Militant

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth

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25p

Defend council jobs and services —page five

SCHOOL STRIKE



Photo: by kind permission of the *Glasgow Herald*.

Thousands of Clydeside school students protest in Glasgow 21 March.

20,000 school students in YTS protest

A GENERAL strike swept through Clydeside schools, bringing 20,000 pupils out last week. They gave Thatcher a defiant message—"We're not having YTS job conscription."

By Jackie Galbraith
(Chair Scottish LPYS, personal capacity)

Julie Fletcher, a fourth year at Sacred Heart School said: "The rally was tremendous. If we had more like it we'd really get somewhere. This will be like the miners. I think YTS is slave labour."

The strike on the afternoon of Thursday 21 March was called by the West of Scotland Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign in protest at Tory plans to force school leavers onto the training schemes and the abuses which take place on them. The response was overwhelming. 10,000 students poured into Glasgow city centre for the YTURC rally at the City Halls. Glasgow's *Daily Record* called it the "biggest show of pupil power ever in Britain."

They came from Motherwell and Paisley in double decker buses. They came from all over Glasgow, and many like those from Barrhead High marched into the City behind their own banners.

At the rally speakers and organisers were amazed when contingents of hundreds poured in, greeted with thunderous applause and roars of 'here we go'. Many waved home made banners with slogans like 'No slave labour' and 'What about a future'. Red flags flew all around the hall.

Mary Allen, in her third year at Castlehead High School said: "I'll never go on a YTS. My pal lost all his fingers in an accident last week and he's not getting a penny. I want Thatcher on the dole. This a campaign that everybody will join."

Pupils from Protestant and Catholic schools marched together, shouting against the common enemy—the Tories and their policies. Most couldn't get into the hall and held a mass meeting in George Square, addressed by Labour Party Young Socialist speakers. After the rally students from City Halls marched into the Square singing 'We hate Maggie' and 'Give us a future'.

One old man approached us and said: "You know, after the battle of George Square in 1919 my father said we would rise again. I always believed him and I have seen it today."

It was like 1919 but instead of bonnets and weary faces this time it was chanting youth, cheers and victory songs.

Even at 4.30 pm groups of students were marching into the square. Despite the massive response to the strike call, the rally was well behaved. There was no trouble and no one was arrested.

The next stage in our campaign against compulsory YTS and low wages is a Scottish march and demonstration on Saturday 27 April in Glasgow.

(Full report of campaign and rally, page 3).

Come to Young Socialists conference

See page three for details

BLOC conference report - pages 14,15

Militant

School revolt

THE MAGNIFICENT rally and demonstration of school students in Glasgow against Tory proposals on the YTS showed the explosive hatred for the Tories amongst young people. At the last election Thatcher claimed that the young were voting Tory. Now they are overwhelmingly opposed.

The rally is a total rebuttal to those who have criticised the LPYS as "sectarian and irrelevant". The 10,000 who rallied in Glasgow and the 20,000 in total who answered the YTURC/LPYS strike call have given notice of the coming of a mass socialist youth movement in Britain.

The demonstration and rally must have been one of the greatest in the history of the labour movement. It touched a nerve amongst a section of the working class youth in a way which has not been seen for years. In answer to those who say that many of the students did not know why they were protesting, the rally and demonstration were stridently anti-Tory and anti-Thatcher, opposed to the present form of the YTS and strikingly in favour of the recent struggle of the miners.

We believe that the leaders of the LPYS and YTURC in the West of Scotland deserve the applause of the labour movement. It is therefore with regret that we have to report that already the LPYS has come under ferocious attack from senior figures in the labour movement. The strike has been condemned as "irresponsible and embarrassing" and leading members of the Scottish Executive have threatened Jackie Galbraith, Scottish chairwomen of the LPYS with disciplinary action.

At the Labour Party Scottish Conference, a resolution was passed that condemned the "narrow sectarian nature" of the LPYS in Scotland. Now the LPYS is condemned for leading mass demonstrations.

It is true that the organisers of the strike and rally may have been taken aback by the turnout. They expected between 1,000 to 1,500 people, which would be a reasonable return on 10,000 leaflets in normal circumstances. The organisers can hardly be blamed for the initiatives of the Thatcher-hating school students who built the movement themselves. In fact the organisers deserve credit for the way in which the demonstration was channelled into acceptable forms of protest when the numbers could have overwhelmed them.

Militant is proud of the leaders of YTURC and the LPYS in the West of Scotland. Their lead can save thousands from a life of hopelessness and despair. Better to stand up and fight than give in to a life of apathy, oblivion and even addiction to heroin.

The point should also be made that when the youth riots took place in England in 1981, Clydeside was left untouched. This will not always be the case. Thatcherism has created a powder keg amongst the legions of downtrodden, neglected youth in the housing schemes of Clydeside. The labour movement has the responsibility to ensure that these energies are used constructively. They must be channelled into a fight to change society fundamentally rather than be dissipated in a movement of opposition which is without discipline or direction.

It is right therefore that YTURC has called a further demonstration against the Tories on Saturday 27 April in Glasgow. We wonder what stance the Scottish Executive, and in particular the leaders of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee in Scotland will take to all these matters? SDP MP Robert McLennan has opposed a further demonstration and decried the events of 21 March. Will it be the case that the Scottish Executive, the LCC and others will join the chorus of opposition? Will it remain fine for the youth of Soweto in South Africa to organise school boycotts and tremendous for the youth of Nicaragua to defend the revolution, but "irresponsible and embarrassing" for the youth of Glasgow to protest against the meanness of their lives? Robin Cook MP for Livingston and an advisor to Neil Kinnock, has urged the party to turn to the youth. "Lenin asked to be given the child at 12," he said; "but we may need to settle for the modern studies pupil at 15". Is Robin Cook to be condemned for being "irresponsible and embarrassing"?

There can only be one anwer to these questions. The Scottish Executive must lend its full weight and authority to the YTURC 27 April demonstration. They should applaud the rally of 21 March. This was history in the making. If the youth are old enough to be effected by the ravages of capitalism in decline, they are old enough to protest against it.

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Transport union's attack brings angry response

Rank-and-file trade unionists in the Transport and General Workers' Union, in Wales and throughout Britain, have reacted angrily to the resolution moved by the Welsh TGWU leaders to the Wales Labour Party conference. They are determined to get this bid to expel supporters of *Militant* from the Labour Party removed from the agenda.

If this resolution were passed at the conference, it would mark the most serious attempt to drive Marxists from the Labour Party since the expulsion of the five members of the *Militant* editorial board. Resolutions and letters of protest must be rained down on the Welsh TGWU leaders to convince them to withdraw this witch-hunting motion from the agenda.

The resolution:

"This conference urges the NEC to continue to take appropriate action against the Militant Tendency in line with National Conference decisions.

Conference congratulates those CLPs in Wales which have acted in line with Conference decisions on the Militant Tendency.

Conference recognises that Militant Tendency is not an organisation eligible for membership of the Labour Party and therefore individual members and known supporters of the Militant Tendency are not eligible for membership of the party.

Conference urges all CLPs to take action in line with conference decisions and similar to that already taken by some CLPs in Wales."

THE ATTACK on *Militant* supporters by the Welsh TGWU leaders comes just at the time when TGWU members in Wales are facing wage cuts and redundancies.

Just how remote the region's leadership has become from the shop floor can be shown by the timing of this witch hunt. Later this year our members will be urged to vote in favour of a political fund. In my branch I have been made responsible for organising the campaign, with the objective of also recruiting to the Labour Party. At the very same time, the regional committee are calling for the expulsion of *Militant* supporters like myself from the party!

Already the call has gone out to flood the regional secretary with resolutions opposing the witch-hunt and TGWU branches throughout Wales will be visited to explain the damage this resolution could cause the party.

Resolutions need to be rushed to George Wright, TGWU, Transport House, Cathedral Road, Cardiff.

The motion before Wales LP conference is a disgrace and an insult to many active T&G members and should be withdrawn immediately.

By Keith Edwards
(Secretary, TGWU 4/92 Branch Llangennech, West Wales, personal capacity)

I AM totally disgusted with this resolution calling for a witch-hunt, with all the other problems we have got to sort out.

In the Fords Bridgend plant, several leading shop stewards and TGWU members with branch positions and in the rank and file are supporters of *Militant*.

We will certainly want to know why the regional leadership are hell-bent on this witch-hunt and I will be raising this issue at our next branch meeting so that we can get to the bottom of this.

Frank O'Connor
(Shop Steward Fords Bridgend TGWU 4/6, personal capacity)

Right wing lash out at Militant's growth

WHEN THE five members of the *Militant* Editorial Board were expelled from the Labour Party in 1983, *Militant* warned it would open up the sluice gates for a general attack on the Marxists in the party.

This process has begun, with the expulsion of six *Militant* supporters in Blackburn and the expulsion of young socialist Brychan Davies in Wales. Presently in three constituency Labour Parties *Militant* supporters are being victimised:

★ Paul Shawcroft has been expelled from Mansfield CLP for organising a *Militant* public meeting and selling the paper.

★ Bill Hopwood is threatened with expulsion from Newcastle East CLP after his name appeared on a leaflet advertising a *Militant* public meeting.

★ After moving down from Ayr, *Militant* supporter Dugald McKinnon has been barred from transferring his membership to Newcastle-under-Lyme CLP, effectively being expelled.

Bending the rules

In the latter case, right wing president of Newcastle-under-Lyme CLP Llin Golding told the local newspaper: "The rules of the party do not allow you to be a supporter of *Militant* and the party at the same time".

Yet at the 1982 and 1983 conferences Labour's ranks were assured that action against *Militant* would be 'limited'.



Photo: D Pearson

Anti-Thatcher demonstration in Newcastle on Saturday where *Militant* sellers sold out of papers. Hundreds signed a petition against Bill Hopwood's expulsion. The ranks of the labour movement want to get on with the job of fighting the Tories.

But support for *Militant* is growing.

Paul Shawcroft spoke at a Notts NUM meeting at the Midlands regional Labour Party conference—the response showed he was very welcome.

The conference of Welsh Labour Students re-selected a Marxist leadership, despite organisational methods used against them by the NOLS leadership, backed by Labour Party national agent David Hughes.

It was pointed out at the conference that membership of WLS under its Marxist leadership had grown by 44% in the past year—compared to NOLS nationally which grew by only 2.2%.

Throughout the country, *Militant* supporters are being elected or returned to regional Labour Party executive committees with, in some cases, increased majoritites.

Attack Tories

It is significant that these attacks on *Militant* are limited to small right wing CLPs. The vast majority of Labour activists want nothing to do with witch-hunts when the real task ahead is to roll back the Tory onslaught.

Unfortunately this fact is lost on some sections of the left—notably the Labour Co-ordinating Committee in Scotland and the 'Democratic Left' leadership of the National Organisation of Labour Students—whose perpetual snipings at *Militant* are aiding the right wing. These groups have claimed that *Militant* supporters are 'sectarian, frightening people away' etc. and even that support for Marxism is dwindling.

The LPYS were accused by the LCC of being incapable of building a youth movement. Two weeks later 10,000 youth are on the streets of Glasgow—in a demonstration inspired by the Young Socialists.

By *Militant* reporters



Photo: Mick Carroll

Broad Lefts' strength

Fifteen hundred delegates representing Broad Left groupings in every sizable trade union in the country gathered last Saturday in Manchester for the second national conference of the Broad Left Organising Committee. Derek Hatton, deputy leader of Liverpool City Council (above, right) received the best reception of conference. Speaking after Ken Livingstone, he criticised the GLC's decision to set a rate but warned the government that the fight against council cuts would continue.

Notts NUM 'democracy'

THROUGHOUT THE miners' strike, the right-wing leaders of Notts NUM said that they were the only "democrats" in the NUM. Yet three instances in the recent period show what a load of trash this claim was—

When Pye Hill NUM branch discussed the proposed rule changes in the Notts area rulebook, someone suggested inviting a speaker from the National Executive to explain their position. At this point, the branch committee, including Colin Clarke one of the leading "Working Miners' Committee" men, said they wouldn't agree to this. Even when the men voted to invite an NEC rep, the scabs who run the branch walked out and the meeting was closed.

Secondly, the leadership of the Notts Area NUM have refused the members a ballot over the 50p levy for victimised miners. So much for being democrats and believing in ballots! Perhaps the right-wingers think that the Notts miners might vote in favour of supporting their brothers who have been victimised?

Thirdly, John Liptrott, "Working Miners Committee" man from Sherwood Pit, has started legal action to stop NUM members in Notts who supported the strike from standing for office this year, on the grounds that they haven't paid any subs for 12 months. He obviously realises that with elections coming up this summer, many of the strikers who lost their positions last year stand to win back office after the useless role the scabs played who were voted in last year.

These instances show that as far as the "Working Miners' Committee" and individuals connected with these groups are concerned, "democracy" only has any value when it's in their interests and ballots go out of the window at the earliest opportunity.

By Simon Lawlor
(Nottingham North LPYS)

Terry Fields demands amnesty

THE LABOUR MP for Liverpool Broadgreen, Terry Fields, has praised the magnificent stand of the miners over the past year. "Their courage has rarely been seen amongst other sections of workers", he told a successful public meeting at Litherland Labour Club on 15 March.

Terry went on to demand that the whole labour movement give total support to the current campaign for an amnesty for all sacked miners. "In spite of using every weapon of the state, he declared, the Tories had failed miserably to win what Thatcher had viewed as an 'industrial Falklands'. The strike has had the effect of radicalising a whole layer of working-class youth, particularly young miners."

Youth lobby

Terry praised the success of the recent YTURC lobby of Parliament, contrasting the radicalisation of young miners with the spineless actions of TUC and the Labour leaders. The role of women in the strike, especially the Miners' Wives Support Groups, was of invaluable assistance.

"Rather than be downcast by the end of the miners' strike," Terry said, "workers will be even more encouraged in their own battles by the NUM's struggle; evidence of this could already be found with car workers, teachers, civil servants and Liverpool City Council."

Tina Warbouys, a striking miner's wife from Sherwood, Nottinghamshire thanked all those who had helped and supported the miners and described how difficult it was to sustain the strike in a mainly scab area: "It's not easy to stay out when all that's needed is a short walk up the pit lane." She concluded by saying that women in mining areas are now more politically aware than ever before.

Clyde schools protest walk-out

THE YOUTH Trade Union Rights Campaign called the Glasgow strike at the end of February.

In three weeks they distributed 10,000 leaflets to secondary schools. They called on senior students to strike in protest at Tory YTS plans.

By the Monday they had run out of leaflets, but even schools we didn't leaflet heard about it and came out in support. Groups of pupils sent pickets to other schools and organised school gate meetings. In Cumbernauld one student gave out nine leaflets and the whole school came out.

Some school students like those from Allan Glen in Glasgow took the whole day off on strike and marched to George Square at 9am, five hours before the rally was due to start. When they were approached by police and teachers they stood firm chanting "we shall not be moved". Eventually they were convinced to return to school for the morning. They marched backed singing "We'll be back", and back they were at 2pm.



Photo: Mick Carroll

Jackie Galbraith, Chair, Scottish LPYS.

At the rally Denny Moohan, a sacked young miner from Musselburgh, got the biggest cheer of the day. He said: "First it was the miners, then it was the teachers, now it's your turn. Don't let the Tories get you down. Stand up and fight." Tony Quinn, the Secretary of West of Scotland YTURC posed the question: "Do you know what YTS stands for?" He got the unaminous response from the hall: "Yes, Youth Training Swindle".

The final speaker Tricia Moore, a sixth year school student and a member of Motherwell LPYS, identified in her uniform as one of them, was greeted with chants of "Here we go". She said: Join the LPYS, get organised in your school and get rid of the Tories for good."

Paisley

PAISLEY LPYS report that 11 schools in their area came out. They brought three double deckers with 320 people to the rally, but had to leave over 200 behind. At St Mirrens and St Margarets many teachers supported the strike, and here as elsewhere pupils formed picket lines at the gates.

★ Seventy people set up a YTURC committee for the Paisley area, with three representatives from each school. This is the start of the campaign to get the support of parents, teachers and trade unionists.

★ In **Motherwell**, (Patricia Moore reports), the response was overwhelming. About 1,000 came out. At one of the schools, St Aiden, the headmaster threatened to lock the school from inside to stop the strike. Despite this the vast majority came out and a busload went to the rally.

At my school, Our Lady's High, 600 came out to get on a 53 seater bus, ignoring threats of punishment for the ringleaders. In another school one of the pupils independently led 50 out on strike. Robert Watson, who has since joined the LPYS, said "I've been looking for something like the YS to join for ages".

From the only school we didn't manage to leaflet in the Motherwell area, Garion High, a delegation of students joined the strike and attended the rally. They have since been suspended and the headmaster has said they cannot come back until they have signed a no-strike agreement saying they will never strike again. But the school students have refused to sign the contract.

We're on strike, Sir

THIS DISCUSSION took place between the headmaster and a pupil at one of Thursday's strike schools.

Well Anne can you tell me where you were on Thursday afternoon?
On strike Sir
On strike Anne?
Yes Sir
Do you think that was wise Anne?
Yes Sir.
Anne, have you ever been up before me in the six years you have been at school?
No Sir.
Do you not think this is a terrible blot on your copy book?
No Sir.
Did you organise the strike in this school Anne?
Yes Sir.
Can you give me your word that you won't be involved in anything like this again?
No Sir.
Were you involved in organising the strike in other schools Anne?
Yes Sir.
What schools Anne?
I can't remember Sir.
You were seen outside the secondary school down the road on Tuesday afternoon. Is that right Anne?
Yes Sir.
You do realise you have behaved irresponsibly Anne.
No Sir.
I will have to take some action against you, you realise that?
That's not fair Sir.
Why not?
Well Sir we're fighting for our future. How would you fancy working 40 hours for £26.25 a week? That's what's ahead of me.
Well I think...
Look Sir they paid out £5½ billion to defeat the miners. They've got millions to build Trident and they say they've got no money to give youth decent jobs. The Tories are trying to .....
I can see I'm wasting my time. Away you go back to your class Anne.

Militant national speaking tour

Details—see page 13

Amnesty Appeal

We appeal to all organisations in the labour and trade union movement to assist the Miners' Amnesty Campaign, and demand a full amnesty for all sacked miners and for a Labour government pledged to their reinstatement with full compensation. Sponsor the campaign by sending at least £5 to: Philip White, Miners' Amnesty Campaign, 10 Hermon Road, Caerau, Maesteg, Mid Glamorgan.

Young miners—come to LPYS conference

LIKE MANY other young miners I have drawn many conclusions in the last year. In particular I have seen the need to join an organisation like the LPYS which is fighting for a socialist labour movement. I urge all young miners to attend the LPYS conference at Easter so that we can repay the LPYS for their total support in the strike. All young people should come to the conference to see that there is a future for youth. Don't just sit back moaning! Do something!

Gary Ironmonger
Cortonwood NUM, LPYS National Committee member elect for Yorkshire Region

Labour Party Young Socialists National Conference

April 5 – 8

Winter Gardens, Blackpool

Apply, Andy Bevan, LPYS conference, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT.





Gordon Bennet writes—

I SEE Gum Gum's been at it again. The Bishop of Durham recently felt the sharp edge of the Tory Chairman's tongue (do worms have tongues?) for daring to suggest that the government are on course for a 'police state'.

I think what most upset our Selwyn was that nobody seems to have explained to the Bishop that since 1979 there has been an eleventh commandment —'Thou shalt not criticise the Conservative Party (not now, not ever, got it!)'.

Some of Brother Gummer's fellow parishioners in the Church of the Blessed Margaret weighed in as well.

The most interesting comment came from well known theologian, Mrs Jill Knight MP, who described the bishop as 'an ignorant disaster who believes neither in the concept of Christianity on which most of us have been brought up nor in researching properly the political subjects he takes up.'

Without knowing the bishop or holding a brief for Christianity, I wouldn't know, but if what Mrs Knight says is true then it sounds to me as though he would make an admirable parliamentary candidate for the Conservative Party.

Gum Gum clearly has to kick start his brain before he opens his mouth, he's also a member of the Church of England Synod. With all this going for him we're always guaranteed entertainment as soon as he steps in front of a microphone.

Nevertheless it's rumoured that the Leader has been a little underwhelmed with his perfomance in recent months so we're unlikely to be thrilled with his missing-link mugshot for very much longer. All the more reason then to savour every Gummerism while we can.

The Bishop made the fairly commonplace observation that the Government's policies were divisive and were creating a kind of police state in which the wealthy are protected against an increasing number of poor and dispossessed.

With his usual, incisive, analytical approach, the Thatcherite court jester proclaimed that this was nonsense and 'stupid'. Quite right too.

OK, so you can't travel wherever you like these days if you're a miner; and if you're a member of a trade union, CND, NCCL or Shelter then you could have your home broken into and bugged, your phone tapped and your name on a computer file somewhere. A small price to pay to defend us from the communist cancer with their secret police, surveillance and internal passport system.

I shall miss old Gum Gum.

A struggle which inspired us

THIS LETTER (below) was sent to *Militant* supporters in the West of Scotland from the Netherthird Strike Committee in Ayr, thanking them for their support during the strike. We also print the reply from BOB WYLIE and RONNIE STEVENSON on behalf of West of Scotland *Militant* supporters.

Dear Friends,

It is with sorrow that I write you this final letter to thank you for your continued support during our dispute.

The feeling here is one of sadness at the final outcome as we feel let down badly by most of the trade union movement.

It is very very difficult to find the words that express how we feel about the great assistance you and your workmates and friends have given throughout this strike and without which we could not have survived.

If it is of any interest I would like to tell you that the Women's Support Group intend to continue the work in the future and if you wish to send any donations to them they would be very grateful.

I can't find any more words to suit the occasion so I'll finish by thanking you on behalf of all striking miners who will all have places in their hearts for you and your ilk.

Thank you very much.

Yours sincerely William Hodge

Secretary Netherthird Strike Centre.



Photo: Rick Matthews. (IFL)

Miners and children picket Kilioch colliery in November.

Dear Billy,

We are writing to thank you for your letter of the 4th March. We too are sad about the final outcome of the strike but not at all sad about the struggle of you and your people. We are proud to know you and call you friends.

We had high hopes of complete victory even in November and December but your struggle has been let down by the official leadership of the TUC and the Labour Party. We will continue to fight to change the leadership of the movement to provide it with leaders worthy of the mighty struggle of the miners, a leadership which will fight to the end to construct a socialist society run by working people in their own interests.

We would like to say to all of your people that your struggle has not been in vain. Although it may not seem like it today the history books will say that what this titanic battle gained for the working class can never be taken away.

Hardship

Despite the role of the TUC leadership, the lies of Fleet Street, despite the brutality of the police and the horrors of hardship suffered, 100,000 stayed out for a year. No sneering cowards or hired liars can take that away from us. In our opinion it is a testimony to the will of the best of the working class to fight to change the way things are. For the Tories it was a civil war where only the bullets were missing.

Your struggle has therefore inspired us about our future. Today the Tories, the bosses and Thatcher may be ringing their bells. What you have done means that tomorrow they will be wringing their hands. Their rotten capitalist system is finished. We believe the lot must go. We hope that you will join your forces with ours in the trade unions and Labour Party to fight for socialism.

Hard lessons

Lessons which are learned the hard way are those which are remembered the longest. You will be back and we will be back. They don't know what they have started.

So yes, Billy, it has been bitter. Bitter and hard to take for all of us, but especially for you and your families. We salute you all to a man and woman for you allow us to declare that our time is coming. For that, you too have a very special place in our hearts. We will never forget but neither will we forgive. It's a fight to the finish now.

Ronnie Stevenson, Bob Wylie for West of Scotland *Militant* supporters.

Northumberland miners - learning as they went along

KEVIN MILES looks at how the strike was built in Northumberland by the rank and file miners.

"MORE THAN anything else, this strike has been a great teacher. People have had their eyes opened. We've learnt about the police, the courts and the media. But most importantly we've learnt about leadership, about the failings of our lodge and area officials, and especially, we've learnt how to organise".

These comments by an NUM activist in Northumberland reveal just some of the conclusions born out of 12 months of struggle. A year ago, the "moderate" leadership of the Northumberland NUM were unenthusiastic, to say the least, about the strike. In subsequent months many pickets recalled, with wry amusement, the bold promises of some lodge officials to "lead their men through picket lines". When flying pickets from Durham appeared in the area however "their men" had other ideas.

Out of touch

As the Northumberland coalfield came out on strike to a man, it began to dawn on the official leadership that perhaps they had been a little out of touch with the mood, and almost reluctantly they began to organise the strike. With Northumberland solid, flying pickets were sent elsewhere, particularly to Lancashire. Even at this stage the main impetus of the strike came from new rank and file activists, fresh to the struggle learning as they went along.



Photo: D. Pearson.

Northumberland miners' rally at Amble last year.

Fund raising networks were set up, with miners speaking at meetings and organising collections not only on Tyneside, but in London. Even this activity was initially set in motion against the resistance of some of the area leadership, who argued that it was "beneath the dignity of the proud Northumberland miners to beg for money".

The rank and file understood far more clearly that it wasn't an issue of the indignity of begging, rather an urgent need to turn the enormous fund of support from other workers into financial assistance for the dispute.

Inspiration

As the strike developed, constant discussion took place among the pickets about developments in the strike. "Match of the Day", "Sportsnight" and feature films fell from grace as the most eagerly awaited television programmes became "TV Eye" "Panorama" and "World in Action". Demonstrations and rallies were well attended. Speakers were listened to attentively.

Great inspiration was derived from the speeches of the NUM leaders in particular, miners felt proud to have a President like Scargill who was standing firm in the face of enormous pressure. Ideas raised in his speeches were seized by the pickets; they were eager to translate into action his call for the organisation of solidarity action. And yet there was a feeling that the leadership of area and lodge level was not shaping up to the tasks of putting in to practice the measures proposed by the national leadership.

The officials seemed reluctant to give out information. The propaganda of the NCB was going unanswered locally. The pickets gained the distinct impression that their officials were more concerned with keeping all the strings firmly in their own hands than they were with winning the strike.

(To be continued)

Fight ratecapping—save jobs and services

Build council combine

THE CONFERENCE of local authority shop stewards in Liverpool this weekend promises to be historic.

It will lay the ground work in establishing a national shop stewards' combine in local authority trade unions.

The Tories have cut 110,000 jobs in local government since 1979. On top of this comes rate-capping with a possible threat to 75,000 jobs.

Must fight

Regardless of what the Labour councils decide, for local authority workers there is little choice. Either fight or go to the wall.

Unfortunately, the response of the official leadership of the national trade unions in local authorities has been disappointing. In the last five years local authority workers have felt isolated and seen little choice but to accept the cuts.

Now however the situation has changed. There is a new mood of confidence and willingness to struggle.

The magnificent miners' struggle has inspired workers and transformed the situation. Just as importantly for local authority workers, was the brilliant victory achieved last year by Liverpool City Council. It showed that there was an alternative and that a serious fightback could be waged if the leadership was there.

There is however one crucial difference from last year. The Tories are no longer desperate to prevent a second front alongside the miners.

The maximum pressure must be exerted on every labour councillor to stand firm. But what will decide the day is the unity of purpose and action that can be built amongst the local authority workers themselves.

The conference this weekend of shop stewards from all over the country must first seek to establish a clear strategy for the fight against rate-capping.

The idea has been raised in some parts of London that the unions should 'work on' if their authority runs out of money through refusing to set a rate. This is fraught with danger.

Solidarity

How can you possibly ask other workers to take solidarity action which would be crucial of the govenment is to be defeated, when you are still working? Without solidarity strike aciton the authority would be isolated and as no 'action' (be it a strike or otherwise) can stand still forever then inevitably support would begin to crumble amongst the workforce.

Along with adopting a clear strategy of all-out industrial action when local authority workers or councils face the crunch, the conference must also take firm steps to put it into effect through the formation of a genuine local authorities shop stewards' combine. Only a beginning can presently be made. A shop steward's movement, with authority to convene and organise national industrial action to defend jobs and services, can only be built by a campaign to win the support of local authority workers across the country. That campaign must be paramount for the conference discussions.

Success

The miners' strike has shown that you cannot take support for granted. The main reason for the success in Liverpool last year was the campaign that was mounted, taking th arguments to every office, every depot, every factory and workplace, to every tenants' association and every estate.

But the struggle cannot be left at rank and file level. The events of the past year have shown that rank and file activity is simply not enough—national leadership is decisive. Again, again and again we must turn our attention back to the struggle to transform the trade unions at every level once more into fighting organisations of the working class. The development of a shop steward's movement will play a major role in this campaign.

By Nick Toms



Liverpool council leader John Hamilton speaks to the mass demonstration in support of Labour's stand, 7 March.
Photo: Dave Sinclair

Liverpool faces Tory offensive

"Hell hath no fury like a Tory scorned". Although an injustice is done to Shakespeare this aptly sums up Liverpool's situation.

Still smarting from last year's defeat, the Tory government are now shaping up for a direct confrontation with Liverpool.

Unfortunately for them other Labour local authorities are taking "the Liverpool road" and are refusing at this stage to set a rate.

Nevertheless it is clear from the attacks of Patrick Jenkin and the daily bombardment in the local rags that Liverpool is regarded as the "main enemy within".

Acting in collusion with the local press and media the Tories and Liverpool's Liberals have launched a blitz of lies and misinformation.

Pygmies

Even Patrick Jenkin had to spend three full days in Liverpool covering the Budget day on 7 March, no doubt in an attempt to bolster the political pygmies who parade as local representatives.

Unfortunately the master himself could only provide, at the end of three days, the announcement that the Tate Art Gallery would receive a grant of £5 million—hardly a dazzling example.

The media has attempted to undermine the authority of the leaders of the labour movement by individual character assassination.

Attempts to answer this torrent of lies and abuse are consistently made but even where the material sees the light of day it is normally on pages 6, 7, or 8.

Matters have become so bad that Radio City threatened to axe a programme because it was regarded as being too biased towards the City Council.

As with the miners this campaign is not accidental. The stakes for the capitalist class are too high. Given the economic crisis they must have a complete monopoly on communication which is a vital weapon in the battle between the classes.

'Phoney war'

This however is only the "phoney" war. The strategy of the Tories seems to be that pressure will be applied to all local councils up to 31 March at which stage a budget should be set.

In this period threats of withdrawal of grants or court action, surcharge and disqualification will all be raised.

The hope of the Tories is that under this pressure the united front will crack, perhaps leaving two or three councils who are prepared to fight on.

At this stage it is probable, given the speeches of Jenkin, that they will then resort to the District Auditor and the courts.

Strike action

If the court takes action against individual councillors it must be met with immediate strike action.

At this stage the role of the national leadership of the Labour Party and the trade unions will also be of crucial value.

The decisions of the Labour Party conference were quite clear on this matter, in stating: "Conference supports any councils which are forced to break the law as a result of the Tory government's policies". In an unequivocal manner the national leadership must give support to the stand of local councils and help to defend jobs and services.

By Dave Cotterrill

According to the *Liverpool Star*, a poll has revealed that 90% of Liverpudlians think that the government doesn't care about the people of Merseyside.

Southwark unions' pledge

THE FOLLOWING letter was sent on 22 March to all Labour Councillors by R. Matcham, Chair of the Southwark Trade union Joint Co-ordinating Committee, representing EETPU, NUPE, UCATT, GMBATU, NALGO and TGWU.

Dear Councillor,

We write on behalf of all Southwark Council Unions to urge you to continue to stand firm against the Rates Act, to refuse to set a Tory rate, and to refuse to comply with this evil legislation, intended to destroy our jobs and services over the next four years and to eliminate local democracy. We are convinced that resolute non-compliance now is the only effective way of defending this Borough and protecting our members' interests.

All our unions have already pledged their support for Councillors who refuse to comply with Patrick Jenkin's vicious legislation. With the law being manipulated ever more blatantly to crush resistance to the Rates Act and to intimidate working people and their elected representatives, we recognise that pressure is mounting on you individually.

The TUJCC is therefore recommending that all Council Unions now commit themselves, through their normal democratic procedures, to the following joint undertaking: that if any Southwark Councillor is legally penalised for refusing to set a rate, we will provide financial support and will take whatever industrial action is necessary to defend you. We are confident that this call will be overwhelmingly endorsed.

Our message is therefore: stand firm and you will have all the support you need.

Yours in comradeship
R. Matcham
Chair
TUJCC

Photo: Paul Traynor



On the Town Hall picket in Southwark, 6 March.

London councils' round-up

IT SEEMS probable that most of the London rate-capped authorities will end the financial year on 31 March still not having set a rate. Most councils are meeting after we go to press this week, but reports indicate that Hackney, Islington, Southwark, Greenwich and Haringey will not set a rate this week.

Lewisham is much more doubtful, with the Labour Group meeting every night last week and it seems posible that they will comply. It is uncertain yet what will happen in Lambeth and Camden, where there are small Labour majorities.

Black history

Passive resistance or radical struggle?



Linda Douglas Reviews *Black History for Beginners* by Denise Dennis and Susan Willmarth.

THIS IS the latest in a series of beginner books that have been designed to wet the readers' appetite for political subjects.

It starts off by explaining what black history is; black history is something that has always been excluded from school history books. It is the history of black people not just in Africa but of blacks throughout the world, struggling for equality and freedom. Most of the battles blacks have faced against discrimination and for equal rights have been fought in the USA and this is where the book concentrates.

We are told how the slave trade was first started in 1441 by a Portuguese Prince called Henry the Navigator.

Portugal dominated the African trade market in this area for the next century, including the slave trade. By 1460 nearly 600 slaves were entering Portugal annually and in Lisbon blacks outnumbered the whites.

Fight for rights

By the 1700's when most slaves were taken direct to America black slaves and poor whites were uniting in the fight for better rights and conditions. The book explains that since then, the two groups have been divided by setting them in competion for the same jobs and educational opportunities. The book forgets to mention who set these people against one another—the ruling class.

The book goes through very briefly, all the most famous slave revolts and how slaves eventually won their 'freedom' with the help of Quakers and other philanthropic whites including the Republican Party anti-slavery platform. Lincoln didn't sign the emancipation proclamation until 1863, two years into the American Civil War, and the main reason behind him signing was to encourage the newly freed blacks to fight for the Union.

Constitution

After the Union had won the civil war the 13th Amendment to the American constitution was passed, abolishing slavery completely after 250 years. The important thing to remember here is that if the black slaves had not constantly been fighting back against slavery the 13th Amendment would never have been passed.

This book definitely starts to go downhill towards the end as the authors' own personal pacifist views start to show through.

The major movements of blacks between the 1920s and 1950s including the Marcus Garvey back to Africa movement and blacks organising in the unions aren't dealt with much. Instead blacks fighting back with 'brain power' and going to universities are given more importance.

The end of the book concentrates on the Martin Luther King movement—again only giving the Black Panthers organisation and Malcolm X enough of a mention to discredit them—something they do not deserve. Malcolm X and the Black Panthers encouraged many black youth in the ghettos to fight back against them becoming lumpen and turning to crime.

Now in the 1950s and 60s we see the period of boycotts, sit-ins, freedom rides and mass marches, the authors make it quite clear that they see this kind of peaceful persuasion as the only means of eventually liberating blacks completely.

Profit system

They forget to mention that both MLK and Malcolm X spoke of towards the end of their lives, of blacks and whites uniting to end the profit system that is the root of racism. They had come to the conclusion that many blacks are coming to today, but this side of their teachings are deliberately hidden from history.

This book does encourage you to read on in this subject, but you do get the impression that it wants you to carry on reading in only one direction. The less radical side of black history.



Between two and three thousand demonstrated in Manchester on 23 March against the racist deportation of Manda Kunda, Kamal Kumar and others. Photo: Mick Carroll



Profits from disease

THE TORIES' proposals on the use of non-branded (generic) drugs in the NHS are predictably meeting with strong opposition. The major drug companies are worried that their monopoly of the NHS market could be threatened by cheaper imported drugs.

The Tories are not interested in improving the Health Service, only in cutting costs. Non-branded drugs may be cheaper but controls and standards in their production, often in other countries would be difficult to maintain. In any case the exploitation of the Health Service by the multinationals would only be transferred from one group to another.

As the only real alternative, socialists have demanded the nationalisation of the drug companies to carry out research and provide cheap drugs to meet the needs of the NHS and the population as a whole.

But it is also worth asking how drugs are used in medicine. Neville Hodgkinson, author of *Will to be Well* reviewed in *The Guardian* (8 February) argued that the big drug companies are interested in perpetuating the use of some drugs to keep up their profits instead of research into the causes of the disease in the first place. Many drugs have an active ingredient which relieves the symptoms of the disease for a while, until the disease itself becomes more acute.

For example, drugs which control arthritis relieve the pain caused by the extra wear on the joints. But the pain has a practical aspect in stopping over-use of the joints and allowing the bloodstream to carry away the waste and debris caused by wear and this pain 'alarm' can be suppressed by drugs.

Of course many arthritis sufferers are thankful for pain-relief—but widespread use of drugs overshadows research into the causes of the disease and the need to develop artificial joints, etc.

Even worse, the long-term use of some drugs can lead to other conditions which require further drug treatment themselves—all very healthy for the profits of the drug companies.

Neville Hodgkinson argues rightly that some doctors have depended too heavily on the drugs industry instead of looking at the real causes of disease. He concludes that these causes are completely 'internal' and that it is our own "troubled thoughts, feelings and actions which create the fertile bodily territory where illness can enter and flourish" This is totally unsatisfactory to millions of people who need medical care.

Undoubtedly there is a close connection between mental well-being and physical health, but as Hodgkinson himself points out there is a great need to establish the real causes of disease instead of depending on the treatment of symptoms with drugs. This will need a drastic increase in medical research, in a direction not steered by the drug companies' desire for profits. It must also be part of a massively expanded health service now under threat from Tory policies and which increasingly can't be afforded by the capitalist system.

By Ben Eastop

Threat to homeless centres

THE GOVERNMENT'S decision to close all 23 resettlement centres for the homeless as well as DHSS re-establishment centres is a brutal and callous attack on those most in need.

These centres cater for the long-term unemployed and the homeless, which have increased sharply in recent years. The resettlement centres nationally cope with 2,000 cases of acute housing need at any one time. They are the only places obliged by law to give shelter to the homeless and penniless. The social security Minister, Tony Newton, wants charities or private companies to take over their role.

The re-establishment centres, which provide training and wide ranging counselling and advice for the long-term unemployed are to close despite the fact that the MSC has recently announced that its 29 skill centres are to close also. Yet the government wants the MSC to take on training at present done by re-establishment centres without any extra resources!

The first eight centres to close are in Brighton, Derby, Liverpool, Plawsworth, Co. Durham, Manchester, Bristol (Winterbourne) and Bridgend, South Wales (Stormy Down).

The re-establisment centre at Field Lane, Fazakerly, Merseyside has a six-month waiting list of applicants for its courses and an order-book for toys and furniture equivalent to five months production. Clinics and hospitals which are the main customers are desperately short of cash and the centre is obviously irreplaceable.



Appalling housing conditions in Liverpool—homelessness is on the increase.

Unemployed

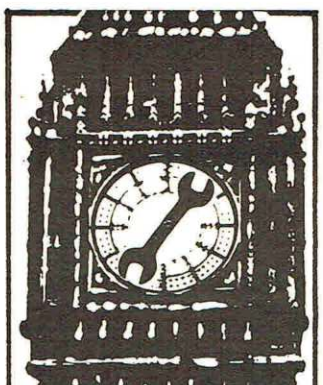
Formerly, these centres tended to cater for the workshy or people with alcoholic problems but with the great increase in numbers of unemployed in recent years this is no longer the case. Over the past few years the unemployed have been applying directly for the courses themselves, increasing the demand which comes normally from social services, the probation service and the police.

The re-settlement centre, with 57 beds has over the past two years provided nearly 3,000 men with accomodation. The kind of alternative to the centre which its clients could face in the future is the typical "doss-house"—privately owned bed and breakfast establishments which have four to six men in a room.

The 25 workers at the centre who are menbers of the CPSA, the SCPS and the CSU, have skills and experience built up over years and like all who use the centre are shocked and angry at the mindless destruction of the government's proposals. They are determined to do everything possible to save the centre and welcome contact from other centres and messages of support from fellow trade-unionists and Labour Parties.

Please contact: Walter Yates (SCPS), Pauline Newman (CPSA), Arthur Evans (CSU), (Phone 051-525-3255) Joint Trade Union Committee, Resettlement Unit and Centre for Re-establishment Courses, Field Lane, Liverpool L10 0AQ.

By Jim McGinley
(Knowsley North Labour Party)



Out of order

THE TORIES were quick to start shouting about getting a 'task force' to deal with football hooliganism. But you never hear them talking with such immediacy about setting up a task force to deal with youth unemployment.

Leaving aside those on YTS, there are still 237,000 16–17 years unemployed—and that's the official figure. What young people think of the Tories was best summed up for me by a piece of graffitti in Coventry during the 1983 election. It said: "Vote Tory, retire at 16".

All the Tories could come up with to deal with youth unemployment in the budget was a massive expansion of YTS—they want to extend the pool of cheap labour to be exploited by the bosses, which in turn threatens real jobs. Why employ a worker on £80–£100 a week when you can have an endless supply of YTS trainees for only £26? Real apprenticeships have been slashed since the introduction of YTS.

Young workers are now in a more precarious position since the budget with the unfair dismissal clauses extended to two years. Youth aged 20 can now be replaced before they reach two years employment by 'cheaper' school-leavers.

The unions must organise YTS trainees and demand the minimum trade union rate for them, £55. When I raised this in Parliament after the budget last week one Tory MP waxed lyrical about the 'solution' to the fall in apprenticeships dreamed up by the right-wing EETPU leadership. They have increased the number of apprenticeships in their industry—by cutting apprentices' wages!

I replied that a far better example for the trade unions to follow was that of the unions at Massey Ferguson, who won a £74 a week wage for trainees with a guaranteed job at the end of their scheme.

The Tories claim that by driving down wages, more jobs will be created. This is gibberish. Since the Tories came to power young people's wages have fallen by 8% for boys and 12% for girls. Yet youth unemployment has tripled.

Even using the Tories' own logic their sums do not add up. The best solution to their latest budget, as I called on Parliament to do, was to reject it, call on the Chancellor to resign and take the rest of the government with him.

By Dave Nellist MP

Why trouble flared at Luton

Millwall fans speak out

THE LAW and order brigade lost no time in demanding 'action to stop football violence' after the crowd trouble at the Luton Millwall FA Cup quarter final last week.

Two *Militant* supporters, John Bryan and Bob Law, have both supported Millwall for over twenty years. They were at the Luton match and give their view of what happened:

The Luton match was the high point of the season. People were borrowing the money to get there right up 'till the last minute. People at work were swopping shifts to get there.

Luton was packed out with Millwall supporters. When we got to the section of the ground for away supporters the streets were jammed with Millwall fans desperately trying to get in.

Only three out of the five turnstiles were open. There was hardly any movement into the ground and the crush got worse and worse. The mood of the crowd was getting angry and frustrated. Some gave up and went into the Luton section.

There were 8,000 Millwall fans packed into space for 5,000. There was scuffling amongst Millwall fans because people couldn't see the match. Others climbed out of the section to avoid the crush, onto the pitch. That was how the pitch got 'invaded'. People were getting crushed.

The ref took the teams off, but the police couldn't force the fans back in the Millwall end, so they were spread throughout the ground, and trouble started between rival supporters.

At the end of the game this led to a pitched battle with police as Millwall fans tried to get across to join up with the others. The police were taken by surprise when they sent the dogs in and the fans chased them back.

The police eventually cleared the ground but fights raged in and around the ground for a good while after. What everyone had hoped was going to be a great night out had turned into a nightmare.

The match should definitely have been made all-ticket. Watford were going to make it all-ticket, and the police wanted it all-ticket. The Luton authorities just did not make adequate provision for the game. Perhaps Luton directors thought they'd make more money by packing people in. They've got no particular loyalty to Luton—they're trying everything to move to Milton Keynes.

The papers are all saying football fans should be 'caged like animals'. The truth is fans were treated like animals, crushed into a totally inadequate space.

There was none of this trouble when we played and beat Chelsea or when we played Leicester City.

Now the press are trying to blame Millwall Football Club for the violence. Calls have been made for the club to be closed down.

Most Millwall fans come from the old docklands and the estates of Southwark and Lewisham. The closing of the docks ripped the heart out of our area. Southwark is in the top ten of deprived boroughs in the country and we're now in the grip of a heroin epidemic.

But the poverty and deprivation in the area goes back as long as the bother Millwall has had in the past—right back to the 1930s.

Scapegoat

We've never had much in this part of London. Its an unfashionable, run-down, tough part of London. To make a football club the scapegoat for what is really the product of years of decline and neglect by successive governments is the height of hypocrisy.

All the anger, all the boredom, all the frustrated energy of working class youth gets released in football. For a large majority it is the highlight of the week, especially if their team looks like winning something. Their hopes and ambitions, stomped on in their daily lives by capitalism, can be pinned on their team, their mates—even winning the cup.

The inevitable result is the sort of violence that happened in Luton. It was more of a mini-inner-city riot than football violence.

The people who suffered the violence or had their house or shops smashed naturally want it stopped. But harsh sentences, or closing grounds, or identity cards won't stop the violence— it would only appear elsewhere.

Where are the policies to channel the energies, the enthusiasm, the passion of working class youth? Capitalism has nothing to offer. Socialists have a duty to channel these youth from fighting each other or wildly lashing out in all directions, into fighting for something useful and beneficial for themselves and society.





Above, John Bryan and his daughter Sonja at Millwall when they played Bradford City before 10,000 spectators. There was no trouble despite the heavy police presence (right)

Billy Bragg on tour

THOUSANDS OF young people are turning out to Billy Bragg's concert tour in support of the Labour Party Jobs and Industry Campaign.

At the Sheffield gig 1500 youth packed into the hall. The mood was uncompromising.

To cheers Billy told the crowd: "This concert proves that those who thought there would be no more political concerts with the end of the miners are wrong. The end of the strike is not the end of the struggle."

Labour MPs present were applauded, although they didn't speak. When Billy mentioned *Militant* there were cheers.



Photo: Militant

Billy Bragg.

When he said Niel Kinnock was going to play the trumpet, there were cries of "Scab". But Billy said: "But he couldn't because he's broken his leg—he fell of the fence."

Organise

The best response was to a newly written song, *Days like these*. The song's message was to get organised: *'It's not enough just to wear badges in days like these.'*

YTURC had a stall at the concert, and afterwards people were signing their names and addresses on any bit of paper they could get their hands on, to show they wanted to get involved with the campaign and the LPYS.

By Sue Ayton
(Wakefield LPYS)



In Stafford YTURC has raised £75 for the campaign through selling 'Stafford Tory Busters' stickers, and collected over 700 signatures for the YTURC petition. The campaign has sparked off interest in the Labour Party Young Socialists, with 50 youth interested in joining.

In Wolverhampton £40 was raised for YTURC in street collections, while 30 trainees at the Springrale Training Centre were given the day off on 28 February to join the YTURC lobby. In a special public meeting to hear Dave Nellist MP, 50 people attended, with £82 raised in a collection, shared between YTURC and the miners.

THE BILLY Bragg concert at Southend, at the Westcliffe Pavillion, was a similar success. The concert attracted nearly 2,000. The LPYS had a stall at the entrance manned by 20 members. Over 100 socialist papers were sold and 55 applications collected for the LPYS.

No safety cover shock

THE DANGER of inadequate health and safety cover for YTS trainees was exposed in Kent recently. A 17 old girl from Gillingham was on a YTS 'outward bound' course, which included absailing down a rock face. She was injured and spent five weeks in hospital, needing two hip operations and is still on crutches six months later. It was only then she discovered there was no insurance cover on the scheme.

Kent County Council's solution was that trainees should take out their own insurance policy! How trainees are meant to afford insurance cover out of £26 a week, the council official didn't say.

By Andy Scott
(UCW)

Pre-LPYS conference rally 'No to YTS conscription—real jobs for youth' Speakers include: Tony Cox (YTURC) Dave Nellist MP, and Gary Ironmonger (NUM & LPYS) Friday April 5 at Empress Ballroom, Winter Gardens, Blackpool

Fascists kicked out of Toxteth

PLANS FOR a British National Party march and rally in Toxteth, Liverpool, were thwarted when local *Militant* supporters went into action, backed by local hoteliers and the black community.

The march was expected on 16 March, but the local hoteliers were contacted and all refused to let any rooms to the fascist BNP. *Militant* supporters mobilised support on the streets. Unfortunately, given the seriousness of the situation, the 'Black Caucus' were noticably absent.

On the day itself 200 *Militant* supporters and local black workers turned out. A coach appeared at the luxurious St George's Hotel with the fascists on board, but they were met by the demonstrators who broke through the police barriers.

In the end the coach pulled away under police escort—the only other coach expected didn't even cross the boundary into Liverpool. Both were escorted back to the M6 and sent back to London.

By Paul Cairnson
(Riverside LPYS)

MARXISM-the La

MARXISTS PLAYED a major role in the creation of the Labour Party and the development of its ideas. There have always been significant numbers of Marxists among the rank and file of the Labour Party. Right wing leaders of the party pretend that Marxism is an alien creed and have always used this as a pretext for attacks on the party membership. Recent moves to expel supporters of *Militant* from the Labour Party have once again raised the issue of the place of Marxism in the party.

In this feature MIKE WADDINGTON describes the influence of Marxism in the creation of the Labour Party and its early years.



Above: George Square, Glasgow 1919—Marxists who played a leading part in the history of "Red Clydeside" were active in the early days of the Labour Party

Below: George Square, Glasgow 1985—Marxists today are playing a vital role i: the fight of school students striking for a future



Photo reproduced by kind permission of the *Glasgow Herald*

THE HISTORY of the Labour Party is officially presented as a collection of the endeavours of philanthropic middle-class do-gooders. The contribution of the rank and file is seldom mentioned. The genuine history of the Labour Party, of the rank and file's contribution, has yet to be written.

One reason why such a project has yet to be seriously undertaken is that it would reveal, to the acute embarassment of the right wing, that the Marxists (including Marx and Engels themselves) were the first and firmest advocates of a Labour Party, that the Marxists participated in its formation and have been well represented in Labour's ranks ever since.

Conceded

As a matter of fact there has never been a period in the history of the Labour Party when there have not been Marxists within it. This is half-conceded by a now forgotten episode of 1948—the publication by the NEC of a Labour Party edition of the Communist Manifesto, the founding document of Marxism. In the foreword to this book, they wrote:

"In presenting this centenary of the Communist Manifesto, with a valuable historical introduction by Professor Laski (then Chairman of the Labour Party—MW) the Labour Party acknowledges its indebtedness to Marx and Engels as two of the men who have been the inspiration of the whole working class movement..... our ideas have been different from those of continental socialism which stemmed more directly from Marx, but we too, have been influenced in a hundred ways by European thinkers and fighters and, above all, by the authors of the Manifesto".

Embarassment

The book itself can now only be found in second hand bookshops as the Labour party no longer stocks it! This burst of enthusiasm for Marxism is a considerable embarrasment to those right wingers who seek to hound the Marxists of today, the supporters of *Militant*, from the Labour Party.

The first trade unionists to enter Parliament were Alexander MacDonald and Thomas Burt in 1874. Both of them were leaders of the mineworkers and both of them had been elected as Liberal MP's. The Fabian Society (formed according to its secretary, Edward Pease, "to break the spell of Marxism") were the firmest advocates of this "Lib-Labism".

As Morgan and Tate have written in their "History of the British Labour Movement":

"the majority (of the Fabian Society), led by the Webbs, favoured the permeation of the Liberals with the ideas of social reform and public control". In fact the main argument of the Webbs etc was that an independent Labour candidate in any election would only take votes from the Liberals and would therefore let the Tory in. Clearly if the entire issue had been left solely to the Fabians, the Labour Party would never have been launched at all.

The Marxists on the other hand, advocated a break with Liberalism and the formation of an independent Labour Party. Frederick Engels, the lifelong collaborator of Karl Marx, writing in the paper of the London Trades Council, the *Labour Standard*, under the heading "A working man's party" said:

"We live in a world where everybody is bound to take care of himself. Yet the English working class allows the landlords, capitalists and retail trading classes with their tail of lawyers, newspaper writers etc to take care of its interests. No wonder reforms in the interests of the workers' cause come so slow and in such miserable dribbles. The working people of England have but to will and they are the masters to carry every reform, social and political, which their situation requires. Then why not make the effort?" (23 July 1881).

The British Social Democratic Federation was formed in the early 1880's on avowedly Marxist principles. This organisation attracted many of the best activists in the trade union movement and therefore provided many of the best fighters for the working class.

Tom Mann

Tom Mann, one of the leaders of the dock strike and later first General Secretary of the AEU, and Will Thorne of the Gasworkers Union were amongst them.

George Lansbury, later a Poplar

Marx and the Labou

MARX AND Engels stood for an independent party of Labour because the working class had interests that were fundamentally opposed to all other classes.

They were the first supporters of the Chartists, the first working class party in the world, who struggled for the right to vote long before it became fashionable to do so—so much for the mythological Marxist opposition to parliament!

In fact the first English edition of the Communist Manifesto was published in a Chartist journal—*The Red Republican*—as "the most revolutionary document ever given to the world". Marx always put the interests of the working class above his own.

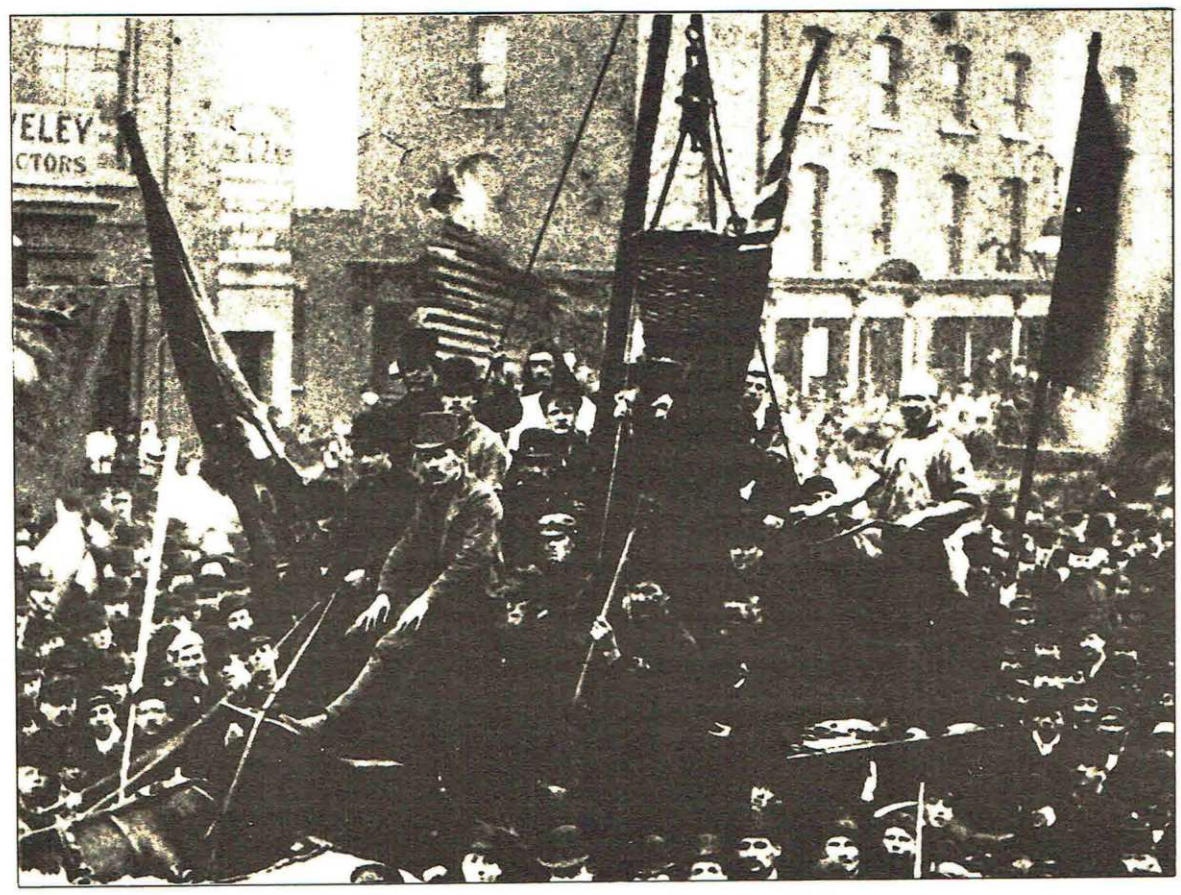
Engels wrote: "had we...insisted upon working together only with those who openly adopted our programme where should we be today?" Marx regarded the formation of a party as a step forward; the party would go on to adopt a socialist programme by its experience.

Any development that encouraged that experience was therefore progressive.

Marx followed this method when he established the International Working Men's Association, known in history as the First International:

"When Marx founded the international, he drew up the general

bour Party's red thread



Dockers march through the City of London in 1889, led by John Burns a member of the Marxist Social Democratic Federation who became a Labour MP in 1902 and was the first worker to become a cabinet minister in 1914.

councillor jailed in 1921 and eventually leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, joined the SDF in the 1890's in Bow and Poplar, in his own words "the cockpit of socialism" in East London.

The SDF however was too sectarian in its approach. Completely contrary to what Marx had written and practised, the SDF had a sterile unpreparedness to work with anybody who did not fully support their programme.

Too rigid

Engels, shortly before his death, wrote "the SDF and the SLP (an American organisation) have the distinction of being the only parties to have continued to reduce the Marxist theory of development to a rigid orthodoxy, which the workers are not to reach as a result of their own class consciousness, but which like an article of faith is to be forced down their throats at once and without development. That is why both remain mere sects, and as Hegel said, 'come from nothing, through nothing, to nothing'." (12 May, 1894).

Nevertheless the SDF did provide many of the great working class leaders who participated in the explosion of the class struggle which has gone down in history as the struggle for the "new unionism" of the 1880s including the famous dockers' and gasworkers' strikes.

The first Labour council in the country was in West Ham in 1893, where under the leadership of Will Thorne and the Marxist Social Democratic Federation, Labour candidates took a majority. In 1887, Keir Hardie held discussions with Engels.

The massive struggles of the late 1880s brought home the need as Marx had predicted for independent Labour representation in Parliament. Strikes like that of the match girls against Bryant and Mays, who had always been pillars of the Liberal Party, illustrated the conflict of interest.

In 1893 over 120 delegates formed the Independent Labour Party, again with the SDF's participation, and a Marxist (Edward Aveling) was elected to its Executive committee.

In 1899 amid mounting legal attacks on the trade union movement—not dissimilar to the recent miners' strike, Neil Kinnock should be reminded—the TUC decided to establish a Labour Representation Committee to seek a voice for the working class in Parliament.

LRC founded

The convening committee of this body was made up of four people from the TUC, including Will Thorne of the SDF, two from the ILP, two from the Fabians, and two directly from the Marxist SDF.

The Labour Representation Committee was formed on the 27 February, 1900, with 41 trade unions and the socialist societies present. The actual Labour committee itself included two representatives of the Social Democratic Federation. Marxism was thus represented at the very beginning of the Labour Party.

A resolution moved by the SDF at the conference for the policy of the LRC to be based upon the "recognition of class war" was defeated, and when a similar resolution was defeated again at the 1901 conference, the SDF disaffiliated from the LRC in a sectarian binge.

Keir Hardie criticised the SDF's plans for forming a "Socialist Representation Committee" as "outraging every principle of Marxian socialist tactics" because, he wrote, "the Labour Party is the only confession of orthodox Marxian socialism in Great Britain, for the Labour Party practices the Marxian policy of class struggle following Marx's own example, and is blamed by its critics for doing so, whilst its critics in practice reduce Marx's great historic formula to a set of quite meaningless phrases."

Disaffiliation

Despite the disaffiliation, many individual SDF members still attended the Labour Party conference through the trade unions. Indeed Will Thorne himself was elected a Labour MP in 1900 and Fred Knee, who was a member of the SDF and also secretary of the London Trades Council, helped form the London Labour Party in 1914, becoming its first secretary.

In 1911, the Social Democratic Federation, with branches of the ILP and Clarion Clubs became the British Socialist Party and by 1914 re-affiliated to the Labour Party. The affiliation was unanimously accepted at the 1916 Labour Party conference.

The outbreak of the Russian revolution left an indelible mark on the Labour Party. As Nye Bevan said at the Labour Party conference in 1951, "the revolution of 1917 came to the working class of Great Britain, not as a social disaster, but as one of the most emancipating events in the history of mankind".

The Russian revolution burst through the paralysis of World War I and saw Labour's aspirations reborn. George Lansbury organised a meeting at the Albert Hall in April of 1917, attended by at least 12,000 people, to welcome the revolution.

In Leeds in June of 1917 a special conference was called by the United Socialist Council (the ILP, SDF and Labour Party) to welcome the Russian revolution. Ramsey MacDonald moved the first resolution: "Russia Hail" and it was seconded by Dora Montefiore—later a founder member of the British Communist Party. The Leeds convention even called for the establishment of soviets in Great Britain.

In 1905 the Labour Representation Committee made two donations to the Bolshevik Party to continue its work. When that Bolshevik Party took power in the October Revolution, the attraction of the Russian revolution was enhanced.

A Bolshevik, Maxim Litvinov, spoke at the 1918 Labour Party conference: "When the foreign representatives filed onto the platform with some of the officials of the Labour Party, a cry from the audience 'cheers for MacDonald!' evoked a spirited outburst, and was followed by 'cheers for Trotsky' " (*Labour Leader*, 24 January, 1918).

Under the influence of the Russian revolution the Labour Party adopted Clause 4 as its socialist aim on behalf of the working class. The revolution unleashed a wave of sympathy that had not been seen in Britain since the days of Chartism.

The revolution was not only welcomed but protected by the working class. Lloyd George the prime minister and Churchill his Minister of War, were responsible for a British invasion of Russia. There was a spontaneous reaction from the working class all around the world, but especially in Britain, to prevent full-scale war on Soviet Russia.

David Adams who was a Labour councillor in Poplar (one of those jailed in 1921) was also branch secretary on the docks where dockers refused to load the *Jolly George* with munitions bound for White forces in Poland. By 1920 the "Hands off Russia" campaign had been formed with 1,000 delegates (689 trade union delegates and 355 Constituency Labour Party delegates) at its national conference.

The 1921 Labour Party conference report stated that 350 Councils of Action had been established throughout the country for this campaign. The TUC and NEC of the Labour Party even threatened a general strike if the government did not cease its military intervention in Northern Russia. The intervention came to an end.

Another example of the enthusiasm for the Russian revolution was the formation of the Communist Party.

At this time joint membership between the Communist Party and the Labour Party was widespread. Minnie and Edgar Lansbury, two more Poplar councillors, were members both of the Communist Party and the Labour Party. In 1922 a Communist Party member, S Saklatvala, was elected as Labour MP for North Battersea.

Turned down

Under these conditions the young Communist Party applied to affiliate to the Labour Party but was repeatedly turned down. Yet in was not until 1925 that individual membership of the Communist Party was made incompatible with membership of the Labour Party. The right wing used this decision as the pretext for the witchunt of Marxists in the party.

The "National Left Wing Movement" was established as a campaign to reverse this decision. Over 50 constituency parties affiliated to the campaign. Between 1926 and '27, the NEC closed down 23 Constituency Labour Parties for refusing to implement the rule on CP membership.

Even so, at the National Left Wing Movement's conference in September 1928, 75 to 80 local Labour Parties were represented. Thus it can be seen that during the heroic period of the Russian revolution Labour's rank and file were attracted towards the glow of October.

Marx once uttered a famous dictum when he was accused by the Pope of fermenting strikes with "his" First International. He replied that "it was not the International that threw workers into the strikes, but on the contrary it was the strikes that threw workers into the International."

Marxists believe that the experience of the working class, the day to day experiences of struggle in industry and in society, will make the need for the socialist transformation of society abundantly clear.

It is for this reason that Marxists have always supported the Labour Party and participated in it and it is for this reason that *Militant* looks confidently to the future.

Engels on Party

rules in such a way that all working class socialists of that period could join it. . . even the more advanced sections of the English trade unions" (Engels, 27 January 1887).

Indeed the 1866 Sheffield conference of trade unions, the forerunner of the TUC, advised all its members to affiliate to the First International. Many of the leading trade unionists of the day were members of its council, including Robert Applegarth of the Carpenters Union and George Odger who was secretary of the London Trades Council.

The defeat of the Paris commune in 1871 and the massive capitalist upswing undermined support for the First International, so rather than allow the association to degenerate, the First International was wound up.

In 1889 with the return of mass unemployment, a new international was set up, the Second International, and this body called itself a Marxist party. British trade unionists participated in this organisation.

Frederick Engels himself attended the Third Congress of the Second International in 1894 and he made the closing speech.

It was this Marxist international that the Labour Party itself joined in 1907. Lenin, following Marx's advice, spoke and voted in favour of that affiliation.

". . . . the Labour Party acknowledges its indebtedness to Marx and Engels as two of the men who have been the inspiration of the whole working class movement. . . . ."

—from the introduction to the 1948 Labour Party NEC's publication of the Communist Manifesto.

Greece

Workers block bosses plans

WHEN THE Central Committee of the ruling Greek Socialist Party (PASOK) met on 9 March in Athens, it decided unanimously not to support the sitting right wing president, Karamanlis, for a second term. This entirely unexpected decision sent shock waves through Greek society and throughout the capitals of the world.

First of two articles
By John Throne



Part of the 600 strong mass picket of the PASOK meeting on 9 March, organised by supporters of *Xekinima*, the Marxist paper in PASOK.

A casual observer would wonder why there should be any surprise that a socialist party should not support a right-wing president, and for that matter, what would be so important about this decision as to send alarm bells ringing in Washington, London and beyond?

First of all, Greece occupies a key strategic position in the Eastern Mediterranean flank, of NATO, pushed up tight against the borders of Albania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. It borders Turkey and sits on the edges of the Middle East, a region of seething upheaval. Any events in Greece, and in particular any tendency towards instability and revolution, is of vital immediate importance to both the Western powers and the ruling bureaucratic elites of Russia and Eastern Europe.

The United States have vital bases in Greece, and Greece is a member of NATO. The Socialist Party promised to end these links before its election in 1981, but did not do so. Any move to the left by the party now raises new fears that it may yet act on its promises.

But the more important factor is the possibility of a successful workers' revolution in Greece and the effects this would have, not only as a pole of attraction in the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean but throughout the entire capitalist world. And of course a healthy, democratic, workers' state in Greece would open up the road to political revolution in the Southern nations of Eastern Europe and threaten the rule of Stalinism in Russia itself. It was not only in the West that the temperature was raised by the PASOK Central Committee decision.

However, even given the vital strategic position of Greece, it could still appear surprising that the Socialist Party's decision drew such a sharp reaction. In order to answer this, it is necessary to look at the developments in Greece itself.

When the Greek military junta fell in 1974, the process of the Greek revolution began. After seven years of a vicious military dictatorship the working class sprang into action. It rebuilt its union organisations. By 1983 twice as many workers were organised as ever before. In the same year the leadership of all major unions, trades councils and peasant co-operative organisations was won by the left parties. And for the first time in history the Greek TUC was controlled by the left.

These were not just organisational battles in smoke filled rooms. They reflected the massive waves of struggle of the working class over this period. In the ten years from 1974 to 1984 the numbers involved in strikes were 17 million. The population is 9½ million and the industrial proletariat is 1.5 million. This is a record unequalled in any other comparable country.

The massive power and combativity of the Greek workers is shown most clearly in figures recently published by the OECD for real increases in manufacturing workers' wages in 22 of its 24 member countries between 1975 and 1982. Taking 1975 to equal 100, the largest increase gained in any country was an increase to 142 in Greece.

Over this period also, demonstrations of one million and more were commonplace on the streets of Athens, a city with a population of three million.

It was, of course, inevitable that the Greek revolution would unfold also on the political front. After 1974 the Communist Party was rebuilt and strengthened. Along with this, in an entirely new development (Greece had never before had a mass socialist party) the workers created from scratch the Greek Socialist Party—PASOK.

And then, in spite of right-wing threats of a return of the tanks—this was Karamanlis' slogan: "me or the tanks" when he was whisked back to Athens by the CIA and Greek capitalism in 1974 to lead the right-wing party, the so-called New Democracy—the Greek workers lifted PASOK on their shoulders and in 1981 elected it to power with an overall majority in its own right.

The left parties as a whole, all of which claim to be Marxist, received 60% of the vote. This was unprecedented in Greece. It was the first left government in the country's history. The Greek ruling class have never been prepared previously to tolerate even a **liberal** capitalist government. It was fear of this development that had led to the coup in 1967, yet in 1981 they had to accept a left government.

The reason was simple—the power of the Greek working class. The ruling class knew that if they tried to move against this government, the working class would rise to back it and a revolutionary situation would result. They were in no position to face this. The rank and file of the army in particular, but also even the police were enthused by the prospect of "The Change", the PASOK slogan in Greece.

Far from the ruling class being in a position to overthrow the new government, an entirely peaceful transformation of society was possible at that time. However, the leaders of PASOK and the Communist Party did not give the necessary lead.

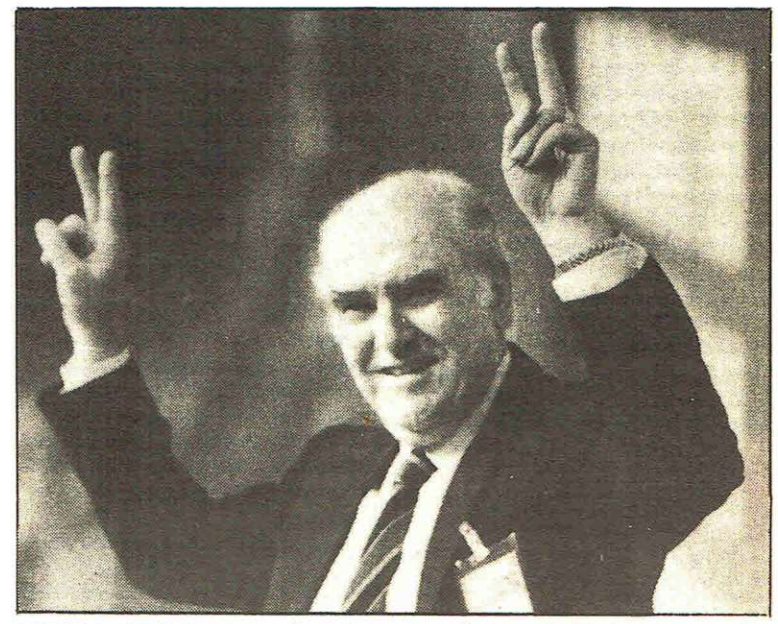
So Greek capitalism had to grind its teeth and wait. They still had their forces intact—the economy, the tops of the police, the army and the media. Their man was the president and the constitution was drawn up in 1975 by Karamanlis himself precisely to stand against any possible left government of the future.

Having lost the government, big business intended to hold onto their last, important legal position. Their strategy had been to pressurise the new government through the presidency, the economy and the media, to carry out the policies they wished and to wait until a suitable time came to get rid of it. What this meant for them was to wait until disillusionment and division would creep into the working class as the result of the government's failure to solve the problems.

They made their first serious move against PASOK in the Euro elections of 1984. They pumped massive sums into New Democracy, they loosened the leashes on their gangs of fascist thugs who beat up PASOK and Communist Party members, while Karamanlis came out and called on the voters to vote "European". This was clearly seen as against PASOK whose declared policy was anti-EEC.

It was reliably reported that the objective was to get New Democracy to come ahead of PASOK. Then the president was to use his powers to dissolve the government if, in his opinion, it was "in evident disharmony with the popular will".

In the ensuing general election the Greek ruling class hoped that New Democracy would get an overall majority. Then, with a right-wing government and a right-wing president, and the left in disarray, the counter-attack would begin to reverse all the gains made by the workers in the previous ten years.



PASOK leader Papandreou, forced to oppose Karamanlis by the pressure of the working class.

Their plans misfired, PASOK came ahead of New Democracy. The forces of the right reassessed their position. Their strategy was now clear—get Karamanlis re-elected at all costs. For this it was necessary to get the votes of PASOK. This would also have the effect of weakening PASOK's base amongst its supporters and so help the New Democracy win the ensuing election which must be held in the autumn of 1985 at the latest.

Greek capitalism saw the re-election of Karamanlis as a vital necessity in reversing the processes of the last 11 years. For the time being their plans have been thwarted.

Class struggle

The media and the right-wing politicians suddenly found all sorts of positive sides to PASOK and Papandreou. Gone were the harsh criticism and attacks. The priority was to gently coax PASOK leaders to vote for Karamanlis. Any opposition especially from the ranks of PASOK and the working class remained unreported in the media.

However, just in case the PASOK leadership become over confident and too independent under the warmth of the new approach, on two separate occasions gangs of fascists beat up PASOK ministers while the police stood by. They were being reminded that there was another alternative—outright confrontation.

So Greek capitalism saw the re-election of Karamanlis as a vital necessity for them in their attempt to reverse the processes of the past 11 years. The class struggle is analagous to a drawn-out military conflict. At times the armies are in full-scale engagement and battle, at times they lie in their positions with the occasional skirmish taking place, then developments towards new all-out battle take place.

In the struggle in Greece the ruling class prepared for battle in the 1984 Euro elections and now again in 1985 in the Presidential elections, and on both occasions these battles were meant to mark a turning point in the war and a reversal of their fortunes. On both occasions they have been thwarted in their plans and failed.

As a result they are now in a more desperate and weaker position, while the working class feels more confident than at any time since 1981. The ruling class have not given up, even on the Presidential vote but the working class feel they can now not only get rid of the hated right-wing president but also re-elect PASOK. And maybe this time, they hope, the real change promised by PASOK in the past can be brought about.

Next week: The choice before PASOK

South Africa, Lebanon, France

Massacre fuels new anger



Black miners in South Africa. The bosses are worried about the growing revolutionary mood and strength of the working class.

THE BRUTAL killing of unarmed black mourners near to the Eastern Cape town of Uitenhage is one more bitter clash in the South African revolution. The political effects could be enormous.

South African police admit to shooting dead 17 people on 21 March, the 25th anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre. A womans' civil rights, organisation, Black Sash, claims that at least 40 people died.

In the days immediately following, other incidents led to more police shootings. Tear gas and burning houses made the air unbreathable.

The people of the black townships of Langa and Kwanobuhle attacked locals they regarded as traitors for siding with the apartheid regime-black policemen and stooge councillors in particular.

This is not the only instance of apartheid violence recently. Well over 200 have died in clashes since last August's disturbances in the East Rand townships. What worries the ruling class in South Africa and internationally is that this incident, so blatantly a massacre, could push the feelings of the black population to a new revolutionary pitch.

The official police story, which the Minister of Law and Order, Louis Le Grange reiterated, is that 3000 to 4000 blacks armed with sticks, stones and petrol bombs marched from Langa township to the suburb of Uitenhage to "attack the white residents". The police claim that they had warned the crowd they were breaking the law and only fired "in self defence" when the crowd surged round the armoured cars.

Police lies

But South African opposition MPs heard affidavits from witnesses which show this to be a lie. On 21 March local residents gathered in Langa township to go to the funeral of a student activist in Kwanobuhle on the other side of Uitenhage. The police had banned the funeral from Sunday, hoping to lessen its impact, not realising that the Thursday was the 25th aniversary of the Sharpeville massacre. They once again banned the funeral but seemingly omitted to tell the inhabitants of Langa. When the police stopped the buses on the morning of 21 March, many mourners then decided to walk to the funeral.

A huge armoured lorry (known as a 'hippo') moved up to block the marchers who eye witnesses say were unarmed. As they advanced a shot rang out (with no warning) and a barrage of bullets were fired from both armoured lorries in the area, continuing even when the mourners fled. The blood stains on the ground showed no signs of a "mob surging round the lorry" as the police claimed. All the stains were some **20 yards in front** of the lorry.

Brutality

The Observer gave details of the brutality of Botha's police in the Uitenhage area. When members of Black Sash unexpectedly visited the local police station they saw four black youths who had all been badly beated. One youth, manacled and bleeding, was being whipped savagely with a leather lash, while other policemen looked on impassively.

This massacre is one more example of the repression which is Botha's only answer to black unrest. But it will not have the same demoralising effect it had, at very bloody cost, after Sharpeville. On 21 March 1960, 69 blacks were killed in peaceful protests against the apartheid pass laws which govern a black worker's movements from birth to death.

After the Sharpeville murders, massive strikes and demonstrations showed black workers' anger. But the apartheid bosses were able to defeat the movement, rounding up 20,000 or more opponents, banning the African National Congress and jailing its leaders. Today they face much stronger opposition.

Sharpeville came after a decade of "peaceful resistance" to apartheid. Today, particularly since the Soweto incidents in 1976, the black population have been taking to the streets against the system. Youth and community associations have grown up in townships throughout South Africa giving far greater depth to the mass organisations than in 1960.

But most of all the black working class has grown enormously in size and organisation. Since 1979 the regime has been forced to recognise non-racial trade unions, and now more than half a million black workers belong to unions. From 1981 to 1984 there has been on average a strike a day in South Africa's various industries.

Local unions organised a strike in the Eastern Cape against the banning of another funeral earlier in the same week as the massacre. This stopped production at Volkswagen, paralysed the local council and caused major disruption at other factories. 40,000 black mineworkers also struck the same week for pay demands. The unions give a firm organising base for the movement which was not present after Sharpeville.

Capitalism's fears

That is why this present massacre has so alarmed the ruling class, as shown by the hypocritical denunciations of apartheid by the likes of Geoffrey Howe.

The bosses realise that the situation in South Africa is explosive. They fear the angry and powerful workers movement and the increasingly revolutionary youth will build a leadership which will not only destroy apartheid but the capitalist system which it was created to defend.



Sharpeville 21 March 1960, 69 workers were murdered. Like Sharpeville, the Langa massacre 25 years later has had international repercussions.

'Iron Fist' policy devastates Lebanon

AS ISRAEL'S army withdraws from Lebanon after almost three years of occupation their 'Iron Fist Policy' leaves a trail of death and destruction in its wake.

They are leaving without achieving the original aims of the invasion. Israel's northern border will be no safer than in 1982. Even their "success" in clearing the Palestine Liberation Organisation out of Beirut and pushing those who remained into Syrian control was only partial.

They have faced unprecedented opposition within Israel itself, with emormous demonstrations, 50,000 for instance on a peace march in Tel Aviv. Opposition has increased along with the death toll of young Israeli soldiers.

Added to this was Israel's rampant inflation and massive international debt, fuelled by the $1 million a day the occupation was costing. Strikes amongst government workers were becomining commonplace. Israeli capitalism is undoubtedly reluctant to leave but has no alternative, short of all-out war.

The Lebanon they leave behind is as fragmented as before and is entering another period of civil war. It is split between the Syrians, who control most of the North and East, the Moslems in the South, and the Christians with a small Northern enclave. The Lebanese government, under Amin Gemayel in reality control very little.

Sectarian violence

As the Israelis withdraw, the upsurge of sectarian violence again splits the poorest sections of society. The natural allies of the poor Christians in Beirut are the poor Shia and Druze Moslems of the South, and not the leaders of the right wing party the Phalange.

The Shia Moslems themselves are split into two main groups. The Amal movement, a secular organisation, and the Hizbollah (God's Party), supporters of the Iranian Ayatollah Khomeini. Its activities were described in the *Economist*: they "made the 20 mile drive from the slums of Beirut to Sidon, where they tore down the Lebanese flag and posters of Mr Gemayel, hoisted the Iranian flag, stuck up posters of Ayatollah Khomeini, wrecked shops selling alcohol and proclaimed Sidon to be Islamic territory."

But worse still for the people of Southern Lebanon is the withdrawing Israeli army's iron fist policy, inflicted on the very South Lebanese people the Israelis claimed to be "liberating from the PLO" in June 1982. Some then welcomed the Israeli army. Now they are at war with an army of occupation.

The Israeli government defend this policy as "protecting the lives of their soldiers, but it is a blatant policy of bloody retribution for attacks on their soldiers. Moving into villages, killing anyone suspected of being a militia member or sympathiser, blowing up suspects' houses and rounding up and interrogating all males over 15. Many villagers simply flee as news of approaching Israeli soliders reaches them. The army strafe the fields with machine-gun fire as they drive along, leading to more retaliation. This will escalate as the Israeli line becomes more difficult to defend.

The Israeli ruling class can't remain in Lebanon, as some 'hawks' like Sharon want, without increasing opposition at home, and they can't withdraw any quicker for practical reasons, and the fear that Syria will take their place almost immediately.

There will be no return to the pre-1975 Lebanon, the so-called 'Switzerland' of the Middle East. Lebanon will be left fragmented and battered.

Socialist federation

The various religious groups offer no answer to the desperate conditions of most Lebanese, Christians and Moslems. The only answer is reunification on a socialist basis. Even then the problems are too great to solve within the confines of Lebanon.

The future of workers and peasants in Lebanon is linked with those in neighbouring states, and demands the reunification of all the Arab states in a socialist Arab tion including Israel.

The building of a movement of workers and peasants on the ideas of socialism is the only way to cut across sectarianism and solve the persistent problems of the region.

By Norma Craven

17-month occupation

FRENCH TRADE unionists at the occupied SKF ball bearing factory in Ivry, just outside Paris, are keen to build direct links with the British labour movement.

During a recent fund-raising tour in the Paris area by two young Yorkshire miners a meeting was held in this factory to discuss the miners' strike, and the miners were warmly received by activists in the CGT (see *Militant*, 22 February).

Later a collection was also held for the miners. A total of 2,600 francs was raised (about £260), including 500 francs (£50) from the SKF workers themselves.

The workers at SKF have been in occupation for *17 months* against closure of their factory and the threat of a police operation to evict them. For most of the dispute they have been dependent on social security payments to get by. Two local officials of the CGT are fighting off an attempt by the bosses of this Swedish multinational to fine them personally a staggering total of *£6 million*.

Any labour movement organisation interested in building links should write (not necessarily in French!) to: Jacques Tord (SKF), Union Locale CGT Ivry, 6 Place Gerald Philippe, 94200 IVRY, France.

Messages of support and/or donations from would also be greatly appreciated and should be sent to the same address.

By Jim Ellen
(Paris)

LETTERS

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

The need for unity



Notts NUM members supporting the strike last year. Photo: Militant

Dear Comrades,

During recent local branch meetings a growing number of men have called for the expulsion of the Notts Area from the National Union of Mineworkers. I say to these men—think again.

There is already far too much 'sectionslism' in the working class movement without creating further divisions. As I see it, expulsion would be the easy option out, but being of benefit to no-one except the capitalist class.

It is up to us, the rank and file, to re-educate the Notts miners and to show the need for a strong and united union.

If the working class are to rid ourselves of this plague known as Thatcherism, we must learn to think as one, move as one and fight as one. Remember the battlecry: "The workers united will never be defeated".

Yours fraternally,
Ank Stones
Houghton Main NUM

Millwall violence

Dear *Militant*,

While watching the scenes of rioting at the Luton-Millwall match, I couldn't help wondering how many of them were unemployed and living in in drab inner-city accommodation. I don't condone violence, far from it, but was it entirely about football—or another reflection of conditions in this country today? I doubt any of the rioters were company directors living in palatial dwellings in beautiful surroundings!

I also wondered how many of the police who were there, were sent to deal with the striking miners. In the miners' strike the police showed 'great courage' we are told, on horseback swinging truncheons, merrily breaking the heads of defenceless miners.

I think we can expect to see many more violent scenes flare up as people get more and more bitter and frustrated by the Thatcher system.

Yours sincerely,
Mrs Dorothy Dale
Newport
Isle of Wight

Fund raising tips

Dear Comrades,

Trying to find an effective and enjoyable way to raise money for the Young Socialists can be difficult, but we in Mid-Kent LPYS have discovered that staging gigs pays off.

At our last gig starring excellent local band 'Surplus Value' (they'll be performing at the national conference next month) we raised £46 at the door. From that, £10 went towards renting the venue– it is important to keep the cost of rent at the lowest, or you could find most of your proceeds going towards it.

It would also save quite a bit of money (around £20) if the performing band has their own PA system, so you don't have to rent one as we did. Although gigs don't perhaps make as much money as other activities, an enjoyable evening with live music attracts young people, and provides good recruiting ground for the LPYS.

Yours fraternally
Ceiren Bell
Mid-Kent LPYS

Warning

Dear Comrades,

When my local Labour Party secretary came to renew my membership, he warned me that he had seen me 'listening to that *Militant* rubbish'. He said if I wanted to have anything to do with them I should join another party because *Militant* was 'against Labour Party policy'.

This was a real joke to me because I had to pester the Labour Party for over six months for information of meetings and events.

It's about time that those people who run the party spent more time campaigning for a socialist Labour victory instead of attacking people who campaign with conviction against the real enemy, the Tory ruling class.

Militant is repeatedly branded as dangerous by the right wing of the Labour Party—yet the right wing daily fail to support the interests of the people who pay them their wages and put them in their positions of power.

Yours comradely
Clive Jones
Oxford East LPYS

A history of expulsions

Dear Comrades,

At the start of another attempted witch-hunt of a *Militant* supporter in Newcastle East (SDP renegade Mike Thomas's old seat) I remember another expulsion 46 years ago.

My mother, who had been a member of the Labour Party since its inception, was expelled. She was a school teacher, who spent all her adult life in the Labour Party and the ILP. Not only was she a socialist, she was an authority on nursery schools and fought all her life for a better deal for women. She had eight children but still found time to work to get premises for the Labour Party in Newcastle East, as well as being the longest serving President of the Northumberland Women's Section.

The Women's Section in those days was very large and they had marches and galas every year in Ashington and Bedlington. The theme of the gala in 1938 was peace, with every section carrying banners of white cloth with the word 'peace' in green.

My mother, who was a pacifist, stuck to her ideals when war was declared. She chaired a meeting against the war (against official party policy), and was then asked to appear before the constituency's general committee to explain. The meeting was held on a Sunday morning in the hard winter of 1940. She was crippled with arthritis at this time and could not attend. She was expelled in her absence without a hearing—40 years of hard work for the party were forgotten. However, she was later invited to renew her membership which she did.

All her family have since been socialists, some active, some not. Two of her granddaughters are in the Labour Party today. Who says you can witch-hunt ideas?

Yours fraternally
Daisy Rawling
(neé Malloch)
Newcastle-upon-Tyne

A rock n' rollers' story

PAN BOOKS have just produced *The Life and Times of Little Richard* by Charles White. For those of us who were around in their teens in the the middle to late '50s, it was Little Richard who was the most explosive of all rock 'n rollers.

But it was Bill Haley, Elvis, Buddy Holly, Jerry Lee Lewis, Eddie Cochran, Gene Vincent etc who were generally given the most publicity and accolades. The majority of them being white southerners, it was their records and promotions that were pushed, while the likes of Fats Domino, Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley and many other black artists who had been singing for much longer, had to contend with the racial prejudice that ran deep in American society.

Little Richard mentions the prejudice he encounters throughout his life, as one of a family of 13, born in the Deep South in Macon, Georgia. He describes his childhood and the music of gospel singers who pass through his town, leading to his struggle to break through musically from the early '50s till finally the immortal *Tutti Frutti* burst on the scene in 1955. The original was a very blue song.

Then the hits poured out, *Long Tall Sally, Ready Teddy, Rip it up, Lucille* and many more backed up by a real driving band, *The Upsetters*. Little Richard's incredible voice and wild stage show was unique, though many of the white artists borrowed his material; Presley, Jerry Lee, Everly Bros, even Pat Boone did pale imitations of *Tutti Frutti* and *Long Tall Sally* and got hits.

For me, the best of Little Richard was that 3 or 4 year period in the 50s which can be seen in clips from films and shows he appeared in.

The sound is still as dynamic as it was nearly 30 years ago on the original 'Speciality' label. The book gives a lot of interesting factual details of recording sessions and testimonials from many singers, some now dead, about his music style, and influence: "You can't keep still when you hear the great Little Richard. He's the wildest act in rock 'n roll and you can't beat his act on stage" Buddy Holly (1958).

By Bob Faulkes

What a waste

Dear Comrades,

£1,992,092—that's the staggering figure wasted by Thatcher's office on foreign tours between May 1979 and December 1984! This appalling total was reported to Wallsend Young Socialists recently by Dennis Skinner MP.

He added that the cost of entertaining at Downing Street and Chequers was £92,787 for the same period. Dennis Skinner was in cracking form and attacked lavish, careless Tory spending and warned that the total cost of this champagne and caviar jet-setting could well exceed £3 million this year.

Yours fraternally
Jackie Dale
Wallsend LPYS

Obituary

COMRADES IN Swansea are sad to report the death of Phil Walters. Tragically, at the early age of 39, Phil was killed in an accident while at work last week.

Phil had been a *Militant* supporter for many years and had bought our paper regularly from the days of our monthly up until the present day.

While a quiet and unassuming character, Phil could always be relied upon to fight for policies which represented the interests of our class.

As a member of the TGWU and Castle Ward Labour Party, Phil was an extremely likeable and genuine comrade who will be deeply missed by many people.

We send our condolances to Phil's family and salute the passing of a fine socialist.

By Alec Thraves

LEFT and RIGHT

Big business's Parliamentary wing

This Tory government is the most representative of big business ever. Labour MP Gordon Brown has complained to Thatcher after the new register of MPs interests showed that the 316 Tory MPs had more than 400 company directorships and over 300 consultants between them.

More profits, less jobs

The Tory myth goes that if only big business was allowed to make decent profits, then more jobs could be created. Perhaps then they could explain this one. Shell has announced 1,000 redundancies at its refinery at Stanlow, blaming financial losses. Yet soon afterwards Shell announced this year's profits—up £900 million to £3½ billion.

The dark days return

The slogan of the trade unions in the late 1970s was 'No return to the 1930s'. In Liverpool those days have returned, as the picture from the *Liverpool Echo* (11 March) shows. In the city's rush hour, 29 year old Billy Pickersgill, a former soldier and hospital worker married with a young daughter, parades around with this placard in the desperate search for work. He has been unemployed for two years. Capitalism knows no depths in humiliating workers.



Budget for a Marxist Daily

FIGHTING fund donations are improving. We must ensure they now reach the £8,900 we need each week to reach the target.

Last quarter. in the final week, over £15,377 came in and we raised £30,000 in January. Start the campaign now and we can double that! We appeal to all our readers to donate £20, £10 even a £1 for the paper. Already this week a supporter from Sutton-in-Ashfield has donated a £20 birthday present.

Secondly, all areas must start organising now—well planned, good fund-raising socials/bazaars/Discos. A letter from North Avon LPYS shows how they raise money for *Militant*:

"We organised a fighting fund social which raised £23.29. This is good for a YS which is mainly school students and unemployed. All the comrades enjoyed themselves and we made a collection. Our YS will organise further fund raising events to build towards a Marxist daily."

Militant is filled with true life stories on the horrors of capitalism every week that should make us angry. Giving donations and getting involved in one way of making sure that anger is channelled into productive channels. We have come this far because people have been prepared to make magnificent sacrifices to support us—now is your chance to help us build our future—and yours too.

By Kim Waddington

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	1023		2900
East Midlands	833		2800
Humberside	532		1850
London East	980		3250
London West	613		2150
London South East	907		2000
London South West	556		1600
Lancashire	313		1100
Manchester	638		2750
Merseyside	1336		6000
Northern	763		4900
Scotland East	722		3000
Scotland West	729		3800
Southern	1106		5000
South West	818		2000
Wales East	206		2450
Wales West	154		2150
West Midlands	1209		4400
Yorkshire	1548		5900
Others	1452		10000
Total received	16440		70000

This week £3024

Supporters at TUC Womens Conference £86.84; P Parrot Bristol NCU £50; Ayrshire miners £24; J Hicks Oxford COHSE £22; Falkirk Video Night £19; K Garnett student from Putney £15; K Pickering Birmingham £11; Alan Buckley Bristol £10; Bootle Labour Party Womens Section £10; Terry Royle unemployed from Ellesmere Port £10; Workers British Gas Easington £9; Rohan Karn Northeast Tech £5; members Hull AUEW No 12 Branch £4; Roger Pursy Newcastle £2; Mr J Brown Ashington GMBATU £2; Ian Williams Shanklin £1.50; Sue Currie Ashington Wansbeck LPYS £1; Stan an OAP from Petersfield Hants gives £1 each week for his paper; H Ridley Tooting LP 90p; J McCormack NUM Polmaise Colliery paid 50p for paper.

Marxist Daily Building Fund 1985

Total received since 1 January:	£		
Eastern	1985	Scotland West	1338
East Midlands	2302	Southern	2002
Humberside	1178	South West	489
London East	2425	Wales East	1278
London West	3267	Wales West	1274
London South East	1671	West Midlands	1391
London South West	1453	Yorkshire	829
Lancashire	300	National	1292
Manchester	893	Total	30588
Merseyside	1872		
Northern	1974	This week: £2,973	
Scotland East	1375		

LAWSON'S BUDGET is yet another attempt to make workers pay for capitalism's crisis. It's time for a budget of our own.

Forcing down pay and abolishing wages councils would take Britain back to 1909, when the wages councils were first set up by Winston Churchill.

Weeks income

We need to fight back and budget for a Marxist daily paper. This is essential for all workers in their struggle to improve conditions and change society. Building a Marxist daily is going to depend, not only on the unemployed and low paid, who already know what it means to go without, but also on the sacrifices of the higher paid workers. No member of the working class will benefit from Lawson's budget. But you will gain from a Marxist daily.

Chris and Jean Johnson, two unemployed comrades from Merseyside have donated £60 as their stake in changing society and Gary Knowles, of Bold NUM in Lancashire has agreed to give his wages of £70 at the end of week. We are asking all our supporters to give an entire week's income by the end of March. If an unemployed couple can give £60 and a miner, after a year on strike, can give £70, then our better paid supporters should be better able to come to our aid. Give a week's income. Help us to write off our debts and buy the new equipment necessary for a more regular paper.

Match these donations

Of course, many of our better paid supporters have donated. A teacher, Jim McGinley has sent us £120 and a seaman, A Taylor from the Wirral has paid £100. If every one of our supporters, high or low paid, can match these donations then we can clear the deck of all debts and be well on the way to changing this rotten, class ridden society.

By Dave Campbell

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.

Peckham LPYS under workers control and management sends fraternal greetings to LPYS National Conference—forward to socialism.

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.

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*.

"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.

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.

Get Militant

EVEN BEFORE the May Day drive *Militant* sales are booming. Sale of the week is probably the 84 which were bought at the Billy Bragg concert in Southend—our sellers recruited 50 people to the LPYS. 175 *Militant*s and 50 *Militant Miner*s were sold at the BLOC conference and many, many more on trains and coaches up to Manchester.

Very good sales are reported from mining areas, in many pits like St Johns and Penallta over 25 are sold every week even before the miners get paid. Best sales are where *Militant* was sold before the strike, consistency is the key!

Be prepared

The battle in the councils is vital and council workers appreciate the support *Militant* has given. Many workers see that Liverpool, which followed *Militant's* strategy, beat the Tories last year and they want their authorities to follow suit. Support for Marxism in Liverpool's unions was built through regular paper sales. Each group of sellers in Liverpool adopted a council depot where they sell every week. Sales would rocket if similar initiatives took place all over the country.

But you don't need to wait for earth shattering events to build sales. In Sittingbourne, Kent, our circulation doubled through a consistent programme of selling. Sales at Bowaters factory, two at the dole and one in the town centre, selling door to door and persuading people who buy the paper at union and Labour Party meetings to buy weekly have all helped.

With Thatcher's popularity slipping more every day, sales success is yours for the asking—just be prepared!

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:

Huddersfield: Friday 29 March 7.30 pm. Speaker: Peter Jarvis. at Manor House Club, Halifax Old Road, Huddersfield.

Bradford New date: Wednesday 3 April. Speaker: Keith Dickinson at Fairfax Opera School, Lister Avenue, 7.30 pm.

Newcastle: Monday 1 April. Speaker: Clare Doyle. Newcastle YMCA, 7.30 pm.

Burnley: New date, Monday 1 April. Speaker: Peter Jarvis at AUEW Building, Hargreaves Street, (opposite GPO)..

Manchester: Tuesday 2 April. Speaker: Peter Jarvis. Basement Theatre, Manchester Town Hall, 7.30 pm.

Teesside: Tuesday 2 April. Speaker: Clare Doyle.

Leeds: Tuesday 2 April. Speakers: Rob Sewell, Les Wrigglesworth (Allerton Bywater NUM) and a South African socialist. Grand Theatre "Studio", Newbriggate..

Hertford: Tuesday 2 April. Speaker: Peter Taaffe. The Pioneer Hall, Ware Road, Hertford, 8.00 pm.

Dewsbury: Wednesday, 3 April, 7.30 pm. Speakers: Rob Sewell and Tracey Cooper (Secretary, Wakefield Miners' Support Group), Dewsbury Arts Centre, Upper Road, Batley Carr.

Newcastle-under-Lyme: Wednesday 3 April. Speakers: Lynn Walsh and Dugald McKinnon, Guildhall, 7.30 pm.

Wallasey Monday 15 April. Speaker: John Pickard.

Greenwich: Tuesday 16 April. Speaker: Brian Ingham.

Wrexham: Tuesday 16 April. Speaker: John Pickard. The Library Arts Centre, Rhosddu Road, Wrexham.

Newham: Tuesday 16 April. Speaker: Lynn Walsh. The Lister Room, East Ham Town Hall, Barking Road, London E6, 7.45 pm.

Bootle: Wednesday 17 April. Speaker: John Pickard.

Islington: Wednesday 17 April. Speaker: Peter Taaffe.

Acton: Wednesday 17 April. Speaker: Clare Doyle. Acton Town Hall, 7.30pm.

Brixton: Thursday 18 April. Speaker: Rob Sewell.

St Helens: Thursday 18 April. Speaker: John Pickard.

Bristol: Tuesday 23 April. Speaker: Keith Dickinson.

Plymouth: Wednesday 24 April. Speaker: Keith Dickinson.

Bath: Thursday 25 April. Speaker: Keith Dickinson.

Wakefield: Friday 10 May. Speaker: Peter Taaffe.

Coventry: Thursday 25 April.

Liverpool: Wednesday 1 May, 7.30 pm. Speaker: John Pickard, AUEW Hall, Mount Pleasant.

Conferences

Liverpool rate-capping conference: Saturday 30 March.

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

LPYS Conference: Saturday 6 April, Blackpool. Main speaker: Ted Grant. **(Where no venue is given, details from local sellers)**

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. 1st 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.

BLOC
2nd National Conference

Photos and reports by: Mick Carroll; Ian Ilett; Viv Seal; Anne McKay.

Organising

THE SECOND national Broad Left Organising Committee Conference in Manchester at the week-end marked the consolidation of BLOC as the major voice of the organised left in the trade union movement.

With 1,500 delegates present from every sizeable trade union in Britain and two Broad Left candidates for top offices in two of the country's largest trade unions speaking it's hardly surprising that despite public boasts, the Frank Chapple contingent failed to appear. The right wing, however, are watching closely the development of this major threat to their domination of the labour movement.

Confidence

Above all, the conference, displayed a confidence and political perspective crucial to activists trying to keep their balance in a difficult period following the miners' strike. Key-note, platform speeches from South Wales NUM executive member Ian Isaac and Liverpool council deputy leader Derek Hatton would have boosted the spirits of any trade unionist listening.

Speaking in the morning session Ian Isaac contrasted the courage of the rank and file of the NUM to the performance of the leadership of the labour movement. Neil Kinnock, in particular, he warned, should not expect any future invitations to speak on South Wales NUM platforms.

Stressing the need to build on the experiences of the past year he called for support for the Miners Amnesty Campaign and the building of a Broad Left in the NUM.

His warning to the Tories that the miners would be back was echoed by other



Ian Isaac

speakers during the day. Sacked Monktonhall miner, Chris Herriot, making the financial appeal for BLOC (which raised £1,500), continued Ian's earlier military analogy: "Our army has withdrawn from the battlefield but in good order. We are not defeated. The war goes on until every miner is reinstated and jobs and pits are secure."

In a powerful speech later in the day, Joe Owens from Polkemmet colliery, quoted a Spanish revolutionary in the civil war: "We, the working class, will inherit the earth." A new world is here in our hearts comrades, he said, that world is socialism and on our shoulders lies the responsiblity to claim it. Conference Chair, Jock Macpherson-Quinn, an AUEW National Committee member and Lambeth councillor, commented: "I have great confidence in the youth of this country and I think Joe's speech shows its justified."

The socialist theme ran like a red thread through the day's discussion. The Broad Left candidate for general secretary of USDAW, Bill Connor, explained how the struggle of his members against low pay in the retail trade, Tory attacks on their working hours and conditions in the form of Sunday trading, and their wages through the abolition of the Wages Councils were rooted in the collapse of British capitalism.

"When we talk about the need for socialism," he said "people will ask us what we have to offer. We have to show how we can increase output *and* cut working hours in an economy run under workers' control and management." We must build BLOC and the Broad Lefts in the unions, he told conference, and link the struggles workers face with the need for socialism.

Link the day-to-day struggles workers face with the need for socialism.

The afternoon's discussion on ratecapping and the fight against council cuts was more controversial. Ken Livingstone argued that to attack the GLC's decision to set a rate was to break the unity of the labour movement and allow the Tories the propaganda victory they are working for.

He compared it with the way the government claim a victory over the miners when the general situation, in terms of the financial cost and wider political effects, shows the miners fought the Tories to a standstill.

He outlined the GLC's plans to fight any cuts in jobs and services from within the administration and called for unity to win the campain against ratecapping, including support for councils like Liverpool in direct confrontation with the Tories. He promised to resign and join GLC workers on the picket line when the first job or service was cut.

Derek Hatton, speaking next in the best received speech of conference, outlined Liverpool's achievements in housebuilding and job creation over the last year.

Talking to conference delegates





JIM RUSSELL and SEAN SEAMAN (left to right), from Whitwell NUM, North Derbyshire. Sean told *Militant* "I'm more politically aware since the strike. I want to get more involved and learn as much as I can. I want to get the other lads in the pit involved. We need a strong broad left in all the unions. By helping to build that we can help those who helped us in the strike." Jim commented: "We've gone back to work now. But that was only one battle. We're going to win the war."

KEVIN MULLINS, National Executive member of the health service union COHSE, a delegate fro Highroyds hospital branch in North West Leeds spoke to *Militant*.

You are known as a Militant *supporter, how do you find the reaction of the membership to your politics?*

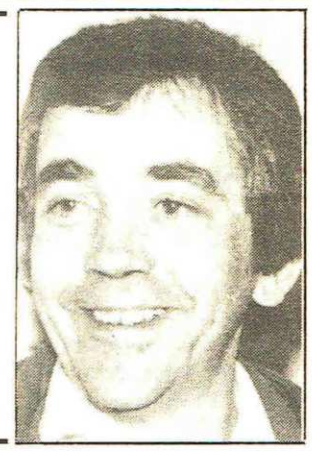
I campaigned as a *Militant* supporter on the programme of the Broad Left, so that says it all.

Do you encounter problems working with different political trends in the Broad Left?

We have had problems. But in the main we have a fairly good relationship with comrades in the Broad Left. Events like this help bring people together. The campaign to change the union leaderships involves an immense amount of work but it's essential if we are to defend low paid workers like my members.

What did you think of Bill Connor's comments on the need for a left alliance on low pay?

Exactly what we need. Unfortunately we are the early days of building that, but you have got to have confidence. Only by having vision for the future will we defeat low pay or any of the other problems we face.





MIKE REYNOLDS, Secretary Glasgow GMBATU 38 branch: "This is not another bullshit conference. I've met up with stewards from Liverpool, London and all over. I take home £50 a week and have a wife and child I've got nothing to lose and everything to fight for.



DOREEN PURVIS, Branch Secretary, CPSA Longbenton DHSS, where the long running civil service computer strike took place. She moved the BLOC resolution on anti-trade union legislation. Ironically, she aiso explained the failure of the ex-Brosd Left NEC, who have voted since to bow down before a Tory injunction and re-ballot CPSA members over industrial action.

Liverpool women's message from BLOC



LESLEY HOLT, a Liverpool TGWU delegate, speaking from the rostrum, argued that the Broad Lefts have a special responsibility to women because of the betrayals of the right wing and the importance to women of a successful fight against rate-capping, privatisation and part-time working.

After the struggles of women in the miners strike, the Longbenton DHSS strike, Barking hospital and many other disputes, no-one could say women were not prepared to struggle. It is the task of the Broad Lefts to ensure such struggles aren't left isolated or women are left to deal with union bureaucrats alone.

The vital thing for women entering struggle, Lesley said, was to see a real leadership being offered. That meant accountability of union leaders was a major issue—women are only apathetic if they think their leaders are apathetic. But they also needed to be offered a programme worth fighting for.

Liverpool city council, she explained, had introduced a minimum wage of £100 per week or ⅔ the naitonal wage—with prorata rates for part-timers.

As a result of the council carrying out its manifesto promises on housing, nurseries and jobs, thousands of women on the estates had lost their cynicism about Labour and come on demonstrations in support of the council in tens of thousands.

On a wider level thousands of miners' wives, seeing a serious struggle being waged had become involved in the union and politics. If socialist policies and a determination to fight for them were shown, she said, women will flock to the Broad Lefts.



KIM SCANLON, the first woman employed as security worker by Liverpool city council: "There are lots of young people on MSC community programme schemes in my branch. I am trying to get them active, come to meetings and to BLOC. We have to awake the awareness of the labour movement".

New AUEW President?

JOHN TOCHER, Broad Left candidate for president of the AUEW, congratulated conference on its choice of venue. Manchester Free Trade Hall is built on the site of the Peterloo massacre, Manchester has a long history in the working people's struggle for democratic rights right up to a recent overflowing meeting at the time of the NGA dispute at Warrington.

The right wing's New Realism is nothing new, he told conference, it merely repeats the ideas of Mondism in the '20s. He attacked the right wing leadership of the AUEW for breaking ranks over resistance to trade union laws.

He called for the movement to get behind the issues which unite us. We can get a radical movement for fundamental change, that mood can be seen amongst the rank and file if they are offered fighting leaderhsip.



the left

They were built on the concessions wrung from Jenkin last year, he argued, and however anybody else defined it, they represented a victory for the people of Liverpool over the Tories.

But it was a victory won despite the national leadership of the Labour Party, he said, and they must play a better role this year.

Commenting on Ken Livingstone's speech he said: "The GLC decision was a serious mistake. It did real damage to the campaign because the GLC had been seen as leading the campaign by many workers. They looked to them and now their confidence has been undermined." The major lesson he drew from it was that the campaigning work had not been done and the GLC did not have the confidence of its workforce.



Bill Connor

He finished with a warning that whatever happens in Liverpool this year or next, the battle will be fought over and over again until we get rid of the Tory government.

But that government represents its class, he said. We need a Labour government which represents our class—not one like the Callagahan cabinet which buckled under the pressure of the IMF and big business. "They represent their system," he said."We must fight for ours. That means fighting for socialism."

The conference adopted resolutions on trade union laws and democracay, local authority ratecapping and an emergency resolution on the Miners Amnesty Campaign. They establish a firm basis of policy for BLOC and useful guidelines on general policy for affiliated Broad Lefts.

After a year of intense activity by union activists around the miners' strike and a host of other disputes and activities, a drop in attendance from the overcrowded Sheffield conference last year is to be expected.

Build Broad Lefts

But the political weight of the conference discussion, the size and seriousness of the individual Broad Left meetings which took place, all indicate that BLOC will play the major role in forging a new leadership of the trade unions over the next few years. Activists must draw the lessons of the past year and turn to the task of building the union Broad Lefts on sound political and organisational foundations.





BLOC conference 1985. Bottom left to right: Ken Livingstone; George Williamson BLOC Organising Secretary; Jock McPherson Quinn BLOC Chair; Derek Hatton.

Industrial Reports

Battle looms over Post Office jobs

EARLIER THIS month UCW Conference in Bournemouth voted to accept a report from the National Executive which amongst other recommendations asked that: "All previous decisions the subjects covered by the Special. . . . Report be reassessed".

By Brian Beckingham

This in effect meant that the UCW leadership were freed from previous conference policy to obtain a shorter working week, leading to more casual staff, redundancies and compulsory productivity linked to the implementation of new technology.

The NEC's victory, was brief. Two important amendments were also carried which rejected any increase in part-time or casual staff and also rejected making the productivity scheme compulsory.

As the *Sunday Times* last week pointed out: "Britain's postal workers are edging nearer a strike following the break down of talks between the Union of Communication Workers and the Post Office last week. The sticking points are the post offices wish to increase part-time workers from 8,500 to 20,000. It's plan is to get all 120,000 workers to join a compulsory productivity scheme and the introduction of more mechanical sorting".

As the report to conference explained, the Post Office is proving intransigent on all major issues and the executive council asked for "Flexibility to negotiate"... "members must understand that both the opportunity for change or for damaging confrontation can arise".

The *Militant* readers' meeting raised £200 for the fighting fund and we sold about 70 papers.



Left: Picket of Borough Post Office in South London. Part of a protest by counter and clerical staff in a number of cities against proposed Post Office closures.
Photo and report by Paul Traynor.

CPSA 'left' and right unite not to fight Tory law

ON THE advice of right-wing General Secretary Alistair Graham and TUC General Council member Ray Alderson, the CPSA National Executive Committee decided, by 11 votes to 10, to reverse the previous NEC decision and comply with the Tories' anti-trade union legislation in this year's Civil Service pay campaign.

The special meeting of the NEC on Monday 25 March was called to discuss the union's response to the government's High Court injunction against the one-day stoppage on 1 April and selective industrial action. The injunction was granted on the grounds that consultation with the members had not been in conformity with the Trade Union Act 1984.

CPSA members will bitterly resent the Tories' interference in the democratic affairs of the union and question why the NEC voted to overturn their previous decision to defy the Tories' anti-trade union laws.

The CPSA is one of the most democratic unions in the TUC. It has traditionally consulted members on national issues through workplace meetings, where votes are cast by show of hands or secret ballot depending on the wishes of members in the branch.

Early voting returns from CPSA branches show a majority for action. This explains the haste with which the Treasury solicitor issued the writ to CPSA headquarters on Friday, giving notice of a High Court hearing on Thursday 28 May.

The debate at the NEC centred around a proposal from Alistair Graham that the current consultative exercise be abandoned and replaced by a ballot that would satisfy the provisions of the Trade Union Act 1984 and be completed by Wednesday 10 April. He also argued for the need to persuade SCPS and IRSF to postpone their one-day strike to coincide with CPSA's on Monday 15 April.

TUC General Council and Communist Party member Ray Alderson added an ammendment calling for separate ballots of CPSA members involved in the regional disruptive action due to start on 2 April. These ballots would also accord with the '84 Act.

In a speech of which Pontius Pilate would have been proud, Alderson attempted to argue that opposition to the Tory laws agreed at the NEC meeting a fortnight ago was no longer tenable. In other words opposition to Tory laws was alright unless the Tories tried to use the law against us!

A procession of Broad Left '84 and right-wing speakers pleaded with the National Executive Committee not to defy the law. Mick Duggan, leading Broad Left '84 member, argued that TUC and CPSA policy of opposition to the Tory's employment laws were now out of date and should therefore be ignored.

Militant supporters argued that the priority must be how we can best win a 1985 pay campaign, but pointed out that it is now impossible for a trade union to embark upon a serious campaign of industrial action without the Tories finding some pretext for declaring the action illegal.

We argued that conducting the consultative exercise in compliance with the 1984 Act was no guarantee of avoiding a conflict with the Tories over their anti-trade union laws. The use of the law and the resultant threat of fines, sequestration and against individual union officials were all clearly designed to scupper the union's plans for an effective campaign of industrial action to defend members' living standards.

In spite of these arguments, Graham's motion and Alderson's amendment scraped through by 11 votes to 10. On 27 March we learned that CPSA had called off the ballot on regional disruptive action—just as we had argued it would have to. The SCPS, quite understandably, refused to accept the logic of having disruptive action in advance of the main ballot. This brings Alderson and Duggan (who seconded the admendment) into line with complete acceptance of the Tory laws against trade unions.

The spineless approach of Broad Left '84 and the right-wing has played into the Tories' hands. But whilst the NEC decision was a setback, all CPSA members must now work doubly hard to ensure we secure an increased majority for industrial action in the reconvened membership ballot due to start next week.

By Chris Baugh
(CPSA National Executive, personal capacity)

Militant

Civil service pay claim
Page 15

Marxism and the Labour Party Pages 8–9

Civil servants, printers

Fight Tory laws



GCHQ anniversary demonstration on 26 January. The writ served by the Treasury is just the latest of many Tory attacks on civil service unions.
Photo: John Harris (IFL)

EMPLOYERS HAVE taken legal action to try and stop two current disputes. Civil Service unions were served a writ to stop industrial action over their pay offer.

The executive of the biggest civil service union the CPSA voted by the narrowest of margins to buckle under to the threats and hold secret ballots. Members of the Communist Party argued for compliance with Tory laws (see page 15).

Print workers, members of NGA and SOGAT at the *Sun* were locked out for refusing to carry out unsafe practices. Murdoch's New International were granted an injunction telling officials to withdraw "directives" for industrial action without a ballot.

The Tories are trying to destroy effective trade unionism. Three acts, the "Employment" Act of 1980 and 1982 and the Trade Union Act of 1984 have eaten away at union rights, demanding secret ballots before industrial action, withdrawing legal protection against breach of contract cases, threatening sympathy action, and attacking unions' political funds. They are designed to impede union action, the main obstacle to Tory plans for an obedient low wage workforce.

The Tories showed their inventiveness during the miners strike, creating new laws and dusting off old laws to stop mass picketing. Miners were jailed and fined for basic trade union activity and the South Wales miners were fined and their assets seized. Tory legislation and common law were mobilised against the miners.

The laws have not stopped workers fighting. The print union NGA were heavily fined for actions in the *Stockport Messenger* dispute, workers at Cammell Laird were jailed, and strikers at Austin Rover were served with an injunction demanding a secret ballot. But workers still look to the unions; they are our first line of defence.

Campaign needed

On all these important occasions the TUC failed to support the workers under attack. So have the right wing union leaders. When Austin Rover slapped an injunction on six unions in November, the leaders of the AUEW and EETPU betrayed their own members' interests by repudiating the strike. Much now depends on the left union leaders to show determination worthy of their own members.

In the Austin Rover dispute, the Transport and General Workers Union bravely refused to comply with the injunction, refused to appear in court and were fined £200,000 for contempt.

Unfortunately this defiance was not accompanied by a campaign. Union leaders must be prepared to go to factories and depots throughout the country to explain the importance of fighting the Tory laws and build a mass movement of strikes and protests to defeat them.

If the unions don't actively oppose the laws the Tories will only become bolder in their attacks. There must be no return to so-called "new realism" policies.

Councillors and trade unionists in Liverpool have defied the government and defended themselves against legal attacks over council spending by taking their case to every section of the local labour movement.

Speaking at the Broad Left Organising Committee (BLOC) conference last weekend, Derek Hatton deputy leader of Liverpool council told delegates, "if we have to choose whether to break laws defending the interests of ordinary people, the old, the young, the sick the disabled or to break class laws designed to hit ordinary people there is only one decision to make."

More and more workers will face this difficult choice as Thatcher tries to make all effective opposition illegal. It faces councillors and local authority workers over ratecapping, and now faces all trade unionists over strikes.

No more retreats

Workers must not stand alone in these battles. Trade union activists must work to commit their unions to fighting the anti union laws. No more retreats! Last week's BLOC conference passes a resolution calling for a fight to commit the TUC to call a general strike as the first step in solidarity with any union under attack through these laws. It also called for a massive propaganda campaign from the unions to convince every worker of these policies.

The Tories' plans can be stopped by mobilising the resources of the labour movement. Take the fight to all workers. Don't let the Tories destroy our rights.

By Roger Shrives



Miners march in Glasgow, 16 March.
Photo: Rick Matthews (IFL)

Miners' ballot
Keep up campaign against sackings

THE FIGHT for the re-instatement of all sacked miners will go on despite the rejection of the 50p levy, by 58,721 votes to 50,492.

The ballot result is a setback, but especially in areas with the highest number of sackings, there will be no let-up in the campaign until every striker has his job back.

The miners must not be left to fight these battles alone. Their strike inspired the whole movement; their brave stand lifted the spirits of all workers. Now the whole movement needs to be mobilised behind the National Amnesty Campaign to force the government and NCB to back down.

Announcing the ballot result, General Secretary Peter Heathfield said it was "disappointing but not unexpected...our members and their families saw reinstatement as a campaigning issue which required the total support of the labour movement.

"A number of areas and branches were already exploring ways in which they could support the families of sacked colleagues. The national union is convinced it can raise sufficient funds to sustain its members until it won that re-instatement".

Miners, however, will be asking why the ballot was not campaigned for by the leadership. There was no explanation of how the money would be used. Some activists felt that it was letting the NCB off the hook, using financial support as an alternative to fighting for their jobs.

A vigorous campaign, especially in the areas with few sacked men, to explain through leaflets and pithead meetings that the levy was a weapon for waging the struggle for total amnesty, would have swung the vote the other way. The campaign should have been used to begin the fightback to defend the union from the new wave of attacks launched by the board.

The threat to lay off half the Kent miners is the most serious in a whole number of attempts by the NCB to capatilise on the end of the strike by curbing union rights and worsening working conditions. Many branches will now be considering adopting their own 50p levy.

The NUM executive must now involve the sacked miners and draw on the support of the 50,000 who backed them in the ballot, in the kind of widespread campaign, both amongst their members and the movement, which should have taken place before the ballot.

There must be a massive drive to raise money for the sacked men and fight for their jobs.

★ Amnesty for all sacked miners!

★ Solidarity with the miners in prison!

★ A trade union and Labour Party levy to support the sacked miners!

★ The dropping of all outstanding charges against strikers!

★ The next Labour government to reinstate all sacked miners!

By Pat Craven



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