Militant

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth

ISSUE 741
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Fight ratecapping—
Save council jobs

Pages 4,5,16

Sweatshop budget

THE TORIES are ruthlessly pursuing their aim of driving down living standards to boost the profits of their big business partners.

To achieve his ends, Lawson is using both carrot and stick. He is reducing National Insurance contributions from both employers and low-paid employees and income tax thresholds are being raised, to "encourage" workers to look for low-paid menial jobs.

By Mick Brooks and Bob Wade

The stick is the further slashing of employment protection provisions. There will be no redress against unfair dismissal until you have been employed for two years. This is nothing less than a blacklisters' charter—a recipe for taking on low-paid youth, keeping their noses to the grindstone and then sacking them before they have any legal protection.

Wages councils

Wages councils, flimsy defence though they are, look likely to be scrapped. "Wages councils destroy jobs," Lawson blandly asserted.

The YTS schemes are being extended to two years. Under the guise of "training", claimed Lawson, YTS would "prepare school-leavers for work." What work? All these schemes do is further the Tories' aim to drive down wages. Forcing youth to do a full week's work for a paltry £26.25 sets the pay norm for young workers throughout industry.

"Too many trainees are unprepared to accept rates of pay that reflect their inexperience," he said. Lawson claimed that YTS made "young people's pay expectations more realistic". On the contrary, expecting people to work 40 hours a week for £26.25 is totally unrealistic!

Having driven down the expectations of school-leavers, the Tories are turning on the next generation, the 18–24 year olds. The Community Programme is to be extended by 100,000 places, to nearly a quarter of a million in the local authority sector. This is a massive increase at a time when local councils are shedding real jobs as a result of Tory cutbacks in public expenditure.

The budget foreshadows even greater cuts. Lawson admitted that he expects public borrowing for 1984/5 to be £10.5 billion, £3.25 billion more than he expected. Of this he attributed £2.75 billion to the miners' strike. He revealed that the strike also caused a 1% fall in output last year and worsened the balance of payments by £4 billion.

His target for public borrowing for 1985/6 is £7 billion. Even after allowing for the cost of the miners' strike, that will mean £500 million less public spending than this year.

While workers suffer the consequences of these cuts, and the lowering of wages, millions will be handed out to some of the very richest through the scrapping of the Development Land Tax and changes in the Capital Gains Tax.

Mass unemployment is a vital necessity for the Tories' plans. They have no intention of "making things better", only of making things far worse. Workers will be outraged by this budget and will be demanding action from the Labour and TUC leaders to mobilise the movement to defend living standards and drive this reactionary government from office.



"IN ONLY one respect did this budget live up to my expectations—I didn't expect it to address the real problems of working people, and it didn't.

"For the mass of unemployed workers, there was no relief, just a further fiddling of the dole figures through doubling the length of YTS schemes, so that a quarter of a million kids will come off the dole and on to YTS.

"For young workers the pressure is on for employers to reduce wages. Now that all firms can sack people within two years and with graduated rates of National Insurance, firms have an incentive to sack 20-year olds and employ ex-YTS trainees at 18."

By Dave Nellist MP

Young miners build LPYS

SACKED SCOTTISH miner Chris Herriot of Monktonhall NUM is one of many young miners coming to this year's conference of the Labour Party Young Socialists:

"We'll be coming to share the lessons we learned over the past year of struggle with the thousands of young workers who'll be there. It is important to continue the struggle against Thatcher, and give that fight a political direction."

Over 3,000 youth will be going to conference, to debate the miners' strike, YTS, nuclear disarmament and many other issues. There will be films, bands and discos, and Bill Bragg will be playing on Friday night.

Labour Party Young Socialists National Conference Winter Gardens, Blackpool Easter Weekend, 5–8 April

Come to BLOC See centre pages

Militant

Labour's right scorn lessons of miners' strike.

THE MOST lasting benefit of the miners' strike will be the heigtened political awareness of all those who played any part in this historic struggle. Thousands who formerly regarded themselves as not interested in politcs will have learned more in a year than in the rest of their lives so far.

This will have profound effects within the Labour Party. Some miners, their wives, and workers who have been inspired by the miners are already joining their local Party branches. They are determined to see a Labour government returned, to achieve on the political front what they did not achieve through industrial struggle.

Their entry into the Party marks the beginning of major changes which will transform branches, constituency parties and the national conference over the next few years. These new members will want to turn their party into a fighting workers' organisation.

Many workers will be puzzled, therefore, by press reports of a "swing to the right" within the party. These have been prompted by the outcome of a small number of re-selection conferences and annual general meetings where there have been defeats for left-wing candidates, those who support the ideas of *Militant* in particular.

At the same time, a number of local parties are trying to expel or take other disciplinary action against activists who support *Militant* or members of the Labour Party Young Socialists. Superficially it would appear that sections of the Labour Party are scorning the lessons of the miners' strike.

The right wing have learned nothing from it. Many MPs and trade union leaders are expressing relief that the strike is over, believing that it was an electoral liability. With their privileged life-style, isolated in Parliament, they have been immune to the changing consciousness which has swept across the country in the wake of the strike. There has not so far been a change throughout the Labour Party to match the industrial battles which have been taking place.

The only reason why the right have been able tc make these advances within the party, however, is that they have been joined by the party's "soft left" and others formerly regarded as "hard left", who have learned all the wrong lessons from the miners' strike. Encouraged by the leaders of the "Communist" Party, especially their guru, Professor Hobsbawm, they have convinced themselves that the miners and other workers have been crushed and that socialism in now a utopian dream.

They have lost all faith in the capacity of the working class to struggle to transform society. Typical are the leaders of the GLC and other Metropolitan County Councils who have conceded the fight against rate-capping before the battle had even been engaged.

These elements within the party have coalesced into a bloc against *Militant* supporters and any others still prepared to stand up and take on the Tories. Only on the basis of support from some former lefts, have the right been able to recover some of the ground they have been consistently losing for years.

This "unholy alliance" in Glasgow Provan prompted the "lefts' " own paper *Tribune* to comment that "left-wing delight at *Militant*'s discomforture was tempered by the growing realisation that Trotskyist domination in Provan had been replaced by a resurgance of Glasgow's traditional Roman Catholic party machine."

The right, and their new allies, argue that their watered down policies are essential to ensure victory at the next election and that socialist policies are a liability. They have proposed a pitiful £5 billion "reflation"of the economy as their alternative to Thatcher, a policy no different from that of the SDP and the Tory "wets".

As Liverpool City Council is showing, when clear, bold socialist policies are taken on to the doorsteps and the streets, explained at workplace meetings, campaigned for in the movement, they not only offer a genuine alternative which would make a real change in working people's lives, but are extremely popular, as the last two council elections have proved.

Amongst the youngest and newest activists within the party and unions, there is no mood of gloom, but a fiery determination to fight back. In the years to come workers will flood into their party and MPs will become more and more subject to their pressure. In larger and larger numbers it is to the Marxists within the movement that the workers will turn, as the only force capable of translating that determination into a political programme for a Labour victory and a socialist Britain.

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Photo: Militant.

Cheryl Varley held by policeman ouside NOLS conference 2/3 March 1985.

NOLS conference fiasco

AT THE National Organisation of Labour Students conference on March 2/3, Labour Party students were denied visitors' tickets and students were roughly treated by NOLS 'stewards'. The police also intervened (see *Militant* issue 739).

Amongst those refused a ticket was Labour Party member Cheryl Varley, a student union officer in Liverpool who represents 30,000 students and covers seven colleges. She describes what happened:

"I couldn't believe the heavy security. People were arguing all round me trying to get in, including a striking miner and a leading NUS member. Students from Lancaster University told me they were barred because: "They (the NOLS leadership) don't know which way we'll vote yet!"

Police arrived

"Eventually one bouncer allowed us to stand by a conference door to listen to the debates. Suddenly there was commotion behind us and shouts that the police had arrived. We were pushed into the conference. NOLS staff from all over the hall ran at us. I was kicked and be punched and thrown backwards. I tried to help a girl who was about to be punched by a NOLS bouncer, but a policeman pulled me backwards and said: "Calm down or leave, or I'll arrest you".

"I stood and cried at the injustice of it all. I came to join the fight against education cuts and instead I'd been barred, kicked and nearly arrested.

"If the NOLS leadership think they can drive out working class socialists through violence and intimidation, they are wrong. A week before this conference, we organised mass meetings in all Liverpool's colleges, with an average attendance of 300, in the fight against the Tories. Support for Marxism amongst young workers and students will grow—and they'll want a leadership prepared to fight the Tories and a democratic student organisation that really represents the socialist aspirations of youth".

Scottish Labour youth attacked

AS *MILITANT* reported last week, at the Scottish Labour Party conference, Labour Co-ordinating Committee members used a resolution on building youth support for Labour to attack the Young Socialists.

They pilloried the Marxist majority in the LPYS, yet remained silent over the Scottish TUC Youth Advisory Committee. The recent STUC Youth Conference was only half the size of the very successful Scottish LPYS conference, with 450 delegates and visitors present, even though the STUC has far more resources than the LPYS.

The LPYS supports the involvement of trade union youth in the Young Socialists. Throughout its many campaigns the LPYS has always aimed at young workers. It was these positive points of the resolution at conference that gained the backing of the majority of delegates.

This is backed up by the LPYS petition circulated at conference, calling for support and more resources for the Young Socialists. It was signed by Phil McCary, NUR executive, George Docherty, NUR Scottish executive, NUM officials and delegates from Bilston Glen. The movement's ranks want to build Labour's support amongst youth, but are sick of the attacks on the LPYS inspired by student supporters of the LCC, when the real task ahead is to roll back the Tory onslaught.

By Eddie Donaghy

TGWU demand purge

TRANSPORT and General Workers' Union members throughout the country will be furious to learn that the Welsh region's leadership have submitted a divisive witch-hunting resolution to this year's Wales Labour Party conference, calling for action to be taken against *Militant* supporters by local constituency Labour Parties.

After the momentous battle of the miners, the stealing of £200,000 of TGWU funds by the law courts, the attacks on our jobs and living standards, T&G members will be amazed that our regional leadership believe that the most important issue to be discussed is action against Labour Party members whose only "crime" is to fight for the implimentation of a socialist programme.

The Tory media will be delighted that the T&G have allowed our enemies yet again the opportunity to give the impression of a split and divided Labour Party just at the time when we are getting our noses in front in the opinion polls.

The T&G resolution is in complete contrast with the emphasis on party unity in the resolution which Islwyn CLP (Kinnock's constituency) has submitted to the conference. Are the Welsh T&G leaders concerned about a Labour victory or are they more pre-occupied with trying to stem the increasing support for *Militant*'s ideas amongst T&G members?

Trade unionists throughout Wales are confident that the T&G rank and file the length and breadth of Britain, along with miners, engineers, and other trade unionists, will flood the regional headquarters with resolutions of protest and disgust and so ensure that this party-splitting resolution is withdrawn from the agenda.

Resolutions and letters of protest to George Wright, TGWU, Transport House, Cathedral Road, Cardiff.

By Keith Edwards
(Secretary, TGWU 4/92, Llangenech, West Wales)

Young Labour recruits intimidated

SIXTEEN YOUNG workers who applied to join Thurrock Labour Party Young Socialists were made to sign a statement saying they disassociated themselves from *Militant*.

They were part of a group of 25 who went to the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign lobby of Parlament on 28 February in a coach organised by the local LPYS.

The attack on *Militant* was pushed through by Tilbury ward Labour Party, a right-wing strong-hold, and the Party's youth officer, evidently alarmed at the prospect of an influx of young people into the Party.

The Youth Officer in a report to the executive committee, says "After I explained what *Militant* was the people involved signed a statement disassociating themselves from *Militant*.

Some potential new members were intimidated into signing it, believing that not to do so would jeopardise their chances of becoming members of the Labour Party.

The statement has since been destroyed. One of those who signed it did the only proper thing—and ate it!

A move to investigate *Militant* supporters in the LPYS confidentially by the executive committee was defeated when opponents of this witch-hunt circulated members of the general management committee and told them of the executive's plans.

The constituency party chairman was forced to state that there would be no expulsions, and no inquiry or investigation into *Militant*.

A motion of no confidence in the Youth Officer was moved for the next meeting.

Expelled

LAST WEDNESDAY *Militant* supporter Paul Shawcroft was expelled from Mansfield Labour Party for refusing to give an undertaking that he wouldn't sell *Militant* and organising a *Militant* public meeting. Notts miner Graham Naylor, on strike throughout the dispute, was suspended from holding office for 12 months.

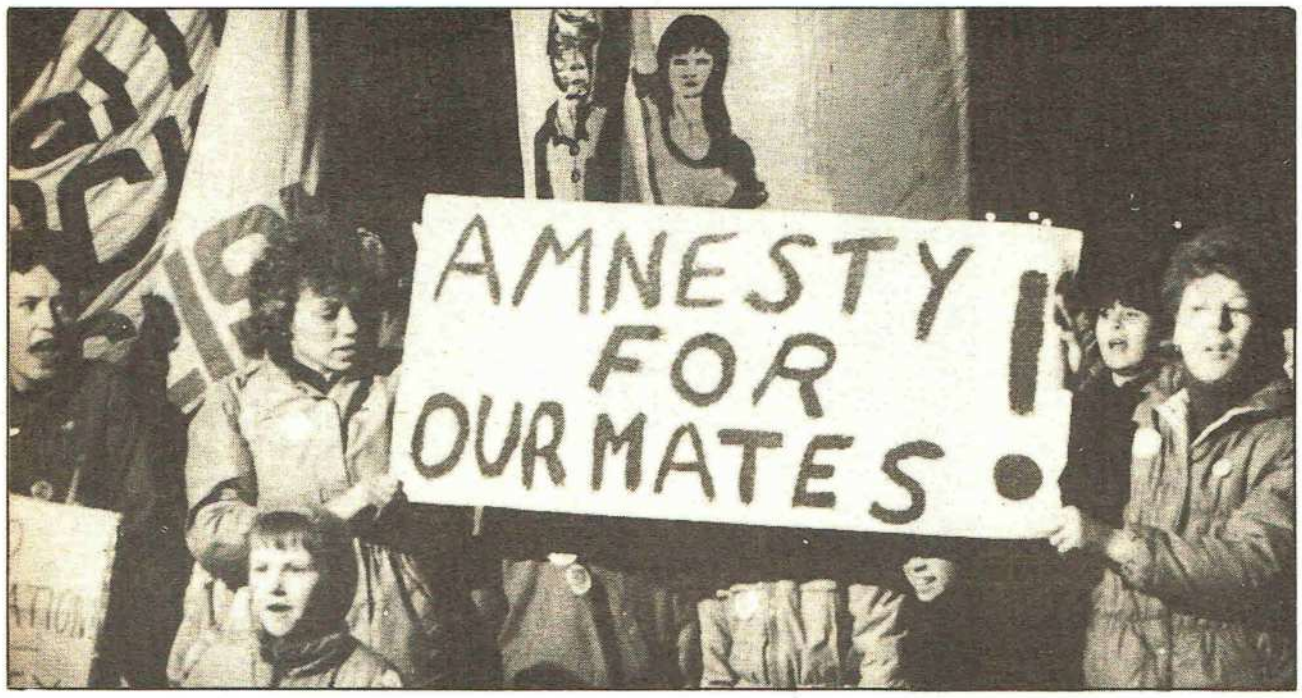
At the meeting of about 30, Paul Shawcroft got only four votes in support—but these were the votes of three Notts miners who were loyal to the strike, and an NUR member who supported the strike.

A party member who scabbed in the miners' strike said that Paul Shawcroft was being expelled for "holding views incompatible with those of the Labour Party." Since when has scabbing been 'compatible' with the socialist ideals of Labour?

Militant supporters in Mansfield Labour Party are confidenct of overturning these decisions in the future, as striking miners and their wives make their presence felt in the party.

In the meantime a petition is being organised aimed particularly at the Notts and North Derbyshire miners who were on strike. Paul Shawcroft and Graham Naylor have appealed and are asking for letters of protest and resolutions to be sent to the NEC of the Labour Party.

After the miners' strike



WE RETURNED to work at Monktonhall on 7 March led by pipers, and the union banner, followed by the 47 members who had been sacked. Everyone then stepped aside and the men went back in to enormous applause. We didn't feel defeated, at the branch meeting we had decided to carry on the fight back at work. Photo: Rick Matthews (IFL)

Pit bosses try it on

WHILE THE campaign to reinistate sacked miners gains momentum, inside the pits the NUM is fighting management attacks on union rights.

Two shifts walked out on strike at **Markham** Number Two pit in Derbyshire after management introduced a fourth shift and sent home an NUM electrician who turned up for work at his usual time for the day shift.

The electrician was unaware of the shift changes and as soon as he was sent home all other electricians walked out.

They were promptly followed by the underground day shift, and later by the afternoon shift. Such was the feeling towards management's actions that even the "super duper scabs" (went back to work before May last year) and the "super scabs" (went back before November) came out with the rest.

Scabs said that they weren't anti-union and weren't prepared to see the management get away with this sort of action. Only 12 stayed at work.

At **Monktonhall**, Scotland, management are refusing to recognise the union, and refusing to negotiate until the overtime ban is over. They are trying to end the overtime ban by asking men to do jobs at the weekend stating they had been sanctioned by the union.

They have tried to stop concessionary coal for NUM members and OAPs. This comes out of our wages so they are on shaky legal ground there.

On Friday the pit normally operates an "early back shift" which starts an hour earlier, very useful to management as it cuts down on absenteeism. Management now want the normal back shift as on other days but this Friday 120 men including those who had scabbed came off at the usual time and the mood is to carry on doing so.

The union is stronger now. At our meeting on Sunday when we discussed what management were throwing at us, a woman canteen worker reported that a miner had doubted the loyalty of the women. To great applause another miner said there had been no doubt about their loyalty, not one canteen worker had gone back to work. Our union will keep on fighting.

Silverwood, South Yorkshire: Here too management have introduced a fourth shift. The Silverwood branch committee has also been put back on three shifts with only the secretary allowed to remain on the surface. Management has also suspended water payments; now nothing extra is given for working in soaking conditions.

Polkemmet, Scotland: The NCB are ignoring the NUM during redundancy and transfer discussions. They are talking with individual miners without a union representative present.

Barnsley area: All NUM branch officials were full-time, but now all except the secretary have been sent back to work. *Militant* supporters are carrying on their activity, the **Houghton Main Militant Miner** is out already, calling for a 'yes' vote, in the ballot for the 50p levy for sacked strikers.

Ollerton, Notts: Despite everything there are still 40 – 50% sticking to the overtime ban, and that included some working miners. But there was a very heated debate at the last branch meeting about the 50p levy and the ban. Management are tightening up on all the rules which affects everyone, strikers and working miners.

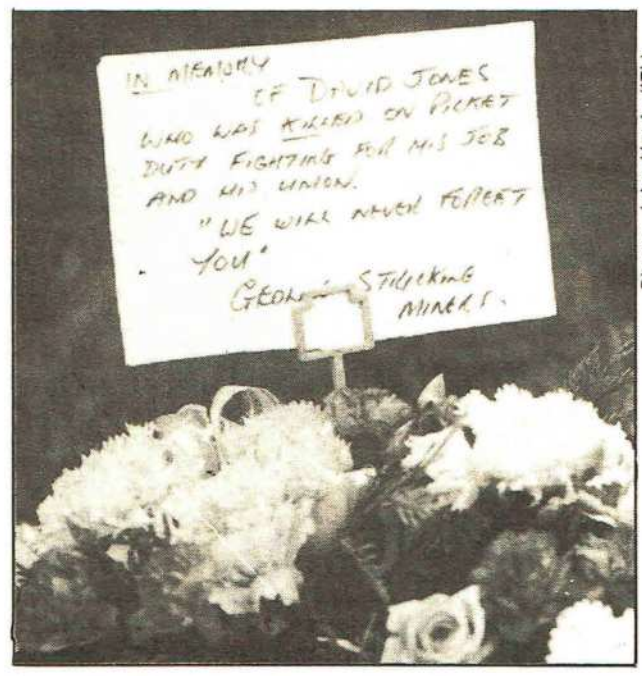


Photo: John Harris (IFL)

Commemoration for David Jones, miner killed on picket duty in Ollerton last year.

Force amnesty - more sacked

THE MINERS' Amnesty Campaign is becoming more important as time goes by with the continuing hard line of NCB bosses. According to some estimates up to a thousand miners may now be sacked, despite reinstatements in some local areas.

Scottish coal chiefs, sticking to their hard line, have refused to reinstate any of the original 180 sacked and have since dismissed a further 25 making 205 in all.

The area Coal Board director Albert Wheeler claims: "People have been sacked for violence and intimidation and we do not want them back in the indutry." He said the Scottish area didn't sack people for 'trivial offences' and therefore had no one to reinstate. A typical example of Wheeler's "violence" is Jackie Aitchison, Bilston Glen secretary: "I was sacked for stepping over a white line which the Board painted at the pit gate."

Wheeler's real aim is to remove the NUM's local leadership; more than two-thirds of those sacked in the Lothians are branch committee members. Scotland has 25% of all sacked miners but only 10% of convictions.

The DHSS which acted as the government's accomplice all through the strike has now ruled sacked miners to be "in dispute" with the NCB and therefore ineligible for benefit. This even applies to about 300 presently sacked or suspended without pay by the NCB pending court cases which may not be heard for months.

Jack Collins, Kent Area NUM president is the latest to join the long list of sponsors for the Miners' Amnesty Campaign which is demanding:

- ★ An immediate amnesty for all sacked miners.
- ★ For a Labour government committed to the immediate reinstatement and full compensation for all sacked miners.

We appeal to all organisations in the labour and trade union movement to take up these demands and assist the work of the Miners' Amnesty Campaign by becoming a sponsor and sending at least £5 to:

Philip White, Miners' Amnesty Campaign Secretary, 10 Herman Road, Caerau, Maesteg, Mid Glamorgan.

Labour MPs keep levy

THE FOLLOWING resolution is being put to the Parliamentry Labour Party by Dennis Skinner, Dave Nellist and Allen Roberts on 20 March supported by the Shadow Cabinet: "That in the light of the continuing hardship being experienced by members of the NUM and thier families particularly the 750 sacked miners, this PLP meeting calls on all Labour MPs to continue their £12 per week contribution to the NUM funds".

Abuse of power

THE COURTS have dealt very severely with striking miners. The flimsy nature of many arrests can be seen in that about one in five people arrested during the dispute were never charged with an offence and so far nearly a quarter have been acquitted of charges. A report in *The Guardian* estimates that of all those arrested only about half would have been found guilty of a criminal offence, and they say that this abuse of the power of arrest is exceeded only by the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

But many miners have been heavily fined, and a number have been sent to prison.

General amnesty NOW



THE *MILITANT* Editorial Board have called a series of important *Militant* Public Meetings to discuss the end of the miners' strike and the Amnesty Campaign. These will be held in every region of the country. Details of those already organised are as follows:

Sutton: Sunday 24 March. Speaker: Ted Grant. 7.00pm Sutton Centre, High Pavement, Sutton-in-Ashfield.
Chesterfield: Monday 25 March. Speaker: Ted Grant. See local sellers for details.
Leicester: Tuesday 26 March. Speaker: Ted Grant. Richard III pub, High Cross Street.
Nottingham: Wednesday, 27 March. Speaker: Ted Grant. 7.30pm, Albert Hall Institute.
Littleton/Lea Hall: Sunday 24 March. Speaker Lynn Walsh. Pye Green, Community Centre, 7.15pm
Dudley: Tuesday 26 March. Speaker Rob Sewell, Courthouse Inn, New Street, Dudley, 7.30pm.
Birmingham: Wednesday, 27 March. Speaker: Rob Sewell. Carr's Lane Church Centre, Carr's Lane, City Centre, 7.30pm.
Amman Valley: Tuesday 26 March. Speakers: Brian Ingham and Wayne Evans (Cynheidre NUM). See local sellers for details.
Maesteg: Monday 25 March. Speakers: Brian Ingham and Phil White (St Johns Lodge, NUM). See local sellers for full details.
Newbridge: Wednesday, 27 March, The Miners Institute. Speakers: Peter Taaffe and Ian Isaac (Secretary, St Johns Lodge, NUM).
Pontypridd: Thursday 28 March. Speakers: Peter Taaffe, and Billy Lidden (Secretary, Cwm NUM). Full details from local sellers.
Bradford: Wednesday, 27 March. Speaker: Peter Jarvis. See local sellers for details.
Keighley: Thursday 28 March. Speaker: Peter Jarvis. See local sellers for details.
Huddersfield: Friday 29 March. Speaker: Peter Jarvis. See local sellers for details.
Southampton: Thursday 29 March. Speaker: Brian Ingham. 7.30pm at St Matthews Church Hall. Onslow Road.
Newcastle: Monday 1 April. Speaker: Clare Doyle. 7.30 at Newcastle YMCA.
East Leeds: Tuesday 2 April. Speaker: Rob Sewell.
West Leeds: Wednesday 3 April. Speaker: Rob Sewell.
Brighton: Tuesday 2 April. Speaker: Ted Grant.
Grays: Tuesday 2 April. Speaker: Peter Taaffe.
Manchester: Tuesday 2 April. Speakers: Peter Jarvis and Terry Fields MP. Manchester Town Hall, basement theatre, 7.30 pm.
Burnley: Wednesday, 3 April. Speaker: Peter Jarvis.
Glasgow: Tuesday, 2 April. Speaker: Brian Ingham. 7.30, McLellan Galleries, East Room, Sauciehall Street, Glasgow.
Newcastle-under-Lyme: Guildhall, Wednesday, 3 April, 7.30. Speakers: Lynn Walsh, Dugald McKinnon.
Cambridge: Thursday, 11 April. Speaker: Keith Dickinson.
Greenwich: Tuesday, 16 April. Speaker: Brian Ingham.
Newham: Tuesday, 16 April. Speaker: Lynn Walsh. 7.45, The Lister Room, East Ham Town Hall, Barking Road, London E6.
Islington: Wednesday, 17 April. Speaker: Peter Taaffe.
Acton: Wednesday 17 April. Speaker: Clare Doyle. Acton Town Hall.
Brixton: Thursday 18 April. Speaker: Rob Sewell.
Bristol: Tuesday, 23 April. Speaker: Keith Dickinson. 7.30pm, Shepherd's Hall, Old Market, Bristol.
Plymouth: Wednesday, 24 April. Speaker: Keith Dickinson.
Dorset: Thursday, 25 April. Speaker: Keith Dickinson.

CONFERENCES:

NUS Conference: Monday 25 March. Speaker Derek Hatton. See leaflets for time and venue

Liverpool rate-capping conference: Saturday 30 March.

South West Region Labour Party Conference: Saturday 30 March, 1pm, Davenport Pub, Exeter. Speaker: Willie Harper (Liverpool City Councillor).

LPYS conference: Saturday 6 April, Blackpool. Main speaker: Ted Grant.



Gordon Bennet writes—

THE 'MILLWALL riot' has predictably given Thatcher an opportunity to climb on one of her favourite hobby horses—law and order. There has been much trumpetting in the press recently about her formation of a 'soccer war cabinet' to deal with football hooliganism. She is 'personally furious', we're told, and something must be done.

No doubt, after much soul searching and examination of all the evidence, the war cabinet will come up with some startingly original proposals such as more police, more pay for police and more detention centres.

Well, since 1979 the Tories have recruited more police, doubled their pay, indulged their drill 'em and flog 'em fantasies with the detention centres, and still crime goes up. They've even studied (and ignored) detailed reports that the short, sharp shock treatment is about as as effective for rehabilitating offenders as sending them on a safecracking course.

Thatcher and friends have quite skillfully used the issue of crime at election time, and have posed as the people with the solutions. Unfortunately Labour has allowed them to get away with it by either weakly echoing the Tories' medieval ideas or acting as though crime isn't a problem that working class people worry about.

We now have a national police force with a French CRS type capability that is politicised and will increasingly be used as a sort of Praetorian Guard for British capitalism. But don't kid yourself that this has anything to do with making the streets safe at night.

While 'the Met' were cheerfully battering as many striking miners as they could get their hands on, back in London the plague of drug pushing, muggings, burglaries and sexual assaults worsened for working class people in the inner city.

In a society which offers nothing to so many, it's hardly surprising that some people turn to crime to survive while others take part in useless acts of vandalism or hooliganism. To understand is not to condone but to begin to find a solution.

The Tories on the other hand blame everyone and everything—except themselves of course—for the incidence of crime. Over the years Mrs Thatcher has blamed parents, teachers, socialism, and on one memorable occassion sombrely explained that "The Devil is still with us, recording his successes with crime figures . . ."

The Tories are basically concerned with crimes against property—their property—and in their eyes the greatest crime against property is socialism and its vehicle, the labour movement.

Fight ratecapping—save jobs and services

Liverpool will fight

WHATEVER happens in the London Boroughs, Liverpool will fight. That has been the message both before and after the budget fixing day of 7 March.

On that day 50,000 people marched through the city centre. It was more impressive than last year's demonstration on two counts. Firstly it was larger. Secondly it consisted almost entirely of local people. Last year, because Liverpool was the only council fighting, many people came from outside to offer support.

Local support

Alex Namow, an FBU member told us that the Labour council was 100 percent better on jobs and housing than the previous ten years of Liberal-Tory rule.

Arfon Williams, an NUT member, pointed out that 1,600 jobs in education would go if the government won and it was as much a fight for the teachers as it was for the cleaners, caretakers and other workers in the schools.

Natalie Marcus, a student at the Colquitt college said she had joined the LPYS,and supported the council to fight for a future.

Kevin Conway is unemployed. Since he left school he has been made redundant three times. The City Council is the only employer who has taken on people and that was why he backed them on 7 March.

Jim Edwards, National Association of Probation Officers said that he was concerned that the cuts that took place wouldn't just affect their jobs but would affect services and his clients who were the most vulnerable section in society.

Construction workers from Barratts had a meeting of the whole workforce and voted to attend the 7 March demonstration because they felt it important that the private sector fought alongside the public sector.

GMBATU 192 branch member **Barney Burke** in the Health Service said: "If we don't stand firm we will go under, the TUC won't give leadership but this council has. We demand that our union leadership fights against privatisation and stands as firm as Liverpool City Council."

Whole city

And to show that when the Tories take on Liverpool, they are taking on a whole city, large numbers of pensioners are backing the city council. On the 7 March demonstration two old ladies, one 84, her friend 72, both bought *Militant*s and said they had been socialists all their lives and they wanted to show Thatcher they were earnest in defending their rights and their services.

By Anne Beales and Josie Aitman

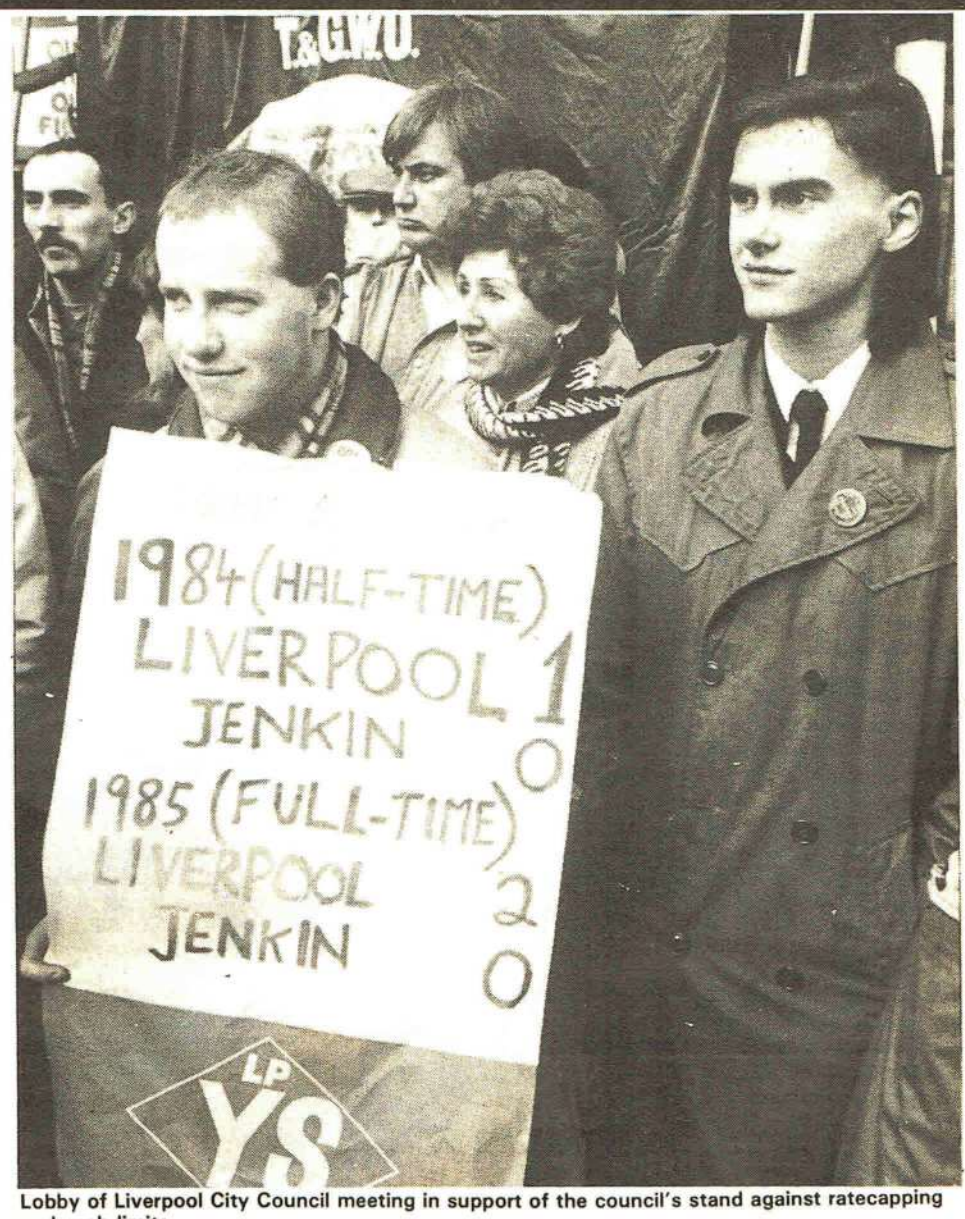


Photo: John Smith (IFL)II

Lobby of Liverpool City Council meeting in support of the council's stand against ratecapping and cash limits.

Hackney under fire

THE POSITION in Hackney is now more serious than in any other London borough.

By the first week of April the council could find itself bankrupt. Already it is unable to raise loans and the council workforce have been sent letters saying they may not get paid from the 1 April.

Legal action by Mourad Fleming, a failed SDP council candidate, means that the council cannot use rent income for anything except housing services and is unable to use any rate income for any purpose whatsoever until the council sets a legal rate. Fleming has threatened to return to court on 1 April to force the council to set a rate by 15 April.

The government is also tightening the screws on the councillors saying they must pay the precepts to the police, regional transport, GLC and ILEA on 1 April. Otherwise they will be legally liable for any costs incurred through delay. The councillors may stand firm through this barrage (there is a Labour majority of 40 on the council), but some may buckle.

Crucial to the outcome and the whole campaign against ratecapping is what strategy is adopted by the workforce. *Militant* supporters have argued that the best policy is one of strike action when the money runs out, when any jobs are threatened or any councillor surcharged.

It is the only way that the struggle can be taken onto a London or national basis. Other council workers, such as 200 at a Southwark NALGO meeting, have said they will strike to back Hackney, but only if Hackney workers are striking themselves. Hackney cannot win if the battle is confined to our borough.

Only way

The only way other workers will move into action is if they see that Hackney workers are determined to fight for their jobs. Emergency essential services should still be provided, and the definition of what constitutes such a service would be determined by the Joint Shop Stewards Committee. That is the message that *Militant* supporters in the council workforce have been putting in leaflets and speeches at mass meetings over the last week.

The leadership of the council workforce do not favour this approach. Most of them prefer a work-in without pay, and it seems that this is the position that will be adopted at a meeting of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee this Thursday.

It is not a position that can last. People will get demoralised working on without pay, in isolation from other boroughs. One of the lessons of the miners' strike was the need for other workers to strike in solidarity.

But it is important that the "work-in" does not collapse in confusion. Even if a "work-in" is the decided tactic, Hackney stewards should send out representatives now to other workers explaining the position and why they will need their support in the next few weeks.

The rate-capping campaign in Hackney is at a crucial stage. The result of the battle here will have a national effect. If we stand firm it could prove decisive in bolstering other councils who are possibly contemplating capitulation.

By Jim Chrystie
(Hackney North CLP Executive, personal capacity)

Pressure grows in Southwark

THE DECISION of the Southwark Labour Group to defy the ratecapping laws has not yet broken the law.

This is the time to apply maximum pressure on wavering councillors. Every opportunity must be taken to make it clear to individual councillors that to cave in means more than their shields will be dented.

Council unions remain determined to back the councillors' fight. Council workers know what cuts would mean for Southwark. Charlie Dempsey (TGWU) said: "I used to be a docker and know what happened when the docks shut down. If we lose 2,000 jobs in Southwark, it would take the guts out of the area. We're the mainstay of the local economy".

Southwark is in the top ten most deprived boroughs and trade unionists emphasise that they are not just fighting for jobs, but also for services. Tommy Slater, TGWU and Council JSSC executive said: "The old, the young, the infirm, the people who really need these services will suffer. We know it means jobs, but we're more concerned with services right across the London boroughs. 100 percent of my workers support the council".



Tommy Slater, TGWU, Borough Engineers.

The mood is summed up by a worker at the Manor Place depot who told *Militant*: "It's no good just hissing and booing at them (the waverers) when they go into the town hall. They just need a good kick up the arse".

By Paul Traynor

Militant gains support in Liverpool

REPEATED attempts were made by the *Liverpool Echo* to predict set-backs for *Militant* in the election of officers and the Executive Committee to the Liverpool District Labour Party at its AGM. But at last week's AGM *Militant* supporters won even greater support.

The *Echo* admitted that: "*Militant* supporters boosted their seats on the 33-member Executive Committee from 10 to 17. Tony Mulhearn was returned unopposed as president." Elections for the trade union places onto the Executive resulted in *Militant* supporters winning seats for the first time. These included Chris Williams, NEC member of the Tobacco Workers' Union, Peter Fergusson, AUEW steward and City Councillor and Marie Harrison, COHSE.

Tony Mulhearn said after the meeting: "The vote at the District Labour Party AGM indicates overwhelming support for the polices of the District Party and its leadership."

Fight ratecapping—save jobs and services

Why the GLC caved in

IN THE aftermath of the GLC's acceptance of the Tory government's ratecapping limit the Labour GLC leaders have been attempting to explain away this defeat.

Fundamentally the argument of Ken Livingstone and his supporters boil down to two issues. Firstly that the lower tier councils (in London the Borough councils) were seeking to avoid taking any illegal action and secondly that the GLC could have implemented a 'growth budget' within the government's rate limits.

Posturing

Ken Livingstone, in a report to the Greater London Labour Party Executive, attacked the "posturing of some Borough leaders" who adopted a policy which allowed them to "duck the issue of illegality" at their 7 March budget meetings but "left the GLC and ILEA out on their own" because of the legal requirement for the upper tier authorities (like the GLC and ILEA) to set a rate by 10 March. Livingstone, while being accurate about the unwillingness to fight of some other Labour councillors, totally ignores the fact that three days before the GLC finally set its rate one council, Hackney, had already 'gone illegal' by refusing to set a rate in defiance of a court order to do so. Surely the GLC could have followed Hackney's example and shown the way for the other Labour authorities? (see *Militant* last week)

No Labour GLC member can claim that this is a new issue. The Labour manifesto for the 1981 GLC election, in a section written by Militant supporters, stated that a Labour GLC 'understanding that the Tory government does not listen to pleas but only responds to pressure ...



Ken Livingstone.

will appeal to the Labour and Trade Union movement to take action, including industrial action, to support its stand. Mass opposition to Tory policies led by a Labour GLC could become the focal point of a national campaign, involving other Labour councils, against the cuts'. Unfortunately the capitulation of the majority of Labour GLC members means that this manifesto commitment will not be implemented.

The second argument that the GLC had the possibility of agreeing a 'growth budget' within the government's rate limits is, at best, an easy excuse for leaving the other ratecapped councils isolated.

Manoeuvres

Livingstone says that his deputy, John McDonnell, was responsible for the GLC not spending its full 1984/5 budget but does not refute McDonnell's arguments in an October report (which Livingstone quotes from a different context) that "for us to be able to use the capital fund and other financial devices to stay in office it would necessitate the government turning a blind eye to these manoeuvres. The obvious motive for the government's complicity would be to divide us from our Borough comrades thus enabling Jenkin to put down more easily the Borough revolt."

It is clear that one of the reasons why many Labour GLC members felt it right to work within the Tories' limits is that they see the battle against the GLC's abolition as already lost. But even if there will be no GLC after April 1986 to be ratecapped the local councils will still be trapped in the vice of spending cuts unless the Tories are defeated. The GLC's 'beggar my neighbour' attitude to the local councils has only served to strengthen the Tories' hand.

No strategy

It is this aspect of the battle which totally undermines Livingstone's complaint that many GLC members "felt we had been misled and manoeuvred" by talk of massive spending cuts if the GLC accepted ratecapping. The battle was not solely about the GLC it was about *all* the local authorities which the Tories are attacking.

GLC members George Nicholson and Valerie Wise said in the *Morning Star*, 16 March, that there was "no real discussion" on the strategy to be adopted by Labour councils. There is a certain element of truth in this. In October 1984 the GLLP Executive defeated by 21 votes to eight the 'deficit budget' strategy put forward by *Militant* supporters and from that time did not discuss any more the political issues raised in the struggle. Certainly there was no discussion of these issues at the GLLP's annual conference earlier this month.

But it is also clear that preparations were being made for some time for a retreat by at least some Labour councils. The GLLP Vice-Chair when moving the Executive's motion at its January special conference totally failed to even mention its main point, the refusal to set a rate! Livingstone's biographer, John Carvel, has reported that when faced with the prospect of "going over the top into illegality... Livingstone's view was that the majority of his group would not wear it. He therefore set about activating the escape route...

While still urging borough councillors to join the GLC in all-out, no-rate illegality, he encouraged Reg Race, former Tribunite MP and now a GLC official in charge of the central programme to produce a new legal budget would could be presented as a growth package. " (The *Guardian*, 14 March).

Passing buck

Livingstone's attempt to pin the blame for the GLC's cave-in on the borough councillors and on the speeches made by McDonnell and Lambeth leader Ted. Knight at the GLLP annual conference **without condemning those GLC members who refused to follow Party policy** shows that Race's plan was not really conceived as a fallback position but rather as a way to avoid a battle with the government. Unlike the Liverpool councillors last year the GLC leaders were afraid to stand up against the government, even though it is clear that at least some other Labour councils will not back down without a fight.

The fact that the GLC's final budget was £55 million below what the Tories would have allowed has led the GLC leadership to attack those Labour councillors who say they wanted to support party policy rather than those who voted to comply with the Tory demands. This blatant attempt to dodge the issue of the GLC leaving the other councils under attack isolated must not be accepted by the labour movement.

By Bob Labi



Photo: A Wiard (Report) III

GLC and ILEA workers demonstrating against rate-capping last November. But no clear strategy for victory came from the leadership in the following months.

ILEA workers reject cuts budget

THE DECISION of the Labour controlled, Inner London Education Authority to set a legal budget within the rate-capped limit represents a betrayal both of the workforce and consumers of the service, and of those other rate-capped authorities left to fight.

The ILEA decision on 7 March, following a labour group meeting that day to vote to comply with the government, has come as a particularly bitter blow to the thousands of ILEA employees who struck and marched through London on 6 March. Our strike was, we were led to believe, to support an authority pledged to reaffirm an "illegal" budget. While not fully meeting the aspirations of authority trade unionists, this would nevertheless have represented a defiant stand by the ILEA.

In the event, the budget has been set at £926.4 million. Frances Morrell, leader of the ILEA, said the budget is like: "An aeroplane setting out to fly the Atlantic with two pints less petrol than we need for the journey." Despite this, authority leaders say the budget will not result in cuts in jobs or services. This will be achieved, it is claimed, by using money from balances and reserves.

Apart from the fact that such depletion of the reserves is dangerous and irresponsible, as well as making swingeing cuts from May 1986 inevitable, it is quite possible that Jenkin will move to make some of the planned manoeuvring illegal. Moreover, there is not the slightest doubt that cuts will follow; indeed they are taking place at the moment. Not necessarily spectacular, immdiate wholesale sackings, but a steady erosion of jobs and services in all fields of the education service, especially in the non-statutory sector.



Photo: A Wiard (Report)

1,000 teaching jobs in ILEA secondary schools are planned to go in the next year.

Over the next few weeks plans are going through to rationalise "off-site" provision in the authority, involving substantial job losses and closures. 1,000 teaching jobs in secondary schools are planned to go over the next year. Indeed, the position of those jobs and services financed through the contingency reserve is particularly uncertain, including over 300 'surplus' teachers left high and dry through last year's redeployment scheme.

The responsibility for this crisis lies both with those renegade Labour councillors who voted for the budget, and the authority leaders themselves. Frances Morrell was involved in behind the scenes dealings over the last few weeks in an attempt to avoid illegality.

No serious consultation at any stage had taken place with the key unions involved, and relations between the NUT, NUPE and NALGO in particular, and the ILEA leadership are virtually at breaking point. Indeed, the failure to properly integrate the unions into the campaign from the outset was the key factor behind the budget defeat.

Despite the budget setback, we are still entitled to expect Labour ILEA members to carry out Labour policies. We must demand the immediate resignation of those who reneged on agreed policy. Further, we must demand that ILEA implement the policy overwhelmingly agreed at Greater London Labour Party Regional Conference on 2 March: rejecting cuts, job losses and compulsory redeployment of teaching staff.

This motion, moved by Hackney North, and seconded by the LPYS, despite Morrell's personal opinion, has been enthusiastically taken up by the authority unions, and will be a guide to our action in the future. The 7 March budget, far from representing the end of the battle for the ILEA, is only the beginning—and any councillors who believe the workforce will throw in the towel quite so effortlessly as the authority has done have another think coming.

Bob Sulatycki
(West London NUT, and Inner London Teachers Association Council, personal capacity)

Zimbabwe

West Germany

Appeasing capitalism Attacking socialism

THE LABOUR movement internationally responded to the detention of trade unionists, ZANU activists and socialists in Zimbabwe with a wave of protest. As a result Mugabe has taken personal charge of the case.

By Tyrone Simpson

The Zimbabwe Trade Unionists Defence Campaign believes that 13 of the detainees (including 12 Zimbabweans) have now been released. But David Hemson and Darcy du Toit, members of the British Labour Party involved in workers' education with SALEP in Zimbabwe, are still held. Deportation orders served last week have been revoked and they have been moved to Chikurubi maximum security prison, Harare.

Despite rumours of a Mugabe press conference and indications from the Zimbabwean High Commission in London that a statement from Harare was expected last Friday, official silence has been maintained.

What answer can the regime give to the hundreds of letters, telegrams, resolutions, etc, from the labour movement all over Europe, from Asia and North America, and from non-racial South African unions asking why a government elected on a 'socialist' ticket is attacking socialists?

In reality the Mugabe government failed to carry out its socialist promises, compromised with capitalism, and finds itself in crisis as a result. As the *Sunday Times* 17 March stated: "Although Mugabe is a self-professed Marxist he has accepted the 'reality' of the private sector and left huge tracts of prime farmlands in white hands."

The state has not been transformed. Even in the CIO (security police), many white officers from the Smith regime remain at their posts. The government is determined to subdue the unions and crack down on socialists in the hope of making Zimbabwe more attractive to imperialist investors and the IMF. This explains the arrest of local ZANU activists, leaders of the Workers' Campaign for a Democratic GEMWU, and co-workers with SALEP.

The sole activity of the detained comrades has been to help build the labour movement, through the unions and in the framework of ZANU itself, on the basis of Marxist ideas.

In at least one instance, it is believed, security police who carried out the detentions came with a warrant to search for arms and ammunition—at the home of comrades who have always openly condemned terrorism! The police found only a battered old duplicator and a cupboard full of books, magazines, tapes and video documentaries from the BBC and Channel 4!

While detained, several of the comrades were severely beaten and at least one subjected to electric shock torture. They were accused of making "subversive statements" and "bringing the government into disrepute".

The Johannesburg *Sunday Star* reported that the trade unionists were "taken in for questioning after word got around of discussion groups at which the failure of Mr. Mugabe's government to implement socialism came under heavy fire."

The London *Sunday Times* reported that Mugabe "now faces what looks like a serious rebellion from the left wing of his ZANU Patriotic Front party. The results of his wrath against trade-unionists who voice opposition to his one-party goal have damaged Zimbabwe's socialist image abroad, coming on top of the prime minister's bloody military campaign against dissidents in the southern province of Matabeleland."

The Minister of Labour has also used the draconian new Labour Relations Act to reimpose upon the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions a leadership which, only days previously, had been suspended by its general council for corruption and mismanagement.

Last week the government-controlled Harare *Herald* (9/3) scandalously blamed the country's problems on "workers who are lazy and generally lack sense of direction". The editorial added, "They are the scum of a nation in a hurry to develop". Lacking the necessary servility or "sense of direction"—having in fact a clear **socialist** sense of direction—has been the crime of the detained trade unionists and ZANU activists.

The goverment is attempting to intimidate workers, peasants and youth struggling for decent wages and jobs, for land, for unions under democratic control and for a socialist ZANU led by the working class.

The implementation of real socialist policies will be the only way to preserve the unity of Zimbabwe, to solve the workers problems, and put an end to the economic blackmail of that country by South African and Western imperialism. No amount of persecution will deter Marxists from explaining these ideas; nor will the regime's manoeuvres prevent the Zimbabwean working class, sooner or later, from rising to its feet in the socialist transformation of society.

Once again, the working class internationally, defending the Zimbabwean socialists, shows its instinctive internationalism in defence of union and democratic rights, and of workers in struggle. The pressure must be kept up until all those who have been detained are able to resume their work in the unions and in ZANU without threat or hindrance.

Keep up the protests to the Zimbabwe High Commission and to Mugabe personally. Send copies and donations to the Zimbabwe Trade Unionists Defence Fund, c/o SALEP, 28 Martello Street, London E8. Telephone (01) 241 0434.

Photo: Militant



Part of the protest outside the Zimbabwean High Commission in London.



Among the detained trade unionists: James Kachisi, M Mashayamombe, Nicholas Mlauzi, Rabi Down and S Nyamhunga. Others detained: Mahara, Makusha, Musona, Tagwiraya, Chikwekwete, Tshoro, Hemson, du Toit, Ms Poppe Mrs Mashaymombe.

Zimbabwe: Detained for demanding union democracy

THE WORKERS' Campaign for a Democratic GEMWU (the engineering union) has organised workers' committees in factories and organised rank-and-file union members to bring it under democratic control.

Last year security police intervened to defend the general secretary of this union, D. Chimusoro, when he was suspended from office for corruption and misconduct by the union's national council. This long-standing supporter of the former Muzorewa regime still holds office in defiance of the workers—by courtesy of Mugabe's security police.

The Southern African Labour Education Project (SALEP) was formed to assist the trade union movement in South Africa and other countries of the region with materials of workers' education. Most resources are devoted to the struggle of black workers in South Africa against apartheid and exploitation.

In recent years, SALEP has also been rendering practical aid to the labour movement in Zimbabwe. In 1983 it produced a pamphlet analysing the draft Labour Relations Bill, pointing out the dangers of its severe measures for state control of the unions. Among other things, the Bill makes strikes effectively illegal in Zimbabwe.

This Bill has recently become law. The detentions of SALEP co-workers are apparently connected with their opposition to it, and for their work in promoting socialist ideas among trade union and ZANU members.

German workers fight for solidarity with miners

A RANK and file trade unionists rally in support of the miners was organised for 9 March in Duisburg in the Ruhr, West Germany, with leading union speakers from Britain.

One of the trade unionists asked to speak was Karl Gruner a shop steward in the IG Metall union, whose fight for a 35 hour week last year inspired workers throughout West Germany. The shop stewards committee at his plant Bosch near Stuttgart have written to the IG Metall national chairman about the attitude of the union's leaders to the British miners strike.

It is a good example of the marvellous solidarity the NUM received from workers, even if not their leaders, throughout the world. They wrote:

"In two circulars you made it clear in the name of the Executive that:—money collected "in the name of the IG Metall" for the miners should be distributed via the Steel Union ISTC."

'That money transfers to the miners' own solidarity fund account and the German collecting account in Wuppertal aren't allowed'.

'That the IG Metall should boycott the planned solidarity conference in Essen with Arthur Scargill speaking. It was hinted, that the NUM doesn't share "the political aims" of the international trade union federation to which the IG Metall belongs. And vice versa: "It shouldn't be taken from our support of British miners' families that the IG Metall Executive identifies itself with the political aims of the NUM".

We are disturbed by this statement. We ourselves struggled for seven weeks last year and had experience of international solidarity. We are trying to imagine how we would have reacted if we'd received solidarity from others along with the public remark that people want to help the "poor families of the engineering workers" but not the "wicked IG Metall", which in furthering its dubious political ends has caused such hardship.

"No zigzags or wavering"

International solidarity can't be divided into "material support, yes—political support, no." Trade union solidarity should not be handicapped through some difference between international federations. The miners involved in such a hard struggle are not interested in such differences neither are we. The destruction of jobs threatens all of us, in all countries, and it does not stop to ask us which party card we carry. If we practice solidarity only with "ifs" and "buts", it will only help the enemy—Kohl here, Thatcher in Britain.

The mass media are already using your letter to defame the miners. It's already clear what kind of political damage your decision has done to a union fighting for its survival.

Resolution No. 1 of the 1983 IG Metall Congress pointed out our determination "to fight for the realisation of the right to work by any available means"—and this is precisely what the miners are doing. If we take our own prognoses on jobs seriously, we can no longer afford zigzags and wavering. The miners need our full material and political solidarity."

(IG Metall shop stewards committees, Bosch Ltd, Reutlingen, eight personal signatures)

Schools rocked by student strike

A WAVE of school student strikes and walkouts has spread throughout the country. The press have been quick to blame it on the industrial action by teachers. They have blown up small incidents of violence trying to present a picture of 'rampaging' children let on the loose by 'irresponsible' teachers.

Thatcher has been quick to blame youth violence on the "lack of parental" and "teacher discipline". But it has more to do with the frustration of school students, who know they face no prospect of a real job when they leave school, but rather the dole or industrial conscription onto YTS.

Police have moved in heavily against the school students. In Middlesborough mounted police are patrolling daily. Also, the school student strikes have in some areas been initially 'anti-teacher'. Therefore it is imperative that the LPYS intervene to give the action an organised direction, and point it at the real culprits, the Tories.

Below DENNIS RUDD of Havant LPYS describes how they intervened in a wave of school strikes there, and the battles they still face.

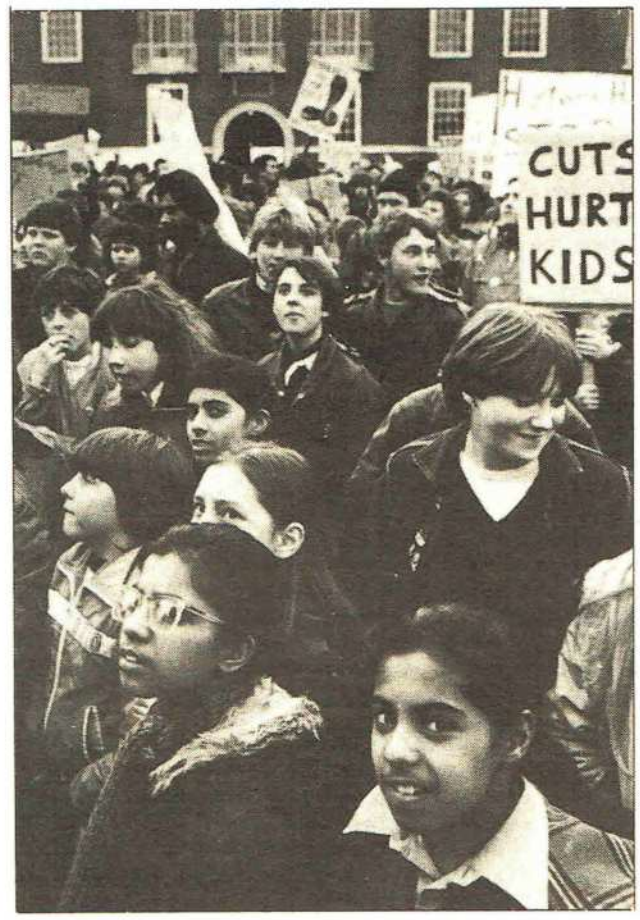


Photo: Militant.

School students join teachers' protest in Barking, East London, in 1982. School students should support the teachers' action today.

THE SERIES of school strikes in the Havant and Portsmouth area were initially a confused action against the teachers, because they feared a potential "threat to examination chances", a fear played upon by the Tory press to throw mud at the teachers.

The LPYS immediately took the initiative. At one of the schools involved there are eight LPYS members. In an emergency leaflet the teachers campaign for better pay was forcefully explained (see leaflet). Many students agreed that the real threat to their education was the Tory's cuts. While opposing the arrest of a number of striking students—one was arrested for 'obstruction' while singing the 'Wizard of Oz'!—the YS received support from the majority of students for opposing the mindless violence of a small minority.

These demands gained support. When the strike later spread to the Bridgemary school in Gosport, from its outset the action was in support of the teachers.

The need for organisation in the fight for student rights is realised. The LPYS are successfully campaigning for school student unions—three of the four striking schools have begun setting them up.

Suspensions

The struggle is far from over however. School student LPYS members have now been suspended from their schools for their part in the campaign.

Unfortunately action against the LPYS campaign has not only come from the school bosses. LPYS member Rob Lewin was called up before the executive of Havant Labour Party and the regional party organiser, to explain the LPYS's action. It was admitted that the LPYS was not doing anything outside Labour Party policy, but the LPYS was still instructed not to get involved with the school issue.

However, with many LPYS members at school—including the 15 students interested in joining the YS since the action began—the LPYS cannot avoid being involved in the action. At Broomfield school, at the LPYS's initiative, 100 students say they want to set up a union. With such a response it is the duty of socialists to intervene.

Fight Coventry closures

THE DECISION of Coventry City Council to close schools met with widespread opposition from parents, staff and in particular, school students. (See last week's *Militant*) Mick Whale spoke to Jayne, Lisa, Mandy, Trudy and Debbie from Binley Park School, one of the school's planned for closure:

"The first we hard of the closure was on the radio. They didn't even have the courtesy to tell us before the rest of Coventry knew.

"You can't print what we think of the council leaders. Councillor Rose (Chairman of the Education Committee) should consult the community, but he wouldn't listen to what people said.

"We don't like fighting against the Labour council, but it has become out of touch. We've all joined the Labour Party and the LPYS to make sure the Labour Party fights for ordinary people.

"The Labour Party needs newer people with fresh ideas if it's going to get into power. Albert Rose says he doesn't want to make it political, but this is a political fight. Now it's school closures, what's it going to be in three years time; hospitals?

"We need a union like the miners. Too many people say that the youth of today are apathetic; we're here to prove we are not."

LPYS demands

AS THE teachers' strike continues, LPYS branches should use the leaflet produced by Portsmouth and Havant branches as a model to intervene in subsequent student protests:

FIGHT THE TORIES NOT THE TEACHERS. Teachers are NOT well paid; they earn less than the average wage for working 50 hours a week. The Tories have kept down teachers' pay and cut back on teachers jobs. The teachers unions are not fighting against you they're fighting for a decent wage.

NUT POLICY IS NOT TO DISRUPT YOUR EXAMS.

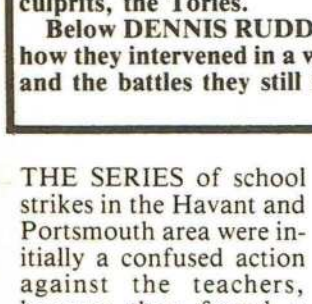
Tories have cut millions of pounds from your education. The real threat to your future comes from Tory education cuts. School students must fight with teachers for a future, school students must support the teachers in their fight for a living wage.

Teachers strength lies in their union; SCHOOL STUDENTS NEED A UNION TOO!

The school students' union must demand:

- **★ No victimisation of pupils for striking.**
- **★ Representation on the board of school governors.**
- **★ Right to dress as people want.**
- **★ No corporal punishment.**
- **★ Improved school facilities.**
- **★ Control of school magazine.**
- **★ Opposition to the Youth Training Swindle.**
- **★ £30 per grant for Further Education.**
- **★ A guaranteed job for every school leaver on trade union rates of pay.**
- **★ End police harassment—STOP the arrest of students for just standing on the pavement.**

Violence is counter-productive. Violence threatens the unity of the strike. It gives the authorities the excuse to clamp down. DON'T BE PROVOKED!! No to mindless violence; organise through union action.



YTS—treated like skivvies



YTS trainees join the YTURC lobby of Parliament on 28 February.

Photo: Mark Pinder.

THE YOUTH Trade Union Rights Campaign, backed by the LPYS, is fighting the Tories' plans to force young people onto YTS. Below, an ex-trainee from Yorkshire describes the total lack of training and exploitation on YTS. She spoke to Sally Johnson of Wakefield West LPYS:

I DECIDED to go on YTS for one main reason; I would receive £10 more than I would on Supplementary. It was also a chance to relieve the boredom of unemployment, and there was a lot of pressure from mum to "start doing something with my life". Not to mention the DHSS who said if I didn't get a job or go on a scheme they would cut my benefit from £16.50 to £9.50 per week.

I opted for a catering course (which offered a City and Guilds certificate at the end). I didn't feel very enthusiastic; it was the case of the scheme being the best of a bad lot.

The first two weeks of the scheme were spent in the classroom. The scheme tutor had no qualifications whatsoever, she was merely an ex-kitchen supervisor roped in by the Hotel and Catering Training Board. I was constantly aware of spelling mistakes, etc.

I was to spend my work experience at a large canteen. This entailed me getting up at 6am but luckily transport was provided free. At my interview the supervisor was "all out to impresss", bragging about his clean and organised kitchen. My friend and I were provided with overalls—I use the term loosely as they were tatty and worn, offering no protection at all.

During my first fortnight I became utterly disillusioned especially after the glowing report from the supervisor. I knew enough about cleanliness to realise that the kitchen was just plain mucky and safety regulations were completely ignored.

I slipped on a patch of grease that somebody hadn't bothered to wipe up. Even though this resulted in a sprained wrist I received no apology or even sympathy. In fact I was told NOT to record this accident in my log book. The supervisor was so paranoid about what we actually did write in our log books that it got to the stage where he'd be leaning over our shoulders dictating a complete pack of lies to us.

Every other fortnight the scheme tutor would come and visit us to see how we were getting on. So it was on with the spick and span new overalls, clean hats, etc. The minute she'd gone back to the tatty ones!

The work I did could hardly be described as giving me any experience whatsoever. Every morning I fried 400 eggs, cleaned two large boilers and mixed a simple trifle mix. In the afternoon yet more cleaning, then off to the toilets for a smoke because they couldn't find anything else for us to do.

We were treated like skivvies. It made me so angry that for £25 a week I was doing more than the chefs who were on a basic wage of £100.

The last straw came when I was firstly told off for not having enough hair covered by my net cap (by a man who'd pick up food from the floor and serve it!). Then I was refused protective shoes that full-time employees were allowed (my feet were always getting scalded by hot water from the boilers).

I don't regret packing it in for one minute. The irony is that on my YTS certificate it would state that I'd had experience in canteen work. I know no more about catering than when I started. But I'm probably highly qualified as a cleaner.

BLOC
BROAD LEFT ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Balance of forces

THE PAST year, since the first BLOC conference, has been dominated by the magnificent struggle of the miners, their wives and communities. This year's conference offers an opportunity for activists to take stock of the situation facing the labour movement.

Debate last year centred around the question of what stage the labour movement was passing through, above all, could and would the working class fight the Tories.

The underlying theme of the opponents of Marxism at that time was a basic acceptance of the arguments of 'New Realism.' From the right, left and ultra-left, there was a general acceptance of the idea that the working class would not resist the Tory offensive.

Pat Wall's prophetic speech, reprinted on these pages, illustrates the fundamental divide between the ideas and methods of Marxism and all other strands within the movement. In plain language he cites the central problem for our class in the complex relationship between rank and file trade unionists and leadership at its various levels. Above all, he demonstrates an unshakeable confidence in the working class,

The ruling class will regret their victory. The miners heroism has "created cadres for the future," noted *The Times*.

rooted in his thirty years experience as a Marxist in the labour movement.

Right up to the end of 1979 Britain saw a steady increase in union membership. Like other major European countries the last few years have seen a significant drop in total membership—2 million, or 15% in the UK. The change has reflected the decline in manufacturing industry, with a shift in the balance of union membership to the service sector. The public sector unions have suffered least.

Nevertheless total union membership at the end of 1983 was a massive 11,338,000. The actual proportion of the workforce unionised is 54.3%, a slight fall since 1979 of just 3%. The annual rate of decline has fallen from 6.5% in 1981 to 2.2% in 1983. The haemorrhage of jobs, however, has not fundamentally weakened the trade unions. What is lacking is the leadership to organise a concerted campaign against redundancies.

This has been graphically revealed in the last 12 months. The ruling class is attempting to place the full burden of the crisis on the shoulders of the working class.

As *Militant* predicted well in advance, over and over again the rank and file have attempted to push the leadership into struggle to resist the onslaught.

Even before last year's BLOC conference there had been major struggles of the Post Office engineers and printers. Since then dockers, railworkers, seamen have all seen action. British Leyland workers, despite a concerted campaign against them by government, management and media, returned to the scene of the battle. Car workers at Jaguar (despite privatisation) and Vauxhall also struck.

Above all, in the miners' strike, with its profound effects on the consciousness of millions of workers, we saw the outline of future revolutionary developments in British society. So much for the demise of the traditional working class.

The conflict over local authority spending is renewed this year at a higher level. Whilst Liverpool alone took on and beat the Tories in 1984 we now have a nation-wide campaign of defiance. Even if it falls to a handful of councils to stand out to the bitter end, hundreds of thousands of local authority workers and in some cases whole cities are being mobilised against the government. The Tories have helped create a depth of opposition in this campaign which the labour movement in Britain has rarely seen.

Also taking place as the conference meets is an unprecedented campaign of industrial action by the teaching unions which could well bring the whole educational system to a halt. It says a great deal about the changing attitudes of the teachers and the white collar workers generally, but will also have a profound effect on many thousands of pupils, genuinely educating them in the realities of class society. The pay campaign of the civil servants could also bring them in to head on confrontation with the government.

Lessons and tasks

The truth is that over the past decade or so we have seen a massive radicalisation of British society. Despite setbacks the labour movement remains potentially the single most powerful force in society, enormously strengthened in the decades after the war and now—at rank and file level at least—learning the political lessons necessary to arm itself with a programme and leadership capable of decisive victory.

Activists attending the BLOC conference will quite rightly be discussing the immediate issues which require action. The Miners Amnesty campaign is vital, not just for miners, but as a test of the movement's ability to support our casualties in the class war conducted by the Tories in the mining areas.

Organising support for the struggle of the local authority workers and councillors fighting ratecapping and cuts will be a major part of the discussion. There are important lessons to be learnt from the decision of the GLC to break ranks and set a rate after leading the campaign for that strategy. The opportunity to question GLC leader Ken Livingstone will be welcomed by many activists unclear about these events.

The work of the various Broad Lefts in the unions, including vital election campaigns in the AUEW and USDAW will be high on the agenda. Many left wing activists will be eager to learn from the experience of those unions with large and open Broad Left bodies. On the basis of debate and discussion, sharing experiences and problems, it should be possible to build a far more effective trade union campaign against the Tories' anti-union legislation and to defend the threatened political funds.

At the same time the lessons of the miners' strike must be taken to heart by every trade unionist. When capitalism is in decline every major trade union struggle quickly becomes a political struggle. A political programme and perspective for control of society by the working class is the only way to guarantee a decent life for all. In the struggles which lie ahead it is our task to forge a leadership of the labour movement capable of turning the programme of socialism into reality.

For fightir



Photo: John Harris (IFL)

Tocher speaks out

JOHN TOCHER, AUEW No. 11 divisional organiser spoke to *Militant* about Terry Duffy's recent comments in the Times on the union's presidential election, in which he was personally attacked.

The most striking thing is the arrogance and contempt that the right wing have for the union its membership and constitution. They treat the union as their property. Clearly they are frightened that the union will go back to the members. But it is the membership who must decide.

I disagree with the policies of both Gerry Russell and Bill Jordan, but in some ways Russell may consider he has

The confidence of a Marxist

WE REPRINT here Pat Wall's prophetic speech at last year's BLOC conference as an excellent example of Marxist perspective and revolutionary optimism.

"PAT WALL, President, Bradford Trades Council, and Evertonian on his way to Wembley. In the early hours of the day following the general election I and other activists in the Bradford North constituency addressed some two or three hundred workers who remained to speak to us after that defeat.

We made the point that we felt that defeat was bitter, not as individuals, not in one constituency, but because we saw the defeat of the right-wing leadership in the Labour Party by the Tories as a defeat on our class. Just as we see any defeat for a right-wing trade union leadership by the employers as a defeat for our class.



Pat Wall.

We said that the arena of struggle had moved from parliament, because of the massive Tory majority, into the struggle of workers in industry, and the struggle of Liverpool City Council at the present time.

In less than one year we see, in my opinion, a decisive change in the mood of our class. We are only at the beginning. But if we weren't at the beginning of a change in mood there wouldn't be three overspill meetings at this conference; if we weren't in a change of mood Tony Benn wouldn't have defeated the national Tory press in the Chesterfield by-election; if we weren't in a change of mood we wouldn't have the magnificent struggle waged by the Yorkshire and other miners at the present time.

That marks the beginning of a decisive change as far as the feeling of our class are concerned. And I'll had add to what several other speakers have said—it takes one victory, one victory only, to profoundly change that mood—to approach flood tide. Because there is a reservoir of hate, of bitterness, in our class at the treatment we've received over the course of the last few years.

One victory would imbue confidence in millions of workers, unemployed and employed, women and men, black and white, to struggle against the Tories and this system.

Leadership

But in the Broad Left we also have to draw the lessons of the past. If we talk about the miners and the victories of '72 and '74 we have to recognise how that took place. That they took place out of unofficial strikes in '70 and '71 in Yorkshire and South Wales in an effort by the rank and file to push the leadership into a fight. And those rank and file struggles, which were defeated, altered the balance of opinion inside the NUM to conduct the 1972 and 1974 battles and out of them the victories which the miners obtained.

It's that relationship between the struggles of the ranks to change the opinions and actions of the leadership, and the fact that when the leadership calls for action it obtains a much bigger response than we can ever get as rank and file militants—that's the struggle that we are in at the present time.

I'd go further. One of the things that saddens those of us who have spent so much of our lives sat in smoke filled conferences of the unions and the Labour Party over the years, and which the Broad Left has to understand, is that for far too long we have used ourselves as an electoral machine, to get this person or that person onto an executive, as general secretary or leader.

We have to have troops on the ground. No matter how good a socialist Tony Benn, Arthur Scargill or anyone else may be,

ng trade unions!





a greater claim to run than Jordan as he is an Executive Committee member and has pursued the executive's policies.

In my travels meeting the members there has been great concern at the wages and conditions which have fared bacly under the right wing leadership. The 5.1% rise in the Minimum Time Rate settled during the miners' strike gives a rate of pay of only £69 for unskilled and £96 for skilled workers, which is disgraceful.

The right wing are preparing to enter sweetheart deals, trading in hard won gains in order to achieve a shorter working week instead of pursuing it on its own merits.

Another thing the members are concerned about is the deterioration in the union's standing in the eyes of the rest of the labour movement. They are also very concerned about the fall in the union's standing in the eyes of the employers. There is a real danger of a split opening up between the AUEW and TASS and its craft sections, which will only benefit the employers.

Rather than attempting to pursue fixed positions we must work together in the engineering industry and the trade union movement generally. The union must no longer be prepared to run away at the first sign of trouble leaving other unions in the lurch.

It is vital that we defend the constitution of the union, ensure democracy and accountability, restore dignity and integrity in the union and return it to its proper standing in the movement. It's time to stop the rot.

unless they are held responsible to the rank and file of this movement, because they are under enormous pressures—and anyone in leadership suffers those pressures—the possibility exists of them bending and giving way in difficult situations.

The demand of the Broad left is for the maximum amount of unity in action, for that we must hold our leaders responsible and accountable...

Workers' moods

I want to finish with one little story to pick up just after where I started in my contribution.

When the dockers were arrested in the early '70s, that was a dispute that started as an inter-union dispute. The Tories and the press are trying to make the miners' strike out to be an inter-union dispute. In the 1970s that dispute was between transport workers and dockers. But when they brought the law in, and the police, and the capitalist courts—that unified our class. That's what led to the official solicitor being brought in and the victory at that time.

Now in an English Electric factory on the East Lancashire road in Liverpool, there was a very good shop stewards' committee at that time. They heard on the radio that the dockers had been arrested and they held a stewards' meeting.

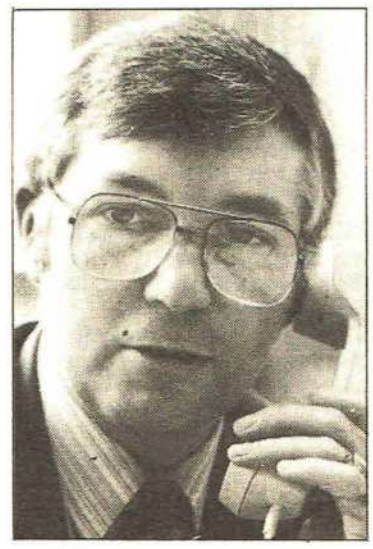
They got into the stewards' room and discussed it, and they said: "Well they won't come out, I don't think we'll get 'em out". But they decided by a majority that whether the workers in that factory would come out or not, they had to call them out.

They came out of the stewards' room and the whole factory was empty. The workers had already gone.

I'd say to you that it may not be this month, it may not be next month; but in the next six to twelve months, even the optimists in this hall will be suprised at the response our class will give—if they get any sort of leadership whatsoever".

USDAW left challenge

BILL CONNOR, national officer for the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allies Workers, and Broad Left candidate for general secretary will be speaking at the BLOC conference. He talked to *Militant* about the background to the election and his ideas for the future.



Bill Connor.

USDAW is not known for its militancy or left wing stance. How has the Broad Left developed and what chance is there of winning the general secretaryship?

The distributive workers union, NUDAW, had a left wing leadership in the 1930s. There was a strong ILP influence. Since USDAW was formed in 1948 there has always been a left grouping. The Broad Left in its present form has emerged over the last seven or eight years.

I came into the union in 1968. By the early 1970s I was heavily involved in the labour movement as Leader of Skelmersdale District Council at the time of the fight against the Housing Finance Act and President of the Trades Council. I became a full-time official in 1971.

Recession in the mid-'70s had the effect of pushing previously inactive women and youth in the union into activity. That in turn is pushing the union to the left. These new activists have enabled us to build the Broad Left as a national force. It's even reflected in the changing political outlook of new officials in the union over the past couple of years.

I think we can take a certain credit for responding to the new trends with open, and democratic organisational methods. There are political differences but we have succeeded in holding the Broad Left together and campaigning for major changes in the union. The last couple of years especially have seen the Broad Left making a real impact at the ADM (annual conference). I am confident we can win this election.

How would your role be different to past right wing general secretaries and what effect would it have on USDAW's role in the wider labour movement?

The union has a very democratic structure. Unfortunately, previous leaderships, most notably Lord Allen, have centralised the union. Local branches, for instance, have no control over their political funds. Members are often unaware of where and when their branch meets.

We need a systematic campaign to encourage the involvement of the members in the union, at all levels. But obviously we have to be offering them something. The bulk of our members are low paid, 62% women, working in bad conditions.

There has been no effective campaign on any of these issues despite the passing of Broad Left policy at successive ADMs. I would see my role not merely as an administrator at central office but as a general secretary seen fighting to implement union policy.

Obviously that approach would affect USDAW's role in the labour movement. For decades it has been a bulwark of the right wing. I would like to see USDAW playing a leading role in the fight against anti-trade union legislation and plans to abolish the 1950 Shops Act which would even further undermine our members' working conditions.

If I'd been general secretary during the miners' strike I would have gone all out to secure solidarity action. A miners' victory over Thatcher would have been a boost for every worker. We can't ignore the fact that trade union struggles now pose political questions. We have got to get rid of the Tories, but we need a Labour government which is really committed to fundamental socialist change.

FROM MONDAY 25 March until Friday, 3 May, branches will be deciding who to nominate for the General Secretary postion.

Voting begins on Monday, 13 May and will continue until Monday 24 June. The final result will be announced on Monday 1 July.

For copies of Bill's nomination leaflet, contact: Mick Wainwright (USDAW Broad Left Secretary), 14 Johnson Road, Blackpool FY4 4DD.

Council stewards combine

A NATIONAL Local Authorities Combine Committee will be launched at a conference in London on 30 March. Potentially it can play a vital role in defence of council jobs and services around the country. JIMMY HOLLINSHEAD, a member of Liverpool city council GMBATU No5 branch committee told *Militant* how it has come about.

IT STARTED from a discussion on our GMB senior reps committee. We had talked about a conference of Local Authority GMBATU branches but it never got off the ground. We decided to be a bit more ambitious and try to pull as many Local Authority unions together as possible.

We decided against restricting its appeal by just basing it on Liverpool and made approaches to the other main LA stewards organistion we knew of, the London Bridge organisation, which unites many of the ratecapped London Borough unions.

I went to a London Bridge Steering Committee meeting in January at County Hall and found that they had very similar ideas. They even had dates and halls propsed. We agreed to go for a national stewards combine and as a result we set up a joint conference arrangements committee.

Jim O'Brien and Ed Hall, chair and secretary of London Bridge, came down to Liverpool at the begining of February and we decided to go for a conference of three delegates per authority on 23 February in Liverpool.

At that conference there were about forty delegates from seventeen authorities. It was decided that in the event of government action against any LA before the planned fuller national conference on 30 March we would all take immediate industrial action in solidarity. A steering committee of one delegate per authority was also set up.

The 30 March national conference will be a fully representative, working conference, based on the numbers of members represented. The co-ordinating committee to be set up will meet monthly during the present campaign and move its venue around the country to areas where there is not an established Stewards committee in order to try to help establish them. In order to respond to events with the necessary speed during this campaign it will have fortnightly executive meetings. That's the problem we face really—a very tricky organisational, even political, problem uniting so many different union and area interests in such a short space of time when things are moving so fast. But the potential is fantastic and I'm sure that all Local Authority workers recognise the strength we have if we work together.



Jimmy Hollinshead.

Schools rocked by student strike

A WAVE of school student strikes and walkouts has spread throughout the country. The press have been quick to blame it on the industrial action by teachers. They have blown up small incidents of violence trying to present a picture of 'rampaging' children let on the loose by 'irresponsible' teachers.

Thatcher has been quick to blame youth violence on the "lack of parental" and "teacher discipline". But it has more to do with the frustration of school students, who know they face no prospect of a real job when they leave school, but rather the dole or industrial conscription onto YTS.

Police have moved in heavily against the school students. In Middlesborough mounted police are patrolling daily. Also, the school student strikes have in some areas been initially 'anti-teacher'. Therefore it is imperative that the LPYS intervene to give the action an organised direction, and point it at the real culprits, the Tories.

Below DENNIS RUDD of Havant LPYS describes how they intervened in a wave of school strikes there, and the battles they still face.

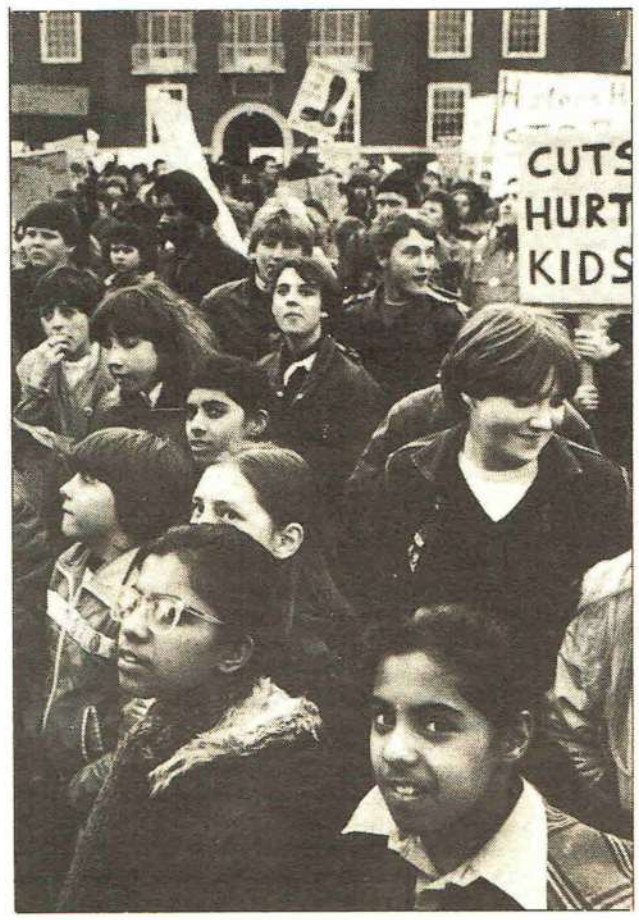


Photo: Militant.

School students join teachers' protest in Barking, East London, in 1982. School students should support the teachers' action today.

THE SERIES of school strikes in the Havant and Portsmouth area were initially a confused action against the teachers, because they feared a potential "threat to examination chances", a fear played upon by the Tory press to throw mud at the teachers.

The LPYS immediately took the initiative. At one of the schools involved there are eight LPYS members. In an emergency leaflet the teachers campaign for better pay was forcefully explained (see leaflet). Many students agreed that the real threat to their education was the Tory's cuts. While opposing the arrest of a number of striking students—one was arrested for 'obstruction' while singing the 'Wizard of Oz'!—the YS received support from the majority of students for opposing the mindless violence of a small minority.

These demands gained support. When the strike later spread to the Bridgemary school in Gosport, from its outset the action was in support of the teachers.

The need for organisation in the fight for student rights is realised. The LPYS are successfully campaigning for school student unions—three of the four striking schools have begun setting them up.

Suspensions

The struggle is far from over however. School student LPYS members have now been suspended from their schools for their part in the campaign.

Unfortunately action against the LPYS campaign has not only come from the school bosses. LPYS member Rob Lewin was called up before the executive of Havant Labour Party and the regional party organiser, to explain the LPYS's action. It was admitted that the LPYS was not doing anything outside Labour Party policy, but the LPYS was still instructed not to get involved with the school issue.

However, with many LPYS members at school—including the 15 students interested in joining the YS since the action began—the LPYS cannot avoid being involved in the action. At Broomfield school, at the LPYS's initiative, 100 students say they want to set up a union. With such a response it is the duty of socialists to intervene.

Fight Coventry closures

THE DECISION of Coventry City Council to close schools met with widespread opposition from parents, staff and in particular, school students. (See last week's *Militant*) Mick Whale spoke to Jayne, Lisa, Mandy, Trudy and Debbie from Binley Park School, one of the school's planned for closure:

"The first we hard of the closure was on the radio. They didn't even have the courtesy to tell us before the rest of Coventry knew.

"You can't print what we think of the council leaders. Councillor Rose (Chairman of the Education Committee) should consult the community, but he wouldn't listen to what people said.

"We don't like fighting against the Labour council, but it has become out of touch. We've all joined the Labour Party and the LPYS to make sure the Labour Party fights for ordinary people.

"The Labour Party needs newer people with fresh ideas if it's going to get into power. Albert Rose says he doesn't want to make it political, but this is a political fight. Now it's school closures, what's it going to be in three years time; hospitals?

"We need a union like the miners. Too many people say that the youth of today are apathetic; we're here to prove we are not."

LPYS demands

AS THE teachers' strike continues, LPYS branches should use the leaflet produced by Portsmouth and Havant branches as a model to intervene in subsequent student protests:

FIGHT THE TORIES NOT THE TEACHERS. Teachers are NOT well paid; they earn less than the average wage for working 50 hours a week. The Tories have kept down teachers' pay and cut back on teachers jobs. The teachers unions are not fighting against you they're fighting for a decent wage.

NUT POLICY IS NOT TO DISRUPT YOUR EXAMS.

Tories have cut millions of pounds from your education. The real threat to your future comes from Tory education cuts. School students must fight with teachers for a future, school students must support the teachers in their fight for a living wage.

Teachers strength lies in their union; SCHOOL STUDENTS NEED A UNION TOO!

The school students' union must demand:

- **★ No victimisation of pupils for striking.**
- **★ Representation on the board of school governors.**
- **★ Right to dress as people want.**
- **★ No corporal punishment.**
- **★ Improved school facilities.**
- **★ Control of school magazine.**
- **★ Opposition to the Youth Training Swindle.**
- **★ £30 per grant for Further Education.**
- **★ A guaranteed job for every school leaver on trade union rates of pay.**
- **★ End police harassment—STOP the arrest of students for just standing on the pavement.**

Violence is counter-productive. Violence threatens the unity of the strike. It gives the authorities the excuse to clamp down. DON'T BE PROVOKED!! No to mindless violence; organise through union action.



YTS—treated like skivvies



Photo: Mark Pinder.

YTS trainees join the YTURC lobby of Parliament on 28 February.

THE YOUTH Trade Union Rights Campaign, backed by the LPYS, is fighting the Tories' plans to force young people onto YTS. Below, an ex-trainee from Yorkshire describes the total lack of training and exploitation on YTS. She spoke to Sally Johnson of Wakefield West LPYS:

I DECIDED to go on YTS for one main reason; I would receive £10 more than I would on Supplementary. It was also a chance to relieve the boredom of unemployment, and there was a lot of pressure from mum to "start doing something with my life". Not to mention the DHSS who said if I didn't get a job or go on a scheme they would cut my benefit from £16.50 to £9.50 per week.

I opted for a catering course (which offered a City and Guilds certificate at the end). I didn't feel very enthusiastic; it was the case of the scheme being the best of a bad lot.

The first two weeks of the scheme were spent in the classroom. The scheme tutor had no qualifications whatsoever, she was merely an ex-kitchen supervisor roped in by the Hotel and Catering Training Board. I was constantly aware of spelling mistakes, etc.

I was to spend my work experience at a large canteen. This entailed me getting up at 6am but luckily transport was provided free. At my interview the supervisor was "all out to impresss", bragging about his clean and organised kitchen. My friend and I were provided with overalls—I use the term loosely as they were tatty and worn, offering no protection at all.

During my first fortnight I became utterly disillusioned especially after the glowing report from the supervisor. I knew enough about cleanliness to realise that the kitchen was just plain mucky and safety regulations were completely ignored.

I slipped on a patch of grease that somebody hadn't bothered to wipe up. Even though this resulted in a sprained wrist I received no apology or even sympathy. In fact I was told NOT to record this accident in my log book. The supervisor was so paranoid about what we actually did write in our log books that it got to the stage where he'd be leaning over our shoulders dictating a complete pack of lies to us.

Every other fortnight the scheme tutor would come and visit us to see how we were getting on. So it was on with the spick and span new overalls, clean hats, etc. The minute she'd gone back to the tatty ones!

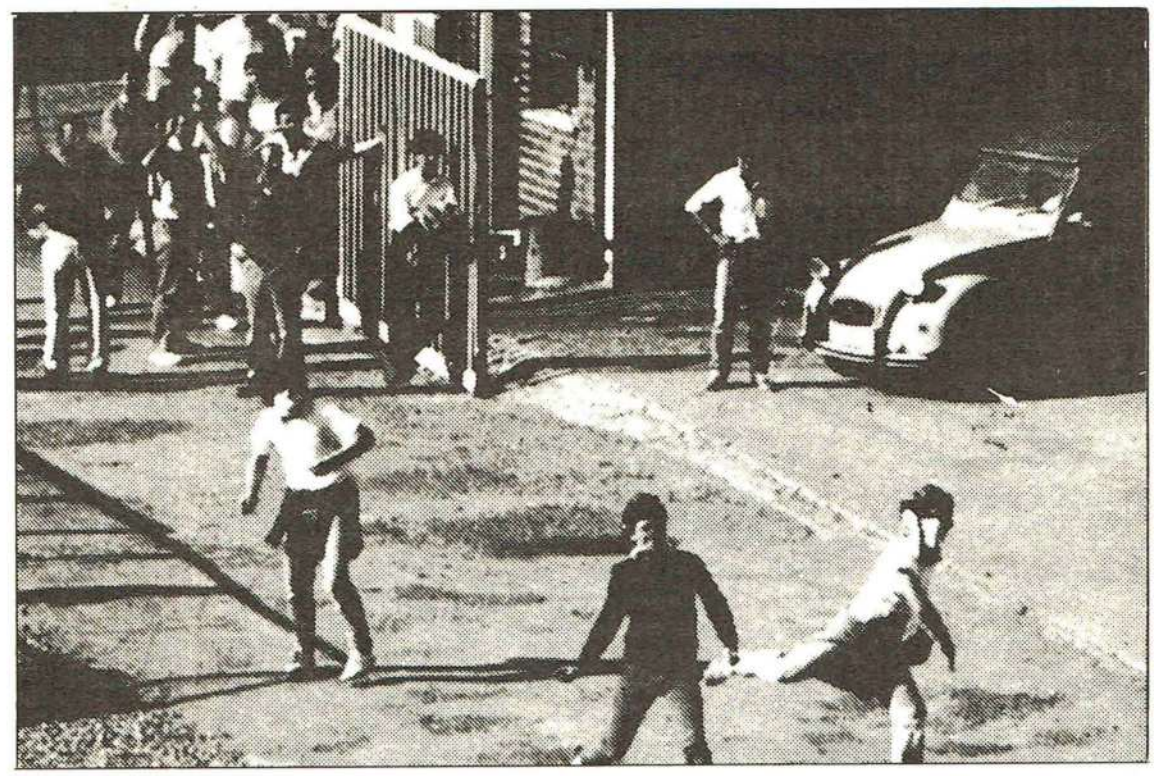
The work I did could hardly be described as giving me any experience whatsoever. Every morning I fried 400 eggs, cleaned two large boilers and mixed a simple trifle mix. In the afternoon yet more cleaning, then off to the toilets for a smoke because they couldn't find anything else for us to do.

We were treated like skivvies. It made me so angry that for £25 a week I was doing more than the chefs who were on a basic wage of £100.

The last straw came when I was firstly told off for not having enough hair covered by my net cap (by a man who'd pick up food from the floor and serve it!). Then I was refused protective shoes that full-time employees were allowed (my feet were always getting scalded by hot water from the boilers).

I don't regret packing it in for one minute. The irony is that on my YTS certificate it would state that I'd had experience in canteen work. I know no more about catering than when I started. But I'm probably highly qualified as a cleaner.

workers
lution



Youth took to the barricades in Bilbao and other cities

2,710,000 by September (20.54%) and by the end of 1985 will probably be near 22%. The figures are the worst in Europe, but they underestimate the true situation. In the South, in Andalucia and Extrendura, rural unemployment has reached a critical point. The spectre of hunger stalks the villages as in the 1930s, causing serious concern in Madrid.

Recently, a political analyst made an extremely significant remark about the explosive conditions in the south. **"We must proceed with caution," he said, "so as not to re-awaken the old demons".**

However, unemployment is nothing new in the south. But now, for the first time jobs are being lost in the industrial heartland of Spain—Catalonia, the Basque Country and Madrid. Unemployment in Bilbao is now 30%.

Flight of capital

The section hardest hit are the youth. At the end of 1983, there were 1,259,000 young people between 16 and 24 officially unemployed. 51.5% of 16 to 19 years old were out of work. In Spain, only 26.3% of the unemployed receive **any** money from the state. The vast majority are reduced to living on handouts from family or friends, and, increasingly, to begging on the streets.

One of the most popular PSOE promises was the creation of 800,000 new jobs. But on the basis of capitalism, there was no way this promise could be carried into practice. Unemployment has inexorably increased.

The PSOE leaders have completely abandoned all thoughts of changing society. Felipe Gonzalez makes no secret of his admiration for capitalism. Not long ago, he told a meeting of Spanish industrialists that capitalism was "the best of all possible social systems."

Gonzalez received polite applause for this from the bosses, but they have not responded by increasing investment. On the contrary. Investment in Spanish industry dropped from 24.14% of Gross Domestic Product in 1973 to 17.86% in 1982, and is still falling. In the last month, Spanish society has been rocked by the scandal of a flight of capital involving prominent diplomats, businessmen, and a member of the royal family. This little affair reveals Spanish capitalism's complete lack of confidence in their future.

The right wing of the Socialist government has leaned over backwards to placate big business. Workers' living standards have been cut; pensions reduced. Profits have soared, particularly for the banks. The so-called "reconversion" of industry will mean wholesale closures, involving the loss of 72,012 jobs directly, and two or three times more indirectly.

In other words, this government is carrying out a policy which the previous capitalist administrations of Suarez and Calvo Sotelo did not dare to do.

Crisis of leadership

IN THE first year of PSOE government there were a number of city-wide and 24-hour general strikes, and the magnificent struggle of the steelworkers of Sagunto and their families which lasted for ten months, and ended in defeat. The effects of that defeat were not long lasting. Almost immediately, there began a long and ferocious battle in the shipyards against closures and redundancies, which threaten the jobs of 40% of the workforce.

A typical example is El Ferrol, in Galicia. The Astano shipyards here are due to lose 3,400 jobs, or 60% of the workforce. This has led to a campaign with demonstrations almost every day. At seven every morning, the 2,000 – 3,000 men turn up at the factory gates whether an action has been planned or not. As in the British miners' strike, the wives of the workers have got active in the dispute. There is now talk about a march from El Ferrol to Madrid.

Backed by a courageous, farsighted leadership, the shipyard workers would be invincible. Unfortunately, the leadership of the Spanish unions lags far behind the fighting spirit of the workers.

The unions in Spain, which reached four million in the two or three years after Franco's death, have all but collapsed in the last period. An optimistic calculation for trade union membership would not exceed 12% of the workers.

The collapse is partly due to mass unemployment, but the main reason is the bitter resentment against the policies of class collaboration which have have been blatantly pursued by both the Socialist UGT and the Communist Workers' Commissions over the last eight years.

From 1979 to 1983 the number of strikes in Spain fell sharply. But over the past two years, the curve has been sharply upwards. The "boomlet" in the world economy has had a certain effect. The rise in the dollar and the expansion of the US market has helped to boost Spanish exports. While the niggardly growth rate of about 2 – 2½% has not been enough to stop the rise in unemployment, there has been a drop in stocks and an improvement in some sectors which has emboldened the workers.

Slowly but surely, the masses are beginning to move back into struggle. In some ways it is like 1976-77, but with one big difference. There is an almost universal distrust towards the leaderships of the workers' organisations.

PSOE at rank-and-file level is largely empty. The Young Socialists, since the expulsion of the Marxist tendency in 1977 – 78 have ceased to exist as a serious force. The YCL has vanished. The "Communist" Party—decimated by a series of splits—is not seen as a serious alternative. The ultra-left sects, which flourished eight or ten years ago, have disappeared.

All parties are in crisis. After the collapse of the old Centre Union of Adolfo Suarez, the ruling class has been unable to get its act together again. The right wing Popular Alliance has not gained support. Attempts to cobble together a new "centre" option have failed.

The main problem of the right wing capitalist parties is that Felipe Gonzalez has stolen their clothes. Profoundly distrustful of the Socialists, the bankers and capitalists have reluctantly concluded this is the best government they can have—for the moment. **Their tactic is to use and discredit the PSOE.** At a certain point, they will pull the rug from under Gonzalez. But the PSOE **may** win the next general elections, due in 1986. Despite the masses' growing disenchantment, the alternative would be even worse!

Even in the Basque Country, the parties are divided. The bourgeois nationalist PNV, which previously appeared virtually monolithic has suffered a serious internal split. Euskadiko Eskerra one of the two radical "left" nationalist parties, is in decline. Its corpulent ex-general secretary, Mario Onoindia has given up politics to dedicate himself to the serious question of gastronomy. Even Herri Batasuna, the political wing of ETA (M) in increasingly in crisis.

The crisis of the bourgeois parties reflects the impasse of capitalism. In spite of themselves, they are compelled to lean for support on the leaders of the workers' organisations. This is not a sign of strength but of extreme weakness. The enormous political power of the Spanish workers was revealed in the unprecedented 10 million votes for PSOE and the magnificent struggles in Sagunto, Gijón. Vigo, El Ferrol, Bilbao, etc.

The workers have shown they are prepared to struggle, but that is not enough to win their aims. The subjective factor—conscious leadership—is decisive. In its absence defeats are inevitable.

The central problem is that the workers have no point of reference either in the political or trade union organisations. The UGT openly supports the government's policy, while the Workers' Commissions limit themselves to a verbal opposition while, in practice, putting the brakes on the movement.

Fighting traditions

This has given rise to a peculiar situation, in which violent outbursts of struggle are accompanied by a rejection, not only of political parties, but also of the unions, whose authority is at an all-time low. The centre of gravity has passed to the workplace organisations, especially the factory committees which generally lead the struggle.

A new feature is the reawakening of the youth, in the first instance the students, after a prolonged apolitical period. In December 5,000 university students tried to set up barricades on the streets of Madrid. The fascists attacked with chains, fists and knives and serious fighting broke out. In February, a student demonstration in Seville was violently broken up by the police.

This reflects a general trend in society. The U-turn of Felipe Gonzales on the question of Spanish membership of NATO has provoked the fury of the youth and the opposition of a considerable section of the PSOE rank-and-file.

In the Basque Country, the national question remains unresolved, as shown by the street demonstrations of youth last Autumn over the extradition of ETA suspects from France. However, the failure of the call for a general strike on the issue shows that workers are tired of the blind alley of terrorism. Many Basque workers, while opposed to the extraditions, refused to strike, aruging that this would be interpreted as support for ETA. Only a few years ago, the strike would have had a big effect.

On the one hand, after eight years, many workers are calling into question the ideas and methods of so-called radical nationalism particularly Herri Batasuna. on the other hand, the class issues are uppermost in the minds of the workers. The nationalist slogans of HB provide no solution to 30% unemployment and the massive closures of industry.

More than ever, Basque workers, and their class brothers and sisters in the rest of Spain, are searching for a revolutionary class alternative. The ideas of marxism, represented by the paper *Nuevo Claridad* and the Basque *Eskera Marxista* meet with an increasingly favourable response from working class activists and young people. The ground is already shaking beneath the feet of the right wing leaders of the PSOE and UGT.

As in Britain, new layers are moving into struggle and drawing revolutionary conclusions. One leader of the shipyard workers in Gijón recently commented to a representative of *Nuevo Claridad*: "The situation here is quite clear. We only have two alternatives: the government's plans or revolution."

This idea will acquire an irresistible force in the comming years in Spain, when the workers and youth will rediscover the marvellous fighting traditions of the past. The Spanish proletariat will once again occupy its rightful place at the head of the international struggle for the socialist transformation of society.

By Alan Woods



Felipe Gonzales with the armed forces—more at home with Generals, Royals and industrialists than with workers.

LETTERS

Militant welcomes letters from readers. Send us your views, comments or criticism. Write to *Militant*, 3/13 Hepscott Road, London. E9 5HB

Council fight

Dear *Militant*,

Unless we stick together and let it be known that we will not tolerate cuts in jobs and services, it could be our last fight. We want better services within our boroughs, not to lose them.

We have an obligation to look after the elderly, sick and handicapped members of our society. They should not just be discarded and treated as useless members of our communities because their facilities are impaired by whatever means, they have the right to look to the fitter and younger members to make certain that they live within our society with dignity and comfort.

Any attack on local government no matter where or in what shape must be attacked and a united front built to combat these blatant attacks on the working class.

Do we honestly have the right to throw away all their lives now to return to Victorian standards where the monied people get even richer and the workers are subservient to the masters?

We should be fighting to go forward not just fighting to stand still.

Yours fraternally
Rose Head
Camden NUPE
(personal capacity)



Photo: Militant

Police size up new equipment at a British Army exhibition. Suitable for more 'community policing'?

Upholding Law and Order?

Dear Comrades,

What a wonderful opportunity for Mrs Thatcher's ego to have another Falklands booster by striking a medal for our wonderful, hard pressed police force. They battled it out for 12 months against Arthur's troops, albeit outnumbering them and well clad with riot shields and big batons (and big wallets).

She could have a march past and take the salute, praising them for their devotion to duty and maybe shed a little tear over the countless muggings, rapes and burglaries that occured while the police were more gainfully employed bringing the working class to its knees.

Yours fraternally
Mrs R McCormick
Liverpool 6

Dear Sir,

On 28 February six policemen raided my home. They busted my door and frame and everyone in our flats was searched. The reasons for the raid were diverse— one policeman said they were looking for a person (who hadn't lived here for two years) while another said an old lady had been mugged.

I have no criminal record and can see no sense or reason for this organised thuggery. Meanwhile I am left with no apology, and damages to my door. I have written to the chief constable and I am awaiting a reply.

Yours faithfully
A Roberts
Liverpool 6

A question of power

Dear Comrades,

The short-sightedness of British capitalism is shown nowhere more clearly than in its squandering of our energy resources. For the purpose of defeating the NUM they are prepared to allow vast reserves of coal to be wasted for ever—if a pit is closed, it is far more expensive to reopen it. Yet in 20 or 30 years Britain's oil and gas resources will be nearly all gone. Without saying a word about the unemployment caused by the pit closure programme, the policy is madness for Britain's long-term energy needs.

The solution to energy problems on a world scale could come from the development of nuclear fusion. Unlike nuclear fission, used in nuclear power stations at the moment, which splits heavy, radioactive elements with the release of much dangerous waste, nuclear fusion uses a form of hydrogen which is perfectly safe and is commonly found in sea water. Nuclear fusion does not leave any radioactive waste. The technical problem is to get enough of the material together under conditions of high heat and density, which is not proving to be easy.

However, the real problem is the tiny resources which are devoted to research into fusion. Also, very similar research is carried out by the USSR, the USA and Britain, as well as other European countries, instead of all these countries co-operating with each other.



Photo: A. Wiard (Report) II

The nuclear fission power industry is dangerous—but provides 'useful' by-products and helps undermine 'subversives' in the coal industry.

A most important point is that the physics involved in nuclear fusion is very similar to the techniques needed to produce the hydrogen bomb. The scientists employed on fusion research worldwide make no secret of their intention to publish any successful results—yet this is the total opposite of what the military chiefs of the East and West want.

In the meantime, coal mines are threatened with closure; old age pensioners die of the cold; and electricity prices climb as the nationalised gas and electricity industries actually cut each others throats instead of working out a sensible energy policy. Capitalism is supposed to be about efficiency, yet a schoolchild of six could see that if oil is 40% dearer than coal then it makes sense for power stations to use coal. Only a blind hatred of the working class can explain the actions of the Coal Board and the government—not efficiency.

Yours fraternally
Matt Miller
Colchester LPYS

Impressions of Liverpool

Dear *Militant*,

Two Swedish comrades visited Liverpool in the aim of writing about the city's struggle against Thatcher for their paper *Offensiv*. While they were here we took them to Sutton Manor pit, a meeting with Liverpool councillors and shop stewards, and to Walton bus depot. Before leaving Britain they sent us this letter:

Before visiting Liverpool we had an interview, in London with Broadgreen's MP, Terry Fields. He really differs from the Swedish MPs we have met and certainly other British MPs. Terry is truly a workers' MP and very popular as we later discovered.

A few weeks ago Swedish T.V. showed a programme about Liverpool where the poverty, unemployment and the bad housing was pointed out. We now know that this is true and that the Labour council together with the trade unions and youth are prepared to fight back against Thatcher to improve conditions for the working class.

During the visit we met and stayed with several members of the Young Socialists. We were impressed by their political awareness and their political activities and that is something that, unfortunately, can't be said about the Swedish (reformist) YS.

The labour movement in Liverpool is today, like the miners, in the forefront of the working-class struggle in Europe. Workers in other parts of Britain are expecting Liverpool to give a lead. Workers all around Europe will follow with great interest the continued struggle in Liverpool.

Yours fraternally
Ake Erikson,
Rodi Ailert
Sweden

Support groups hardened

Colleagues,

At the recent meeting of the Glasgow East End Support Committee we heard five minutes before the start of the meeting the result of the NUM conference. Needless to say we were choked by the announcement that after a year the strike has finished without a victory.

After half an hour the mood changed from disgust and frustration to a realisation of what the future held. Many workers would face attacks by this government and what had developed throughout the strike could continue and would continue to exist and operate after the return to work. A young miner, Jamie Riddle insisted that the EESC must now campaign to help the teachers defeat this government. So it was agreed that our support committee continues to fight to defend the interests of working people in Glasgow's East End.

I can pay no finer tribute to those miners on the Glasgow East End Support Committee except to say I would have been poorer in every way in the last 12 months had I not known them and counted them amongst my friends.

Victory shall be ours!
Eddie Phillips
Glasgow

Dear Comrades,

The media have tried to portray the miners return to work as a complete victory for the government. The atmosphere at Keresly colliery on the day the miners returned totally refutes this, the miners and their wives and girlfriends were joined by many workers from Coventry in jubilant chants of "here we go" The general mood of the workers was that "We'll be ready to fight twice as hard next time round." It was also illustrated how deep the wounds of the strike have gone when one miner's wife shouted at a scab:"Your mother would be turning in her grave if she could see you now". He turned round angry—but you could see he knew it was true.

Fraternally
L Miller
Coventry South West
LPYS

LEFT and RIGHT

A burning issue

After an incident in Arkansas, USA, recently, perhaps the rich won't be so keen on privatisation, especially of the fire service. Businessman Anthony Brazil's £140,000 house caught fire. The fire brigade rushed to the scene - and calmly watched the blaze. One fireman did get out a hose, but used it to wash the fire engine. Meanwhile the house burnt to the ground. The problem? When they got there, the firemen discovered Mr Brazil had not paid his £18 fire insurance annual subscription. No payment, no fire cover.

Glad to be of service

Right wing Labour MP Austin Mitchell returned to his constituency of Grimsby on February 2, he wrote in his diary column in *House*, the magazine for Parliament. He found it deserted: "They (constituents) seem to have stayed at home. Even the *Militant* sellers aren't in the precinct." Gosh it must have been deserted. He wouldn't have found the *Militant* sellers the following Saturday either, as they were in the slammer after being arrested by the police. But why was Austin concerned as to their whereabouts? A clue in his entry for February 10, where he bemoans speaking at Trinity Hall, Cambridge: "When I decide to speak about socialism there's all the abuse. My daughter tells me I don't know enough about it to fill 20 minutes and offers me some back numbers of *Militant* she carries around with her for moments like these."

12 good Tories and true

The Ponting verdict is a real dilemma for Tory MPs. They can't blame the judge, as he usually comes from their class. So it must be the jury, or at least the Tory MP for Halesowen and Stourbridge, John Stokes thinks so. He told the *Sunday Times* (February 17): "What we need is twelve good men and true. We need solid citizens with a collar and tie and a good shave, clean respectable chaps of substance and by that I mean men of property and education. Now anyone can be on a jury."

If you throw enough mud...

'PITMAN'S SON BECOMES FIEND' screamed the frontpage headline in the north east paper, the *Evening Chronicle*. Another tale of woe from the miners' strike you think? But no, the story was in fact about the so-called Fox, the rapist recently sentenced to six life sentences. You see, it's open season on the NUM and a more accurate headline like 'Fox was a labourer' just won't do. So the Fox's deceased father was dragged into it. What next—'Yorkshire Ripper—friend of friend whose uncle's brother-in-law's sister's boyfriend is a miner perhaps?

Marxist Daily Building Fund 1985

Total received since 1 January:

	£		£
Eastern	1840	Scotland West	1338
East Midlands	2273	Southern	1828
Humberside	963	South West	489
London East	2256	Wales East	1269
London West	2813	Wales West	1194
London South East	1371	West Midlands	1157
London South West	1380	Yorkshire	295
Lancashire	300	National	1292
Manchester	634	Total	27615
Merseyside	1685		
Northern	1873	THIS WEEK £5295	
Scotland East	1365		

PREDICTABLY, NOW that the Labour Party is beginning to pull ahead in the opinion polls, the press and TV have come out with more attacks on *Militant* making out that we are on the decline. Our finances show what nonsense this story is.

In 1983 £148,102 was raised by our supporters, In 1984, £311,756 was donated to the Fighting Fund and the Marxist Daily Building Fund combined. Already, since the end of January, over £40,000 has been contributed by our supporters.

Hundreds of miners, who experienced the reality of the picket line have seen the need for a Marxist paper to arm them with a strategy for winning their battles. They have agreed to sell *Militant* and give money towards building it. Workers in other industries are supporting *Militant* because they know how valuable a weapon it is going to be in their fight to defend jobs and services.

A daily paper doesn't fall out of thin air. We need an extra press to print it on, a new paper guillotine, and new typesetting equipment. We need the money to buy these and to write off our existing debts. Our enemies in the Tory press measure our success by the support we get from the labour movement, in particular by the money we raise. Have you played your part by donating a week's income?

Week's income

From the reports so far, many supporters up and down the country have agreed to give a week's income but only a small proportion of this has so far arrived. In the East Midlands, £2,000 has so far come in with other readers also being approached. If your area can match that achievement by the end of March, we will be well on the road to a Daily.

This week, again, miners have been amongst the best contributors. Mostyn Jones from Marine pit in Gwent has given £20 and Staffordshire miner Roy Jones has promised to give £50 by the end of March. Twelve mainly unemployed comrades in East Scotland have pooled together and given £373 and Phil Sharpe, an Inland Revenue worker from Haringey has donated £100.

This week, we have also had a donation of £1,000 from a comrade who inherited a bit of money. We know that many workers never get windfalls like this, but for those who do, what could be a higher priority than a Marxist daily?

This week £5,295 has been sent in, making a total of £27,615 since the first of January.

Now, if the right wing believe their own propaganda that *Militant* is on the decline, that's no skin off our nose—but they had better watch out because we know our supporters will keep up their efforts to establish a daily Marxist paper.

FIGHTING FUND

This week £2,943

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	919		2900
East Midlands	770		2800
Humberside	478		1850
London East	882		3250
London West	613		2150
London South East	721		2000
London South West	368		1600
Lancashire	298		1100
Manchester	584		2750
Merseyside	1224		6000
Northern	711		4900
Scotland East	306		3000
Scotland West	618		3800
Southern	880		5000
South West	599		2000
Wales East	206		2450
Wales West	154		2150
West Midlands	931		4400
Yorkshire	1345		5900
Others	810		10000
Total received	13416		70000

WITH JUST two weeks to go to LPYS National Conference every YS branch should be preparing to make a big donation to the Fighting Fund at the *Militant* Readers' Meeting.

This is always the highlight of the conference, and last year a remarkable total of £8,084 was collected. There's no doubt about which paper the activists in the LPYS support! This year we are aiming to beat last year's figure with a collection of over £10,000. We could reach this if every YS brought just £20 to donate. So start thinking now. Show our critics who has built the YS and who will continue to build it.

Following the success of the brilliant (literally, they were fluorescent yellow!) stickers at the YTURC lobby a new design will be out for conference along with a new Lenin poster to add to those of Marx, Trotsky and Connolly.

Don't let up!

This week's fighting fund total is a slight improvement with £2,943 coming in. But we really need to be raising over £8,000 each week to reach our target of £70,000 by the end of April. We now need a drive over the next seven weeks to see every area pass its own target. Every area is doing better than at this stage last quarter so we are well set to make it.

But don't let up; Seven weeks can pass before you know it! Put your fund raising ideas into practice, carry out all those plans.

Jacqui Mendoza from Bracknell, for example, is an unemployed single parent who has given £50. Three old age pensioners from South Clyde have also sent in cash; J.Stevenson, £3, M.McCarthy, £2 and J.Mullens 50p. Support amongst students is reflected in donations from North Staffordshire Poly, £10 and Kingsway Princeton College, £10. We have even had £5.35 from a supporter in Leeds from University Challenge expenses (reading *Militant*?)

Make it a Militant May Day

***MILITANT* is the best known paper in the Labour Movement. Miners know that *Militant* gave them the maximum, unstinting support throughout the year-long strike.**

Labour Party members know that *Militant* is the best fighter for the socialist ideas the party was founded on, and that *Militant* sellers are amongst the hardest workers at election time when the Tory enemy has to be beaten. There could not be a better time to boost circulation. The paper can be sold anywhere.

Militant is planning a fortnight's sales drive starting with the May Day issue (3 May) and including the issue of 10 May. Our aim—to double sales for these two issues. Can **you** double sales at **your** place of work, or on **your** estate? If you haven't tried selling there, make a start during the May sales campaign.

Sellers in Hastings have written to tell us of how one of them sells; "Papers under her arm, she descends on a housing estate, Broomgrove, and knocks on doors. 'Are you happy with Thatcher,' she asks. Usually the answer is 'no', so she jumps in 'do you want to buy a paper which explains how to get rid of the Tories.' The response has been good; not only have workers brought the paper, but they eagerly discuss Socialism, and have asked how they can involve themselves."

Workplace sales

In every town and city there are still many workplaces where *Militant* is not yet sold. Why should they be deprived of a workers' paper? In the sales campaign sellers can try extra workplace sales, making a special effort towards the pits and council depots. Try extra street or tube and bus station sales. Sellers in Southampton manage to cover their shopping centre six lunchtimes a week.

Special 'Buy *Militant*' posters will be available for the campaign and plenty of new sales leaflets. These can be distributed outside big meetings, or outside factories where new sales are being started.

Our May Day message to all sellers will be "let's spread our message and lift sales to new heights." Encourage regular buyers to become regular sellers. Explain that preparations for a more frequent *Militant*, depend on creating the widest possible circulation now.

Write to us with your plans for the sales drive. Tell us what it was that inspired you to start selling *Militant*. By building sales, you will be building the support and influence of Marxism among the British working class.

By Jeremy Birch

ads

CLASSIFIED: 10p per word, minimum 10 words.
SEMI-DISPLAY: £2 per 2 column centimetres.
All advertisement copy should reach this office by SATURDAY.

BADGES—1" button badges with 20th anniversary slogan 20p each (10p each for orders over 20)—1" button badge—'Militant' on coloured background (white/yellow/green/blue) 20p each. Enamel stud badges—"Militant for Labour and Youth" 75p each. All orders for badges must be accompanied with minimum 25p for p&p.
Cash with order. Cheques made payable to 'Militant' send to 3-13 Hepscott Road, London, E9 5HB.

HISTORIC VIDEO now available. Musselburgh *Militant* Readers' Meeting, 28/2/85. Now available on video featuring: Peter Taaffe, Tony Mulhearn, Joe Owens (NUM). Not to be missed—copies only £10—profits to Fighting Fund. Send money and orders, stating format required to: Peter Gillan, 23 Galt Road, Musselburgh, East Lothian, Scotland.

LESLEY HOLT and LIAQAT MAHOOD send thanks to all the comrades for messages, presents and help during their wedding celebrations.

World Socialist Books booklist available free from: World Socialist Books, 3-13 Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB

New *Militant International Review*
Out now
Price 90p (inc p+p) from World Socialist Books, 3–13 Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB.

ELEANOR LOUISE FRAMPTON (born to Gail and Phil) wishes to thank all *Militant* supporters for their gifts and good wishes and the chance to inherit the socialist future.

LPYS/YTURC public meeting. "YTS—no to industrial conscription". Tuesday 26 March, 7.30pm in Caley Cinema, Edinburgh.
Speakers: Eric Clarke (Scottish Secretary, NUM), Jackie Galbraith (Chair Scottish LPYS), Andrew Skea (Rowntree Mackintosh JCC), Donn McNabe (YTS trainee).

"LIVERPOOL MILITANT Labour" badge with Labour logo, "Black and white youth unite" badge with red Militant logo, 25p each plus 25p minimum p&p. FF cheques payable to P Cooper, 31 Balmoral Road, Fairfield, Liverpool, L6 8NB.

MAKE some Fighting Fund for your Area! Militant "No Slave Labour On YTS" stickers now available. Price: £1.50 for 100—but they must be sold for a donation! Send order to *Militant*, 3-13 Hepscott Rd, London E9. Cheques/Po's made payable to *Militant*.

CASSETTE TAPES with two issues of *Militant* (one each side). Available fortnightly. £3.50 per quarter, £13 for year.
Now available on cassette: all centre page articles from issue 693–721. Send either seven blank C-90 cassettes or £6.30 payable to *Militant* Tapes, 18 Blandford Grove, Woodhouse, Leeds 2. Phone: (0532) 455936.

Militant Meetings

SOUTHAMPTON: Marxist Discussion Group meets every Friday 7.45, 206 Honeysuckle Road, Bassett, Southampton. Tel: 551420 for details of subjects or any further information.

PENRHIWCEIBER: Marxist Discussion Group meets every Monday 7.30pm at the Osborne Hotel, Penrhiwceiber. 18 March—"NUM: Historic Struggle—hard lessons."; 25 March—"Is Russia socialist?"; 1 April—"Which way forward for Labour?"; 15 April—"History of the South Wales Miners Federation". For more details call at 25 Railway Terrace, Penrhiwceiber, or phone Ed Gullyford on Pontypridd 492915.

May Day greetings

SHOW YOUR solidarity with a socialist newspaper. Get your trade union, Labour Party, LPYS, Women's Council, Shop Stewards' Committee or Trades Council organisation to send greetings to *Militant* on the traditional workers' day, May Day.

Rates: 3 col cms £6; 6 col cms £10; 1/16 page £15; 1/8 page £25; 1/4 page £50.

All copy to reach: Circulation Department, *Militant*, 3–13 Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB by Wednesday 24 April.

LABOUR PARTY YOUNG SOCIALISTS

BLACK WORKERS AND THE LABOUR PARTY



Discussion document 35p

COPIES of this discussion document, produced by members of the LPYS from: Andy Bevan, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT.

Industrial Reports

Liverpool stewards' debate-unity vital

WE PRINT here a letter sent to *Militant* by Peter Cresswell, secretary of Liverpool Joint Shop Stewards' Committee and NALGO representative, criticising an article by Ian Lowes (*Militant*, 8 March) on building the JSSC. Ian answers below:

Dear Editor,

I do not doubt Ian Lowes' committment to building working class unity (Militant—8 March) but he has a funny way of arguing for it.

First of all it is completely wrong to imply that anyone who opposes the appointment of Mr S Bond as "Principal Race Relations Advisor" is making "common cause with the Liberals". The Liberals, who have no interest in race relations, will of course, leap on any divisions in the labour movement and seek to exploit them, but it is crass to suggest that that means we should all agree with every utterance of the District Labour Party.

Secondly, Ian is badly informed if he believes that NALGO, NUT and NATFHE officers handed out blank stewards credentials at a meeting of the Joint Stewards' Committee. This is untrue and will, I am sure, be withdrawn.

Thirdly, Ian is wrong that the anti-privatisation strike in 1983 was the "first time ever" that NALGO members had taken strike action. NALGO has a long and honourable record of industrial action in Liverpool, including major strikes of social workers and typists which lasted over six months during the Liberals' years in power.

I am sure that Ian will welcome the record being put straight on these points.

Yours sincerely,
Peter Cresswell
Secretary.



Liverpool demonstration last year. Photo: Dave Sinclair.

TO REPLY to Peter Cresswell's detailed points in the order he writes. Firstly, I did not imply that anyone who opposed the Sam Bond appointment was making common cause with the Liberals.

I said: "The Communist Party has made common cause with the Liberals." Some sincere individuals have been misled by the campaign waged by opponents of the Labour Party on this issue.

Secondly, the *Morning Star* implied that GMBATU were manipulating the AGM in an underhand way. I contrasted the report in the *Morning Star* about credentials being given to G&M stewards at door of the AGM with the fact that other unions had handed out credentials to their members at the door on the occasion of a meeting when they wished to overturn the appointment of Sam Bond. I was incorrect to say the forms were blank. The names were put in by the branch secretary on the door—no different to what the GMBATU did at the AGM.

Joint action

Thirdly, the article should have read: "For the first time ever their (NALGO) members took **joint** strike action." I fully appreciate the struggles that NALGO have been engaged in. The reference was to joint strike action with the manual unions against privatisation. I didn't know *Militant* was going to reprint this article, which was first published a year ago in issue 689. I wish Peter had pointed out the error then.

The whole point of both articles was to emphasise the way *Militant* supporters fight for unity of white collar and manual workers. I stand by that position—it is more vital than ever if we are to resist the Tory attacks on jobs and services.

Undermining

It is unfortunate therefore, that Communist Party members in Liverpool, and the *Morning Star*, should be attempting to undermine Liverpool council's struggle. It is that campaign which has forced me, reluctantly, to take up their distortions and smears in the pages of *Militant*. I would return Peter's compliment—I do not doubt his commitment to Liverpool's cause. But I do wish he would not close his eyes to the very real damage which the Communist Party's hatred of *Militant* is doing to our common cause—the defence of Liverpool's jobs and services.

Yours fraternally,
Ian Lowes
Chair,
Liverpool Council JSSC
(Personal capacity)

TUC Women's conference

THE TUC Women's Conference, held in Southport last week, showed a real determination to take up the struggle against the Tories and win equality for women.

Women trade unionists have been set an example by the magnificent struggle of the miners' wives and the Women's Support Groups. Conference passed a composite resolution acknowledging the valuable role played by the Women's Support Groups and reminding the labour movement of the strength and power of women—which must be effectively mobilised.

Whilst there was a fighting mood amongst delegates there was a general frustration at the inadequacies of most resolutions and also the failure of the Women's Advisory Committee and the General Council in acting on any of the resolutions passed at previous conferences.

The composite resolution passed on equal pay merely called for campaigns in the trade unions on new regulations and to strengthen the law, as did many other resolutions covering other subjects.

Eileen Alexandra, TGWU delegate speaking in the debate on equal pay pointed out that we cannot depend on legislation to fight low pay and for equal pay—that the only way was to unionise and organise.

Harriet Stevens, CPSA, seconding the resolution on mounting a campaign against further cuts in the social security system said that there had already been attacks on social security by the Tory government without a whimper from the TUC.

It is not enough, she said, just to stick hands up in favour of the resolution, there must be a real fight against these attacks.

Opposition was also voiced against the taxing of crèche facilities. Lynne Johnson, BIFU, in moving the resolution, explained that good, respectable child-care facilities are not a 'privilege', they are a right essential to break down the barriers placed before working women.

There was an excellent debate around an emergency resolution put forward by the TUC Women's Advisory Committee calling for a review of the law concerning the rights of young women under 16 in relation to abortion, contraception advice and treatment, because of the Appeal Court ruling in favour of Victoria Gillick. This means that it is illegal for doctors to give contraceptive advice or treatment to girls under 16 without parental consent.

Delegates pointed out the dangers to young girls and the possible return to back-street abortions, unwanted babies and black market sales of contraceptive pills.



Women's TUC conference in Southport. Ella Egan, NUM delegate moves women's support group motion which recieved a standing ovation. Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (Report)

Union action

One delegate pointed out that it was trade union action which stopped the Corrie bill and it would be the same action that would stop Gillick. The resolution was passed unanimously.

At the *Militant* readers' meeting on Thursday night, delegates heard Audrey White, TGWU National Women's Advisory Committee member, and Harriet Stevens, CPSA delegate, both speaking in a personal capacity, outline the *Militant* charter for working women, and the future for the labour and trade union movement.

Unlike the conference itself there was plenty of opportunity here for discussion. The speakers put forward a fighting programme that would lead to a real improvement in the lives of working class women and the class as a whole. £86 was raised for the *Militant* fighting fund.

During the conference 97 delegates representing 31 unions signed a petition protesting at the imprisonment and interrogation of 14 trade unionists and Southern African Labour Education Project members by the Mugabe government in Zimbabwe. This represented one-third of the conference and many more signature would have been obtained but for the intervention of conference stewards who stopped the petition circulating.

By Anne Bannister

Derisory civil service pay offer

THE government have offered civil servants a pay increase which would mean a further cut in their declining living standards and which fails miserably to deal with low pay.

The offer is:

1) 4 per cent for grades with pay scale maximums above £6,650 per annum.

2) £4 per week for grades below £6,650 per annum (ie. the entire clerical and low-paid grades).

3) £3 per week for 16 and 17 year olds.

4) Some minor improvements in allowances.

The unions have claimed increases varying from £15 per week or 15 per cent with £100 minimum wage and in the case of the IRSF (tax union) also reduction in working time.

Since 1980 civil service pay has fallen 25 per cent behind the pay of comparable workers in private industry. Living standards have been cut by 15–20 per cent. Almost the entire membership of the CPSA is low-paid. The offer from the government makes these matters worse.

The unions (CPSA, SCPS, CSU and IRSF) have rejected the offer as divisive and paltry and are now consulting the members on the first part of a programme of industrial action starting with a national one-day strike on 1 April,and continuing with a programme of selective strikes in certain areas of key government departments throughout the month of April.

According to *The Times* on 19 March, the Tories have already warned the unions that they face legal action if they do not comply with the laws on secret ballots. For the CPSA to comply with such an order would mean breaking the rules and policies of their union.

That is why the CPSA is holding a consultative exercise from the 18–28 March following the union's traditional practice of workplace meetings with votes 'for' and 'against' being counted after debates. The votes are then aggregated on a national basis.

The CPSA has a proud democratic tradition and strike action is only taken after membership votes. The threat and possibility of legal action is clearly an attempt by the government to divert attention from their attacks on civil servants' pay and conditions to try and frighten and confuse civil servants into voting against industrial action.

The lack of a real campaign so far from national level must be replaced by a fighting mood and campaign locally. Local representatives must hammer home the arguments why their members must vote for action.

By Kevin Roddy
(CPSA National Executive Committee member, personal capacity
Broad Left Presidential Candidate)

Industrial Reports

Tories harden against teachers' claim

IT SEEMS clear that the government is setting up to try to give teachers a drubbing.

On February 19th Keith Joseph began by withdrawing any hint of extra money for revised contracts. Since then he has carefully cut off any possible roads open to the management panel for a compromise with the teachers. He has torpedoed the management panel's offer of arbitration. He said he will not fund any offer produced by arbitration. And now he is saying that any thoughts of improvement even over two years, would be quite unrealistic.

Pulling the strings

There is no attempt to pretend that the unions must negotiate with management, not the government as in the coal dispute. No, the strings are being pulled in public, even the management panel itself is stultified and impotent.

The government's high-handedness is no accident and should be no surprise. The same infamous policy document, the Ridley Report of 1978, which outlined advance planning to take on the NUM, also dealt with other public sector workers. In it teachers were dumped in 'group C', the catagory viewed as least likely to put up any damaging resistance. For them "wage comparability is rejected, the criteria of wage payments should be the manpower situation in the industry and the vulnerability of the nation to a strike" (*Economist*, 27/5/'78). This was to be in comparison to 'vulnerable' industries, such as gas, water, and electricity, which "have the nation by the jugular" and where "the only feasible option is to pay up".

Teachers in other words were to be reduced to low-paid skivvies. Servants, in the worst sense of the word, to government and industry, not full and equal partners in society.

Well, Sir Keith, and Nicholas Ridley, and Mrs. Thatcher might find their complacency misplaced. Teachers are beginning to discover that they have more muscle than they thought, if they are pushed into using it. And they will not lie down.

Ian G. Hunter
(Secretary, Chester-le-Street NUT)

Defiant in Notts

THERE WAS a mood of defiance at a recent meeting of 200 members of the National Union of Teachers in Nottingham Education Authority.

A speaker on the platform also stated that; "the actions of the chairman of the Labour controlled Nottingham Education Authority in condemning the present NUT strike have nothing to do with the feeling and opinions of the main body of the Labour Party in Notts."

The defiant mood of the meeting was clear, irrespective of the government's treatment of the miners. If anything the miners'struggle has only served to galvanise the union's determination to win and backed up in this case with a ballot showing overwhelming support for the action. Teachers want to regain some of the 34 percent of earnings lost over the past 10 years.

Public meetings and leafletting about the strikes are now being organised to explain the teacher's case. Wider action is being considered alongside other public sector trade unions to combat the government's White Paper freezing pay for the next three years.

By Kevin Slattery.
South Notts NUT.

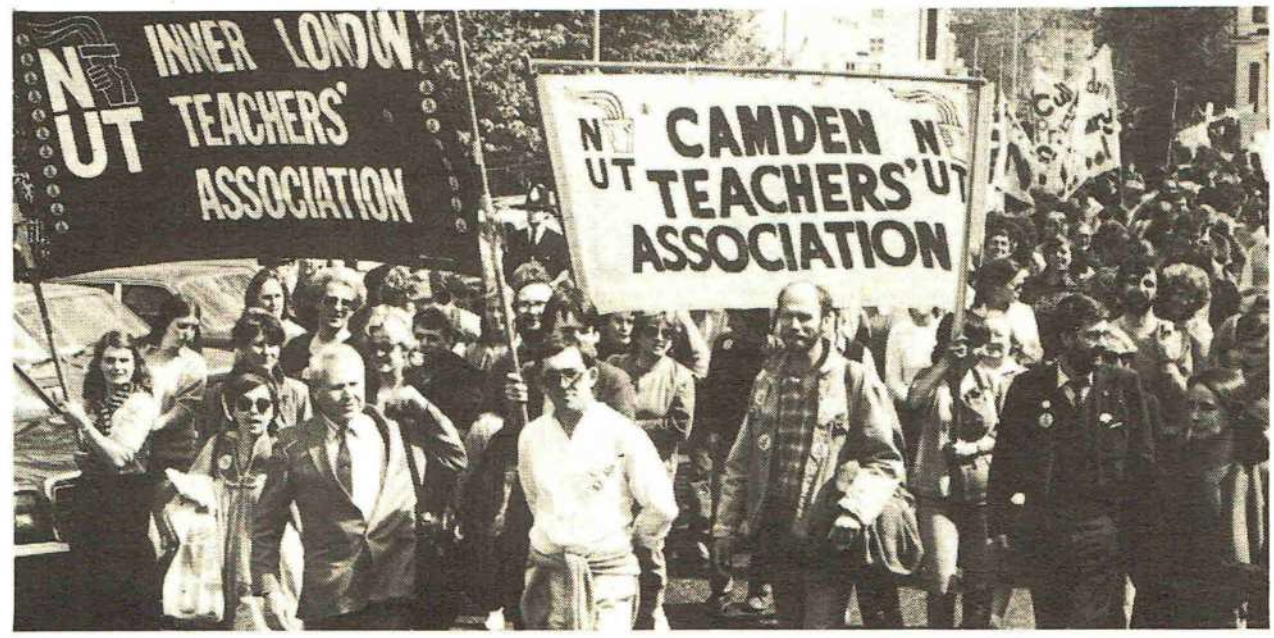


Photo: Stephano Cagnoni (IFL)

Teachers march in London last year during one day strike. The Tories' mood of no compromise will force teachers to extend their present action further.

Cowboy buses threat

BUS DRIVERS and public transport workers face large scale job losses, cuts in wages and worse conditions due to the Tories' Transport Act and White Paper on buses.

Walton Garage on Merseyside could face closure and the loss of 160 workers as routes are put out to tender. **Kenny Peeney** TGWU secretary and secretary of Liverpool Trades Council Transport Committee says: "routes that need a subsidy must be put out to tender. We haven't a chance against these cowboys who will pay only £75 for 44 hours. We will be left with one route starting later and finishing earlier and with less duties. We would need 24 or 30 drivers to operate this route at the least. Our garage would close. Engineers, electricians, ticket audit, cleaners, shunters, inspectors, and drivers would all be on the dole."

"Less buses being bought would affect British Leyland and their suppliers and our members would be on the dole with the other unfortunate 4 million. The travelling public would be left to unscrupulous operators running buses when they want and charging fares they want. Will pensioners' and school children's passes be kept? We will see.

On Merseyside we have had a 14% percent increase in passengers—the first increase for a decade and a labour and trade union success.

The electorate voted with a large majority for this cheap fares policy. The government is prepared to totally disregard this. So much for democracy".

Atomic cleaners out

ANNE BANNISTER, Merseyside spoke to Beatrice Davis, part-time cleaner and Anne Yarnold, cleaning supervisor, who are on strike at the UK Atomic Energy Authority, at Risley, Warrington.

OVER 100 girls have been on strike since 18 February and are picketing after the contract cleaning firm, Exclusive Cleaning and Maintenance Northern Ltd, lowered their wages by 21p per hour and withdrew their four weeks paid holiday per year. With the offer of only one week's paid holiday in 1986, Exclusive Cleaning, which is a subsidiary of the Bren Green Group, obtained a new contract with the UK Atomic Energy Authority in December 1984.

The girls were given 30 minutes to sign the contract, and with no opportunity for discussion or consultation with the union. All the girls signed thinking it was just for their jobs without realising the consequences of the changes in the terms and conditions.

The TGWU put in a wage claim and demand for restoration of holiday entitlement but management made no offers and the girls unanimously decided to take strike action. All the girls received dismissal notices unless they returned to work on the 4 March. The girls stood firm and are still picketing.

Since then management have been sending scabs in to do the cleaning including teenage boys who are paid £3 per hour, double the rate the girls were on.Usually there is a six week wait for security clearance, before working at the Atomic Energy Authority. The girls are getting tremendous support from the local labour movement and over 1,000 office staff at the UKAEA have signed a petition in support.

The girls themselves said: "We are not just fighting for our jobs but so that everybody knows what is happening and so that they can fight before it starts on them." Anybody who can offer support to the girls should join the picket between 5 – 12 every night and send letters of support and dontions to: Branch Secretary, Christine Hunter, 40 Wilkinson Street, Warrington.

Six month strike at Courtaulds

PICTURE A scene from the television news: pickets lining either side of the road scabs driving hurriedly by to cat-calls and jeers with police in attendance.

This is not South Wales or Yorkshire—it's the Courtaulds Cavalcade textile factory at Lurgan in Northern Ireland, where members of the NUTGW have been on strike for six months.

The dispute arose when management transferred several workers from shift to day work with a loss to each man of £25 per week. The union negotiated to reduce the loss. The men were sacked. A further 100 members refused to do their jobs and were laid off. A meeting was held and a ballot of 96 to six decided to continue with the dispute.

A week later the company offered new terms including new shifts and a different bonus system, wiping out 15 years of procedural agreement by dictating the number of shop stewards, and how shop stewards are elected.

None of this was acceptable to the workers. DHSS has refused to pay any social security, claiming the men have work to go to, even though the management have laid them off and sent them their P45s. Two of the pickets have been knocked down by company vehicles. Worst of all members of the other main union at the plant AUEW/TASS are not only crossing the official picket line but also doing work to cover for the strikers.

Closure threat

Management have refused to talk to the men for the last few weeks, but have been sending them individual letters using scabs as postmen . They are now even threatening to close the factory.

Because of the lack of media coverage it is essential that this dispute receives as much publicity as possible.

Messages of support and especially financial assistance should be sent to: Colin Quinn (Convenor) Courtaulds NUTGW, 44 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast.

DHSS overtime ban

FOR THE past seven weeks, staff at DHSS in Greenwich Park have been taking industrial action in order to combat the hours of overtime being worked.

This has resulted in a series of one-day strikes in which the man-hours lost have certainly negated the hours of overtime being worked. This has not yet prompted the management to withdraw their offer of overtime.

Support

Whilst some senior officers have seized this chance to grab more money, the strikers have been well supported with more than 30 (one-third) members taking part. There has also been support from the members of the Greenwich West Office which is in the same building and from members of the UCW, all of whom have refused to cross picket lines.

The strikers feel that there is no justification in this economic climate for the working of overtime which is never more than a short-term solution to the problems of staff shortages and low pay. This present action is also a natural forerunner to the national overtime ban which will have to be adhered to as part of the strategy to obtain a decent wage settlement for CPSA members and other civil servants.

Messages of support and donations to: Branch Secretary, CPSA, DHSS Greenwich Park, London SE10.

By John Barr
(CPSA)

Ravenscraig strikes—stewards off key

IN PAST weeks, two separate disputes involving almost a quarter of the entire workforce have taken place inside Ravenscraig steel works, Motherwell. The victimisation of one worker for allegedly smashing up a lorry resulted in 380 GMBATU members taking strike action, which lasted a week until the man was reinstated.

The second dispute concerned 320 men in the concast and BOS plant (Basic Oxygen Supply), who'd demanded extra money for new working arrangements involving more work—a point conceded by BSC who, however refused to pay for it.

The ISTC stewards recommended a return to work pending talks at national level.

Many socialists will be appalled at the atttitude put forward by stewards who argued that strikes of this nature only "play into the hands of the South Wales plants".

Chauvinism

This "Ravenscraig chauvinism", in other words 'we are more efficient than Llanwern or Port Talbot, and must remain so to ensure Ravenscraig stays open in 1986" has caused many thousands of job losses before.

Recent statements from within the plant that Ravenscraig will not be affected by the closure of Polkemmet colliery is a very dangerous stance for any group of workers to adopt, irrespective of their own anxieties about their jobs.

Clearly the rising strike wave within the plant (six major strikes since the beginning of 1984) is a measure of the mood of the men, a mood which is in the real traditions of Ravenscraig, but one which has been sadly lacking until recently.

By Colin Fox
(Motherwell South LPYS)

Militant

Council workers fight cuts
Pages 4, 5

Prepare council strikes

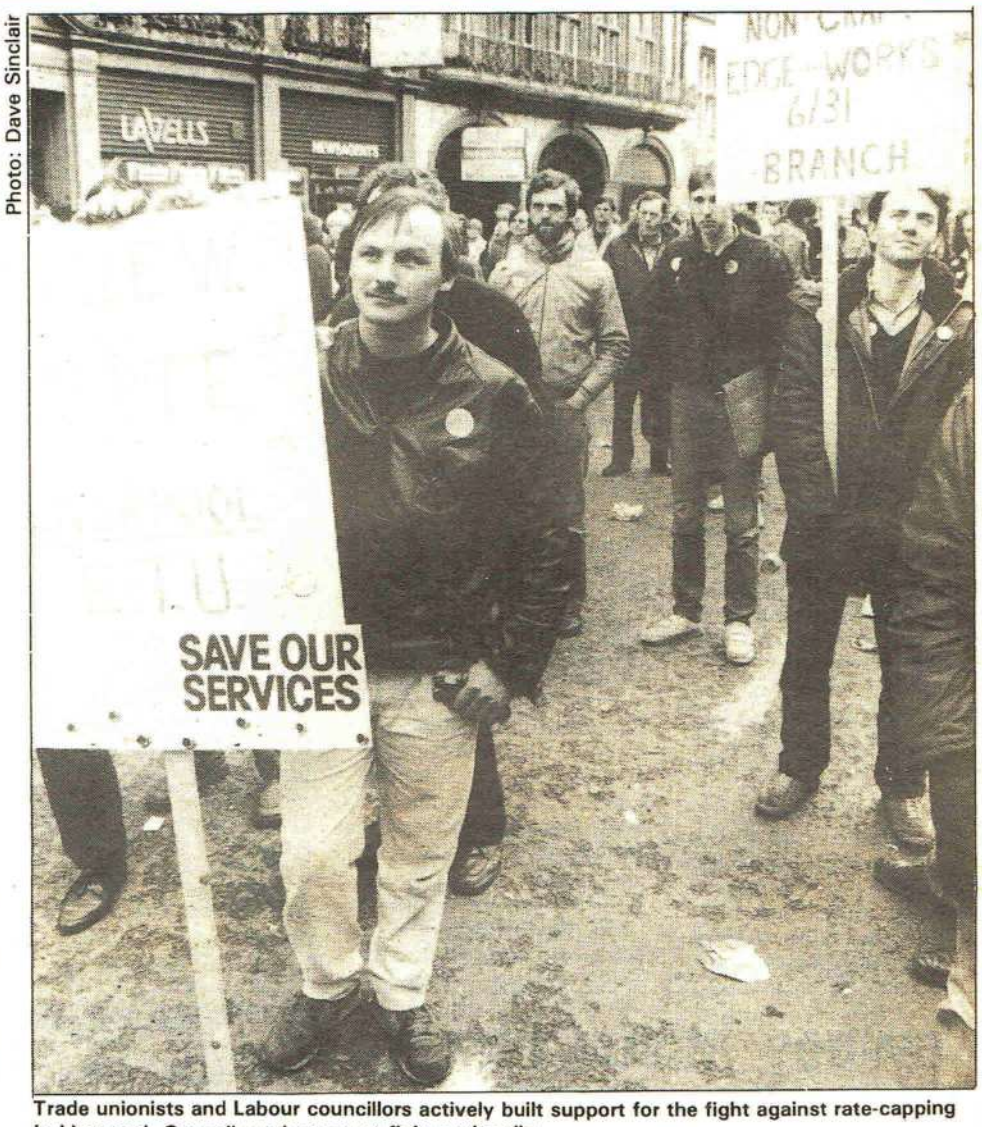


Photo: Dave Sinclair

Trade unionists and Labour councillors actively built support for the fight against rate-capping in Liverpool. Council workers must fight nationally.

THE NEXT few weeks are likely to prove decisive in the campaign against rate-capping. The demonstrations and lobbies of Council meetings on 7 March were marvellous, but now the crunch is coming.

By Nigel Bloch
(Treasurer, Hackney JSSC, personal capacity)

Some Councils such as Liverpool will stand firm and fight all the way, but in others some Labour Councillors are wavering. In Lewisham there is a proposal for a "lean" Budget, with "acceptable" cuts. Other Councils are meeting in the next 10 days to discuss their next move.

We must be clear. There are **no** acceptable cuts in jobs or services. All must be fought. Councillors must stand firm and not fix a rate until all the money taken since 1979 in Rate Support Grant and penalties is returned.

Whatever Councils do, for Council workers there can be no equivocation. A cut for us is not a matter of words of regret, it means we have no job. It is our livelihood at stake.

National action

In Hackney we realise the immediacy of the crisis. We have been told by the Council leadership that there may be no pay from 1 April. The response should be clear and on a national scale. We need an all-out strike of Council workers if the money runs out, if any worker is sacked or if any Councillor is surcharged.

Emergency cover should be provided for essential services, with joint shop stewards committees in the individual boroughs deciding what constitutes an essential, emergency service.

At a meeting of over 500 London Council shop stewards on 19 March, Jim Hollinshead from Liverpool shop stewards' committee, argued that national action was the only way to defeat Tory plans. At the London Bridge stewards meeting, some delegates argued for a work-in instead of a strike. But as Jim and other delegates pointed out, that would not get support from workers in other boroughs.

No one will strike in another Borough, if workers in the Borough directly affected are not on strike. And national industrial action is what is needed, not national work-ins.

To help plan and co-ordinate such national action, a national conference with delegates from all local authorities has been arranged in Liverpool on 30 March.

The battle is now at a crucial stage. We must strike together as one. It is the only way to get victory.

Workers' leaders released

Zimbabwe

THERE HAS been a wave of angry protest internationally at the detention of trade unionists, socialists and members of Prime Minister Mugabe's own party ZANU by Zimbabwean police on 1 March.

The Zimbabwe Trade Unionists Defence Campaign believes that 13 of the detainees, including 12 Zimbabweans, have been released, but two members of the British Labour Party involved with workers' education are still held.

The original detainees included trade unionists fighting for a democratically controlled engineering union in Zimbabwe. For details of the defence campaign and the background to the arrests, see page six.

Sri Lanka

SRI LANKAN trade union leader Vasudeva Nanayakkara, president of the United Federation of Labour and a leader of the NSSP (New Socialist Party) was released on bail on 19 March.

After more than a month in jail, he now faces charges. His "crime" was distributing leaflets. For this he has been set a huge bail sum of 300,000 rupees (£10,000).

Trade unionists in Sri Lanka want to thank union members and socialists worldwide for the support which forced the Jayawardene regime to release Vasudeva on bail. As with the Zimbabwean trade unionists it proves that international protests from workers can help to defend class fighters from repression.



Imprisoned workers' leader Vasudeva Nanayakkara

Miners Amnesty Campaign

THE SCOTTISH area management of the National Coal Board have been the most unyielding so far in their victimisation of miners after the strike.

Chris Herriot, one of 47 miners sacked at Monktonhall colliery reports on the campaign for amnesty in that area: "The Lothian Victimised Miners Association has been set up covering Bilston Glen and Newbattle workshops as well as our pit. About 100 miners have been victimised around here; in our pit they have all been real activists.

"We are producing leaflets to go to union branches and the general public, we will be canvassing for support door-to-door, giving out special posters for windows and fly-posting. We are also getting together car stickers and a petition.

"The LVMA vice chair David Costello made it clear that although we are prepared to meet and discuss with Tories, it's the Tories who have put the miners on the dole. Our campaign will aim to win support from the working class." More on the Miners Amnesty Campaign--page 3.



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Prospects for Spanish

Despair or revo

IN THE early morning of 23 November, without a word of warning, heavily armed Spanish police moved into the Euskalduna shipyards in Bilbao, where for several weeks workers had been fighting the government's plan for "industrial reconversion".

The workers fled into the factory, pursued by police, who were firing machine-guns and brutally assaulting the workers, at least one of whom was hit by bullets. Another received burns on 22% of his body. Others were battered to the ground with truncheons and rifle butts.

The fleeing workers then paused. The word had gone round that a worker—Pablo Gonzalez- had suffered a heart attack. When workers' pleas to the police to let the dying man through went unheeded, the mood underwent a lightning change. The workers turned on the police and fought back with anything which came to hand. Now the "forces of order" had to take their share of cracked skulls and bruised ribs.

With an anger born of desperation, the workers forced a path through the ranks of the police. But Pablo Gonzalez died, a martyr to the struggle for a job and a crust of bread.

Nor was this the only death recorded in the bitter struggle in Spain's shipyards which has already gone on for months. A young lad of 20 years of age was shot and killed when he and others attempted to set up a barricade in the Asturian port of Gijón.

About the same time, police attacked the headquarters of the trade unions in Bilbao, causing serious damage to all of them, with one exception: the Socialist controlled UGT which, mysteriously, was left untouched.

One week later, the provinces of El Ferrol and Vigo were paralysed by a general strike, under the slogan of "Galicia stands up". The day ended with 21 arrests and several workers injured in clashes with the police, including a number savaged by police dogs. No fewer than 200,000 workers participated in demonstrations called by the CP-dominated Workers' Commissions (CCOO) and the nationalist INTG (National Intersindical of Galician Workers).

The demonstrations and strikes—which affected even shops, markets and fishermen—were particularly significant, because Galicia, a very poor, mainly agricultural region, had not been noted for militancy. The right wing Popular Alliance of Manuel Fraga has had its greatest support here.

This radicalisation is linked to the massive unemployment which threatens to drag down the mass of the Spanish workers, even in formerly prosperous areas such as the Basque Country, into a bottomless pit of poverty, and despair.

In 1976, there were only 697,000 unemployed in Spain, which like other Western economies, had benefitted from the post-war boom. The economic reserves built up in this period provided a layer of fat which helped to give the Spanish ruling class a certain room for manoeuvre in carrying through the difficult and dangerous transition from the Franco régime to the present unstable bourgeois "democracy". Even so, many features of the previous regime were retained, under a thin varnish of "parliamentarianism".

After a delay of six years, and a period of profound demoralisation of the working class the pendulum swung sharply to the left with the landslide victory of the Socialist Party (PSOE) in October 1982, with ten million votes and a crushing majority.

As in Greece and France, the Socialist leaders were elected on the slogan of "change". But the social and economic situation they faced was radically different from that in the ramshackle "centre" government of Adolfo Suarez.

The Spanish economy was in chaos. By the end of 1982, unemployment stood at 2,235,000—17.06% of the active population. The Socialist leaders promised 800,000 new jobs, but the hopes of workers and unemployed were soon dashed. The PSOE, which ten years had toyed with radical and even "revolutionary" demagogy, had been taken over by the right wing. Large amounts of money had flowed into party coffers from abroad, through the so-called "Friedrich Ebert Foundation" in Madrid, an extremely shadowy organisation linked to the German SPD and, in the view of many people, to the CIA.

Such aid was clearly not disinterested; it coincided with a sharp turn to the right and the wholesale expulsion of socialists who tried to defend Marxist ideas, which the party itself had proclaimed since its inception.



Armed police attack workers at Euskalduna shipyards Bilbao last November.

Living in a different world

THE RIGHT wing PSOE leaders make Roy Hattersley look like a raving ultra-left. They openly espouse the cause of capitalism, in a way which our home-grown variety usually save up for their retirement days in the House of Lords!

Recently, the magazine *Cambio 16* carried a devastating article on the type of vulgar careerists who have hijacked the Spanish workers' main party.An MP of the right wing AP complained that these Socialists were far worse sticklers for pomp and ceremony than even the former centre: "They are excessively punctillious about protocol—more than the UCD people. The only explanation is that they have an inferiority complex, since they do not form part of the governing classes. They are outsiders who have to continually re-affirm themselves."

One "outsider", the mayor of a village of 20,000 inhabitants in Valencia, insisted on a complete renovation of the town hall with luxury furniture and imported wood which cost the rate-payers 60 million pesetas. In the same province, Socialist voters discovered the humble pursuits of some of their leaders with the news that the president of the Valencian Autonomous Government and other luminaries and their wives had been (temporarily) lost at sea in their yacht.

With a glint of malice, *Cambio 16* comments: "Thousands of Socialists have learnt a great deal. With power, they have discovered five-star restaurants, rest-homes in Leona, ski-resorts, yachting and Mediterranean cruises, carpeted offices, Mercedes and trips abroad. They have put on their ties and taken on bodyguards."

The sight of them flashing past in big limousines, followed by a roaring escort of armed police is now commonplace. The"Socialist" mayor of Zaragoza, however, has gone one better. He insists on travelling to Madrid...by helicopter, which, apart from being illegal, costs all of 90,000 pesetas per hour.

These examples show what happens when leaders of the labour movement escape from the control of the rank and file, acquiring habits and lifestyles which put them in a different, privileged world

The recent "Flick" scandal in West Germany revealed the tip of the iceberg of how big business uses its finances to influence and control labour organisations through the tops. According to West German sources—including a Social Democratic MP—large sums of money from the millionaire Flick were chanelled via the German SPD into PSOE funds. The allegations caused a scandal, eventually brushed under the carpet, mainly because the right wing bourgeois parties were afraid that a thorough investigation would reveal the extent of their involvement in corruption.

PSOE's leadership and especially the Parliamentary group, is entirely remote from the realities of working class life. Many are "recent converts", middle-class upstarts who played no role in the underground struggle against Franco and blatantly jumped on the bandwaggon to get positions of power and high incomes.

Industry destroyed

The most open representatives of the right wing are Boyer, the Finance Minister, Solchaga, the Minister of Industry, and finally Barrionuevo, Minister of the Interior, who, in his youth, was a member of the fascist student organisation.

The son of a right wing Carlist, he is a personal friend of the former Minister of the Interior, Rosón. However, his fervent defence of police repression goes further than his predecessor. His first action on assuming office was to oppose a movement to set up a police trade union. More recently, he has publicly decorated known torturers. Under Barrionuevo, the beatings, arbitrary arrests, tortures and shootings continue apace, particularly in the Basque Country.

But the main anger has been directed against the architects of the so-called "industrial reconversion" policy—Boyer and Solchaga, the dominant influence within the government. Their polices are indistinguishable from Thatcher's, wholesale closure and destruction of industries and communities.

Unemployment reached



Women workers have come to the fore in Spain. Here the mothers of Euskalduna workers say "no surrender"