

Militant

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Labour to
power on a
socialist
programme



DON'T GIVE HER ANOTHER CHANCE

DON'T BE taken in by Thatcher's silky soft image. The Tories are the party of the rich—and aim to make the rest of us suffer. Thatcher called Callaghan the "prime minister of unemployment" in 1978. But her governments have allowed unemployment to rise to unparalleled levels. They have needed at least *nineteen* fiddles of the statistics to bring the figures down towards three million. "We must expect a lot more of our jobs to come from service industries, from McDonalds and the... Disney Land they are starting in Corby" said Thatcher in 1983.

By Roger Shrivess

The Tories offer Mickey Mouse jobs because they have allowed industry to rot. A 28 per cent fall in manufacturing jobs since 1979 means two million producers of wealth (like Corby steel workers) on the scrap heap.

"I want every man and woman a capitalist" the Prime Minister said before the last election. Publicly owned resources have been sold off, mainly to big business in a game of upper crust bingo. They call it 'people's capitalism' but the big decisions are still made by the big profit makers.

Ask the BT workers,

forced to strike for pay and jobs. Ask Caterpillar workers forced to occupy for their future.

"Sometimes the wages of young people are much too high in relation to adults" Thatcher complained in 1983. The Tories have introduced poverty pay scheme after scheme for school leavers to slash young workers' expectations. Now their greedy eyes are set on American style 'workfare' where you lose benefit unless you take a slave wage dead end job.

The politician who said: "the NHS is safe with us" has presided over a rapid rise in waiting lists and prescription charges and ruthless closures and cutbacks. Local government services like housing and education have been cut to the bone by rate capping.

(Continued on back page)

Election special

NOW IS the best time to double or even treble our sales. The general election will see mass rallies and other political activities. Everyone will want to know what the most famous paper in the labour movement is saying. Even before the election was called, 300 copies of *Militant* were sold on the streets of Bermondsey last weekend. Follow their example. Make the next four weeks a victory for Marxism as well as a victory for Labour. Sell *Militant*!

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Liverpool Labour victory
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West Midlands cars
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Local elections Liverpool Labour's

LAST FRIDAY the phones of Liverpool socialists were buzzing with calls from throughout Britain: "What a result! Congratulations, you've given us all a real boost in our area" was the message.

Whilst Labour's national leadership made weary apologies for its string of lost opportunities and set-backs in areas where the right wing control the councils, euphoric celebrations were being held in the Labour clubs of Liverpool.

Labour's victory there was a stunning vindication of the policies of the previous Labour council, forced out of office by the courts and disowned by the national leadership, but backed overwhelmingly by the working people of the city.

"LAST LAUGH for Labour" was the *Daily Post* headline. "An amazing bounce back after the disqualification of 47 Labour councillors by the House of Lords", was the dumbfounded admission of the rabidly anti-socialist *Liverpool Echo*.

All the enemies of Labour and *Militant* were concerned by Liverpool's Labour victory. Norman Tebbit described the result as: "Quite extraordinary. It's going to take quite a lot of thinking about for all of us".

Highly paid election experts were forced to notice the exceptional nature of Liverpool's result on a night when Labour lost seats to the Tories in Manchester, Blackburn, Crewe (Gwyneth Dunwoody's seat where BREL workers face redundancies) and the Midlands. Professor Anthony King, speaking on BBC's *Newsnight*, remarked: "Liverpool has declared political UDI."

For Labour to win was a brilliant achievement. Ponder the mountain of obstacles thrown up to block Labour's path. Four years of lies and smears heaped on the previous Labour councillors were given the official seal of approval by the Lords.

Liberal gimmicks

The Liberal junta which gained temporary control of the council tried vote-catching gimmicks like opening St. George's Hall at a cost of £100,000 (funded out of cancelled house building projects). They cancelled appointments made by Labour to the cleansing department before losing office, froze vacancies in the department and then took on 106 cleansing staff in a fanfare of publicity about "cleaning up our city".

The *Echo* spewed out its daily diatribe against "militants" and highlighted every Liberal gimmick. Peter Kilfoyle, Labour's imposed Liverpool agent, instead of co-ordinating the campaign against the Liberals, spent his time eliminating socialists from the party's council panel. And the national party leadership ensured Liverpool had no District Labour Party to drive the campaign forward in the way it was done in the past.

Against that background every socialist in Britain should stand ten foot tall when they study the statistics of Liverpool's victory. The turnout was 50.2 per cent, five per cent up on last year and only just below that of 1984, when the elections were in the middle of that dramatic struggle that resulted in the famous victory against the Tories in June that year.



Liverpool Broadgreen Labour Party members celebrate the election of John Blackhall (left) as councillor in Kensington

What a monumental answer by working class voters to those jeremiahs who justify a purge of socialist policies by claiming that socialism is unpopular.

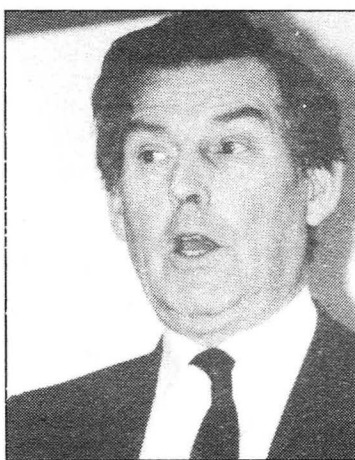
None of Labour's officialdom expected to win. General Secretary, Larry Whitty, said afterwards: "Who would have expected Labour to win Liverpool two weeks ago"? Now after the event they try to claim it is due to a new 'moderate' Labour Party in Liverpool.

But if Larry Whitty thought a new, purged Labour group was such a vote winner, why did he not trumpet Labour's prospects in Liverpool "two weeks ago"? And how does he explain Labour losing seats to the Tories and Alliance in areas with no *Militant* councillors?

It is rumoured that Kinnock will be visiting Liverpool, and its new more 'moderate' Labour group. Every Party activist in the city, enthused by these results, will be asking why he did not come when the Liverpool labour movement needed public support from the national leadership, in the fight against Thatcher and the Lords.

Kilfoyle tries to belittle the influence of *Militant*, saying it is not an issue. Even the acting Labour group leader, Keva Coombes, played this tune to the press, but he now readily admits that Labour's victory was "a personal vote of confidence in the 47 disqualified councillors" and their record on housing, job creation, rents and rates.

But these comrades are trying to face both ways at once. The policies of the past four years were



"Mr Steel will be telling the (Alliance) Group that he regards the winning of an overall majority in Liverpool as the beginning of a general election campaign. We will have an Alliance government for Liverpool, and he wants it to be a forerunner for an Alliance government for the rest of the country." — Sir Trevor Jones, 21 April.

championed by *Militant*, were labelled *Militant* by the press and it was *Militant* supporters who spearheaded the campaign to implement them from 1983 to 1987.

No Labour voter was under any illusion about the continued influence of *Militant* in the Liverpool Labour movement. The *Echo* produced red-scare articles warning that *Militant* still dominates the Labour Party.

The Liberals put out eve of poll leaflets with press cuttings reproduced with headlines ranging from: "Barred Militants say 'we'll return stronger'" (*Sunday Times*), to: "Gangsters run our Town Hall" (*Echo*).

The Liberal war-cry was: "Hit *Militant* where it hurts—in the ballot box". Yet afterwards Liberal MP David Alton accused *Militant* supporters are "hiding behind the Labour Party".

On the contrary, every *Militant* supporter in the election said exactly where they stood. Liverpool is a crushing answer by workers to any who doubt the effectiveness of

"It's thumbs up for the policies of the last four years, despite the Kinnock factor and the Kilfoyle factor." — Derek Hatton, 8 May.

Photo: Tina Carroll

with private education myself, but my wife pays for them to go".

In three wards in Liverpool, laboratory conditions existed to test the popular myth that *Militant* loses votes. In all cases two seats were vacant. In Kensington a brilliant campaign was conducted and *Militant* supporter John Blackhall won, whilst unfortunately another good socialist narrowly lost.

In St Mary's Labour's vote rose by 2,000 compared to the recent by-election. Michael Parkinson of Liverpool University, an 'expert' on Liverpool, quipped on television that Labour had won one seat and lost one in St Mary's, where one was a *Militant* candidate and the other was not, and his guess would be that the *Militant* lost. Well, Michael we have news for you...

Anfield is the most graphic judgement on *Militant* compared to the right wing. In that seat, the *Militant* supporter, Jackie Smith, topped the poll, while unfortunately from the point of view of Labour, Malcolm Kennedy, who was imposed on the local party, came fourth. He is the husband of Jane Kennedy supplier of ammunition to the NEC for expulsions and arch witch-hunter.

Big votes for Labour in a number of south end wards are no credit to the right wing candidates that dominated those seats. They are a tribute to the fact that it was in the south end that the majority of Labour's house building programme was actually carried out.

The prospects for the future are rich for socialism. The Labour Party has received a clear mandate to continue the socialist policies of the past four years, in particular in reversing the Liberals' cancellation of the housing programme and job creation, and also to continue the policy of a rent freeze. It is important they reverse the Liberal witch-hunt and victimisation of Sam Bond and Beryl Molyneux.

But since the elections, Kilfoyle has already referred to the heroic stand of the old Labour group, saying: "We will not go down that road again." Of course no-one welcomes the prospect of surcharge and removal from office, but Liverpool activists and *Militant* supporters in particular, will still demand a fighting stance from the Labour group. For without it, jobs and services cannot be guaranteed.

And with 10 councillors elected last week, making a total of 11, *Militant* has achieved the position of having the same percentage of supporters as in the previous Labour group.

The stories of our death are entirely premature. *Militant* provided some of the best activists and best campaigns, without which Labour would not have won key seats which ensured a majority in the council.

Liverpool has registered 85,000 votes for socialism. Let the national Labour Party leadership learn the Liverpool lesson and build a majority socialist Labour government.

By Richard Venton

City-wide votes were:-			
	May 1986		May 1987
Labour	71,131	(41.4%)	84,968 (45.2%)
Liberal	77,270	(45.0%)	85,077 (45.3%)
Conservative	21,348	(12.4%)	17,596 (9.3%)
Total	171,704		187,671
1986 - 87:			
Labour vote increased:		13,837	(3.8%)
Liberal vote increased:		7,807	(0.3%)
Conservative vote fell:		3,752	(minus 3.1%)

brilliant victory

Party's democratic traditions stifled

LABOUR'S VICTORY is all the more significant when account is taken of the role played in the party's campaign by the national leaders and local officials.

In previous local elections, the Liverpool District Labour Party (DLP) would have elected an officer to oversee the work in the marginal seats and coordinate Labour's campaign there with a regular meeting of candidates and agents to check on material, canvassing progress and key issues to be tackled.

This year, as last May, the DLP was suspended and there was no central campaign coordination. Instead of a democratic policy conference, the now rigged Temporary Coordinating Committee (TCC) imposed a policy on the party and candidates.

It is ironic that after the old DLP officers were wrongly accused of presenting statements to delegates on the nights of DLP meetings with no time to study the contents, Peter Kilfoyle, the official appointed to run the party in Liverpool, did exactly that. This year's policy statement was presented to members of the TCC on the night of the meeting, leaving no chance for a democratic discussion on policy in the local movement.

No leadership

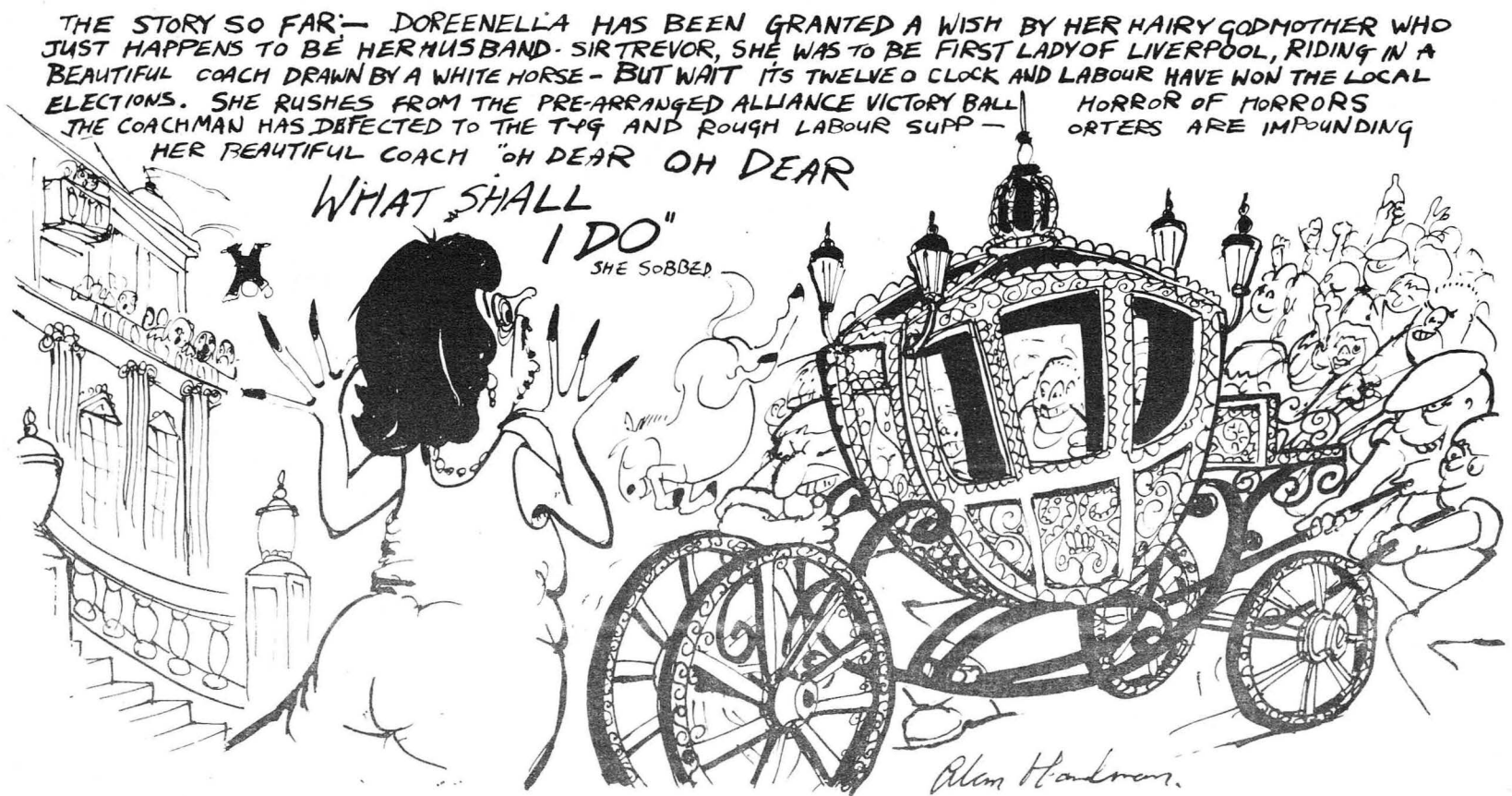
There was not the same campaign atmosphere as in previous years and the blame for this lies entirely with the Labour Party leadership and its puppet in Liverpool, Peter Kilfoyle. Even Keva Coombes, the caretaker leader of the remaining eleven Labour councillors, was forced to admit in *The Guardian* that "there has been no machinery, staff, offices or money for the eleven remaining councillors."

Rather than lead a campaign for a Labour victory and expose the Liberals, all Kilfoyle's time and vital money and resources was spent on trying to cleanse the Party and the panel of candidates of *Militant* supporters in a desperate bid to present Labour with a 'moderate' image.

£4,000 alone was spent on stopping Richard Knights, a Party member for 16 years, from standing for Labour, while candidates who send their children to private schools or who in the past have voted for £25million worth of cuts found themselves fighting seats for Labour.

As a result of the party leaders' near obsession with 'seeing off *Militant* in Liverpool', a Labour victory could have been jeopardised. In the event, working-class voters recognised the work the previous Labour council had done for them.

By Martin Lee



LADY DOREEN Jones, the wife of Liverpool's Liberal leader, Sir Trevor, is Lady Mayor no more. Like Cinderella at midnight, her brief moment of glory has come to an end. The new Labour Group on Liverpool City Council has voted not to reinstate the office of Lord Mayor. By 27 votes to 23 they agreed to elect a Chairman of the Council.

They also adopted a statement moved by left-wing councillors, which paid tribute to the 47 disqualified councillors and pledged to continue the former Labour council's policy on house-building, a rent freeze and low

rates rises. 15 voted against this and eight abstained.

All the elections for Group officers, however, were won by the right. By 31 votes to 20, Harry Rimmer, former deputy leader of Merseyside County Council, was elected leader and Alan Dean, a councillor for only four days, is to be his deputy. In both cases the defeated candidate was Tony Jennings, backed by the Broad Left and *Militant* supporters.

The left on the Group will remain the conscience of the previous 47 councillors and will keep a vigilant eye on the new leadership.

'Moderates' plot to take over

DEREK HATTON, Tony Mulhearn and other leading Labour party members in Liverpool were expelled because of their supposed membership of an organisation operating within the party. The evidence against them was thin and it was apparent that they were in fact expelled for their political ideas.

Militant now has real evidence of a secret organisation within the Labour Party in Liverpool. A letter from right-winger Roy Gladstone invited some "non-tendency (*sic*) candidates who will be standing in the May elections" to "discuss the set up of the council and look at some of the basic tactical mistakes we made, (out of pure ignorance), that

allowed the tendency to control and manipulate the group". "Also present", he said, "will be a number of non-tendency ex-councillors and some of the present councillors".

This is how the right wing spent their time during the council election campaign—plotting against the influence of *Militant*'s ideas in the Liverpool labour movement, when the whole party should have been defending the Labour council's fantastic achievements from the onslaughts of the press and the Liberals!

Will Kinnock's hatchet man in Liverpool, Peter Kilfoyle, now be taking action against these conspirators?

Merseyside Militant Rally

Build for a socialist Labour government

Sunday 17 May, 7pm
Philharmonic Hall, Hope Street, Liverpool

Speakers: Peter Taaffe, Nimrod Sejake

Right wing to blame for Labour's decline

Birmingham

IN BIRMINGHAM Labour was expecting to gain several key seats. In fact they lost five to the Tories, fortunately not enough to lose control of the City Council.

In the wake of recent attacks against black section activists and the left

generally, Labour's right-wing leaders must take the blame for these shocking results in solid working-class areas dominated by council estates.

The right are already trying to blame the left, but clearly their tactic of portraying themselves as more 'moderate' and 'sensible' than the opposition has backfired.

This year's rates increase

Manchester

LABOUR SUFFERED a significant setback in the Manchester City Council elections. They still have a crushing majority, but polled 12,000 fewer votes than last year, despite a higher turnout, and lost six seats to the Tories and three to the Alliance.

While this can be explained partly by the poor performance of Labour's national leadership, the City Council's recent 20 per cent rates and £1.50 rent rises also had inevitable electoral consequences.

The City Labour Party's decision to retreat from a struggle with the Tories was reflected in a low-key campaign in many wards, as activists were forced on to the defensive.

Rather than fighting to win support for a struggle for more resources from the government which has stolen a million pounds a week from the city since 1979, Labour was forced to

has been held at six per cent, but obviously most Brummies have not forgotten that rates went up 63 per cent in the previous two years under Labour. It will now take a monumental effort to lift rank-and-file spirits to fight in crucial parliamentary seats in the general election.

By Les Kuriata

try and justify the highest rates in the country.

Council leader Graham Stringer blamed the results on press misrepresentation of the council's relatively small expenditure on gays and lesbians and their decision to employ Viraj Mendis as a Deportations Officer. (Mendis has been forced to take sanctuary in a local church to avoid deportation to Sri Lanka and possible execution).

"This decision (to replace Sharon Atkin as candidate for Nottingham East) has certainly guaranteed that Labour will win in the local elections in Nottingham." — Joe Ashton MP, 30 April. The Tories won control of Nottingham City Council from Labour.

Even the worst smears of the media, however, can be tackled if Labour is seen to be fighting on behalf of working people generally, rather than making them pay for Tory cuts through rent and rates increases.

But in Moston ward, controlled by the right wing, Labour's leaflets were headed *No Extremists! No Militants!*. They congratulated Neil Kinnock on his campaign to expel *Militant* supporters from the Labour Party. The Labour candidate, a councillor for many years, lost the seat to the Tories.

Next year, the council will face an even worse cash crisis. Labour could be pushed into imposing draconian cuts and face much more severe electoral reverses. The only alternative is to organise a fighting campaign with the trade unions against the Tory cuts.

By John Hunt.

Militant

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Socialist campaign

THE ELECTION is on. Battle has been joined. In the next month the labour movement faces a severe test—its ability to inspire its natural majority of workers, the unemployed, youth and pensioners to turn out to vote down the Tory enemy.

Eight years of Thatcherism, of cuts, of unemployment, of attacks on the unions, must be avenged. The capitalists are already eagerly anticipating a third Tory term. Last week share prices registered their largest one day rise in expectation of an 11 June victory.

However, their confident hopes can be confounded in the course of the election campaign itself. If Party conference policies for a minimum wage, a 35 hour week, for at least a £27 a week grant for all FE students, for the rebuilding of the welfare state and a programme for jobs are brought to the fore, Labour can win through. Full blooded socialist economic policies can then convince ordinary voters that Labour really can wield the resources necessary to tackle their burning everyday problems.

The outstanding results for Labour in Liverpool at the local elections, against all the odds, decisively confirms that left policies win votes. No-one can be in any doubt that Liverpool workers did not vote for any new moderate local leadership, but enthusiastically endorsed the militant record of the disbarred councillors. While right wing Labour control in the electorally sensitive West Midlands, recorded a potentially fatal swing against Labour.

A socialist and class based campaign, as Liverpool has conducted over four years, has to be launched with urgency over the next four weeks, by Labour nationally.

And what more devastating ammunition could a determined and aggressive Party leadership require to guarantee success? Tory leaders have been intimately involved with MI5, plotting against Labour, especially at elections, and threatening workers' democratic rights. They have organised a gigantic profiteering swindle, selling off £5 billion worth of state assets per year. Their own MPs have been caught making a killing in privatised shares.

The Tories have presided over wholesale destruction of manufacturing industry and jobs, giving the lie to their empty boasts about 'booming Britain'. Eighteen months after Thatcher's American rescue of Westland, major redundancies have been announced there.

The opportunity exists for Labour now to galvanise into action its traditional class base. Tony Benn has correctly urged that "in our public campaign we must address our arguments directly to our natural constituency, which must include those millions who never vote, and not concentrate all our attention on a few thousand middle of the road voters who are thought capable of being won back from the SDP." But he recognises that for this task: "The absence of any very clear vision of the future is one of the most glaring omissions from the present programme."

Labour must immediately reach out to its traditional core of support, with its traditional methods—daily public meetings, street meetings and factory gate meetings in every constituency.

If the Tory press retains any pretence of objective journalism, let it report the real response on the estates and at the meetings, of ordinary workers to Labour's campaign.

Labour can never win through its coverage in a unanimously hostile press and TV. But it can neutralise the malevolent effect of the media, including their cynical use of opinion polls to try to distort voting intentions, by mass campaigning.

Nor will Labour succeed merely by employing upbeat advertising agencies, while throwing overboard policy commitments that will attract its traditional following. Electoral victory is secured by activists, inspired by the Party's socialist message and mobilised through mass meetings and mass activities. Pull in the factory and office workers to join the mass canvassing of the Labour estates! Pull in the active youth to get out the potentially election winning youth vote!

However the national Party campaign is organised, then at least in those areas where the left and the Marxists are at the centre of the work, it must take up the policies and approach needed to enthuse Labour workers.

Militant supporters throughout the country will be committing themselves to fight, harder than anyone else, to drive Thatcher out. But more than that, they have the opportunity to prove the effectiveness and the response to a fighting socialist programme and an energetic socialist campaign.

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Northern Ireland Repression stepped up

Election Militant

EIGHT IRA men and one civilian died in a carefully prepared SAS/RUC trap. The eight man IRA team blew up the Loughgall RUC station in county Armagh before being cut down in a hail of gunfire from under cover police and troops. The area around the police barracks was riddled with gunfire by the undercover units.

One civilian in a car 100 to 150 yards from the police station also died, and his passenger was shot in the head and chest.

The IRA unit involved was observed eight miles away by the RUC. They decided not to intercept and arrest the IRA men, but wait in Loughgall to prepare a deadly ambush.

This event marks an offensive by imperialism on the IRA. More importantly it underlines that British policy in the Catholic areas will now be the mailed fist of repression, and it represents a turn in imperialism's policy towards a military solution.

But as Militant has consistently warned, there can be no political or military solution on a capitalist basis. The 'political' solution of the Anglo-Irish deal was doomed to fail. So will any attempt by imperialism to enforce a military solution.

The Catholic areas are now more alienated than ever before. The RUC handling of recent republican funerals has heightened tensions in the Catholic areas, not seen since the hunger strikes.

The killings in Loughgall will convince Catholics that a shoot to kill policy still exists. Rather than defeat the Provos, Sinn Fein will benefit and the Provos themselves will gain more recruits allowing them to escalate their campaign.

Labour must break from Tory policies in Ireland, and campaign for a socialist solution

The events at Loughgall come at a time when the IRA was riding high on a series of successes against the RUC. Since March the Provos had intensified their campaign of killing RUC men, bombing police barracks, shooting builders and assassinating members of the judiciary.

Marxism has always opposed the dead-end methods of the Provisionals. Individual terror can never defeat imperialism and capitalism, and will only provide another excuse for more repression. In Northern Ireland it further serves to increase sectarian divisions, and gives a boost to reactionary Loyalists.

Last Thursday night, 7 May, Gary McCartan a 17 year old Catholic was the victim of a Ulster Volunteer Force killer gang. He is the fourteenth member of his immediate family to be assassinated in the troubles, mainly by roving Loyalist killer gangs.

Last week's events in Northern Ireland once again underline the need for the labour and trade union movement to show a way out. Those struggling to build a movement of Catholic and Protestant workers around socialist policies and a mass Labour Party call for support from the labour movement in Britain. They will not be helped by the statements of Neil Kinnock who supported the army and police action of Loughgall as a "significant victory against the men of violence". British Labour must break from its support for Tory policies in Northern Ireland and campaign for a socialist solution.

"IN TWO streets last weekend, we sold 34 papers and raised over £5 for the fighting fund. One in every three people bought a copy of Militant! One woman bought three copies. She said she would sell the rest to her family."

So reports a seller from Coventry. They sold over 200 copies on estate sales in the area. "Liverpool has shown who the real fighters are!" was one comment on the doorstep. Later that night another seller sold out of papers at a disco! She took payment for a further three copies on the promise of delivering them the next day. It just goes to show you can sell Militant anywhere.

Sellers up and down the country are gearing themselves for a massive boost to our sales. Circulation is already on the increase so we're all set for record sales as the election campaign gets under way.

To help boost sales even more Militant will come out more frequently during the campaign. Production will be changed (see below for details). Treble our sales and pave the way for a twice weekly paper!

More and more people are looking for an alternative and want to read Militant's analysis of what needs to be done for a Labour victory. Make sure you are selling on the street, round the estates and at the workplaces. Don't miss any opportunity for new sales.

Special offer for new subscribers: Read Militant's election count-down and analysis. Order the next four issues for only £1 post free! See back page for details.

Militant will be produced on:
Wednesday, 13 May;
Monday, 18 May;
Friday, 22 May;
Thursday, 28 May;
Thursday, 4 June;
Friday, 12 June.

Sam Bond forced to quit

SAM BOND has been forced to quit his job with the Liverpool City Council by the newly-elected right-wing Labour leadership.

In the last two and a half years, Sam has made substantial gains for Liverpool blacks, despite obstruction by a handful of Nalگو bureaucrats and self-appointed "race" officials.

Sam has always insisted he would not accept redeployment to any other position in the council service. In fact Sam's determination to stick by his job has won him the admiration of the over-

whelming majority of the city's black population.

The previous Labour administration stood by Sam all the way. His appointment was backed by the vast majority of the city's black organisations.

Reinstate

Now these groups and the black community feel betrayed by the right-wing in the new Labour group.

The Labour movement and black groups in the city must now mount a campaign for Sam's reinstatement. No

retreat on Labour's anti-racist policies! Labour must continue to allocate substantial resources to housing and services in Liverpool 8! No return to the days when blacks were prevented from gaining jobs with the city council!

Sam Bond is determined to continue the fight. He said: "The right-wing may have succeeded in removing me from my job, but the fight goes on. We must defend and build on our achievements. There will be no retreat."

Arrested for selling Militant—in court on polling day

MILITANT sellers were arrested in Birkenhead on Saturday, supposedly for obstruction. Their papers were taken as evidence. Dave Clark reports.

When we were threatened with arrest for obstruction one comrade asked: "If we spread out can we continue selling?" and got the reply: "No, I want you off the precinct". I was told "If you don't give me your name and address I'll arrest you" so I gave them my name and address.

Then the WPC said "If you don't stop selling and move on I'll arrest you" so I put my papers away and prepared to move away.

Two other comrades were taken away in a police car and on the way to the police station the police driver apologised for them being arrested and said: "With all this unemployment around, it's enough to make you militant isn't it?"

At the police station, all our possessions were taken off us and impounded, including one comrade's shopping of lettuce and spring onions. We were kept in different cells for five hours. We have to be in court on 11 June. By amazing coincidence that happens to be election day!



Local residents of Fulbeck blocking the road to stop tests to decide whether to dump nuclear waste.

Photo: John Harris (FL)



FOR A fleeting moment Coventry workers may have believed in the Tories' 'booming Britain'. New jobs were announced at Jaguar and Talbot and at Rover in nearby Solihull.

Then Massey Ferguson announced 1,000 redundancies. In one fell swoop they destroyed as many jobs as the other firms had created.

In an adjournment debate in Parliament, Dave Nellist Labour MP for Coventry South East, said: "It would be ironic, if it were not so tragic, that the announcement came within 48 hours of claims by members of the Tory cabinet that unemployment was improving and the economy getting brighter. Massey Ferguson has given the lie to that dubious Tory claim."

"It follows on the heels of the major job losses announced at Caterpillar and Westland. If publicly owned, planned and integrated, all three firms could play an enormous role in producing equipment or airlifting grain to famine-stricken areas of the world."

"However, in the archaic and anarchic capitalist system, the needs of the hungry millions and the skills of thousands of engineering workers are driven apart..."

"About 110,000 people—equivalent to one third of the population of Coventry—die every 24 hours because of hunger or hunger-related diseases."

"However, now 1,000 skilled and experienced workers in our city, which is still referred to as the Western world's tractor capital are to be sacrificed because of what the company calls a 'lack of orders'."

Tories bribe voters

WESTMINSTER MUST have echoed to the sound of screeching tyres last week, as the Tories executed pre-election U-turns.

In a letter to every teacher in England and Wales, Kenneth Baker, denied he wanted to determine their pay and promised a new negotiating machinery by 1989. He also withdrew his advice to local councils to close small rural schools.

Environment Secretary, Nicholas Ridley, also suffered a change of heart. He dropped plans to find a dump for nuclear waste and declared that none will be established in Britain this century, at least not in vulnerable Tory constituencies.

Even the fraud squad broke with tradition and charged someone over City scandals. The sacrificial lamb was the former chairman of Guinness, Ernest Saunders.

All this came just after the Tories' tight fist suddenly opened up a little for the nurses, if not for other health service workers.

No one is conned by the Tories' blatant electioneering.

Nurses know from the terrible pressure of working in the battered

and bleeding NHS how cold-hearted the Tories are.

It will take more than one scapegoat to convince workers that the Tories and the police chiefs are taking action against their free-enterprising friends in the City of London.

Teachers know that Baker has taken unprecedented action against their union rights and that the Tories will

be prepared to do the same to all public sector workers.

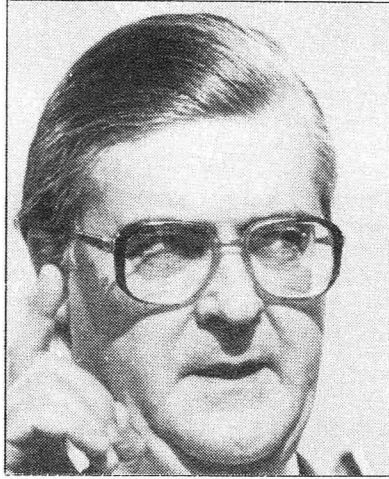
Even habitual Tory voters in villages where schools were threatened or where radioactive waste was to be dumped, know that the policy changes are an electoral manoeuvre.

All four proposed nuclear dump sites were in Tory seats. But the villagers' traditional loyalties were shaken during their campaigns.

"We have been labelled middle-class, middle-aged hooligans and I think that's probably quite apt," one told the high-Tory *Daily Telegraph*. "We have surprised ourselves and I think we've surprised the Government."

The *Telegraph* was forced to admit that villagers in Bradwell in Essex put their victory down to Tory fears that their MP would lose his seat.

If the Tories are returned to government, they will put their kicking boots back on again. Workers, and many of the middle class too, can expect further assaults in the interests of the monopolies.



Kenneth Baker.

By Tony Cross

Labour manifesto: no room for nationalisation

CRYING OUT for a change is Labour's election slogan, adopted by a joint meeting of the Party's National Executive Committee and the Shadow Cabinet to agree the election manifesto.

Millions of working people are indeed crying out for change and will be looking at this manifesto for evidence that a Labour victory will bring it about. But they will be disappointed.

There are some specific pledges. Pensions and Child Benefit are to go up. Victimised miners are to be reinstated. The disqualification of councillors is to be lifted and the present system of penalising councillors abolished, though not retrospectively. The teachers' right to negotiate is to be restored.

Overall however, the manifesto lacks concrete commitments. There was little in it which could not have appeared in the SDP's. The slogan *Crying out for a change* had been rejected by the NEC last week as too SDPish!

Nationalisation is not mentioned. One prominent Shadow Cabinet member said that it would be a grave mistake to take back into public ownership everything privatised or put out to

tender by the Tories.

Prescription charges are to be 'reduced'. YTS is not to be scrapped but 'proper training' introduced. No figure is put on the allowance for 16-18 year olds or the minimum wage.

The Tory employment laws are to be repealed, but unions will still be compelled to hold secret ballots. A tribunal under a 'legally qualified person' will take over the investigation of complaints against unions by individual members.

Challenged by Tony Benn to justify letting capital run itself while maintaining controls over unions, a Shadow spokesman retorted: "How could you control capital anyway?"

On defence, it was agreed by 31 votes to six not to adopt the demand of a conference resolution carried by 5-1 that money saved on

nuclear weapons be used for social purposes. The money is to go on more conventional arms.

Very little discussion was allowed. The draft was not circulated in advance, there was 20 minutes to read it and all copies had to be handed back at the end of the meeting. The right wing's big majority was used to bulldoze the manifesto through. Many of the left felt that the meeting was a rubber-stamp.

The manifesto says nothing which challenges the capitalist system run by the Tories, which lies at the root of all the social problems that voters are looking to Labour to resolve. One prominent leader even argued that it was "over the top to say that the Tories have left the inner cities to rot".

By a Militant reporter

Stop Press:

DOUGLAS BLACKSTOCK, a Marxist student activist won the official backing of Scottish Labour Students for the position of West Scotland area NUS convenor at a selection meeting by 69 votes to 53.

This was despite the fact that the meeting was rigged in advance by the Democratic Left leadership of the Scottish Labour Students. The actual elections take place in one week's time and if elected Douglas will represent 90,000 students in the West of Scotland.

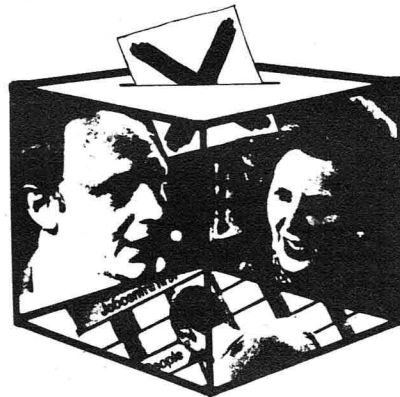
Llanelli rallies to Militant

220 PEOPLE attended a tremendous *Militant* rally in Llanelli last Monday. The rally kicked off *Militant* supporters' election campaign against the Tories, but was also an answer to a witch-hunt against long-standing local Labour Party member and union activist, Muriel Browning.

Main speaker, Peter Taaffe, pointed out that the meeting showed the most confident mood in the labour movement and was a warning to the right-wing against further wrecking activities.

A magnificent £670 was raised for the *Militant* fighting fund.

By local *Militant* reporter.



ELECTION COUNTDOWN

SDP CAMPAIGNING has been disrupted by founder member, Neville Sandelson, calling on supporters to vote Tory in seats where this can stop a Labour MP being elected. He believes that party leader, David Owen, agrees with him but doesn't say so. "We're on the same wavelength", he says.

Sandelson rightly says an Alliance

government is a mere fantasy.

"An outright Tory win would be the best thing for David Owen" Sandelson says. Owen's statement that he would work with a Tory government shows that he is pretty much of the same mind. But the SDP leaders fear being exposed as openly pro-Tory.

Sandelson meanwhile gives a picture of the SDP's members when he comments on their activities in the Fulham by-election. "To see some of those yuppies trying to establish contact with the voters was painful," he says.

A POLL conducted by MORI for the Electricity Council has not hit the headlines. It showed over 60 per cent opposed to further privatisation, despite all the glossy adverts and propaganda about 'people's capitalism'.

Further potential support for socialist policies was shown in the poll's finding that nearly 50 per cent favoured "further nationalisation or social ownership". This is a remarkable result bearing in mind the biased nature of polls and the lack of campaigning for this socialist principle by Labour leaders.



LYNN WALSH reviews the latest programme in Duncan Campbell's documentary *Secret Society* (BBC2, Wednesday, 6 May), which reveals the threatening nature of the shadowy Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).

The prosecution's most damning evidence was provided by the chief witness for the defence—James Anderton, Manchester's chief constable.

He repeatedly pleaded the right to silence. He was prepared to discuss ACPO. But he could not discuss ACPO's riot control manual, or ACPO's intelligence gathering guidelines, or ACPO's efforts to stretch police powers beyond the limits of existing laws.

Nevertheless, what Anderton did admit powerfully reinforced the case made out by Duncan Campbell and his more helpful expert witnesses (like John Alderson, former chief constable of Devon and Cornwall).

ACPO is a highly centralised, secretive body of senior police officers. Its self-perpetuating leadership is drawn from the 47 chief constables. It has no statutory authority, but lays down a definite 'party line' on key issues. It puts forceful views to top Home Office officials, but never consults with elected local

TV Review

Police chiefs a law unto themselves

police authorities.

ACPO has successfully organised lobbying of parliament to block or secure the legislation it wants. This is particularly true in relation to the policing of public meetings, demonstrations, and industrial disputes, where the police chiefs have 'led' the Home Office, the courts, and the Tory government.

Miners' strike

Trade unionists will not forget ACPO's blandly named 'National Reporting Centre'. During the miners' strike the Centre, run by ACPO's president, was used to co-ordinate national, para-military action against NUM pickets, including the pre-emptive stopping of cars miles away from pits.

In practice, there is a na-

tional force. But as even Anderton hinted, the police chiefs prefer unofficial operation through the agency of ACPO to the official establishment of a national force. Thus after the miners' strike, the National Reporting Centre was ostentatiously dismantled in front of the TV cameras.

Through ACPO, as Duncan Campbell pointed out, they get the best of both worlds. The police chiefs enjoy local autonomy combined with national influence—without the hindrance of control and accountability either locally or nationally.

The development of the Police National Computer (not National Police Computer, please) illustrates the point. Guidelines for its development were drawn up not by the Home Office, but by...guess who? Its mega-

bytes are stuffed full of 'criminal intelligence' gathered according to ACPO methods.

Among other things, local bobbies - the friendly community policemen - are urged to find "an informant on every street" who will pass on information, and to cultivate local acquaintances who have "legitimate access to private homes". Anderton indignantly rejected the idea that this was "like 1984"—it was simply people looking after one another!

Democratic

All chief constables believe in, commented the chair of Manchester's police committee, is the "infallibility of chief constables." And the overriding impression conveyed by Anderton was of an arrogant and contemp-

tuous rejection of any suggestion that the police should be subject to any kind of democratic control.

Anderton denounced 'political' control. Did this mean 'democratic' control, asked Campbell? "We are not here," he replied, "to discuss the democratic or the anti-democratic Anderton." "But," he went on "to have a politically directed police force, even if determined by a democratic process, I personally feel would not be in the best public interest."

If it were decreed, "I think I would be living in a country which was not my country and I would have to review my whole position, professionally and personally and very critically indeed." Judging from his tone, this was not a promise to leave the country.

Pointing his finger

ominously at Campbell (whose well-informed questions had sorely tried his patience), Anderton warned: "I might have to campaign against such a system." The intimations of a future bonapartist role could not have been clearer.

The official guardians of democracy (or the law, as Anderton prefers) are in reality the praetorian guard of the capitalist class. In periods of relative class peace they are prepared to work behind the facade of democracy. But when the crisis in the system arouses mass opposition, the tops of the different arms of the state make all the necessary preparations to defend the system through the unrestrained use of force. Anderton's rejection of 'political' (ie. democratic) control is a warning of the way the police chiefs will inevitably react to any move by a future left Labour government, under the pressure of the working class, to put democratic checks on the police.

Secret Society did not draw any fundamental political conclusions. But in revealing the direction in which the police chiefs are moving, it presented important material to the viewing public. It is no wonder that Thatcher's response to the series was: 'Send in the Special Branch!'

Left and Right

Taxing time for the really rich

"EVERY COMPANY in the country is fiddling its profits..." The biggest culprits for cooking the books are "the largest public companies—whose accounts are anything from lightly grilled to thoroughly roasted—but never raw." So runs the advertising blurb for a new book, *Creative Accounting*, by Ian Griffiths.

Companies may need to "report larger profits to satisfy shareholders," writes the obliging Mr. Griffiths, but "they usually need to minimise their tax bills." And the latest craze is 'handling' the pension fund—spending money set aside for workers' pensions on investment speculation.

Fishy city business

But in the City the Tory government has been bringing to heel those tricksters and insider traders. Since insider trading was made a criminal offence in 1980, 110 cases have been referred to the Department of Trade and Industry by the Stock Exchange. And how many have been prosecuted? Just six! And even the Stock Exchange admits these were only the "small fish". Who said crime does not pay?

WHO SAID the rich do not pay their taxes? The Duke of Devonshire came to a very convenient agreement with the taxmen. Instead of paying £120,000 owed in death duties in cash, they accepted five of his valuable paintings. But they allowed the paintings to remain on the wall at one of family's four homes—Arundel Castle.

So, if you have difficulties with the Inland Revenue, just look for an old master in the attic.

On the buses

New evidence emerges of London Regional Transport's difficulties in finding staff. It complained it could not recruit enough Londoners, but that workers from elsewhere who applied could not afford the capital's astronomical living costs.

But some Londoners have been trying to get on the buses. A number of print workers sacked by Murdoch have applied for jobs. Apparently none of them have been accepted. London Regional Transport seems to fear that the printers will bring a rather embittered view of employers to their jobs.

Film Review

THE NEW American film on the Vietnam War, *Platoon*, has already outgrossed *Rambo* and *Apocalypse Now* at the US box office. It claims to paint a realistic view of the war. BILL BOYLE has been to see it.

OVER ONE and three quarter million US soldiers required psychiatric treatment as a result of their experiences in the Vietnam War. Oliver Stone's film goes some of the way to explain why. It is a tense, dramatic and bloody re-enactment of one platoon at war. The film makes clear that America poured arms and men into a war it had been told by its own generals it could not win. And those who fought were mainly blacks, hispanics, Puerto Ricans and the poor white working class. Although the story is told through the eyes of the only white middle class volunteer (Stone himself).

The film pulls no punches. It vividly draws a picture of terrified young soldiers taking out their fear on the helpless civilian population. It shows the drinking, the drug taking and the brutality of an alienated army,



where officers were regularly 'fragged'—murdered by their own men with fragmentation grenades.

But it does not record the confusion and sympathy that many soldiers felt for the 'enemy'. It does not ask any of the fundamental questions which divided the 'Vietnam generation', and created such havoc back home in the US. And it does not explain how the mightiest military machine in the world was beaten by the Vietnamese people, fighting their impoverishment and colonial enslavement.

In the film none of the main characters question why they are 10,000 miles

from home, attempting to destroy the land of an ancient civilisation. The enemy are simply there and have to be fought.

Platoon is well worth going to see. But the real story has still to find its way onto film—the story of the Vietnamese people, and of the Vietcong and of the resistance. They are just the 'hidden enemy'.

The film is also a warning of the effects that any US invasion of Nicaragua would have—on the troops themselves, but more lastingly upon the political outlook of the American people.

**Wages
40 pence
a week!**

Tories exploit the weakest

Work—or workfare?

HOSPITALS FOR the mentally handicapped and the mentally ill often use their residents as a source of cheap labour. The miserable wages on Youth Training Schemes seem like fortunes compared to what these people receive.

Management in one district health authority had a bright idea recently to save cash in their 'industrial therapy units' where a typical day is spent packing batteries, sanitary towels and car repair kits.

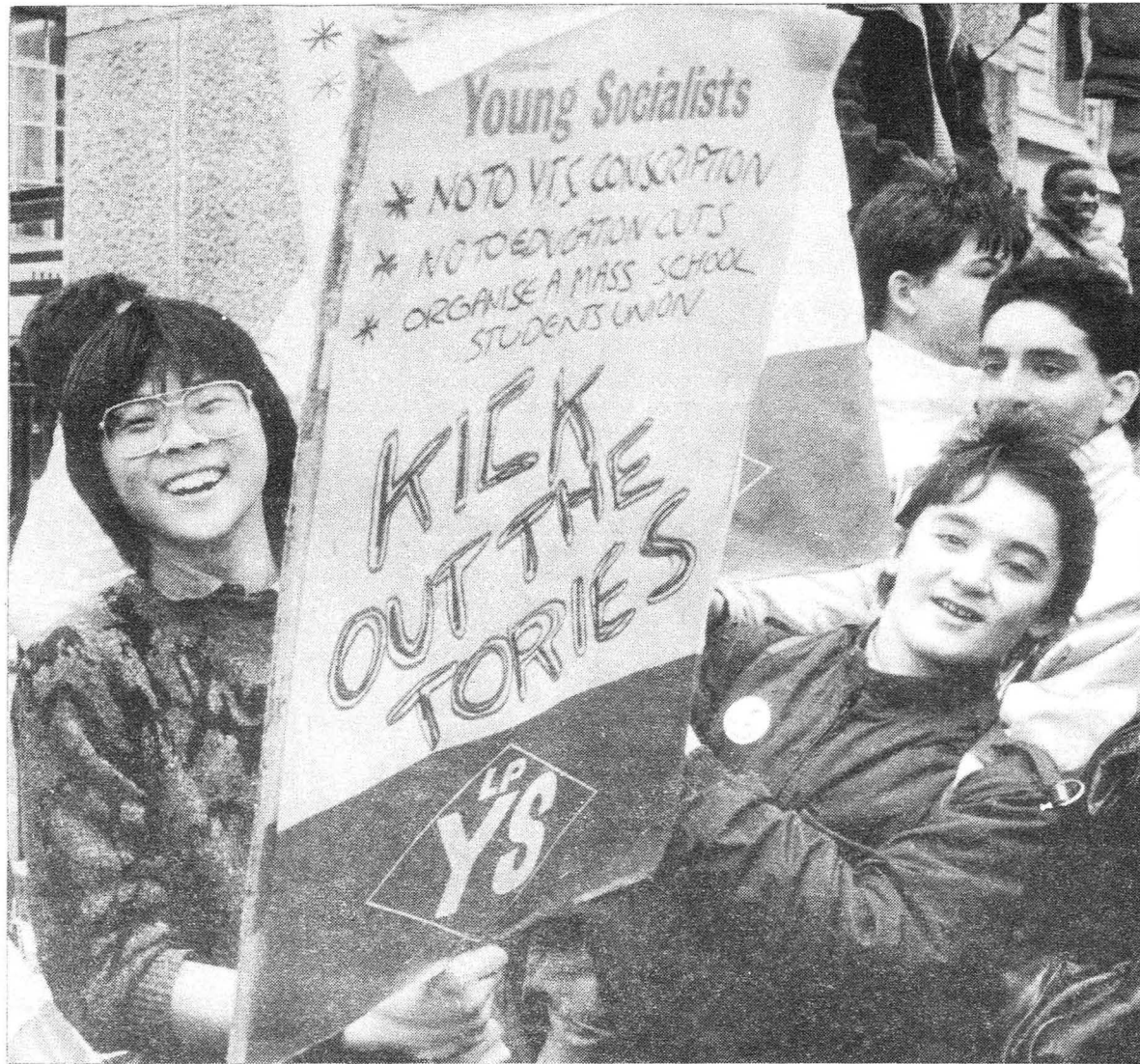
Divine inspiration

Management in an adjacent non NHS unit, run by the church, had the divine inspiration to cut their residents' wages to £1 for a working week as long as 25 hours. The Health Authority management, not to be outdone, cut their wages to £1 a week as well and also decided that residents should pay 60p for their tea, leaving weekly take home pay at 40p!

This society writes off the lives of the mentally handicapped and mentally ill. People who work with them can see the potential there, but cuts in staff and services leave it unfulfilled; only the bare essentials of care can be performed for our residents.

Consumers and workers in the NHS will be fighting to make sure the Tories are wiped out in the election and that Labour stops the super-exploitation of the weakest in society.

By Bernard Matthews



School Students' Union members protest at the slave labour future the Tories offer.

THERE HAVE been eight years of Tory attacks on basic workers' rights. While anti union laws try to stop workers fighting back, mass unemployment has been used to reduce expectations, particularly amongst school leavers.

The Tories hope low paid youth will set the pattern throughout the labour market.

Some Tory MPs are looking closely at Reagan's workfare scheme in the USA. In West Virginia, where unemployment is over 20 per cent, the Community Works Experience Programme pays about \$2 an hour for sweeping the streets, cutting the grass etc. If an unemployed person turns it down, bang goes their benefit and free medical cover.

Right wing Tory MP Peter Bruinvels thinks such a scheme would be good in Britain. On a recent Central TV programme, he said; 'It's far better than people sitting on their backsides and getting regular handouts for doing nothing.'

Labour MP Dave Nellist, on the same programme pointed out that such schemes put the blame for unemployment on the unemployed, not the capitalist system. Even this government's figures show 15 out of work for every vacancy.

There is real work to be done. Dave pointed out that in Coventry, 15,000 houses need extensive work on them. "Give us back the £100 million the Tories have stolen off Coventry since 1979 and we'll employ plasterers, bricklayers, electricians, and so on, give decent apprenticeships, real training at union rates, and start to end unemployment and bad housing."

A Tory victory would probably bring workfare to Britain. Thatcher's devout admirer, David Owen also backs such a scheme. But a 16 year old school student in the TV audience said: "We're not going to fall for it. The young have the right to a job, not some cheap scheme designed to cut the dole figures."

By Roger Hearn

'A waste of time, a waste of skill, a waste of resources'

"THE MANPOWER Services Commission (MSC) schemes are just an open prison for trainees and supervisors." Frank Murray told *Militant*.

Frank, a skilled domestic appliance engineer, worked for the MSC in South London as a plumbing supervisor as there were no vacancies in his own trade. He has now resigned.

Frank says: "I just spent five months walking round the training centre with a screwdriver in my hand. They promised me a workshop and trainees. After a fight, I got some basic tools, but

no facilities—and no trainees.

"I'm not a militant, I'm middle of the road. But I could see that the only thing the government wanted was to keep people off the dole figures; training didn't come into it. I prepared information sheets showing what plumbing work we could do to send round old peoples' homes, and organisations like churches who use the MSC schemes.

"But the MSC said 'no', all they wanted was to have people come in for a few days a week so they come off the long term dole statistics. The MSC set up

charities and appoint chairmen. Some schemes are now being farmed out to private firms. They don't want to spend anything at all.

Shut down

"They even shut down already existing schemes. One instructor had arranged finance from the Greater London Council when it was still going, for his community workshop; it gave real training, with good tools like a £6000 lathe. Our manager decided that he should come back to the cen-

tre and do nothing.

"I got no money. It was farcical; kids would have to queue up for a simple claw hammer.

"Where I worked there were 27 supervisors, three project managers and one operations manager. What we lacked were money and trainees. Management were always trying to make everything harder. We had a meeting one day lasting two hours and the only practical outcome was to authorise buying one hammer!

"The MSC try to save money any way they can. Trainees didn't

get their fares paid to the job, they were on £47 a week. The supervisors get badly treated too. Skilled electricians work for almost £1.50 an hour below the standard rate.

"Some of the schemes are good but it's a lottery. Supervisors get no guidelines and no real contract of employment. The emphasis is on schemes which juggle the figures best. Community Programme is probably the least bad of the schemes! But they are all wasting the time of the trainees and the skills of the instructors."

Fighting Fund

Final total
£37028

Double our money now!

THE COMING general election will be of enormous significance for the future of the struggle for socialism in Britain.

Last week's great election victory in Liverpool shows *Militant's* vital role in mobilising support for Labour. But we need a massive increase in resources to enable *Militant* to carry out that job effectively.

In the fighting fund quarter that finished last week, we raised £37,028. We need double that next quarter. In particular we need cash now, for extra material, meetings and heightened publicity for the idea of a Labour government committed to im-

plementing real socialist policies.

Workers and young people will want to show their determination to get rid of Thatcher and her cronies. There's no better way of saying it than by wearing a *Militant* 'Kick out the Tories' sticker. Supporters in Coventry sold £14 worth last weekend and £11 worth went on the demo for sacked Hangers' workers in London.

Many workers who are convinced by our Marxist ideas to get involved in the election campaign will want to thank us, as G Christian from West Sussex did with a fiver. Some Labour Party members in Croxth col-

lected £6 for the *Militant* fighting fund before canvassing. Ask other people for cash during the election.

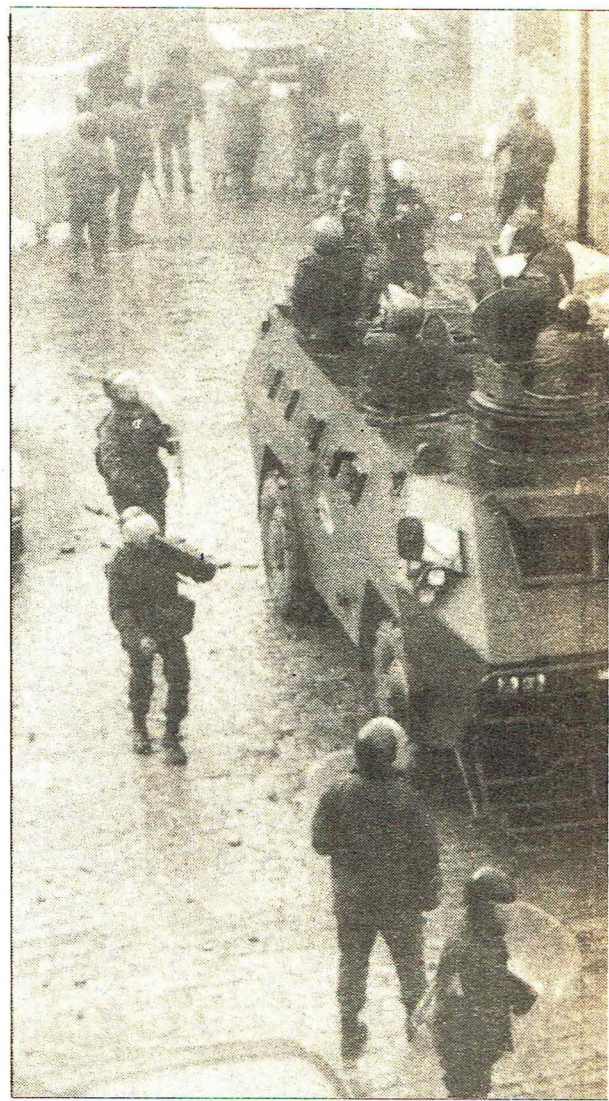
The key votes in the election will be the youth and trade union votes. Leeds LPYS members donated £25 last week and £335 was collected at Wales TUC.

Liverpool showed that Labour could win with enthusiastic campaigning. Support the cause of Labour by backing *Militant*.

Many thanks to NCU member John Napier who sent a tennor. Gary Greenwood and Sue Green from Leicester £10, Michelle Rudde, Leicester East LPYS £5. Mark Fletcher Liverpool £5.

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
1 South East	1736		2250
2 London	5897		9350
3 Eastern	1625		3200
4 South West	777		1900
5 East Midlands	1257		3250
6 Southern	1129		3050
7 Wales	1775		4800
8 Scotland East	812		2800
9 Manchester/Lancs	912		3850
10 Yorkshire	1999		8300
11 Northern	1001		4600
12 Merseyside	1586		7500
13 West Midlands	951		4750
14 Scotland West	343		3500
National	15228		6900
Total	37028		70000

Spain—the revolution begins



The Civil Guard found themselves in battle with steelworkers and

LAST WEEK in Reinos a steelworker died from injuries inflicted by the Civil Guard. The next day there was a demonstration of 12,000. The worker had been sent home from hospital two hours after receiving treatment for his nose which had been smashed by a rubber bullet. However, tear gas had caused irreparable damage to his breathing system. The response of the union leaders was to call a one-day strike in the town, a two-hour strike in the province—and *one minute's silence* in the rest of the country. But workers throughout Spain will be filled with anger and resolve to continue their magnificent movement, which is increasingly bringing them up against the full repressive power of the capitalist state.

By Alan Woods

"HELL, WE must do something." said the young machine operator (whom we will call Juan) with conviction. But everyone in the factory was working as normal—except the management, who were looking forward to a special lunch.

Large quantities of Jabugo ham were being delivered, a delicacy which few workers in this small Cantabrian town of Reinos see even at Christmas.

But this was not Christmas. The celebration was to give a send-off to Enrique Antolin, until now president of the Forjas y Aceros (Foarsa) steelworks. Antolin, card-holding member of the Socialist Party (PSOE), had just been promoted to economic advisor to the Basque autonomous government. He had just popped in to say goodbye.

Antolin had recently signed a 'reconversion' agreement, with the loss of 463 out of the 1,763 jobs in the factory. Reinos, with 13,000 inhabitants, depends on the steelworks. Now nearly 1,000 workers had been declared 'surplus to requirements'.

Occupation

In other times, they might have gone back to work on the land. But the EEC quotas on dairy produce had been a bombshell, sparking off a violent movement of small farmers, who blocked roads with their tractors and fought the police.

This is not a traditionally militant region. The last strike at Foarsa was in 1978 over wages. But now, with the threat of redundancy, the air on the factory floor was thick with unease and resentment.

Juan's words reflected no conscious plan. It was more like thinking aloud. His mate shrugged his shoulders: "But what can we do?" Juan came to a decision: "I'm going to shut the machine down".

"You can't do that. What if none of the others follow?"

"I don't know. All I know is, we must do something."

Juan brought the machine to a halt. Within minutes, every other machine was at a standstill.

It was like lifting the lid off a pressure cooker. The factory floor was in turmoil. As if moved by some invisible hand, workers surged forward to take the administration by assault.

Fearing for Antolin's physical safety, the factory committee (shop stewards) hastily locked him in the 'bunker', a building inside the plant containing machinery.

Recalling the subsequent events, Juan still found it hard to grasp the depth of feeling of the masses. Spontaneously, the whole community moved to take over 'their' steelworks. Young and old, men, women and children, poured onto the premises to show solidarity. Up to 3,000 occupied the plant, where the new economic advisor to the Basque government spent an uncomfortable day and night in the 'bunker'.

"You can't imagine my feelings," Juan recalled. "I thought I had started it all. But all the others had been thinking the same. I was just a spark which set the whole thing off."

The movement rapidly acquired a semi-insurrectionary character. Barricades severed links with the rest of Spain. Not until 8.30 next morning did an armed detachment of the Civil Guard manage to break in and set the 'prisoner' free.

But when they tried to get back in barracks, they found their way blocked by angry crowds. From 8.30 am to 12.30 pm Reinos's streets were a battleground, with hand-to-hand fighting between Civil Guards and steelworkers, backed by school students.

Housewives, undeterred by a hail of rubber bullets, attacked the police with such fury that the police waved white handkerchiefs in humiliating surrender.

Twelve hours later, workers could hardly believe the transformation in the village: "If I'd got hold of a Civil Guard, I'd have killed him," said one worker: "I didn't know I could get that mad."





Local people in Reinosa.



Reinosa showed in miniature, the transformation which awaits the whole of Spanish society.

But I saw seven of them beating up a young kid, Farga Casanova's son."

Old inhabitants began to recall the revolutionary days of 1936, the only time they could remember anything similar. There are many similarities between the present situation in Spain and the revolutionary period of 1931-37, except that in many ways the present movement is on a much higher plane.

Spain's working class was then only about 20 per cent of the population. Today it is a crushing majority and the capitalist class is infinitely weaker politically. The basis for fascist or Bonapartist reaction does not exist at present.

The fact that the capitalists are compelled to rule through the right-wing Socialist, Felipe Gonzalez, is a sign of extreme weakness. Spanish capitalism is the only capitalist class in Europe which does not have a party worthy of the name.

For a time it was happy to lean on the right wing leaders of the PSOE and the unions. Under Social Democratic leadership, everything appeared to be for the best in the best of all capitalist worlds. But now the dream has turned to ashes.

Fight for survival

Spain has the most strikes and demonstrations in Europe. In the first two months of 1987 there were more hours lost in strikes than in the whole of 1986. If present trends continue, by the end of the year there will have been more strikes than in 1976, when a pre-revolutionary situation existed.

All sections of the working class have been in struggle. Asturian miners were on unofficial strike for 54 days and only went back because they ran out of money.

Such an unofficial movement is highly unusual. In general, union affiliation in Spain is extremely low (about 10 per cent), but in the Asturian mines it is above 85 per cent. The miners have always been loyal to the union leaders. Yet this strike took place in open defiance of their leaders' appeals to return to work.

As in Reinosa, the miners see this as a fight for survival. The right-wing Socialists want to destroy large parts of HUNOSA (the Spanish NCB) and hand over the few profitable pits left to private owners. This would mean the death of whole communities. And the miners and their families know it.

As in Britain, young miners were

in the lead. Barricades were set up in all mining areas. Sometimes trees blocked the road. But often just a bag of rubbish in the road with the laconic wording *no one passes this point* would prove sufficient.

The attempt to cow the miners by drafting large numbers of riot police into the villages backfired. In one case armed police occupied a pit but were forcibly evicted by the miners. In pitched battles, the police were bombarded with bricks, stones and heavy metal spikes.

Mass demonstrations have been held, the biggest since the 1930s. Yet the union leaders have continually dragged their feet.

The leader of the Asturian Workers' Commissions (CCOO) called a general strike for 24 March, yet did not issue a single poster or leaflet. Despite this, the strike was 100 per cent solid.

The General Workers' Union (UGT) members came out alongside the CC OO. In spite of attempts to foster divisions from the top, the workers are insisting on unity in action.

On the 24th, in Oviedo, there were 50,000 on the demonstration, which ended in a pitched battle with riot police who brutally charged the demonstration, beating up passers-by, including old people and pregnant women.

Now the miners have gone back, but nothing is resolved. The first thing they did, on returning, was to organise a strike fund. The Asturian miners have yet to say their last word.

Meanwhile at the other end of Spain, the bay of Cadiz was in ferment, again over government plans for 'industrial reconversion' which threatens the shipyards with mass redundancies if not closure.

Here, too, there are daily mass meetings in the streets of Puerto Real and bloody clashes with the police. Across Spain, there is growing anger at Gonzalez's right-wing policies and frustration at the lack of a lead from the union chiefs.

The leaders of the CC OO, like the Grand Old Duke of York, have marched the workers up the hill, promised to call a general strike, but at the decisive moment marched them down again.

The union leaders, especially those of the CC OO, influenced by the 'Communist' Party, are terrified of the spontaneous movement of the working class. Like Felipe Gonzalez, they accept that the capitalist system will last forever. Their cowardly reformism is clear from an article by a leader of the Catalan 'Communist' Party (PSUC) and CC OO. Josep Lluís

Atienza:

"On the day after D-Day (ie, a general strike—AW), in all the workshops the question would be: 'And now, what?' And since we do not possess the answer, it would be preferable not to give rise to the question."

Unfortunately for Atienza and his ilk hundreds of thousands of Spanish workers are already asking: "Why don't we all strike together? Why do our leaders always call out different groups of workers on different days?"

The only tendency in the labour movement not afraid to pose the question and provide a correct answer is the Marxist tendency represented by the paper *Nuevo Claridad*.

It was the Marxists who led Spain's school students to an historic victory in an epic three months' struggle earlier this year. This movement opened the floodgates through which the workers' movement is now pouring.

"Lost respect"

A leading political commentator Abel Hernandez wrote in *Diario 16* (13 April):

"The first demonstration of students and the subsequent concessions showed the way to other social forces. The day that Felipe Gonzalez's government lost the respect of the schoolkids, it lost the respect of everyone."

Likewise, in an interview Alfonso Guerra, up till now regarded as Gonzalez's 'second in command', was asked:

"And the attitude of the Minister of Education, receiving the students negotiating with them, and granting some of the things they were asking for—couldn't this have made others believe the way to squeeze concessions out of the government is by going onto the streets?"

AG: "Maybe so, some people criticise the Minister of Education for entering into negotiations too late, others because he conceded too much. The truth is that... many people have looked into that mirror and said: 'well now it's clear that in this country you have to mobilise to get what you want.'" (*El Pais*, 19 April)

Among the 'many people' referred to by Guerra is Nicolas Redondo, general secretary of the Socialist union, the UGT. Deep cracks have opened up between the government and the UGT, which has openly defied Gonzalez's pay policy and sharply criticised the

policy of 'industrial reconversion' identified with Economy Minister Carlos Solchaga.

For the first time, the federal committee of the UGT has refused to call on its members to vote for PSOE in the forthcoming elections.

Since PSOE came to power in 1982, real wages have been savagely cut while profits have soared. In 1986, for the first time in recent history, the capitalists' share of GNP was greater than that of the workers (in the Common Market as a whole wages account for 56 per cent of GNP on average, and profits for 32.5 per cent).

Under Gonzalez's policy of 'social solidarity', there has been a massive redistribution of wealth from poor to rich. Profits (especially in dominant finance capital) have soared, while wages have been slashed. Yet Solchaga insists that anything more than a 5 per cent wage increase would spell disaster.

His policy is to cut to the bone, driving down wages and increasing profits, while ruthlessly closing 'uneconomical' factories—as in Reinosa.

This policy is not a mere whim of Solchaga's. It reflects the disastrous state of Spanish capitalism which cannot compete with the industrial giants. Common Market entry has proved a disaster, with cheap European manufactured goods flooding onto the Spanish market, turning Spain's previous trade surplus with the EEC into a sizeable deficit.

"Since 1 January there have been 296 demonstrations or violent protests in Spain with numerous injured and considerable destruction. On one day, 29 January, the agricultural labourers carried out more than 100 roadblocks in Badajoz and 30 in Caceres, causing total collapse of communications in both provinces." *Cambio 16*

In most cases, this movement has been not only in spite of official union leaderships, but against them. In many areas rank and file action committees have sprung up, usually based on existing factory committees, which are like Britain's shop stewards committees, but with union and non-union delegates elected by all the workers.

In Rio Tinto, for example, a committee has been set up with representatives from all the villages in the area, including women and young people.

The Marxist tendency in Alava, in the Basque Country, managed to unite all the factory committee in the Ayala Valley during the recent 24 hour general strike, again draw-

ing in women, youth and small shopkeepers. A similar initiative has been taken by the Marxists in Vitoria.

Such extended strike committees can be seen as 'embryonic soviets' which at this stage play the role of essential organs of struggle, uniting rank and file workers, irrespective of trade union or political differences, nationality, age or sex. They are not alternatives to the official unions, but focal points in the struggle to transform and regenerate the workers' organisations, the unions and the Socialist Party.

There is bitter disappointment with the policies of PSOE right wing, yet opinion polls show the Socialist vote holding up reasonably well. Workers see no alternative to PSOE, but its right wing leaders are increasingly discredited.

Transformation

Cambio 16 quoted a 30-year-old worker from Reinosa: "Fifteen years ago I had hopes, plans for the future. Not any more. I feel let down by everything—even democracy. The state institutions live on another planet, very far from Spain—and from Reinosa."

In struggle, workers will relearn all the lessons and rediscover the glorious traditions of the past. They will overcome the obstacles of trade union division and find the road to Marxism.

Above all they will understand the need to transform the mass organisations of the working class. Instead of kidnapping factory managers, they will take back the unions and PSOE, which has been kidnapped by the right wing agents of the banks and monopolies.

This generation's outlook is shown by one incident in Reinosa. A school students' union member came home late one night and was surprised to find his father hammering away at a sheet of metal in the kitchen. His father called him over. "Come and give us a hand."

He was making a powerful steel catapult, one of the weapons improvised by the workers for encounters with the riot police. All the nuts and bolts have quietly vanished from the factories in Reinosa, and the sheet-metal dealers are doing a roaring trade.

When he had finished, the father handed the deadly implement to his son. "I was making this for you."

It was a significant gesture. But unnecessary. The lad, like all his friends, already had one.

South Africa: Only socialist policies can defeat racist reaction

AFTER MONTHS of bargaining and bickering between the different white parties, South Africa's ruling Nationalist Party has again won a landslide victory in the all-white election on 6 May.

The liberal Progressive Federal Party, losing one-third of its seats, has been ousted as the official opposition and replaced by the far-right Conservative Party, which took 27 per cent of the vote.

The election took place in the huge shadow of the revolutionary upsurge of the black workers and youth from 1984 to 1986, which has still not been defeated. Botha called the election to try and reassert the authority of the government in the face of criticisms from left and right.

But instead of ending the turmoil the election has only underlined the polarisation taking place even in white society. On the very day of the poll the black working class dramatically demonstrated its power with a general strike of one and a half million.

White liberal reformists had expected a swing towards their utopian ideas of easing apartheid and seeking a 'negotiated settlement' (on a capitalist basis) with the black leadership.

'Reformism'

Having for years accepted the rule of the Nationalists who governed in their interests, the 'liberal' bosses are now keen to dissociate themselves from the government. They used all their money and their control of the English language press to back the PFP and 'Independents', in the hopes of appealing to 'reformist' Nationalist MPs and drawing the government towards the 'left'.

In a *Newsnight* interview, veteran PFP MP Helen Suzman warned that the government should begin negotiating with the black leaders now—or risk facing a more determined working class with a Marxist leadership in five years time!

But the liberals' hopes were dashed. In Natal, even the so-called Kwa-Natal Indaba—a spineless pretence of power-sharing—was rejected as opposition supporters swung behind the Nats.

On the other hand white workers, threatened for the first time in decades by unemployment and poverty, unable as yet to iden-

tify with the black working class struggle, have been drawn to the hysterical rantings of the extreme right wing politicians.

Even Botha's brutal tactics in the run-up to the election, with the military raid on Zambia, the attacks on COSATU and the sacking of railway strikers, could not stem the defection of voters to the extreme right.

The shift to the right has made the 'liberal' bosses uneasy. The white racist frankenstein monster which they created is assuming a life of its own. Even traditional PFP supporters, when faced with the spectre of revolution, will desert their peace-time liberal principles and vote Nationalist—ie, for a strong state.

The gains by the Conservative Party indicates a dangerous strengthening of racist reaction. Botha has been emboldened to talk of a further clampdown on 'extra-parliamentary opposition'—ie, the UDF, the youth movement and the trade unions.

All this is a serious warning to those in the movement—including some leaders of the ANC and SA Communist Party—who still believe in a strategy of 'isolating' the regime in alliance with 'anti-apartheid' capitalists and 'forcing' it to negotiate the transfer of power. Nothing could be more at odds with the real relationship of forces.

It is now more vital than ever for the ANC and COSATU leadership to strengthen the movement, to organise the self-defence of workers and youth against terrorist attack, and begin a serious campaign to win over working class whites on the basis of a bold class programme of democracy and socialist transformation.

To neglect this would make a deepening racial civil war ever more inevitable.

South Africa's socialist revolution has begun. In the end the struggle in South Africa is a struggle between the massive black working class and the capitalist state. The whites-only election has shown the points of fatigue and fracture beginning in the white state.



(Above) Botha's 'triumph': the ninth Nationalist election win since 1948 reflects no massive confidence among whites in the monolith of NP power, as in the past, but a fearful rallying behind the state in the face of the revolutionary challenge of black workers and youth (below).

Election results	Seats	% of votes
National Party	123	52.4
Conservative Party	22	26.4
Progressive Federal Party	19	14.1
New Republic Party	1	1.9
Herstigte Nasionale Party	0	3.1
Independents	1	1.3

IVIN MALAZA MEMORIAL FUND

£60 WAS collected in two hours at London School of Economics, and £2,400 raised at the Ivin Malaza memorial meeting—split between Ivin Malaza Memorial Fund and *Militant Fighting Fund*. £114 was collected at Ridley Road Market in Hackney, with further pledges of £250 from Southwark and Lewisham LPYS, and £50 from London West End NCU branch. Send donations to: Cllr L Faulkes, 143B Amherst Road, London E8 2AW. Cheques payable to: "Ivin Malaza Memorial Fund"



Workers 'vote' for struggle

THE MASSIVE general strike of black workers on 5 and 6 May brought many parts of South Africa to a standstill. Empty buses and almost deserted streets in every major city testified to the social strength of the black working class.

The strike was called by the Congress of SA Trade Unions in reply to the sacking of 16,000 striking railway workers and the shooting of six strikers by police. The siege of COSATU house infuriated workers throughout SA and the strike call captured this simmering anger.

On both days of the strike Soweto was bombarded with leaflets from a helicopter, reading: "We, the security forces, want you to enjoy life free from radical intimidation... an injury to one Soweto child by the radicals is an injury to all." Most workers chose to ignore this friendly advice!

Since then the state has escalated its attacks. In the early hours of the morning after the election two bombs exploded inside COSATU House, reportedly leaving it unusable.

The strike was successful on both days, with a massive turn-out on the day of the white election, conservatively estimated at one and a half million, with a similar number of youth boycotting schools.

Youth

In some areas youth took to the streets to build support for the strike.

The centre of Johannesburg was reported to be empty, and support for the strike in the militant region of the Eastern Cape was 100 per cent. In Natal thousands of workers stayed at home, defying the serious threat of attacks from

Inkatha and its murderous rent-a-scab 'union', UWUSA.

Through the strike, black workers have elected to continue the struggle. Battle lines are being drawn. The workers are making it clear that they have not been defeated by Botha's state of emergency, and will rise again and again to the forefront of the struggle to overthrow apartheid and capitalism.

Now, with new attacks threatening, workers are waiting for a lead from the COSATU leadership. The national minimum wage campaign, if carefully planned and coordinated around a definite demand, could link up struggles throughout the country and draw ever greater numbers of workers into the unions.

By Sean Kelly

Malta

AFTER 17 years in government, Malta's Labour Party has lost the island's first election under proportional representation by a single seat. In this article written prior to the election, a correspondent in Malta analyses the reasons for this defeat.

MALTA'S ELECTION of 9 May may mark a watershed.

The first Labour government carried out some significant

reforms. The banks, broadcasting, energy supply etc. were nationalised; new social services were introduced; NATO was thrown out.

But the Labour leaders had no intention of breaking with the capitalist system. They encouraged multinationals to invest in Malta and pressurised the trade unions not to insist on better wages and conditions.

Inevitably, as the world boom of capitalism ran out of steam, the second and third Labour governments passed from reforms to counter-reforms. Industrial struggles by workers were ruthlessly sup-

pressed and a witch-hunt launched against left-wingers in the party.

In the 1981 election Labour paid the price for these policies, losing its majority of votes but keeping a majority of seats. Now it seems that nothing short of electoral rigging can prevent a victory by the right-wing Nationalist Party on Saturday.

Whether or not it wins the election, Labour faces internal dissension which may well result in a growing movement towards Marxist ideas among the disillusioned rank and file.

Complacent

Dear Comrades,
While I was out canvassing recently for the District Council elections I came across many people who were all committed Labour voters.

Sadly however, under a Labour controlled council many of the properties are decaying, walls running wet, fences and gates missing, and in one garden a very deep, open drain.

It is vital that Labour councils support the people who support them as Liverpool City Council did, even if it means going into conflict with Tory laws.

Whoever wins the next election, Labour councils have a duty to organise a united campaign for increased housing funds to enable decent housing to be built for all.

Yours fraternally
Mike Gibbs
Wakefield Labour Party

Retrospective discipline

Dear Comrades,
Paid off from Huwood Ltd, an engineering factory in Gateshead a year ago, I was obviously disappointed, especially because the redundancies were selective.

Imagine my disappointment when on a paper sale this week I bumped into an old workmate who told me there had just been more redundancies and one of those paid off had been there for thirty years.

When he asked why he was on the list management told him it was because he received a warning for bad time keeping 12 years ago!

With 'rewards' like this from employers its not surprising more workers are joining behind the banner of Marxism.

Yours fraternally
John Killen
Gateshead

Sacrificing health for prestige and profits

Dear Comrades,
When I was in hospital recently one of the patients was telling me that because of a back complaint he had been off work for five weeks to undergo treatment.

He works for an American multi-national and the personnel manager wrote to him saying 'be back at work in a week or you are sacked'.

His doctor wrote to the personnel manager asking for more time and adding that on returning to work he should only undertake light work.

The patient has worked for the firm for fifteen years. In reply the personnel manager said he could have another month off, but there was going to be no light work when he returned.

So just to keep the credibility of his authority this individual is willing to sacrifice a man's health or force him onto the dole.

Roll on the day when managers are elected and accountable to the workforce.

Yours fraternally
Nick Hewitt
Swindon

The wrong arm of the law

Dear Comrades,
Some Poole comrades were on a Saturday street sale when we were approached by two members of the local constabulary.

They said there was a by-law which prohibited street traders from the area where we were selling, but they said they'd check it with their HQ.

As soon as the Town Hall opened I asked if a licence to sell newspapers was needed, or if there was a by-law saying it was illegal to do so. They sent me a copy of the "Local government (miscellaneous provision) Act 1982" regarding street trading.

This said "The following are *not* street trading - Trading as a news vendor where the only articles for sale are newspapers or periodicals or they are sold without a stall which does not exceed one metre in length or width and two metres in height".

So, if you're just standing there without a stall and not blocking the street they can't nick you.

It might be best if comrades wrote to their own councils for a copy of the relevant Act.

Yours fraternally
J Hayes
Poole Labour Party (UCATT)



More "poll" than "opinions"

Dear Comrades,
The papers make a great deal of the results of opinion polls. Having just been questioned by a representative of NOP I would warn all comrades not to take their findings too seriously.

As well as asking which way I intended to vote the bloke also asked a number of questions about consumer products. First off was a whole page of questions about lawnmowers. Since we were standing on the

doorstep of my 12th floor flat it seemed rather a waste of time. I was then asked if I had a car. When I said 'no' he said "Well, we'll skip the section on sport then."

I was then asked what newspaper I read. I said the *Militant*. However that was not on his list and so I was told to try again. He then asked what I thought was the major problem facing people at work. I said capitalism. Again that was not on the list of acceptable answers.

It seems that opinion polls and the people who hire them are only interested in certain sorts of opinions. I for one will never take their findings seriously again, and I can't understand why the Labour Party spends thousands of pounds in employing these idiots.

Yours fraternally
David Fryatt
Bow and Poplar Labour Party

Profiting from diabetes

Dear Comrades,
The media recently lauded the decision of the Tory government to provide free needles to diabetic patients. But as usual, the public only got one side of the story. Needles are a vital necessity to diabetics as a means of supplying the body with the insulin that diabetics lack. Previously I had to pay about 9p per needle. That doesn't seem too much, except that I have to buy them in lots of 150 upwards and as I'm unemployed that sort of money is beyond my reach without really skimping on other things.

Today I got through the post a catalogue from a medical firm selling "A full selection of items for the diabetic" - "at competitive prices". Such items are not luxuries but vital and in the long-term,

life-saving equipment.

Some years ago, my parents paid £80 for a small device for calculating blood sugar levels. It now costs over £100 and is not available under the NHS. Neither are the fluids needed to keep the machine running properly.

It's clear from such catalogues that illness can be very good for you - if you happen to own a medical firm!

All the equipment needed for the correct medical care of all workers should be available as a right, not as a privilege or by going without other necessities.

Yours fraternally
K Blake
Folkestone Labour Party Young Socialists

Tories blame the jobless

Dear Comrades,
In November's *Department of Employment Gazette* there's a rather crude attempt at blaming truancy for unemployment. Below a picture of some stereotype 'tough' looking teenagers is a caption which reads "Today's truant, tomorrow's unemployed?" There's no mistaking the pill we're meant to swallow here. If only these lads had gone to school they'd have jobs now. It's their own fault if they're unemployed.

To back this up they give us an excellent example of the use of 'selective statistics': "Almost one in five of the youngsters who were unemployed at the time of a study published earlier this year said they had played truant for days or even weeks at a time in their fifth year at school".

Now if almost one in five play truant, you don't need to be a statistician to realise that more than four out of five *don't* play truant, probably work



Striking school students show who's really to blame for unemployment.

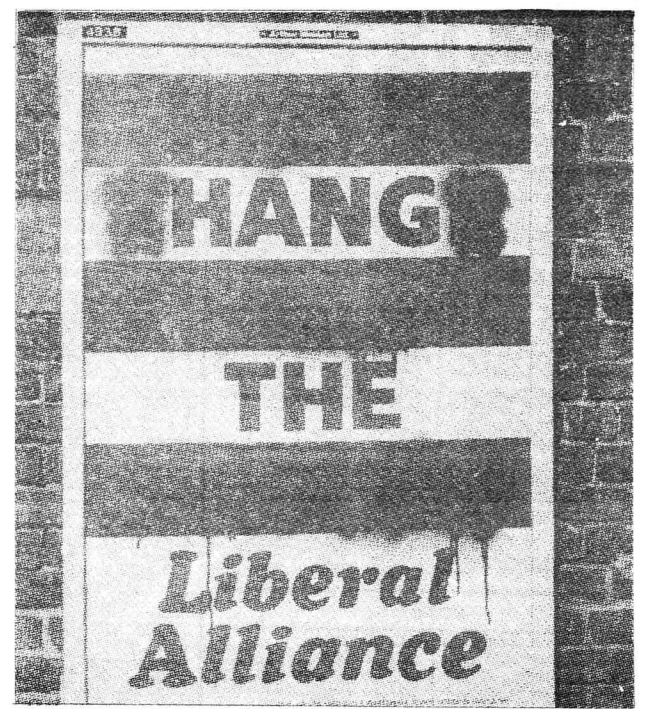
hard, achieve good exam results and still end up unemployed.

This government has changed the way unemployment figures are assessed no less than 19 times, and are forcing people into poverty wages with its Restart programme and availability testing.

Not content with all this,

they now have to blame school children (who see no hope in the future anyway) for the disgraceful levels of unemployment that their policies have created.

Yours fraternally
Ann Creen
CPSA branch chair,
Newcastle, Gateshead (personal capacity)



Liverpool's message

THE LIBERALS and their friends at the *Liverpool Echo* were not too pleased to wake up one morning to discover what some imaginative people had shown what they thought of the 'caring' Liberal Alliance.

It is clear that most workers think that the best way to 'clean up the city' is to start by sweeping out the Alliance and their rich backers who can afford to pay for hundreds of poster board sites across the city, but cannot afford decent houses and services for the people of Liverpool.

Rounding up support for Labour

Dear Comrades,
While out asking local shop keepers in Hyson Green to put up posters for the LPYS march against racism in Leicester, 30 shops agreed to put up posters to support and advertise the march.

In one small cafe a woman at the counter took a poster and bought a ticket for the coach and the three other people in the cafe said they supported the YS event and would also be voting Labour

in the next election.
A man called me over to his table and asked "Why don't they come and poll us here to find out who should win the election?" he answered his question by saying "they don't want to hear we want to get rid of the Tories". Let's make them hear.

Yours fraternally
Tina Hull
Nottingham East Labour Party Young Socialists

Aiming to injure

Dear Comrades,
Dylan Murphy's letter (*Militant* 845) misses the main point about boxing. In other sports it's true physical contact can injure, maim and even kill, but boxing is the only sport where the whole aim is to physically hurt your opponent whether professional or amateur.

No amount of 'training', 'good refereeing' or bigger gloves will stop the damage being done although it can reduce some of the damage.

Nearly all boxers will end up with some degree of brain damage as well as damage to the body. The degree depends on the length of his boxing career and how much skill he has in avoiding punishment. But it is still a question of degree. Mohammed Ali, one of the most skillful of heavyweights, shows quite openly 'punch-drunk' symptoms, others it will affect in later life.

Yours fraternally
Bob Faulkes
Hackney South Labour Party

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.

○ New stickers "Kick out the Tories" and "No slave labour on YTS". Now available. Cost £1 per 100 plus 25p p&p. Available from 3/13 Hepscoot Rd, London E9 5HB.

○ 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 Road, West Park, Leeds 16. Tel: 0532 624917.

○ *Offensiv* camp in Sweden. Monday 6 - Saturday 11 July 1987. Camp takes place close to Gothenburg in the middle of a forest beside a lake. Political seminars, swimming, football, canoeing, walking etc. Bring a tent or stay in the houses. Translation to English arranged. For information write to: *Offensiv* Brahegatan 2, S-415 01 Göteborg, Sweden. Tel 031 844162.

○ Socialist band require guitarist preferably with vocals. Contact Tim 01 254 9551, or John 01 310 9255 for details.

Lothian miners fight for their jobs

By Joe Owens,
Chairman Bilston Glen
NUM and
Alex Shanks,
Chairman Monktonhall
SCEBTA, in personal
capacities

78,000 JOBS have been destroyed in the British mining industry in the past two years alone and the 'peripheral' coalfields have borne the brunt. In Scotland the number of miners has fallen from 13,000 before the strike to under 5,000.

And job losses and pit closures are not the only threats. 'American' methods which have caused four times the British rate of injuries and deaths there have already led to a significant increase in underground injuries here.

Contrary to the 'evidence' paraded in the gutter press, miners are still well down the wages league, despite a recent report that mining is the most stressful occupation in the country.

British Coal have refused to negotiate a wage rise until the union adopt a new conciliation scheme which will allow NUM representation only where they have a majority at the pit. This the union and its members firmly reject.

The management threat that industrial action at individual pits will be taken into account when discussing future investment is another attempt to hold a gun to the union's head.

Privatisation

All these factors, and the extension of private contractors in the pits, point to the ultimate and now openly voiced intention of the Tories to privatise the mining industry.

But a mood of militancy is developing. There has been recent industrial action over victimisation, by Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Yorkshire miners. Haslam recently announced that 28 per cent of all industrial disputes took place in the mining industry, with now less than 15 pits untouched by industrial action since the end of the strike.

Leadership will be the decisive factor in transforming this mood into united action for increased wages, improved working conditions and more jobs.

There are two choices facing all miners. The first, put forward by some Scottish area leaders, is to be 'realistic' and accept that British Coal has the upper hand and that we have no choice but to critically accept management dictat.

The other alternative is the one stated by Arthur Scargill, Peter Heathfield and activists in the National Miners' Broad Left, to stand up and fight. As one Monktonhall miner said: "This is the weather for picketing; let's man the barricades".

As the crisis of capitalism deepens, the ideas of struggle and socialism will find an echo amongst the miners in Lothian and nationally.

THE SMALL towns and villages of Mid and East Lothian, like so many other mining communities, have been involved in a seemingly unending struggle for survival since the Tories came to power in 1979. Only two pits now remain.

BILSTON GLEN, Scotland's biggest unit, was once known as Scotland's showpiece pit, 'the jewel in the crown'. Now, since the strike there has been a reduction in manpower through redundancies, the less attractive redundancy scheme now on the table and the threat of the six-day week and flexible working hours and practices.

Four hour shift

Management have tried to implement changes knowing that if they get away with them at the Glen, that will be a lever towards their acceptance elsewhere.

For example they want four-shift working on the G30 development, arguing that it was falling behind schedule and had to be completed in half the original time. This was described as a temporary measure, but it has since been discovered that the same proposal,

with the same justification, has been made at Lady Windsor colliery in South Wales, hardly a coincidence.

If this measure had been accepted in principle on development work, they would have then tried it on the coalface, then throughout the area. It has been temporarily halted, mainly because had they tried to implement it forcibly the men were ready to walk out.

It is now branch policy to take industrial action when necessary if any attempt is made to impose flexibility in working practices at Bilston Glen.

The management also tried, at a special consultative meeting, to introduce a UDM man into the meeting. They were forced to cancel the meeting when the unions threatened to walk out.

The mood is angry and frustrated. With fighting leadership, it could be channelled towards the action necessary to deflect and defeat management's attempts arrogantly to impose their will and treat the men with contempt.

Despite having the largest coal reserves in Scotland, the workforce

at MONKTONHALL colliery has been reduced from around 1,800 in 1983 to a mere 268 now.

It has always been considered a hotbed of militancy by British Coal. Monktonhall miners showed their determination in Autumn 1983, when they were on strike for eight weeks to defend the pit.

This should have been the start of the national strike, but the Scottish area leadership never had this strategy in mind and the Tories were left to pick the Spring for the beginning of the battle.

Private contractors

Despite around half the workforce returning to work during the national strike, despite 600 more redundancies last November, the Board have been unable to break the will of the men to struggle.

Since the end of the strike, there have been stoppages over newspaper reports that a 'super-scab' committed suicide because of intimidation at the pit and over water payments. For the last five months, tradesmen have refused to work late back shift at the weekends because previously

they were entitled to a short 12-6 shift.

Now however, we face one of the most serious threats ever. British Coal, as part of their strategy for 'creeping' privatisation, are proposing to bring private contractors into Monktonhall to drive mines to Bilston Glen and develop a new part of the pit called the Peacock.

Also around 60-70 men are to be seconded from British Coal employment to AMCO, a private company. British Coal are saying that this is temporary, but the contract is for three years.

Labour can still win the general election, but we cannot depend on it. If the Tories are re-elected there is no doubt that British Coal will be privatised by 1989 or 1990. The men seconded would never be employees of British Coal again.

This proposal must be fought. Every man in the pit is opposed to it, but the crucial factor will be the lead given locally. It is a national issue and can be given national prominence if taken up boldly by the local leaders.

Thatcher wrecks B

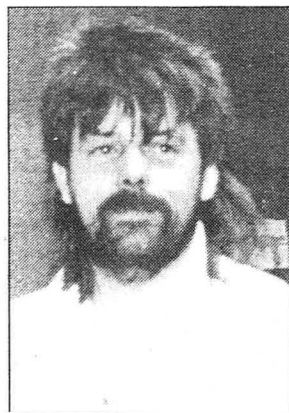
We want a future for our kids

THE TORY attacks on the Scottish coalfield have had repercussions throughout Mid and East Lothian.

In Musselburgh for instance, there are 20 per cent on the dole, and if account is taken of those on special schemes, nearer 30 per cent.

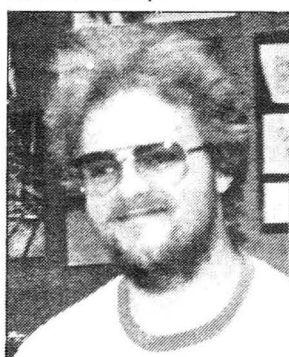
The ancillary industries which supplied the coal industry have been affected too. Brunton's Wire Rope Mill, which once got 25-30 per cent of its work from the Coal Board is down to 500 men, less than a third of what it used to be. PETER LUKE spoke to some of those affected.

"MUSSELBURGH used to have a whole number of industries, but one after another they've went to the wall. The wire mill is just surviving, but at one time there was a paper mill and a saw mill. The net mill that supplied the fishing industry employed hundreds at one time but now it's down to about a dozen." — David Thomson, unemployed worker, Musselburgh.



David Thomson.

Derek McKillop.



"I'VE BEEN on the buroo for three years now. The last job I had was at Ladbrokes but after my experiences there it's a safe bet I won't be back there. I want a job in the vehicle industry, but despite having two and a half years training and a Scottish National certificate in Engineering, nobody wants to know." — Derek McKillop, unemployed worker, Musselburgh.

Photos: Liza Mc Guire.



Billy Shearer outside the Scottish mining museum at a disused pit in Newtongrange, Midlothian.

"I'M AN unemployed member of NUPE and I'm in the process of setting up an unemployed branch of NUPE for Midlothian. Once that's done I will

be going round the YTS scemes trying to get them signed up. I've also joined the LPYS A lot of people think all skins are NF, but although some

are, the bulk are nothing, hate the system and if shown the way would get involved." — Billy Shearer, unemployed skinhead, Bonnyrigg.

"WE WENT on strike to support the miners on the STUC day of action. We closed the whole place down then. You'd hardly call this place a hotbed of militancy, but we knew the consequences of pit closures for us. Now we've just had another batch of redundancies. The production of rope for the pits is down to half of what it was before the miners' strike — Brunton's worker.

"WE ALL know what's gone wrong, but we don't run the place. We all want to see a future for our kids, but a lot of things need to be changed. Our prospects are a bit like Hibs'. We've survived this season, but next year we could go down. Hibs need a couple of good strikers and they'll be alright. We need about 500." — Brunton's worker.



Brunton's mill workers.

"WORK HARD, keep your nose clean and hope like hell you've got a job tomorrow."

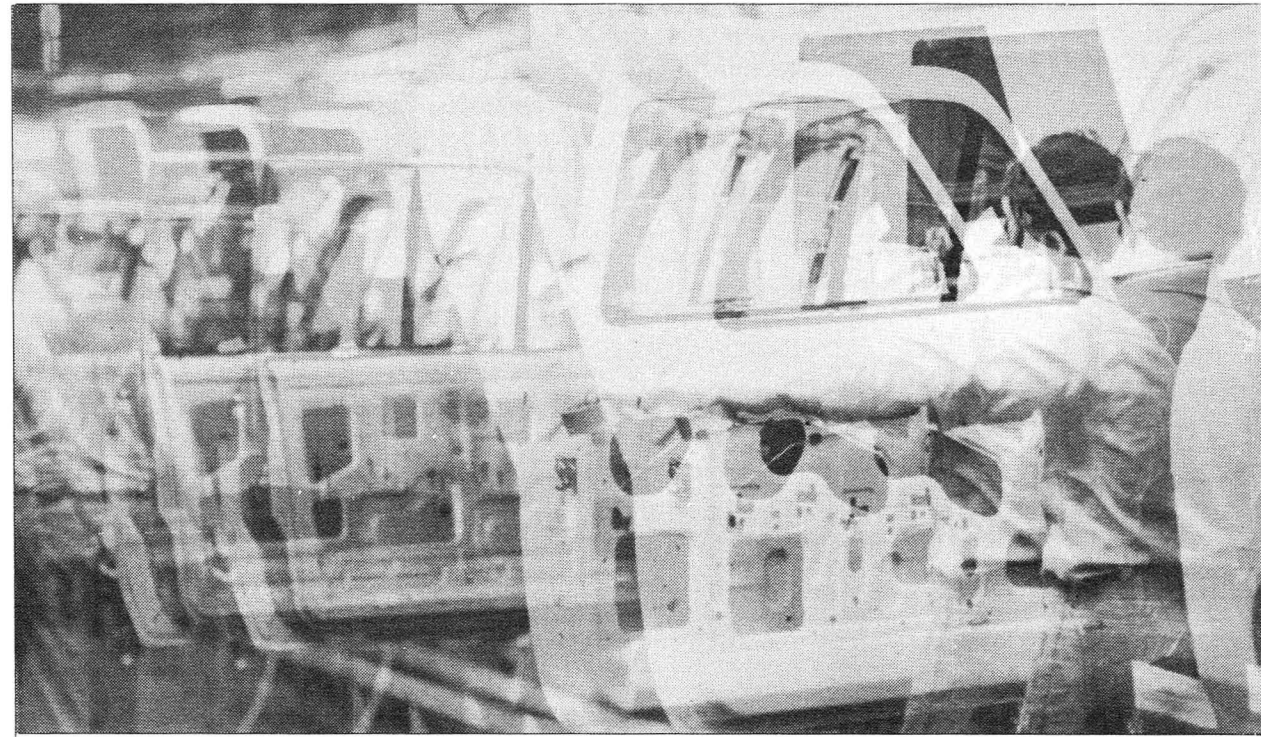
Thatcher's hatchet man, Graham Day, spelt out the Tories' message to every worker when he took over at Austin Rover.

If the Tories win the election,

what future will there be for car workers? Another dose of Thatcherite policies would ravage the industry. Any profitable parts left in Austin Rover would be privatised. Economic downturn would mean another wave of redundancies and factory closures. The car industry

bosses would turn the screw even more to squeeze more production out of fewer workers.

In this feature, *Militant* talks to car workers about life on the shopfloor. And we give the facts which show how the bosses have wrecked the industry.



British industry

Freight Rover

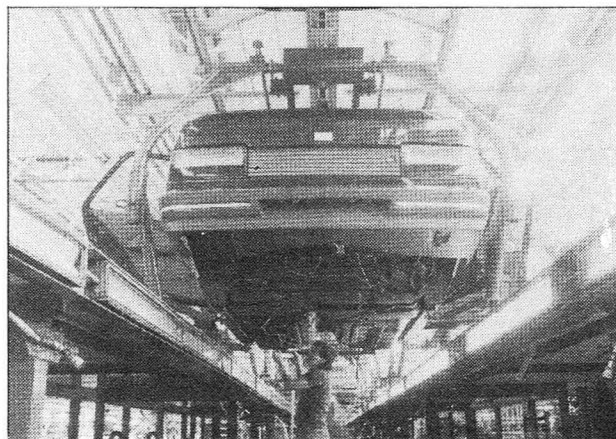
Easter surprise

A FRIEND of mine works for Freight Rover, now taken over by DAF. I asked him whether there had been any big changes. No, he replied, except a new 'zonal competition.' The track has been divided into zones and workers in each zone are supposed to compete with each other for a mystery prize.

Trade unionists like my friend warned that the plant was still run by the same old stingy British management. They reminded workmates of the retirement of one of their popular workmates

who left after working for BL for 44 years. The workers had clubbed together to buy him a microwave. All management could come up with was a tie, a keyring and an ashtray. They even had the cheek to hold an official presentation to hand these knick-knacks over!

But despite their warnings, the competition proceeded, with zone set against zone, worker against worker. And then came the big day. The track was stopped and turned into an impromptu stage. The blushing winners were called up to receive their prizes. Half-hearted applause turned into thunderous, sarcastic cheers when the production heroes were presented with their coveted prizes. Each winner was presented with...an Easter egg!



The Tinderbox

"WE WORK bell to bell with only 40 minutes break. If production has fallen it's not unusual for the production manager to call in the shop stewards to put pressure on them. This type of harassment is one reason why we have recently had two yes votes for strike action.

The relationship between foremen and workers is strain-

ed. Many of the younger foremen see being a bastard as a way of climbing up the career ladder. I know one who took a pay cut to become a foreman. He tried to make a name for himself by harassing the blokes and didn't hide the fact that this was because he was after promotion.

A by-product of the increased workload is that the workforce's average age is going down and shop stewards are becoming younger. Our management is sitting on a tinderbox."

Freight Rover worker.

Austin Rover—"We work quicker than machines"

AUSTIN ROVER needs to produce 600,000 cars a year to keep going, according to Ray Horrocks, ex-chief executive. Here are the figures that show the giant company's inglorious decline:

- ★ Production fell to 410,000 cars in 1986;
- ★ Exports fell to 106,000 cars in 1985, compared to 248,000 in 1978;
- ★ Share of the British market fell to just 16 per cent in 1986.

But, productivity at Longbridge has gone up from six cars per worker per year in 1978 to fourteen today.

450 workers have just been taken on at Longbridge. There were 8,000 applicants in 24 hours. "I hope there are 10,000 tomorrow. We like to have a good selection," was a Land Rover personnel manager's response.

PRESS REPORTS make the modern car factory sound like a Macdonalds, with "pick-quick" refreshment areas, information screens and so on. But the bosses have not introduced these to make life easier for the workforce. A Cowley worker told Dave Carr:

"For the first time in 8 years working at BL, I came home

Longbridge workers see the new jobs as a Tory election ploy since their share of the home market is still dropping. One thing the last decade of decline and fall of the car industry has taught is "here today, gone tomorrow".

from the night-shift aching all over. There should be seven of us working on a team but there's only four. Management's blue-eyed boys get the easiest jobs. I have to manhandle heavy materials."

Isn't there a hoist or something to lift car floors?

"Yes, but we can be made to work quicker than machines. I

But confidence is coming back. Good shop stewards have managed to win concessions. In one section, the "best" production manager and superintendent that management can find have been brought in to try and outwit the workers. One sec-

tion is in dispute because all 91 blokes are on written warnings."

"LONGBRIDGE IS one of the few factories where the apprentice system survives. But last year only 40 places were offered. They are being replaced by YTS here too. Workers are scared to speak out for fear of the sack. And no wonder! Recently *Militant* sellers outside Cowley discovered that one reader had been threatened with dismissal for "reading a political paper". Rest assured, there is a thriving Samizdat movement!

Midlands cars - boom or bust?

Jaguar

JAGUAR IS enjoying a temporary boom. But jobs will be sacrificed again when the economy takes a nosedive. Meanwhile life is not all roses on the track, as one young worker told Tony Cross:

"For eight hours a day, five days a week, I fit windows into car doors. I switch off and do the job like a robot. It's the only way to get through the day, it's so boring and monotonous.

Babies' track

When I get home I feel drained after standing up and kneeling down what seems like half a million times. But my job's not the worst! I'm glad I'm not on the mounting track. The blokes on there call ours the babies' track!

They fit the engines, axles and wheels and that sort of thing. Next time you see a Jaguar, look at the wheels and imagine lifting a few of

them every day. They have to lift the wheels right up in the air to fit them. Underneath a bloke is fitting an exhaust, with his work above his head.

My old man used to fit exhausts and so now he's got a bad back. In fact, in the new medical centre the company's just built, they have a physio just dealing with people's back problems, there are so many of them. No wonder the bosses encourage us all to join Manor Hospital - which is private, of course!

When the Series Three was introduced, we took an increase in bonus to bring production up from 56 cars a day to 60. On the XJ40, we now produce 64 cars a day with no pay increase at all.

Jaguar's put out a booklet on pay and conditions which goes on about 'the continued contribution made by the workforce to the success of the company'. Yet John Egan has been in the papers about the book he's written, slagging off the unions and the laziness of his workers. We've kept him pretty well off! It just seems completely two-faced to me."

Save our jobs

THE BRITISH car industry is now dwarfed by its international competitors. It must try and steal their markets to survive, but in Western Europe alone there is overcapacity of 2.5 million cars - and that is in a boom!

"We will soon catch up with the Japanese," bragged Ray Horrocks, when Austin Rover began to introduce new technology. But all it has meant is new models being introduced even faster and competition intensifying.

Meanwhile, a single Japanese worker has £11,780 worth of machinery behind him and produces £1,000 worth of cars in nine days. An Austin Rover worker has £1,000 worth of machinery behind him. No wonder it takes the British worker 47 days to produce the same amount!

The Tories expect the "soft" Midlands to return them to power. To save their industry car workers need a Labour government committed to:

- ★ Renationalise privatised companies;
- ★ Nationalise component manufacturers;
- ★ Nationalise privately owned car manufacturers;
- ★ Introduce workers' control and management;
- ★ Draw up a socialist plan of transport to guarantee car workers' jobs and efficient transport for all.

One apprentice remarked that when getting his pay docket, he was embarrassed to be earning more than twice what his YTS workmate was earning for doing the same job."

Longbridge workers spoke to Sue Wilkie.

Industrial Reports

Gateshead strikers attacked

AFTER SEVEN weeks of the HFW Plastic factory dispute in Gateshead 35 people have been arrested and scores of pickets injured as a result of the lunacy of the police and scab drivers.

Up to 60 or more police at a time have been wading into pickets and drivers have been speeding through the gates regardless of safety.

On the Saturday May Day demonstration workers and their families gathered out-

side the factory and were lucky to escape injury when a lorry drove into them at speed.

Among those slightly injured was *Militant* supporter Kevin Henderson and a young woman who threw herself at a child who had frozen in fright in the path of a vehicle.

On this occasion there was not a policeman to be seen and all complaints have come up against a brick wall.

On 7 May two women were arrested outside the gates under the Public Order Act which once again sparked off a demonstration outside Gateshead police station.

The police response to this demonstration demanding the release of the women was a further 15 arrests, including Kevin and myself.

Despite all this harassment the workers and their sup-

porters remain determined to see the struggle through. Already hundreds of pounds have been raised and more events are planned for the future. Contacts with local miners' support groups have also been established.

Please send donations and support to: HFW Plastic Welfare Fund, Sogat '82, 119 Jesmond Rd, Newcastle Upon Tyne.

By Bob Harker

Banks clerks pay ballot

BANK CLERKS in Nat. West, Barclays, and Lloyds are to be balloted on a series of one-day strikes and an overtime ban, in support of a Banking, Insurance and Finance Union (BIFU) pay claim.

National Westminster Bank alone made over £1 billion profit in 1986, an increase of 26 per cent on 1985, yet they have imposed a 5 per cent pay increase on staff.

Despite ever increasing profits bank worker salaries have consistently fallen behind those in comparable industries. Thatcher herself tells us that wage increases must be earned, yet in an industry where productivity has increased dramatically many staff still earn less than the governments own low pay threshold.

Thousands of bank clerks qualify for supplementary benefit; rent and rate rebates etc, which effectively means that taxpayers and ratepayers are subsidising bank profits.

Mean

While many staff are unable to take advantage of cheap house loans and are forced to remain at home with their parents, the majority of young workers do not even qualify for a loan under the banks' stringent rules.

This situation is peculiar to bank staff, but when you consider they work for some of the world's most profitable institutions the situation is criminal.

A grade one clerk can earn as little as £76 per week before tax and National Insurance contributions, and half of all staff earn less than the average weekly wage. All this whilst a bank chairman earns £2853 per week which is more than most staff earn in six months.

By Andy Walsh

(BIFU NEC member, personal capacity)

Maudsley hospital 'political' protest

NURSES AT the Maudsley Hospital in South London have voted to go on strike for one hour next Monday in protest at what they see as a series of 'political' appointments of nursing officers at the hospital.

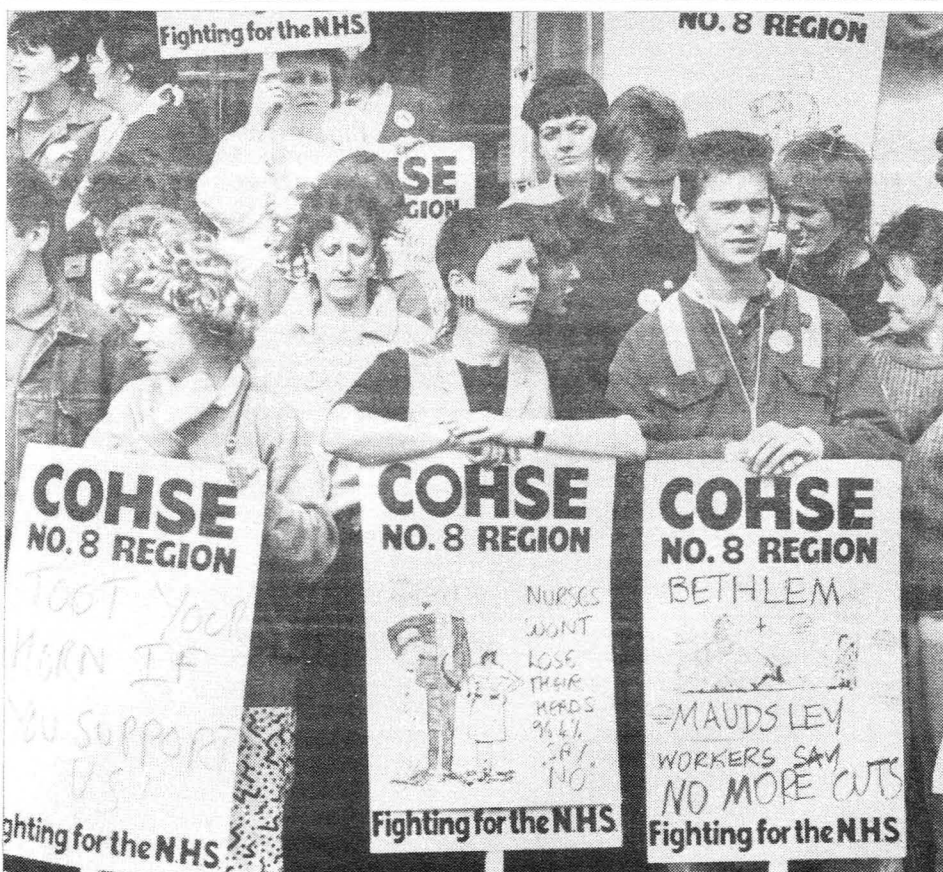
Nursing members of Cohse, the largest union at the hospital, voted 96.4 per cent in favour of the action in a ballot which had a 74.5 per cent turn out.

Branch secretary Ian Morton explains: "This result shows that nurses at the Maudsley are determined that ability and experience should be the guiding factors in making appointments to nursing management posts, not the petty political gestures which the general management is intent on

making.

"It is quite clear to all nurses at the Maudsley that the nurse managers are being selected with a view to the stance they have taken over the past year with regard to the fight against cuts in services at the hospital. Management has now completely lost what little confidence nurses had left in them."

The one hour stoppage on Monday 11 May from 4 to 5pm was marked by a demonstration at the front of the hospital, on Denmark Hill SE5, as members of the Health Authority arrive for their meeting. Further details from: Ian Morton (733-5516) or Chris Hart Home 771-3303, work 703-6333 ext: ward 6.



Maudsley demo last Monday.

Photo: Dave Sinclair.

Senior Coleman's own professor

SENIOR COLEMAN strikers held a public meeting on Friday night, 8 May in Manchester Town Hall. More than 50 people attended including shop stewards from local engineering factories, other unions and workplaces.

The speakers included a Caterpillar striker, a Silentnight speaker and a YS speaker, also John Tocher, AEU Divisional Secretary, spoke despite illness. He spoke very optimistically, as did all the speakers on the fact that Senior Coleman can win

and the Tories' anti trade union legislation can be defeated.

The purpose of the meeting was to set up a Greater Manchester support group, a steering committee was elected whose first meeting will be next Friday and it is hoped that this will extend support for the dispute throughout Manchester and nationally.

Also it transpired this week in a *Guardian* article on Friday 8th that Professor Smith who was chairman of the Silentnight Bedding Company

during that strike is now chairman of Senior Coleman is being proposed as deputy, and within two years, chairman of British Rail.

Union-buster

This is obviously a Tory reward for attempting to break the union in other companies.

Senior Coleman strikers have drafted a letter to Jimmy Knapp expressing their concern for his members if Professor Smith gets to

be the Chairman of British Rail.

Despite massive unemployment in Manchester, where some areas have over 50 per cent adult male unemployment, the Senior Coleman management have never achieved up to 50 per cent of the pre-strike workforce, even though they are attempting consciously to recruit from the dole queues. This proves that no matter how desperate people become they will not scab on a strike such as Senior Colman

By Aileen Ingham

THIS YEAR'S Union of Communication Workers (UCW) conference in Jersey takes place under threat of the Post Office being sold off if Thatcher is re-elected.

If the Post Office is privatised, the pay, conditions and union representation of members will be hammered.

Management have been preparing for years for the denationalisation of the business through job cuts, productivity and bonus schemes, new technology and small pay increases.

The lack of coordinated fight back stems from the belief of our trade union leaders that 'there is no alternative'.

They do not think it is possible to mobilise the members for a successful struggle against the Post Office and the government.

UCW must fight privatisation

But a growing number of strikes, walk-outs and other actions prove that the membership is prepared to struggle—what is needed is a leadership to match.

This year's pay claim has been agreed and recommended by the union's executive, who are balloting the membership to accept the Post Office offer of 5.1 per cent.

Although members will welcome the quick settlement there will be discontent at the miserly offer when compared to last year's record profits of £156m.

Although the UCW leadership can claim that the Post Office moved con-

siderably from its original 'immoveable' offer, undoubtedly the reasoning behind management's 'generosity' is to ensure industrial calm during the coming general election.

Hours

Conference faces a number of crucial issues. Negotiations for a shorter working week have failed. This key issue will be debated at conference.

The executive are recommending a ballot on industrial action for those members and associate grades who work a 43-hour gross week.

But last year's conference called for a 3-hour reduction in the working week covering all grades in the Post Office.

No doubt there will be many amendments supporting this existing policy and industrial action by all the grades conference.

If the leadership's recommendation on the shorter working week is carried it will mean UCW members being forced to cross their own picket lines.

The issue of 'picket lines' also relates to another conference item, a special report on Datapost which attempts to reverse last year's conference decision not to han-

dle Datapost during industrial disputes. If carried this would be a backward step.

Amalgamation with the NCU will again be high on the agenda. The UCW is in favour although last year's NCU conference rejected the joint proposals by a narrow majority of 462 votes.

This year's British Telecom strike by the NCU has shown the increasing need for amalgamation. It is essential that both unions campaign for amalgamation on the basis of a full democratic structure at all levels.

The coming battles in the Post Office are a direct result

of the policies of the present government. The Tories have deliberately attacked the trade unions so as to increase profits and drive down the living standards of organised workers.

If they are re-elected we will be sold off on the Stock Exchange. Every member of the UCW needs to understand the importance of working to get a Labour government committed to protecting our industry.

However there are no guarantees and our best defence will be a strong and united union determined to protect and enhance the jobs, pay and conditions of the members.

By John Johnson

(WDO, C&CS branch)

Chris Whale

(North London District C&CS branch)

Industrial Reports

Step up London bus cuts action

LONDON BUS workers struck last Monday against attacks on wages and conditions being enforced as part of London Regional Transport's plans to hive off bus routes open to private tender. Further action is planned. Militant reporters talked to bus workers.

● SHEPHERDS BUSH TGWU branch chair Chris James told Steve Poole that he agreed with last week's article in *Militant* and condemned London Bus for putting people out of work after thirty year's service by forming subsidiary companies to get round employment legislation, severance and redundancy payments.

Londoners, he said, will have to wake up to the fact that this is no longer a transport service

run for the masses but for profits for those private companies tendering for established routes. All trade unionists should support the fight to stop wage cuts.

● AT CLAPTON garage in Hackney Pat Caughlin told Bob Faulkes that nothing had moved at the garage at that point. After the 24 hour strike there would be a policy of non-cooperation, probably a work to rule, wild cat strikes with no notice to management.

He believed an all-out strike very possible: "No way can we accept an 80p reduction in our hourly rate, £37 per week, and an extra seven hours per week. At Norbiton garage they're threatening to sack all the staff. If that happens then it will be all-out."

● A WALTHAMSTOW steward told Jim Halpin: "We are not striking for more money, just to keep what we've got", "Which is not a lot" added another striker.

Out of a workforce of 246 only two were scabbing. All the fitters and canteen staff came out in support, partly in response to solidarity from the drivers during the canteen workers strike last year.

● NORBITON WAS the target of management's attempts to impose lower wages and conditions the week before and triggered widespread action in south London. Ron Goodwin, TGWU branch secretary at Plumstead garage spoke to Jeggs Kirby.

"The bus routes in Woolwich, Thamesmead and Bexleyheath

are to be carved up by London Regional Transport, a quango appointed by the government. LRT is to withdraw some routes, reduce others and what's left will be auctioned off to the lowest bidder. The firm that pays the lowest wages, cuts its safety standards, uses the oldest buses will probably win the routes.

"We have been told by our management, London Buses, that that they will go all out to win the routes but that they will have to cut our wages from £151 to £121 per week and will expect us to work an extra seven hours a week.

● PAT ATKINSON, LDC Automotive district committee, told Tony Cross that his Stamford Hill garage was 100 per cent solid and that there was much

talk on the picket line of the need for a wider transport strike to have a complete effect on London.

On the wider front, he said, a recent meeting attempted to begin co-ordination of all staff on London buses. It was agreed to coordinate garage committees including staff reps from the drivers and conductors to engineering and craft to establish a sound rank and file basis for further action.

They were particularly important, he said, for ensuring the fullest communication of information and preventing management manipulating overtime to divide the workforce. He called for a London-wide shop stewards conference of LRT staff to map out a strategy for stepping up the action.

North London DE

CPSA members at six Department of Employment offices and Job Centres in North East London have come out on a two week strike from Monday 11 May.

The dispute revolves around a pilot scheme which is supposed to relieve stress: being imposed without consultation.

From a very fuzzy copy of management's statement the following could just about be discerned: "There are no grounds for a dispute, we apologise for lack of consultation but we are going ahead."

This scheme will close the Job Centre at lunch time in the West End, lead to a juggling of jobs and the introduction of answer phones. Consequently the jobless will suffer.

Area manager Bill Thornton actually said: "The aim is to lessen the number coming through the doors of Job Centres."

The dispute is being supported by other members who returned after last week's strike with collections and levies. As picket Tania Fletcher said: "If we give an inch they will take a mile."

Brian Debus talked to pickets at Spurstow Terrace, Hackney.



THE TWO day strike in the Northern region on 23 April and 24 April 1987 was given massive support by CPSA members in Newcastle Central Office, despite the lack of leadership by the national union and the lack of faith in the strategy as a means to win the dispute.

Experience of early morning scabs skulking into work meant that picket lines were manned from 6.30am. The police presence was as obvious as ever, despite my advice to the 'Picket Liaison Officer' prior to the strike that strong-arm tactics weren't necessary.

One scab at Washington Child Benefit Centre was so upset about the abusive language on the picket line (he'd been called a scab!) that, on arrival at the office, he telephoned the union office to complain and was further stricken because no one was there!

At the main entrance of Newcastle Central Office, pickets became alarmed at members gathering on the other side of the

road. Was this an avalanche of scabs about to bulldozer their way through the picket line?

We approached the members (about 40 plus) both curious and anxious as to their destination. Were they going to cross the picket line? No—they were off to the Harrogate Flower Show, saying what a lovely day for a strike!

After picketing on Friday morning, we set off for Carlisle where the Cumbria rally was to take place. The CPSA speaker was Kate Losinska who droned on about the number of friends she had; how the union had no money and what a long drive she'd had that morning from Perth!

A shiftworker from our branch commented at the meeting that Kate Losinska was the next best thing to Ovaltine, so dull was her speech.

By Terry Martin
(DHSS Newcastle Central Office)

Gloucestershire and GCHQ hit back

LAST THURSDAY and Friday, Gloucestershire CPSA and SCPS members played their part in the national campaign for improved working conditions, increased pay and staff and a better service generally.

The average turnout was 75 per cent with all major offices closed and management grades also took action. At Gloucester Unemployment Office "A", a very good reception and feedback was received from claimants as the issues at stake were explained, some even joined the picket line and helped with the distribution of

material and information.

Coffee was provided by prison officers at Gloucester prison, just over the road from the dole office, the two workplaces continuing their longstanding support for each other.

Contact had been made with other unions connected with public service, notably Nalگو and Nupe who not only sympathised with the action but lent valuable physical support as well.

Cheltenham Social Security Office workers closed up after a contingent from GCHQ paid them a visit, and at Innsworth, an un-

precedented 84 Ministry of Defence workers, both CPSA and SCPS members, struck, with the overwhelming support of the forces' personnel.

The national media had tried to latch onto the GCHQ workers' action as a threat to national security. But with nationwide revolution, the antics of MI5 and the public questioning just who does constitute this threat, they were on a sticky wicket to start with. When this was coupled with the arbitrary and well documented manner in which this government has treated workers at

GCHQ and their attacks on the civil service as a whole, they were on to a loser all the way.

On Thursday afternoon the rally at St, Peters Social Club, which was used free of charge, was attended by over 200 civil servants, drawn mainly from Gloucester, Cheltenham and Stroud.

The mood was optimistic and enthusiastic, with the workers confident of victory, but then no one was under the illusion that it would.

By Manny Thain
Stroud CPSA

Yorkshire colliery review a warning

"Operating profits of £53 million capped an extremely good year for the South Yorkshire area" These were the opening remarks of Ted Horton, the newly imposed director of the South Yorkshire area of British Coal. But was 1986/87 a good year for the miners that work in South Yorkshire?

Wath and Cadeby were both closed down with the men and their families made redundant or uprooted, even though men at Wath voted to close their own pit this was done with the pressure of knowing management had no plans for a future there. Ted Horton also mentioned "The need to reduce industrial disputes" but those strikes that took place were needed to defend working conditions and practices. Everything still indicates that 1986/87 was another year of management attacks on miners.

Jobs

Management see a rosy future for South Yorkshire with more and even bigger profits but these will come at the expense of miners jobs and working conditions. Some of those expected job losses appear on the cards for the men working at Manvers Kilnhurst, the two pits that make up the Manvers complex. The Coal Board are putting the complex to the extended review, which in normal language means they want to close. Treeton colliery is also threatened with nearly 200 job losses. British Coal claim that this is due to bad geological conditions.

British Coal argue that the Manvers complex is uneconomic and lost £9 million last year. But if you consider the mismanagement that led to Kilnhurst not producing coal for eight months and misinvestment in machinery that wasn't used,

you can see how easy it was to make a loss. Now the new S52's face shows how coal can be produced and is the top ten face in the national production league according to British Coal figures.

They have also reported in the local press that Manvers complex is short of reserves, but this is only because the bureaucrat has used the pen to carve up the reserves and transfer them to another local colliery.

The unions at Manvers and Kilnhurst need to prepare for the battle ahead as Bill Billups a miner at Kilnhurst said "We don't want to move. Kilnhurst is worth fighting for, but we need unity of the men". Unity between both pits is also required because both pits are essential for the existence of one another.

We have to prepare a case against closure immediately. Firstly to answer British Coal's lies about doubtful reserves, we have to draw up a sound geological survey to prove we have a financial future. We also need an economic case to be written.

But to keep a pit open requires a fighting workforce. A pit news letter would act as a means of keeping men informed about what was happening and also act as a means of building a fighting spirit. It is not only the men at Manvers and Kilnhurst that need informing of the fight, but miners in Yorkshire and nationally need to be aware of what's going on.

By taking industrial action where necessary to protect our jobs and working conditions, we can save our pit and be an inspiration to other miners fighting closure. But to do this requires bold leadership and an immediate plan of action.

By Gary Ironmonger
(Kilnhurst NUM (personal capacity))

IN MEMORY

Of Ian Burge, secretary of Tower Hamlets NHS Joint Shop Stewards Committee. Died 18 May 1980. In memory of comrade, friend and fighter. Not forgotten.

Militant

Spain

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CPSA strike reports

page 15

CPSA vote for action

Now strike to win



THE CPSA conference has voted almost unanimously for a strategy of industrial action to win their pay claim, which will lead to an all out strike in the civil service.

Delegates were confident that, after the adoption of motion of emergency No. 25, an all out strike to win was inevitable.

Two alternatives were debated; the position of the CPSA Broad Left *Militant* supporters, and the strategy of 'Broad Left '84' supported by the 'Communist Party' and the leaders of the Society of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS).

Militant supporter Danny Williamson of the Department of National Savings Glasgow outlined this position—a clear commitment to an all out strike, counterposed to those who argued for a period of regional strikes with the possibility of strike action in the near future.

By Chris Baugh
(Land Registry Lytham, personal capacity)

This resolution, emergency motion 1 was lost, but this was not a rejection of all out action. In fact those who moved emergency motion 25 gave a clear commitment to the all out strike.

There was a clear contradiction, however, in the position of Broad Left '84 supporters. They had their own strategy adopted by the 1986 pay conference. But now they came to the rostrum to say that that strategy, which Broad Left supporter Mark Serwotka pointed out

was only what his members wanted implemented, was unrealistic.

Despite the fact that they had had since November 1986 to organise their position, they still thought that an all out strike was "not on the agenda" yet.

CPSA members will expect a vigorous strategy and that the claim will be pursued by the leadership with all leading activists to a successful conclusion. Members will expect no prevarication in the move to the all out strike.

Confident mood

CPSA members have shown their anger and determination, in the enormously successful selective action so far, on pay, jobs and services. They are determined to win.

Militant supporters will work



Civil Service strikers march through London on 7 May.

tirelessly to make the terms of emergency motion 25 a success. Thatcher and the Tories will be wrong if they interpret the defeat of the *Militant* and Broad Left position as a victory for them.

The mood of conference delegates and observers is confident. As delegate Sue Kingshot of Inland Revenue headquarters said: "there are 2,500 delegates and observers at this conference, 2500

ambassadors for victory. If we do the work, we can win an all out strike."

The Broad Left and *Militant* supporters have no lack of confidence in the membership and every confidence that the action will be successful. The members' best assurance of that will be the election of a Broad Left National Executive Committee, president and deputy general secretary.

Don't give Thatcher another chance

(Continued from page 1)

Thatcher even wants to stop us fighting back. The unions have had their rights taken away; billions have been spent on smashing strikes. The Tories have more anti union laws in store. If you oppose Thatcher's plans for perpetual government the Tories either threaten abolition as with the

GLC or disqualification like Liverpool's fighting Labour council.

In 1975 Thatcher said that socialists "believe people should be numbers in a state computer." This from a party which has millions of names on police computers, has allowed police raids of newspapers, organised paramilitary operations against the miners and seem-

ingly co-operated with intelligence service moves to get rid of the 1974 Labour government.

Labour must end this open dictatorship of the rich. Four weeks of campaigning with socialist policies on the real issues can get rid of Thatcher on 11 June and give Labour a chance to implement a socialist alternative.



11 June, a chance to "disarm" Thatcher.

Defeat the Tories

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• Tories out, for a majority socialist Labour government.

• 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 tied to the cost of living for all, including sick and disabled people.

• A socialist plan of production democratically drawn up and implemented by committees involving the

trade unions, shop stewards, the unwaged and small business people.

• Opposition to the capitalist Common Market, the EEC. For a socialist United States of Europe as a step towards a World Socialist Federation.

• 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 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.