branches so as to take advantage of movements of world currencies—'leading and lagging', as it is called—and play the field at currency speculation.

Devaluation of a currency makes imports dearer and exports cheaper to buy. It has exactly the same effect as a protective tariff.

When currencies are 'free floating', the exchange rate is supposed to be determined by supply and demand for that currency on the market. But governments manipulate interest rates to keep exchange rates artificially low, as an alternative to open protectionism.

The classical argument in favour of free trade was that it gave the customer the option of the cheapest and the best. Tariffs put prices up and keep them up.

But the very idea that governments are more powerful than world capitalism, and can impose their will on the multinationals,

misses the point. If market forces cannot stand tariff walls, then they undermine them.

Take sugar. Quotas, tariffs and subsidies keep the price in industrialised countries such as the USA seven times as high as the world market price, which has collapsed.

The result is that sugar's role as a sweetener has largely been taken over by imported corn syrup, particularly in the US. To protect their own sugar industry, the US government retaliated by imposing restrictions on the import of "sweetened edible preparations". So chocolate covered ants, kosher pizzas and even Korean noodles (with a sugar content of 0.002 per cent) sit in warehouses under the ban.

Trade cold war

But corn syrup has permanently displaced sugar in ketchup, ice cream, cakes and jam, so American sugar growers and refiners continue to lose out.

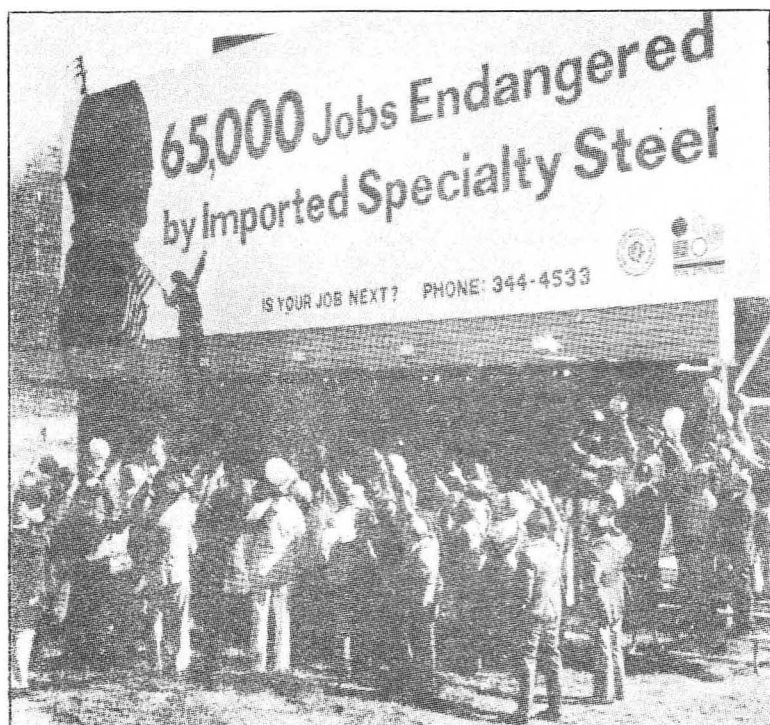
We are already in a trade 'cold war' among the major capitalist powers. But with the possibility of an almighty collapse in the next few years, the capitalist powers could start tearing each other to pieces in a full-scale 'hot' war.

Supporters of trade controls should bear in mind that they will only be adding their voices to the protectionist clamour of the capitalists themselves. The results will by no stretch of the imagination benefit the working class. It would lead to a catastrophic slowdown of world trade, widespread collapse of industry and skyrocketing unemployment.

Politically, the main effect will be to play off workers in different countries against each other.

Neither free trade, nor protectionism, Marx concluded a century ago, can work in the workers' interests as long as production is in the hands of the bosses.

By ending the rule of capitalism and taking control of the economy internationally, the working class can create a new world order where the production and exchange of goods will be democratically decided and planned by the working people themselves.



Protectionism plays off workers against each other. These US steel workers are demanding quotas against steel produced by their brothers and sisters internationally.

Now for all-Spain one day strike!

THE 24 March general strike against mine closures in Asturias was a massive success, with almost every sector at a standstill.

50,000 workers demonstrated in Oviedo in the face of police attacks. Supporters of the Spanish Marxist paper, *Nuevo Claridad*, explained the need to learn the lessons of the victorious school students' struggle and to organise self-defence against the fascists and police. This found an immediate echo.

On 25 and 26 March a general strike of Asturian miners was called jointly by the CCOO (Workers' Commissions: Communist-led unions) and UGT (Socialist-led union federation). This action, against a background of past divisions, reflects the powerful pressure of the rank and file workers for united struggle.

Although the unions have organised very little, the Asturian miners have now been solidly on strike for over a month.

In Reinoso, where steel workers on strike against redundancies disarmed paramilitary Civil Guards three

weeks ago, clashes broke out again when police tried to dismantle the workers' barricades. A policeman pulled out a gun; the crowd was infuriated, and the police were forced to flee.

Similar scenes took place in Andalucia. All over Spain, workers are losing their fear of the police.

Militancy

Industrial struggles are convulsing the country. Miners were on strike last week in Leon, in Rio Tinto, in Cartagena. Iberia airways and the railways were brought to a halt, and hospitals hit by industrial action, in ongoing actions against the five per cent limit on wage rises imposed by the Socialist government. A general strike of the building industry has been called for the first two weeks of April.

There is a tremendous mood of militancy among workers and youth. The

THE SE (Marxist-led school students' union) held its founding conference in Madrid on 20 to 22 March.

Significantly, the provincial government gave the students a free hall for the conference, and the national railways gave delegates 40 per cent discount on travel for the days of the conference.

The leader of the Workers' Commissions, Marcelino Camacho, addressed the conference and was greeted with a standing ovation as students chanted, with fists raised, "*Obreros y estudiantes unidos adelante*" (Workers and students must

be united).

Camacho, moved by this reception, saluted the students with the words: "I am an old worker who has learned from the students' movement." He invited delegates from the union to attend the meeting of delegates from the Workers' Commissions on 3 April, where the demand for a one-day all-Spain general strike will be debated. The workers, he said, would be proud to have the students present.

From correspondents in Spain

union leaders, who have lagged behind the movement, are coming under unprecedented pressure.

A call for an all-Spain one day general strike was lost by only one vote on the national committee of the Workers' Commissions. Instead a 'general mobilisation' was called. That position will now have to be defended on 3 April before 25,000

delegates, representing workers from the whole of Spain, where the question of a general strike will be posed.

The Socialist government has learned nothing, and intends to continue its austerity policies which have provoked the present wave of struggle.

This makes new and greater battles inevitable.



Reinoso: Angry Spanish steel workers, threatened with redundancies, force police to flee.



Yugoslavia: political revolution has begun

AN UNPRECEDENTED wave of strikes has engulfed Yugoslavia, shaking the country's floundering Stalinist rulers.

28,000 workers took part in a reported 168 strikes against wage cuts and a simultaneous increase in food prices. These savage measures shatter the ruling 'Communist' Party's pretence of workers' 'self-management'.

While a degree of token workers' control has been conceded at the bottom, at the top the real economic decisions are dictated by the bureaucracy.

The strikes began in Zagreb, the Croatian capital. But to the alarm of the government and their stooge trade union leaders, the movement spread to Serbia, Slovenia and Macedonia.

Overwhelming opposition

In addition to industrial workers, hospital and hotel workers joined the strikes. Staff in a hotel in Slovenia even refused to serve Yugoslav prime minister Mikulic when he stayed there two weeks ago!

"We will be trying to convince workers that their industrial action is not in society's interests, but we expect they will be striking again at the end of each month", admitted one member of the Croatian trade union executive. (Emphasis added)

Faced with this over-

By Laurence Coates

whelming opposition, Mikulic has for the time being retreated. His proposal to peg wages at their 1986 level, involving a 50 per cent pay cut for some workers, has effectively been withdrawn.

These panic measures underline the chronic economic problems of the country. In the chain of East European Stalinist states, Yugoslavia is unquestionably the weakest link.

Inflation is running at 100 per cent, and unemployment has risen to over one million, or 18 per cent of the workforce. The working class has suffered a 30 per cent slump in living standards since 1980.

Like their counterparts elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the Yugoslav bureaucracy has become an absolute barrier to further economic progress.

In their desperate search for solutions, they have pushed for greater trade links with the capitalist world, and massive loans from the western banks and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Far from solving their problems, this has aggravated them.

The economy is being crushed under a \$20 billion

mountain of debt. In 1983, interest repayments consumed 23 per cent of export earnings.

Yugoslavia's regime has landed itself in the worst of all possible worlds. In addition to the dead hand of bureaucracy, the economy has been exposed to the sicknesses of capitalism.

The crisis has resurrected sharp national divisions within the country. In 1981, martial law was declared in the southern province of Kosovo, in response to rioting by youth of the Albanian national group.

The growing disaffection of the Albanians was primarily a reaction against the appalling poverty in the region. Kosovo's per capita income is not even one-seventh of that in Slovenia, the most prosperous region.

Chauvinism

In the eyes of the Kosovo worker or peasant, the crimes of the bureaucracy stand out more sharply because the bureaucracy is largely Serbian.

Narrow national chauvinism is a feature of every Stalinist bureaucracy. Each ruling clique is motivated by the desire to protect its own interests.

On this basis, it has been impossible to integrate and unify the various small-scale economies of Eastern Europe, despite the enor-



Yugoslav workers vote for factory council—but power remains with the top bureaucracy.

mous mutual benefits that would ensue.

Within Yugoslavia's borders, these national rivalries have become particularly acute. The bureaucracy has proved incapable of fully integrating the economies of the six republics and the two autonomous provinces.

Each has its own national bank, development board and balance of payments. This fragmentation has become a frightful brake on development. Each republic has, for example, developed its own iron and steel industry, regardless of the economic justification.

Likewise, the banks in Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro have negotiated foreign loans without the full knowledge of the federal government.

The rivalries between the ruling cliques in each republic is reflected in the annual rotation of the prime minister's position and leading jobs in the 'Com-

munist' Party.

But this elaborate balancing act has not prevented rivalry and splits between and within the various national sections of the bureaucracy.

Divisions at top

During the recent strike wave, the Central Committee of the Croatian 'Communist' Party publicly opposed the federal government's wage freeze. These divisions at the top, more pronounced than anywhere else in the Stalinist world, and the first mass strikes by the workers, are the clearest symptoms of the approaching political revolution—the battle to get rid of the bureaucracy, and establish workers' democracy on the basis of the planned economy.

As one Croatian socialist observed: "For the first time the workforce has experienced its strength when acting together. It may

draw political conclusions from this."

Another intellectual commented: "Look, you are unlikely to find broad support for a restoration of capitalism in the country, but equally there is nobody any more who believes that self-management actually functions."

Mikulic has denounced the growing influence of those who want to "push the League of Communists (CP) completely from the political scene". This is evidence that growing layers of Yugoslav society are challenging the rule of the bureaucracy.

Numerous underground groups exist. It is possible that, in the absence of a clear Marxist leadership, workers' opposition may take on various national guises at first.

But the magnificent strike movement, transcending national barriers, shows that even if the process is protracted, the political revolution has begun.

Abolish housework

Dear Comrades,
Taking up a point in a letter (*Militant* 836) by someone who thought that child benefit was to pay women to bring up children. My view is that child benefit should be massively increased to cover the material costs of bringing up a child.
However, it shouldn't be wages for mothers or parents. All adults should have an independent income, whether working or not and if a parent chooses to stay at home while children are small, that income should

cover them.
Wages for housework or bringing up children is a reactionary demand, reinforcing the myth that a woman's place is in the home and that children somehow suffer if they don't spend nearly all their time with their mother.
Housework and childcare should be socialised, the responsibility of the whole community, not the individual mother or father.
Yours fraternally
Margaret Manning
Manchester

Avoiding divisions

Dear Comrades,
I have just read the letters in *Militant* 839 by Kathleen Jones and Penny Iveson.
I agree that many men, even within the Labour movement, still consider women second class citizens and have little or no understanding of the problems faced by women in every day life. But the male sex cannot be blamed wholesale for the oppression and exploitation of women under capitalism.
Women can be recruited

to the movement using issues such as contraception, child benefits, maternity rights, etc. but women are also affected by low pay, bad housing and unemployment. It is a mistake to try and divorce women from the working class on the grounds of their sex.
Women must unite with men in the fight against the common enemy—capitalism.
Yours fraternally
Mara Cortesi
Isle of Wight

Never mind the pain —mind the profits

Dear Comrades,
On a night shift in my last job, I cut myself slicing plastic tubing up into sections.
When I got in the following night a letter was waiting for me: "Dear Mr Lewis, last night you relieved the operator in line two and cut your hand. Blood went on the lengths you were packing. Had these gone out we could have had the whole order sent back or lost the order, or both. Should anything like this happen again I shall have to take stronger action"
So there you are, a firm that doesn't want blood. All job applications to Bonnington Plastics, Long Whetton, Leicester.
Yours fraternally
Graham Lewis
Erewash Labour Party

Letters

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

Send us your views, comments or criticism.

The hidden slums of Harrow

Dear Comrades,
I am writing to congratulate you on your centre page spread in *Militant* 839. Having lived most of my life in the so called 'soft south', I wholeheartedly agree that the divide in British society is not between north and south, but between rich and poor.
Until a couple of years ago I lived on a housing estate which must be one of the worst in the country. The six low rise blocks constantly smelt of urine, excreta, engine oil and fires. The road outside was a dumping ground for stolen cars.
These flats were constantly damp and the local council has not maintained or even painted them since the 1970's.
From the description given, many would think these flats to be in an inner city area such as Hackney or Toxteth, but no! This is the forgotten part of the Tory borough of Harrow in north west London.
Yours fraternally
Tom Smith
West London



Some of the appalling housing conditions facing council tenants in inner London.

How Conservatives became 'Tories'?

Dear Comrades,
Flicking through the pages of the *Chambers Scots Dictionary* I noticed the word 'Tory' and stopped to read

its explanation.
It read "A term of contempt and dislike, applied to a child or grown person; a disreputable or deceitful person; a tyrannical person..."
Yours fraternally
Jon Melia
Lanarkshire

Why abortion should be available on demand

Dear Comrades,
The article "Defend abortion rights" in *Militant* 839 was excellent. I know from my own personal experience the need for proper facilities for women.
I went to a Roman Catholic school, where the only sex education was a couple of lessons in biology. Contraceptive advice was nil.
Then when I got pregnant (before I knew it) for the first four months the doctor

thought I had glandular fever. When I found out I was pregnant, I went to see if I could get an abortion. The doctor degraded me and reduced me to a 'simpering lump'. Because of this I did not have an abortion.
Now my son is two years old and because neither my husband or myself have a job, we can not offer him much, except a decent future under a socialist system.
Yours fraternally
Name withheld

Preferential treatment

Dear Comrades,
The attempt by the Tories to make Tamil refugees into criminals shows blatant double standards. While blacks and Asians are persecuted, known nazis are let off.
Take the case of Wladyslaw Dering. A Polish concentration camp doctor responsible for barbarous sterilisation of Jews, he arrived in Scotland after the

war and got a job with the Colonial Service.
He was later awarded the OBE and died wealthy and untroubled. A recently declassified US Central War Crimes Register shows he was listed as a major war criminal wanted for torture. The country that wanted him?—Britain!
Yours fraternally
Pete Watson
Bradford

Asian mother's torment

Dear Comrades,
Nina Rahel's article outlining the torment facing couples in India who produce female children must have disturbed readers.
I remember being in hospital after the birth of my own daughter, seeing a young Indian woman transferred to the psychiatric wing of the hospital after giving birth to a female child, such was the fear of herself and her family of providing for a female child.

After careful nursing and welfare support the young mother was able to leave hospital with the baby.
Without the care and support provided by nursing staff, what would have become of this baby?
Yours fraternally
S Smith
Coventry South East womens' section

Zeebrugge Single parent poverty disaster

Dear Comrades,
It's difficult to get a clear idea of the effect of our material about Zeebrugge. I think the page five feature was very good.
The workers' comments were invaluable and added to the expression of chilling certainty of such catastrophes under capitalism.
It didn't take too many words to show why socialism is so necessary.
I have gained some invaluable pointers as to how to cover major social issues and the value of informed exposures.
Yours fraternally
Phil Frampton
Manchester

Dear Comrades,
The hardship of being a member of a one parent family trying to live in Thatcher's Britain was shown again this week when my mother received a letter from the DHSS saying they have been paying her too much and could she please pay

back £112.80, which needless to say we have not got. They pay her £1.03 a week which I might add will not be going up because of Lawson's budget.
Yours fraternally
ND Fish
Grantham Labour Party
Young Socialists

Unions to blame?

ter press have consistently said that it is because of the unions factories are closing down.
Why is it then Permafex are making 70 people redundant in the next three to four months when there is no union at that factory?
Yours fraternally
M Al-Baldawi
Stoke Central Labour Party
Young Socialists

The Tories and their gut-

Management American-style

Dear Comrades,
A young comrade in Poole LPYS has recently been sacked. The company he worked for is an American multinational which sends over a contingent of American managers every six months to make sure the company is being run in the way they wish it to be.
From the first day these managers came in, he was subjected to several 'rollockings'.

He received a warning for sitting too close to a workmate. He was then told he was taking too long to sharpen his pencil!
It came to a head when the LPYS regional conference was held and he was a delegate.
On the Friday he was told to work overtime on Saturday. He explained he was going away for the weekend and would not be able to work overtime.
When he returned to work

on the Monday morning he was suspended without pay and since then he has been sacked.
When workers are faced with conditions like these even in the South then I think it is an indication of the potential for the LPYS to recruit young workers.
Yours fraternally
Laura Lee
Poole LPYS

Revelling of rich

Dear Comrades,
Right is a cutting from the *Exeter Weekly News* about the drunken activities of students at the Exeter University Bracton Law Society dinner.
42 per cent of the intake of Exeter University come from private schools and more students own cars than at any other university.
As a student from a working class background, struggling to survive on my grant, the debauchery of the sons and daughters of the ruling class makes me sick.
It makes me more angry and determined when I sell *Militant* on estates to OAP's and unemployed youth who have less than £10 a week to live on after they have paid bills etc.
Yours fraternally
David Oatley
Exeter university

STUDENTS at Exeter University have been quick to calm the uproar that broke out over drunken high-jinks at a dinner at £10-a-head of the Bracton Law Society.
Reports spoke of drunken students throwing food, of special guest Sir Robin Day leaving early, of contraceptive stuffed with food being left on cheese boards, and a trail of vomit through the university.
But Paula Ferris, the director of external relations, emphasised: 'Only a small number of students were involved and the majority did not know that things

Industrial Reports

Coventry bakers win

AFTER JUST 2½ weeks the strength of organisation of the Bakers Union has brought victory for the 200 Coventry strikers at Suttons bakery.

Management's attempt to force workers to do 12 hours work in 8 hours has ended in humiliating defeat. When workers refused to do this they were suspended and a walkout followed.

The strikers organised quickly, with supervisory staff promising support when the strike was made official and this they gave to a man. Their action showed management the determination of all the bakers, but the fatal blow was dealt through international solidarity.

The Allied Bakery bosses were determined to force through their proposals and had planned to fly in supervisors from Ireland. But the marvellous bakery workers there threatened strike action if the supervisors were flown out.

Within hours management had conceded, withdrawing the suspensions, agreeing to pay men for the time they were suspended and agreeing to joint talks to resolve the question of hours.

The workers would like to thank all those who supported them including the Coventry SE Labour Party. Local *Militant* supporters are now confident of regular sales and support in the bakery.



Sutton bakers' picket line.

For democratic Astms/Tass merger

MERGER PROPOSALS are being discussed in the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs (Astms) and Technical, Administrative and Supervisory Staffs (Tass).

It would create a union of 650,000 members, the sixth largest union in Britain and one of the largest white collar unions in the world.

Militant supporters in Astms are campaigning for the merger, which would help overcome divisions in workplaces and strengthen efforts to defend jobs and advance living standards.

However, within Astms, activists are determined that the merger will not take place at the expense of democracy in the new union.

Already a plan to take the final decision at the Annual Delegate Conference (ADC) in May has been thrown out (though a resolution to this effect is now back on the agenda) and substituted by a timetable for discussing the merger at the

ADC, to get the members views and then making the final decision to agree to hold a ballot on the merger at a special ADC in September.

This timetable will mean that branch delegates at ADC will have a chance to vote on a series of resolutions to indicate their views as to the best basis for the merger.

Astms *Militant* supporters support the timetable but the danger is that the conditions for the merger previously negotiated with Tass will be presented as a fait accompli, so the campaign will have to continue after ADC to ensure that the resolutions passed by the conference are put to Tass as the basis of the merger.

The main concern is to ensure the retention of a branch based conference and therefore at ADC *Militant* supporters will be fighting to retain a branch-based conference and for the special conference to decide the rules of the new union to be convened on the basis of one delegate

per existing Astms branch (Astms has 770 branches), with an equal number of delegates from Tass.

The proposal already put forward by Astms head office is for the rules conference to consist of 330 delegates from each side, with the Astms delegates coming from "grouped" branches which, when you consider the branches to be "grouped", is just a blatant attempt to neuter left wing branches.

Also we will be campaigning for the ADC to endorse points such as—branches and divisional councils in the merged union to control their own finances, including political levy; NEC members should be elected for a two year period, as at present in Astms; the representative of the union to the TUC General Council should be elected.

In addition we will be supporting the adoption of some of the democratic practices of Tass which include electing a Youth Committee and holding an annual Youth Con-

ference, and also the election and accountability to the membership of full time officials, which is the policy of one section of Tass.

We will also be trying to extend this principle so that all full time officials would be on the average wage of the membership.

It is important that after the merger takes place, Divisional councils, branches and sections are integrated into a unitary union as soon as possible because a merger just at the top of the new union would mean that many of the advantages of the merger would be lost.

If the merger takes place on the basis of the utmost democracy then a new, strong union can be built which would be best equipped to protect its members and improve their living standards.

By Dave Clark

(Astms Liverpool Shipping and Freight branch, No 618, personal capacity)

Civil Service pay ballot

DESPITE A complete absence of leadership on behalf of the CPSA national executive committee the pay ballot looks to have rejected the Tories' offer of 4.25 per cent.

Hefty majorities in the CPSA and SCPS are reported from all around the country for the programme of industrial action outlined by the 'consortium' of four main civil service unions.

The action will begin in early April, with a rolling programme of industrial action in various regions in selected offices.

The CPSA NEC, which meets on Thursday 2 April, must not hesitate in enthusiastically beginning that programme and working with confidence and determination to achieve a successful settlement.

The membership senses that the Tories are vulnerable in an election year. If the NEC does not take the lead it will pay the price in the coming executive committee elections.

Once again the rank and file have overcome the lack of leadership from the executive.

The first time was when they advocated a 'go-it-alone' policy, which was completely overturned by the co-ordination of the civil service Broad Lefts, who overturned the CPSA and IRSF leadership at their pay conferences. The second came after the leadership made no recommendation on the Tory offer.

Civil servants have demonstrated their willingness to fight on pay. The NECs must not only allow them to do so, but lead from the front.

Liverpool cleaners strike

IN LIVERPOOL there has been a concerted effort by the TGWU to organise part-time workers and many are now finding themselves taking strike action, shortly after joining the union.

At the India Buildings, 60 cleaners have been on strike for six weeks over pay. They demanded an increase from what is one of the lowest rates in the City Centre, of £1.56 per hour to the union rate of £1.96 per hour. So far they have been offered £1.70 per hour.

The India Buildings houses many different offices and shops and the girls have been successful in turning away

many deliveries, including the post. The cleaning is being carried out by management and other individuals in the offices.

The other strike, has been won after two weeks at the Queen Elizabeth Law Courts.

These strikes require the support from the rest of the movement and particularly from union members inside the building to ensure that no scabs come into clean and that no union members do any of the jobs normally done by the cleaners. If this occurred the buildings would quickly have to close for health and safety reasons.

By Ann Bannister



EALING Nalgo lobby of the ruling Labour council. On the same Monday, 30 March, the union had another march through Acton and Ealing and voted by a record majority to continue their all out-strike. Ealing has the second highest cost of living in London and Nalgo wants inner London weighting allowance, which the borough's teachers and manual workers have been getting for more than ten years. Activists suspect the Labour council has been put up to pick a confrontation with Nalgo to smash the union in London. On the mood in Ealing at present they will not succeed.

Wallasey estate backs Dillons strike

FOUR WEEKS ago sixteen women workers at Dillons supermarket on the Leasowe estate in Wallasey joined the Transport and General Workers union after management had employed a well known thug to act as a bouncer in the store.

After repeated verbal abuse and threats of violence they decided enough was enough and came out on strike on Monday 23 March.

Despite Dillons being the only shop on the estate which sells basic necessities, the response from the local community has been stunning, with the shop only getting four or five scabby customers a day.

The initiative of these workers has been absolutely brilliant with things like setting

up their own shop outside the front door of Dillons. They sell essentials like nappies, toilet rolls, bread, washing powder, as well as things such as papers and tins of vegetables.

They have even approached the taxi drivers' TGWU branch who have agreed to offer cut price fares for people on the estate going shopping in the nearest shopping centre three miles away.

The local pub lent the women tables and stools so they could eat their Sunday dinner, en masse, outside the shop to serve warning to management that they weren't going back until the thug is removed.

The mood on the estate is simmering. There is enormous support for Labour on the estate summed up by a young

unemployed lad on the picket line who said that there seem to be two Labour Parties at the moment, Neil Kinnock's one and the real one.

Despite the right wing dominance of the local ward Wallasey LPYS called a public meeting on Monday 30 March.

About 60 local people attended. Local Prospective Parliamentary Candidate Lol Duffy, Cathy Wilson of Liverpool Women's Council and two strikers spoke.

A husband of the shop steward moved a vote of thanks to the YS and to the husbands and boyfriends who have been supporting the women in the strike.

Wallasey CLP has agreed a voluntary 50p a week levy for the duration of the strike.

Nupe expulsion halted

A NATIONAL union of Public Employees member has obtained a high court injunction to prevent his expulsion from the union.

Martin Craig, a Nupe shop steward and newly elected member of the Southern and Eastern Divisional Council of Nupe was expelled from his branch at a special meeting on 18 March.

The meeting had been called to discuss Area Officer changes and was attended by the Nupe Divisional Officer, Shaun Hilliard and the Area Officer, Alan Pooley. Martin Craig was unable to attend due to work commitments.

The meeting was subject to a lengthy address by Shaun Hilliard on the dispute over Area Officer changes in the Southern and Eastern Division and, although there was no reference to disciplinary action on the agenda, went on to consider Martin's expulsion despite him not being present to defend himself. The first Martin Craig knew of his expulsion was when he received a letter from his branch secretary on 25 March.

The reason given for Martin Craig's expulsion is that he 'was not satisfied with the council's (Nupe's executive) decision' over the transfer of his Area Officer, Nick Bradley, to Hertfordshire.

The action has incensed Nupe activists in North Kent. One Nupe branch secretary from North Kent told *Militant*:

"This action stinks. It's completely undemocratic and breaks all the union's rules. Only the executive council can expel someone and in any case Martin wasn't given any notice to defend himself."

"Our union prides itself on being a caring organisation yet it now seems that any form of dissent in Nupe is forbidden."

Nupe's North Kent branches have called a conference on 'Democracy in Nupe' on Saturday 4 April at Spa Road Library, London SE 16.

By Nick Toms

Scottish Freightliner

"FREIGHTLINER" terminals at Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen are to be closed with the loss of 100 jobs.

Management claim the closure is due to Freightliner wagons reaching their life expectancy and profits being made don't justify renewal.

But a more likely explanation is that the service is being "rationalised" to be made more profitable before privatisation.

The closure will be a major blow to Lothian Region who have spent much time and money developing an integrated road/rail transport policy to shift freight traffic towards rail and away from built up areas.

By Jim Bennett
(Edinburgh)

Step up Caterpillar action

Scottish occupation

in balance

BY 368 to 362, Caterpillar workers have voted to continue the occupation of their Uddingston factory.

The result, which came as a surprise to many (including a number of men in the occupation itself) is a real shot in the arm to the campaign to save the factory and the 1,200 jobs.

A majority at the mass meeting on Monday felt that the hand of the Joint Occupation Committee (JOC) was immeasurably stronger in any negotiations with Caterpillar if the occupation continued.

Despite the 'Interim Interdict' which Caterpillar won in the Court of Session last week, the fight continues. After 11 weeks the men are still angry.

Their attitude is summed up in the latest slogan to adorn the front door of the building: "We gave them land to build their factory on, a skilled workmanship, our loyalty and our trust, now they want our pride, dignity, self-respect and right to feed our families".

The vote against the occupation has gone up by only eight since the last meeting (held prior to Lord Clyde's judgement).

After instructions by their lawyer that the court proceedings would not result in criminal charges being brought against them, since they were involved in a civil action, and that persuasion of the Interdict by Caterpillar could take weeks, they voted to defy the law.

In the spirit of the whole

By Colin Fox

dispute, so far, it was the majority's feeling that if the law forces 1,200 onto the streets, and finds in Caterpillar's favour, then "The law is an ass".

John Brannan, AEU convenor, announcing the decision of the men said: "We will continue our occupation. We enter negotiations with Caterpillar bosses to demand a maximum opportunity for the plant. To maximise a return to work, and to maximise all payments we are entitled to."

Monday's mass meeting followed a demonstration and rally in Glasgow at the weekend, attended by around 5,000. In addressing the rally John Brannan pointed out: "If Caterpillar bosses get back into that factory, we can say goodbye to our machines, goodbye to our jobs and goodbye to any strength that we have".

Tory

Also invited to speak at the rally was Norman Willis of the TUC who led the singing of 'We shall overcome', now the national anthem of the Labour Party north of the border it seems.

The only bitter note in an otherwise low key event, was the opportunity which the Scottish TUC provided to Tory minister Alan Stewart



Photo: Patricia Moore.

MP, to speak on the platform.

After the millions of jobs he and his class have destroyed over the past seven years, the STUC disgracefully invited him to lecture the assembled crowds on how much the Tories care for jobs at Caterpillar.

Quite rightly, the LPYS contingent, aided by the victimised miners and others, heckled and shouted him down with cries of "Nationalise the Cat" and "Maggie, Maggie, Maggie, Out, out, out".

Caterpillar bosses meanwhile have now called for the AEU at national level to enter 'meaningful talks' to consider possible further uses for the Uddingston factory and discuss redundancy payments.

All along, the 'carrot' of redundancy money has been conspicuously absent in Caterpillar propaganda.

Indeed, the whole workforce, knowing the conservatism of the company, has sought solace from the fact that the alternative to fighting to save jobs was the dole and very little else.

At the mass meeting on Monday, John Brannan read a letter he had received from an ex-worker at Caterpillar's Newcastle factory, who after 14 years service, got only £3,000 redundancy money.

Financial support from the Labour movement and street collections, however, has been increasingly generous over the past few weeks, averaging around £15,000 per week.

£800 was collected by shipyard workers at Scot Lithgow at the weekend and £1,500 was collected from Govan shipbuilders at the same time. This is indicative of the support amongst the working class which the Caterpillar workers have, and remains a source of great strength.

The dispute has, however, changed direction.

The Joint Occupation

STOP PRESS: AEU executive intervene
The engineering union executive voted on Tuesday 31 March to instruct their Caterpillar members to abandon the occupation or official recognition will be withdrawn. As we go to press the stewards are meeting Scottish EC member Jimmy Airlie. We have had reports that a compromise has been reached: that the men will leave the occupation tonight (Wednesday); the stewards to stay in, invite Caterpillar management to meet them; a mass meeting will be held to discuss the next step.

Committee said in a hand-out to last Monday's mass meeting that they are now prepared to: "Meet with this company any place, any time, to discuss the plant's future, discuss a return to work, and to discuss money. The occupation continues until the discussions are continued.

Compromise?

A 'compromise' is in the air. But where are the grounds for it?

Caterpillar wants out completely and even though it is now prepared to consider "how some equipment may be retained for use by a prospective purchaser for the facility" (press advert 30 March), the fact remains that no buy-out is likely.

Remarks by Rifkind and the Tories that they are, "Attempting to find alternative uses for the factory, but the occupation hinders our progress", ring hollow.

If there was any possibility of a buy-out, or even a partial takeover of the factory, then it would have certainly appeared before now.

In reality, the same overcapacity which Caterpillar faces, confronts other manufacturers in other industries.

In case Rifkind has not seen them, there are dozens, if not hundreds of empty factories on Clydeside. Workers will ask "why couldn't he find a buyer for them?"

Weeks have passed since the suggestions about buy-

outs, workers co-operatives and Caterpillar reversing its decision were first mooted. They are even less likely now.

Caterpillar's Tannochside factory should be nationalised, that is understood by every worker on Clydeside.

It's the only way to guarantee the jobs, and the factory's long term future. Even a buy-out or agency deal, were it likely, would probably secure only a handful of jobs for a very limited period.

But if the need to nationalise the factory is understood as the only viable alternative to closure, how is it to be achieved?

Rifkind and the Tories vehemently oppose it, but they can be forcibly persuaded. The JOC must take the initiative from these last two mass meetings.

They must take the blacking campaign back into their own control from the dead hand of the STUC.

Then it has to be stepped up—taken into the docks, the engineering works and the construction industry. Factories up and down the country must be visited to obtain real industrial support.

They must also call on the support which has been pledged from Britain and the European factories to stop Caterpillar production in Europe and black all goods in Britain.

A campaign should be launched for a one day strike on Clydeside to pressurise the Tories through lost production and lost profits to step in and take the plant into public ownership.

This happened with Rolls Royce in 1971. The Upper Clyde Shipbuilders occupation in 1971/72 persuaded them to back down. And only three years ago, they nationalised Johnson Matthey bank to avert a financial disaster in the city.

Support

The public support for Caterpillar's nationalisation is huge, workers everywhere desperately want to see them win, those feelings must be capitalised on and given proper direction.

The occupation at Caterpillar can play the same role which the UCS occupation played in the 70s when it helped turn the tide against the Heath government.

A victory here can turn the tide on redundancies, economic misery for millions and the end of Thatcher. It can also illuminate the strong position workers have in the occupying and running of their own factories.

Messages of support to: Caterpillar Occupation Committee, c/o Thomas Stevenson, 17 Compsie View, Bargedie, Glasgow 4.

Classified ads

15p per word, minimum 10 words. Semi-Display £2 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.

○ MILITANT enamel Red Flag badges. £1 each with SAE. Send to Mick Griffiths, 20 Trilby St, Wakefield, W Yorks. Tel. Wakefield, 375 022.

○ ANY READERS interested in computers, with access to computers and/or modems who would be interested in a Marxist Computer Club, please contact Box No 3, 3/13 Hepscott Rd.

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○ Socialist Summer Camp workers' education group. Saturday 8—Saturday 15 August, 1987. Bracelands campsite, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire. Courses on: Marxist Economics, youth and the struggle for socialism, the Russian Revolution, USA, third world. Plus rallies, debates, discos, sports, crèche. Book your holiday now. Cost £40 (£75 for family booking). Brochure available from the end of Easter.

○ The Burden is Heavy: video on the growth of the workers' movement in Zimbabwe, with important conclusions for all socialists. Cost of hire: £20 (£10 for YS branches/women's sections). Order from Zimbabwe Trade Unionists' Defence Campaign, PO Box 77, London E8 4TB.

○ LABOUR Theory of Value (Paul Storey). Set of three tapes. Why Marxism opposes feminism (Margaret Crear). £1.50, plus 25p postage, each order from World Socialist Books.

○ CASSETTE tapes with two issues of Militant (one each side). Available fortnightly. Tapes £3.50 per quarter, £13 per year. To be returned or send blank C-90 tapes. Contact Dave: 14 Harrowby Rd, West Park, Leeds 16. Tel: 0532 624917.

Pollok LPYS public meeting

Support Caterpillar workers

Crookston Castle secondary school
Thursday 9 April 7.30pm
Speaker from LPYS and Caterpillar JOC.

Caterpillar occupation Multinational competition destroys jobs



Tory Secretary of State for Scotland (on tractor) with Uddington plant manager Robinson.

CATERPILLAR Incorporated is registered from 100, W E Adams St, Peoria, Illinois, USA. It recorded a \$7.3 billion turnover in 1984/5/6. Operations in 31 plants worldwide, employing some 53,616 people (down from 89,266 in 1979), made profits of \$198 million last year.

The decision in January 1987 to close its Uddington factory near Glasgow came as part of a decision to reduce worldwide capacity by 3 million square feet.

That included 1.2 million square feet in Uddington, 1 million square feet at Dallas, Oregon and 0.8 million square feet at Davenport, Iowa.

In a three year period attempting to undercut its main competitor, Komatsu of Japan, it sustained losses of almost \$1 billion.

In 1985, for example,

although sales actually increased by 9 per cent its profits slumped by 60 per cent. Like many other multinationals it attempted to carry losses for a temporary period to try and win market share away from its competitors.

Caterpillar Chairman, Mr George Schaefer, told industry analysts recently: "We certainly intend retaining industry leadership. We have priced our products competitively on a value

basis and offered special incentive programmes to enhance the marketing efforts of our dealers—perhaps at the sacrifice of some short term profitability for long term improved results." (*Financial Times* 24 March 1987)

As well as the tactic of undercutting and loss leading in the manufacture of earth moving vehicles, Caterpillar is simultaneously moving away from production of tractors to more obvious sales of spare parts and equipment.

Jobs

Whilst jobs worldwide have decreased by 36,000 in the past five years, the biggest proportion has undoubtedly been in North

America with a 50 per cent cut (31,000 in 1980 to 15,000 in 1985).

Investment worldwide has fallen drastically and steadily in the past period from a level of around \$900 million a year in 1981 to less than \$230 million in 1986.

This is a harbinger of worse things to come and inevitably means further reduction in capacity and jobs in the future.

Even George Schaefer, although no doubt loath to admit it, has to point out that these reductions and cuts may come sooner rather than later.

"We might have to do some more additional down sizing (sic). The days of Caterpillar making a return of 8 per cent on sales as they managed in the 1970s is a

thing of the past." (*FT* 23 March '87).

Uddington plant manager, Ken Robinson, told the workers that they were: "a victim of the company's worldwide remedy."

Important links have been developed between the joint organisation committee at Uddington and the CGT (France), CSDT (Belgium) and UAW (USA) as a result of the occupation. These unions have all visited and pledged support.

Internationalism

Whilst it was true that the development of an international Caterpillar union combine had been in its infancy before January, its growth will accelerate as a result of lessons learnt in the

Glasgow struggle.

There will be many more "victims" in the years to come as the crisis of capitalism throughout the US and Europe deepens.

If multinational employees working at a profitable factory, producing equipment in desperate demand throughout the world, particularly in under developed countries cannot find security of employment then we have to ask who is safe? Could it be your job next?

The Caterpillar unions internationally must get together and develop the same levels of communication as their bosses. Future closures can only be averted by unions at sister factories fighting together to win and secure all their jobs.

How long have you both worked for Caterpillar and what are our feelings about how they have treated you?

John: I've been in here 13 years now and I work in the material control section. I'm bitter. What gets me is the sheer disregard they have shown us since last September especially.

When they announced that £62.5m 'fraud' they openly encouraged guys in here to take on heavy debts, to buy houses, cars and furniture and all those things.

I remember lying by the pool on holiday in Spain last October with the wife and two kids, with a big cigar in my mouth thinking that my future was secure for at least the next ten years.

Christ, I wasn't long in losing that feeling when I come home to Bellshill and found that the whole place was to be closed!

Tommy: My position's the same as John's although I've only been in here just over a year. I left about 1981 having worked for eight years with Caterpillar, to go and work in the Clydesdale steelworks.

What do you consider are your prospects of working somewhere else if Caterpillar does close?

Tommy: If this place closes then we have virtually no chance of working anywhere else. There are no other places about here. I'm married with two boys of eight and six. My chances of getting another job are nil. And I'm only 30.

John: Caterpillar and Honeywell's were the biggest employers about here at one time. Honeywell used to have 4,000 on their books. Now there's less than 600.

Where could we work? There's nothing here! Most guys in here will go straight on the dole and be there til they retire if we lose this one.

How have your wives reacted to your occupation?

Tommy: Both our wives and most of the others have been really behind us from day one. They know that Robinson and the rest of them (Caterpillar managers-CF)

Glasgow workers fighting back

Interview with John Burns (wearing striped jumper in pic) and Tommy Anderson.



photo: Militant

"If we get beat it's not for want of trying and we will have done everything we could do. Thatcher and the Tories don't want us to win because they know other workers would do what we've done and they'd win too. That would be the end of her."

have broken promises they made to us. So they're right behind us.

John: I think you can see the way the wives are helping by the great work the Women's Support Group have been doing. They are as much part of this fight as the men and they know as well as we do that the whole question of redundancies is not on, not under any circumstances!

British Steel and British Coal are notorious for dangling big fat cheques to get workers to sell their jobs. What about Caterpillar?

John: Listen, what they're offering us is garbage but that's not the

point. I'm not taking any redundancy money ever—I want my job!

Tommy: The same goes for me, and I'll tell you another thing. Most of the men in here would get less than a couple of thousand pounds which is no substitute for a job promised to last for the next ten years.

What have your jobs been during the occupation?

Tommy: We've been running the Entertainments Committee with 3 or 4 other guys! Basically it meant organising charity events to raise money and also getting people to come into the factory and put on

performances for the guys, like the way we have invited you Young Socialists to come in and put on your 'Trial of Thatcher' play. We've also had Andy Cameron in and Ben Gunn and various singers, hypnotists, cabaret artists etc.

How successful has it been so far?

John: Well, I'll tell you I might just take up this job full time! But seriously we've raised nearly £5,000 in charity concerts, plays, bingo, raffles, football matches. You name it we've done it!

Tommy: Don't forget that Scheme (Scottish Rock Band) and Hipsway are both putting on con-

certs for us at the end of April in Glasgow. I think I'll change my name to Tommy Goldsmith! (after Harvey-CF).

I suppose you were both active in the union before the occupation?

Both: No.

Tommy: No. The vast majority of the 800 men at that meeting on Monday weren't either.

John: You know that's one of the things that's impressed me the most in this occupation, the way guys come to the fore in disputes like this. Even those who were very critical of the union before are now playing a very active part in the occupation. We are all 'Militants' now!

Tommy: That's right. I've seen people spend a full day out in the street collecting money when you couldn't get them along to branch meetings in the canteen even for half-an-hour before.

What advice would you give other workers who find themselves threatened with redundancies?

Tommy: Never mind just those threatened with redundancies I would tell all workers this—don't take on a mortgage or big debts 'cos you never know when the axe will fall. How can they shut a place like this which makes them money. After all if we are not safe no-one is.

John: It makes a lot more sense to me, if you're fighting the multinational bosses or whoever, to occupy rather than to stand out in the cold picketing. It's also a damn sight more effective 'cos its Caterpillar's electricity and heating and telephones you're using not your own!

The 64 million dollar question. Are you going to win?

Tommy: Yes. We've got to win.

John: If we get beat it's not for the want of trying and we will have done everything we could do. Thatcher and the Tories don't want us to win because they know other workers would do what we've done and they'd win too. That would be the end of her. We'll win alright, make no mistake. Interim Interdict or not!

Militant

"No cuts in maternity benefits."
National lobby of Parliament and mass rally. Monday 6 April. Central Hall, Westminster, London SW1. 11am to 8pm including speakers and entertainment.

Maternity emergency

AFTER SAVAGELY cutting health and education, which have particularly hit women, and threatening child benefits, now the Tories are launching an equally brutal and more direct attack on women.

On 6 April the Tory government ends the statutory right of women to a £25 maternity grant. Their Social Security Act 1986:

- ★ Abolishes the £25 maternity grant and replaces it with a means-tested payment—500,000 women will lose the statutory maternity grant.
- ★ Abolishes free milk and vitamins for pregnant women and children in the families of low paid workers.
- ★ One in five mothers will lose maternity allowance—up to £530 each each.

The universal grant, first introduced by Labour in 1969, has never been increased. If the grant had increased with inflation, it should now be £130. The Health Education Council and the Health Visitors Association recommend £400.

Particularly hard hit will be young women on YTS. They will be unable to build up any of the necessary contributions or service to qualify for maternity benefits in general.

One in four households have a woman as the sole or the main breadwinner of the family, because of the increasing number of single parents, and because of mass unemployment.

By Jane Hartley

Maternity allowance—the major benefit for working women—has been steadily eroded by the Tories. Now, fewer women will be able to claim this. A National Minimum Wage of at least £120, including women on maternity leave, would reduce the dependence of many working-class families on government aid.

These latest attacks continue to place the main burden of child-bearing on the individual, especially the working-class woman. That burden should be borne by society as a whole. We need a universal system of statutory maternity grants that reflect genuine costs of both pregnancy and childbirth.

To these reforms should be linked an increase in wages for midwives, nurses and other supportive staff such as health visitors who are disgracefully low paid by this government.

But, for a massive expansion in health and social services, we need to kick out the Tories, and ensure that a socialist Labour government places industry and finance under public control, so that working people and their families get the help they deserve.



Women and children are increasingly coming under attack from the Tories. Photo: Militant.

Fight for decent benefits

Help us in the struggle for socialism—Join the Labour Party and fight for:

- ★ A universal maternity grant which reflects the material cost of pregnancy and childbirth of £500
- ★ Child benefits which cover the real cost of raising children.
- ★ Maternity and paternity leave (in addition to 11 weeks maternity leave before birth) for up to six weeks, then
- ★ Six months leave for either parent on full pay with their original job held open for two years.

- ★ Full maternity rights for all part-time workers and YTS workers irrespective of number of employees and length of time at work.
- ★ Special leave entitlement for either parent caring for sick children.
- ★ A free nursery place for every child.
- ★ A national minimum wage of £120, with pro-rata payment for part-time workers.
- ★ A job for every woman who wants employment.

What We Stand for

- The immediate introduction of a 35-hour week without loss in pay as a step towards the elimination of unemployment.
- Reversal of all Tory cuts and a massive programme of public works on housing, education, the health service, etc.
- A minimum wage of £120 a week for all, including pensioners, sick and disabled people.
- A socialist plan of production democratically drawn up and implemented by committees involving the trade unions, shop stewards, housewives and small business people.
- Opposition to the capitalist Common Market, the EEC. For a socialist United States of Europe as a step towards a World Socialist Federation.
- Workers' management of the nationalised industries. These should be run on the basis of one-third of the places on the management board coming from the unions in the industry, one-third from the TUC representing the working class as a whole, and one-third from the government.
- Opposition to the Tory government's anti-union laws and the reversal of attacks on the trade unions.
- Massive cuts in arms spending. Support for unilateral nuclear disarmament, but with the recognition that only a socialist change of society in Britain and internationally can eliminate the danger of a nuclear holocaust.
- Nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies, including the banks and insurance companies which control 80 per cent to 85 per cent of the economy. This should be through an Enabling Bill in Parliament with minimum compensation on the basis of proven need.

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