Militant

The Marxist Paper for Labour and Youth

ISSUE 745
19 April 1985

25p

The case for a minimum wage.

See centre pages

Schools:



On the YTURC lobby of Parliament on 28 February.



Photo reproduced by kind permission of the *Glasgow Herald*

Part of the 21 March School Students demonstration in Glasgow.

THE HALF-DAY strike organised by the School Students Action Committee has been condemned in Parliament by Thatcher.

"Despite the inadequacies of some YTS schemes", asked Liberal MP David Alton on 16 April, "does not the Prime Minister agree that the calls by some irresponsible members of the Labour Party for young people to come out on strike and leave their schools on 25 April is mischievous and irresponsible and is an attempt to use young people as cannon fodder?"

Cheap labour schemes

Thatcher replied: "I find deplorable that politically inspired and counter-productive action. It is against the Youth Training Scheme which is designed to help young people acquire more skills and better training in order to help them get jobs. The act is totally inspired by the extreme left wing of the trade union movement".

But most Youth Training Schemes do not give skills, jobs and training. With pay of £26.50 a week, the schemes are cheap labour alternatives to real permanent jobs and a cosmetic to hide the true unemployment level. Around 600,000 unemployed youngsters have been chasing under 10,000 vacancies.

No jobs

Even the Manpower Services Commission, who run the schemes, admit only 56% of trainees get *any* job when they leave, and the vast majority of those are in low paid, unskilled, clerical or sales jobs. In Sunderland only 30% of boys and 40% of girls leaving the schemes between April and June last year found jobs.

School leavers face a grim prospect under the Tories. School students are not being used as "cannon fodder", for the first time they are fighting back against being used as "profit fodder".

Education feature and NUT Conference report

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THE YOUTH Trades Union Rights Campaign have called a demonstration and rally in Glasgow on Saturday 27 April. Called under the slogan 'No forced labour on YTS', speakers will include Billy Bragg, Bob Gillespie of SOGAT '82 and Tam McPhee, Chair of the Scottish NUM youth section.

The demonstration assembles at 11.30am opposite the High Court at Glasgow Green, marching to Queens Park for a rally at 1.30pm.

Strike back at Thatcher

ON 21 March in Glasgow, 20,000 school students took part in the biggest ever schools strike. Tory attacks on youth, especially their proposals to introduce a two year compulsory YTS, disgusted school students.

All over Britain many similar strikes have taken place, reflecting the mood of anger in Britain's schools. These protests, which have been unorganised, have often been sparked off by the teachers' strike. Where the case has been explained, any antagonism to the teachers has been turned around. What is clear is that this mood needs to be organised and given direction.

At this years Labour Party Young Socialists conference over Easter, a 200 strong meeting organised by the School Students Action Committee, unaminously agreed to call a half-day school strike on Thursday 25 April.

The Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign is acting on behalf of the School Students Action Committee for fear of victimisation of SSAC members.

The strike is not anti-teacher, not anti-school, or anti-parents, the strike is for a future for youth, saying no to YTS conscription and acting in support of the teachers. School students should follow the example of the miners and teachers, fighting the Tories; show them we are not going to *sit back, we are going to fight back.*

Democracy in TGWU

TO THE accompaniment of an orchestrated campaign by the Tory press, the right wing of the Transport and General Workers' Union are demanding a fresh ballot for the position of general secretary.

Left-wing candidate Ron Todd won the election in May last year by 273,662, votes to 228,845 for George Wright, Welsh regional secretary and candidate of the right.

Union members are angry at the wild and so far largely unsubstantiated charges of ballot-rigging. They fear that the right are hoping to bulldoze the union into a new election held against a background of hysterical propaganda from the media.

The campaign for a re-ballot has been launched eleven months after the election, with it seems only the flimsiest of evidence. If ballot-rigging were on the scale the press are implying, why has it taken so long to unearth the evidence?

Re-ballot

Pressure is mounting on the executive council to throw out the re-ballot unless concrete evidence can be produced. In the present union-bashing atmosphere being generated by the media, it could only harm the union. It could well affect the crucial vote on the political fund, in which activists are fighting to retain the union's link with the Labour Party.

Joining the chorus, with a call for the use of postal ballots, is Terry Duffy, President of the AUEW. Far more than in the TGWU, AUEW postal ballots are subject to enormous interference from the Tory press, with voting done away form the workplace and branch meeting where the issues and the candidates can be discussed. In addition it has been alleged that many AUEW members do not receive ballot papers.

As Moss Evans, the TGWU's retiring general secretary has pointed out, the worst example of union ballot rigging, in the ETU in the 1950s, occurred under a system of postal balloting.

Damage to union

It is hypocrisy for the right and the press to talk about union democracy.

This campaign is clearly political and timed to cause the maximum damage to Britain's largest union. They hope to manufacture a victory for George Wright and move the union to the right, draw support away from the political fund and lay the ground for the introduction of undemocratic postal balloting in the TGWU and other unions . The demand for a fresh ballot should be flung out.

Militant supporters, the very ones the right wants to witchhunt out of the union, have a consistent record of demanding greater democracy within the TGWU. In order to ensure that there can be no further controversies of this kind, these demands need to be implemented without delay:

1. All officials to be elected, subject to recall by the membership and paid no more than the average wage of a skilled worker;
2. Properly constituted and regular meetings of all union branches;
3. The right of candidates in all elections to publish election addresses and campaign on what they stand for;
4. Each branch to elect rank and file scrutineers to count the votes;
5. Counterfoils on all ballot papers;
6. Publication of the results for every branch;
7. A recall executive council meeting to hear all allegations.

These procedures would ensure the right of every member to vote, while at the same time maintaining the branch and workplace as the central unit of the union, where the political issues and the candidates' views can be debated.

TGWU Militant supporters fight back

LEADING THE campaign for a fresh ballot is George Wright, Welsh regional secretary of the TGWU and loser in last year's election. At the same time the Welsh executive have moved a resolution to the Wales Labour Party conference demanding action against the Militant Tendency.

Similar resolutions have been submitted to the union's biennial delegate conference, demanding not only that *Militant* supporters be banned from the Labour Party, but also that they be declared ineligible to hold office within the union. So much for democracy within the union if members are to be deprived of their democratic right to stand for office!

Deakin

If these resolutions are passed, the TGWU will be back in the days of Deakin, when left-wing members were hounded by the leadership. When political bans against Communist Party members were lifted by the TGWU, it marked a great step forward for the whole trade union movment. There must be no going back.

Members are fighting back with letters of protest to the Welsh leadership. "The last thing I thought we would have need would be the expulsion of activists and members" wrote Bernard Norman, a long-standing and well respected TGWU member and treasurer of Caerphilly Labour Party, of which George Wright is a member.

From Gateshead 8/600 branch, Bob Harker has written: " We must fight the real enemy, the capitalist system, stop this senseless witchhunt which only makes us weak and allows our enemy to divide us, which in turn prolongs the working class suffering and misery."

By Bill Mullins
(TGWU, West Bromwich District Committee, personal capacity)

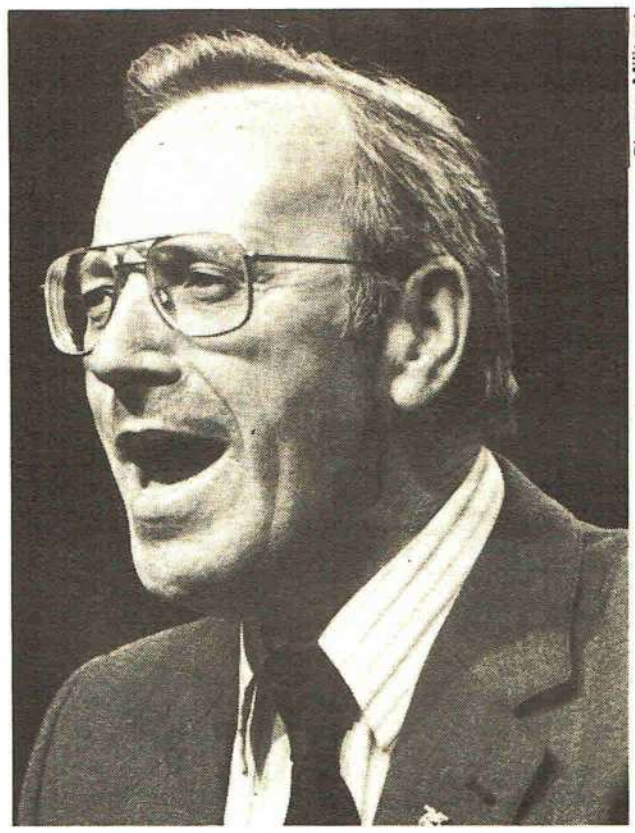


Photo: Militant

Moss Evans, outgoing General Secretary of TGWU.



Ron Todd, General Secretary elect of TGWU.

Hundreds protest at expulsion

TO READ the Tory press over the recent months, you'd think Marxism was on its last legs and there was mass support for right wing attacks on *Militant* supporters. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Right wing inspired organisational attacks *have* been taken against *Militant* supporters, but only in the face of widespread opposition from the ranks of the labour movment.

In Newcastle for example, Bill Hopwood has been expelled from the Labour Party—his 'crime' was for his name to appear on a leaflet advertising a *Militant* readers' meeting.

However, at the meeting of the Newcastle East CLP general committee which took the decision, over 20 less-active delegates appeared, turning out solely to ensure the expulsion went through (64 votes to 34).

Yet this vote did not represent the true feelings of ordinary Labour Party members, represented by the 400 letters, the 1,300 signature petition and seven resolutions from branches and affiliated organisations the CLP recieved protesting at the expulsion.

Coventry SE

The right wing realise they are in a precarious position and that their attacks are unpopular. This was shown at the meeting of the Labour Party's appeals and mediation committee on Monday.

This looked into the report of the enquiry into Coventry South East Labour Party following claims that the 'Militant Tendency' had 'used' the election campaign there in 1983—the 'crime' this time was that *Militant* supporters helped secure an election victory for the Labour candidate, Dave Nellist, who won the seat, against the national trend.

While the four strong committee only rejected Dennis Skinner's proposal to drop the whole issue on the chairman's casting vote, the move by right winger Neville Hough for the party to "take action" against the Coventry Party, did not receive a seconder. The report will now go to the National Executive Committee without a recommendation from the appeals committee, which shows the right wing's indecision.

The NEC will discuss this on Wednesday 24 April. The secretary of Coventry SE Labour Party is proposing that the CLP organise a coach to lobby the NEC. For further details, phone Tom Smith on Coventry 445631.

The campaign against the witch-hunt will build momentum. *Militant* supporters are holding a series of meetings in the regions where organisational attacks against Marxists have taken place.

A meeting is being arranged in Newcastle East against the expulsion of Bill Hopwood. A meeting has been called for 9 May in Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs, against the expulsion of Dugald McKinnon (see last week's paper); and the witch-hunting call by the Welsh TGWU leaders will be answered at a *Militant* readers' fringe meeting at the Welsh Labour Party conference on May 17 in Llandudno (details—see page 13).

Left MPs thwarted in backing councils

DEFIANT LABOUR councils and the Labour Party's ranks were backed by the left-wing Campaign Group of MPs but at the same time got a slap in the face from the party leadership.

On 3 April, backed by Neil Kinnock, the right wing and 'soft left' of the parliamentary Labour Party voted down a resolution from the Campaign Group which supported Labour councils refusing to set a rate. The right wing's own resolution called for a 'negotiated settlement'.

In moving the motion the campaign group stated: 'We recognise that the non-compliance councils are carrying the decisions of the 1984 Labour Party conference in defending jobs and services that the Tories are determined to destroy".

It was clear that the right wing had mobilised for the meeting. The Campaign Group offered a compromise resolution, so that the PLP could remain united during the current struggle. But this was turned down and the right wing and Neil Kinnock insisted their resolution stood and was passed.

It is clear that the Labour leadership have no intention of abiding by conference decisions, and are quite prepared to stand aside and let the Labour councils in the firing line fight alone.

Salford children fed by teachers

IN SALFORD, the hard poverty-stricken conditions of the 1930s have already returned. Teachers in many Salford schools are having to wash and feed some pupils before classes can begin. The children are given a warm drink, cereal or porridge.

"It is true that children have to be fed" said Judith Elderkin, Salford NUT secretary: "They come in late, they're listless and it's obvious they've had no breakfast".

Parts of Salford have a 60% unemployment rate and some of the worst housing conditions; and nearly a fifth of Salford families have just one parent. Salford council are looking into reorganisation of their welfare aid service and discussing visits to families at home. This however, has to be contrasted with the recent decision to increase the rates by 26% plus a £1 increase in council rents.

By Dave Morgan
(Worsley LPYS)

Billy Bragg tour boosts Young Socialists

HUNDREDS OF names for the Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign petition have been collected in London during Billy Bragg's tour for the GLC's "Jobs '85" campaign. At each gig local LPYS branches have set up stalls outside.

At Ealing 200 signed the petition out of an audience of 250. At Brixton, LPYS members sold out of copies of *Socialist Youth*. In Billy Bragg's home town of Barking many signed the petition after he told the audience to get organised.

At Stoke Newington Young Socialists sold 50 *Socialist Youth* in an hour. Hundreds signed the petition while 42 people joined the YS—some adresses were from as far afield as Belfast and Germany.

Just before performing 'Between the wars' he told the crowd that just buying a record was not enough; they should go to the LPYS stall and join up.

Miner defends links with SA black unions

ROY JONES a striking Staffordshire miner, visited South African gold and coal miners at the invitation of militant blacks in the SA National Union of Mineworkers during the coal dispute.

But astonishingly Peter Heathfield, General Secretary of the British NUM has expressed his "embarrassment" at "newspaper cuttings in UK and South African publications concerning the visit of Mr Jones and the subsequent comments he made."

Peter Heathfield's main criticism was that the national headquarters and national officials knew nothing of the invitation or any visit. But the Staffordshire area president knew of the visit in advance and many international solidarity visits were set up at Area level.

Heathfield also raises questions of official protocol to attack the appropriateness of the visit. The NUM unfortunately has not so far declared recognition and support for the South African NUM.

Roy Jones not only mobilised support for the strike but has spoken at many miners' meetings in Britain, reporting on the conditions of the South African miners, and their heroic struggles, braving the guns of the apartheid regime police to make the NUM the largest democratic black union in South Africa. Roy, incidently was made the first white member of the SA NUM.

The South African Labour Education Project (SALEP) who helped organise Roy's visit have issued a reply. They say the attacks are " a result of the pernicious position adopted towards the re-emerging trade unions in South Africa by the exiled South African Communist Party and those with whom it has influence in the British Labour movement. For a whole period they argued that no genuine trade unions could exist under the repressive apartheid regime. Hostile to direct links between workers, they insisted that only the CP controlled South African Congress of Trade Unions in exile was to be supported.

"While unable to sustain this position in the face of the rise of militant non racial unions with hundreds of thousands of black members in South Africa these labour leaders continue in their hostility to direct links".

Peter Heathfield's letter has been used by Labour's right wing to sustain a witch hunt against SALEP, which SALEP say was initiated by the South African Communist Party and its supporters. In March the right wing majority of Labour's NEC with some "left" support voted to ban SALEP from any contact with or help from the Labour Party.

SALEP say they will carry on their work in strengthening direct links between South African workers and workers internationally, to build solidarity in the enormous fight against apartheid and the capitalist mineowners who benefit from it.

Hungary to give backing to Shah

EDDIE SHAH, the owner of the *Stockport Messenger* is starting a new newspaper. It will be largely financed by the Hungarian International Bank, a state-run bank in "Communist" Hungary.

In 1983, Shah was involved in a protracted battle with the print union NGA over the closed shop in his Warrington printing works. Shah tore up the closed shop agreement with the NGA and hired non-union labour, making sure the workers he employed had the "right" attitude to scabbing.

The full force of the police and the judiciary came down on the NGA members for daring to stand up to Shah. Isn't it strange for a "socialist" state to lend money to a known strikebreaker?

But this is not an oversight by some minor Hungarian official. It is a conscious policy. Loaning £6.2 million, towards the £20 million Shah needs, says the banks's managing director was; "from a commercial point of view a very good project."

Next time the press talk about *Militant* or the trade unions living on Moscow gold, throw the lie back in their faces.

Hungarian gold will finance Shah's anti-working class vitriol. Polish coal was exported to Britain during the miners' strike, to the great relief of Thatcher and MacGregor.

Kadar's Stalinist bureaucracy in Hungary have a bloody record of crushing workers' struggles. The workers on the streets of Budapest in the revolutionary upsurge in 1956 were demanding that they, not the secret police and bureaucracy, should control the state and the economy.

While British workers are fighting to get rid of the Shahs and Thatchers, Hungary's working class will be fighting to overthrow the parasitic bureaucrats like Kadar.

By Tim White



Police wade in to break the picket at Eddie Shah's *Stockport Messenger* in 1983.





Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

Sunday's conference in London where representatives from various Labour Parties discussed black sections.

Socialist policies to win blacks

ON SUNDAY 14 April representatives from various Labour Parties met again to discuss how they were going to defy LP policy not to have constitutional black sections.

Despite even the Greater London Labour Party voting against black sections at its conference earlier this year, some parties are still pushing ahead with their plans to set them up.

Many of the people involved claim that the LP is 'institutionally racist' and ruled by white males. They even go as far to claim that if they don't get what they want they will leave the LP taking the 'black vote' with them, therefore leaving 53 Labour MPs at risk! One person even claimed that black youth riot and vandalise because there are no black sections in the LP!

Constitution

Effectively what these people are doing is reducing the important question of racism and it's effects, down to a simple constitutional issue. And the Tory press is more than ready to use this argument to discredit to Labour Party now that it's ahead in the opinion polls.

The fight against racism should be discussed seriously in the Labour Party and campaigning work done to win blacks to the party. It shouldn't be reduced to squabbling over positions in the party.

It's absolutely ludicrous of these people to think that at their say-so, blacks will stop voting for Labour. Blacks are becoming more cynical towards the Labour Party and many black youth don't vote at all, but it's not because black sections don't exist, but because the party has failed to deliver on its policies in the past, and unless it starts to fight on socialist policies and fight seriously against racism, they won't win over black workers.

By Linda Douglas

Back USDAW left candidate

THE nominations for the new USDAW General Secretary are now underway. The voting for the position will begin on 13 May. The USDAW Broad Left is urging support for Bill Connor.

If low pay is to be fought and eradicated, USDAW must have a leadership capable of mobilising the membership. Bill Connor is the only candidate able to do this. The USDAW Broad Left is urging all USDAW members to attend their branches and nominate Bill for General Secretary before 3 May.

(USDAW Election results—see page 15; Low-Pay and minimum wage campaign—see centre pages.)

Belfast elections

THE Northern Ireland Labour and Trade Union Group are fielding three candidates in the local elections on 15 May, in Upper Falls, South Belfast and East Belfast.

Militant Third National Rally

21st Birthday celebration
Sunday 3 November, 1985
Royal Albert Hall
Speakers include:

Peter Taaffe Ted Grant Harry De Boer

All tickets £3 (Cheques to "Militant Rally")
(Créche available, but places must be booked)

THE Albert Hall, scene of the first rally of welcome for the Russian revolution in 1917, will be the venue this year for *Militant*'s 21st birthday!

***Militant* is proud to include on this year's platform Harry De Boer—the veteran Trotskyist and Teamsters' picket captain during their historic 1934 strike. Harry was shot and wounded during that strike by the police. Later on Harry went to Mexico for a few weeks and met Leon Trotsky. Harry will be speaking of his experiences in the labour movement up to his meeting with Trotsky.**

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Gordon Bennet writes—

MICHAEL COCKS MP is Labour's Chief Whip and a very important person—or at least he thinks so. He's also very keen to see that fair play triumphs in the reselection process for Labour MPs.

This evidently was the case in the lead up to the 1983 General Election when after boundary changes in Bristol it was Michael rather than Tony Benn who got the nomination.

After threats of legal action this time round it appears that 'fairness' will once again triumph and Comrade Cocks will be reselected to fight the next election.

However he's still not happy. It seems that some left wing MPs actually donate a considerable part of their parliamentary salary to the labour movement.

Most party members are aware of the fact that Dennis Skinner donated the whole of his salary to the miners during the coal strike.

Equally most party members know that Dave Nellist and Terry Fields were elected as 'workers' MPs on a worker's wage'.

Cocks has now written to Jim Mortimer to complain that such practices are basically pretty corrupt because it's tantamount to left MPs buying their seats.

With all the accumulated skill of a political archaeologist he's unearthed something called the 'Hastings agreement' which has been reliably carbon-dated to 1933 and states that no union, candidate,or MP may donate more than £200 to the local party.

Even if we disregard the fact that inflation since 1933 may just mean that the 'Hastings limit' is worth a tiny bit more than two hundred notes today, it never ceases to amaze me how jealously the right wing guard their monopoly of bullshit.

In the disgusting, money grabbing, careerist world of the right wing, it's OK to make a mint out of representing the party.

You can buy a big house, maybe a farm, and generally live the life of Riley. But as soon as you start donating any money to the movement that put you in Parliament then we're talking corruption!

With perks and allowances MPs earn more in one year than most workers earn in five. If Cocks feels hard done by then he should stand aside for someone who regards representing working people as the honour that it is.

Of course there is another solution. If all Labour MPs follow the lead of Skinner, Fields and Nellist then not only would they be a lot closer to the lifestyle of their constituents, but the party would be a great deal healthier financially.And no-one could then say that any particular candidate had an advantage in reselection contests.

After the miners' strike

Durham's prototype union goes phut!

REMEMBER ROY Jenkins and his prototype aeroplane which never quite got off the ground—the SDP? Well, we have one similar in Durham, known as a CWAT. (Don't tell anyone but they stand for for—shush—Colliery Workers and Allied Trades).

The problem is that our prototype crashed into the hanger doors as the scabs were heaving it out of the wind tunnel. Based at Wearmouth colliery the design team of CWAT are claiming support of between 500 and 1,500 specialist engineers (in the main) including some ground crew from Lancashire—150 miles away.

At the founding conference at Downhill Working Mens club only 120 plus attended. There was much talk of a 'proper union'. NUM spies in the audience reported that the leadership was self-appointed, while questions about elections for positions were pushed aside. It was also evident that the majority including the leadership were of advanced age, redundancy seekers and beneficaries of NUM facilities prior to the strike.

The great preponderance of mechanics present led a call from the floor for a future crafts section of CWAT! This was enthusiastically received by the platform but visibly displeased non-craft workers. Would they be thrown out of the flying pig without a parachute?

In true scab fashion CWAT leaders Bob 'bomber' Skelton and Alan 'Biggles' Bellenie have traipsed to the management-run *Sunderland Echo* for publicity. (Journalists there are locked out for fighting for their jobs.)

In addition CWAT have been allowed to freely distribute literature and posters around the pit, falsely claiming that anyone who broke the strike was dismissed from the NUM. In fact only 37 out of 1,700 NUM members have been expelled, with a higher proportion of mechanics expelled by their own separate branch.

Melt away

The NUM replied to these lies in a leaflet and the CWAT leaders were seen off. NUM members should recognise that within a few years, if not months, CWAT leaders will be enjoying redundancy money. Also CWAT will not be recognised by the TUC, nor receive any benefits of such an affiliation; CWAT has no money nor the ability to undertake claims for compensation. Their coal allowances are paid for by the NUM membership. And CWAT leaders would be incapable of defending workers who fell foul of management, or defending wages and conditions. Even the NCB hints that CWAT will melt away.

By a Durham mechanic



Photo: Dave Sinclair

Durham miners march to the Durham Gala in the summer of last year during the strike. The NUM will continue to be the real voice of rank and file miners in the Durham Area.

Reflections of a Wearmouth miner

DAVE HOPPER, Secretary of Wearmouth Lodge NUM and executive member, Durham Area was interviewed by BOB HARKER at the end of the strike.

'The general mood of the lads who remained on strike was one of frustration, they went through a hell of a lot throughout the 12 months of strike and I think it's probably the most unsatisfactory way the strike could have ended.

I think one of the bitterest pills to swallow has obviously been the lack of an amnesty for the members who have been sacked for pursuing the union's policy during the strike.

I think there could be repercussions against the leadership as a result of this strike but that obviously remains to be seen. It has politicised a lot of miners—especially the younger miners who have never been involved in an industrial dispute before.

I think that at grass roots level, after this, we will come through and pursue the correct policy. I certainly feel, and I think the vast majority of the miners feel, that the policies were correct in this particular dispute.

In the end we had to go on the retreat, but our day will certainly come again. The decision in Durham was that we should attempt to go through the local area procedures to get men reinstated.

We may seem to have lost the battle but the war goes on. We will now have to use a strategy from inside the pit. There is one thing that we have got to make sure that we never do again, and that is to allow the Coal Board to build up stocks to such levels that we were foolish enough to allow prior to the strike.

We have had tremendous support from the NUS, NUPE, NUR and ASLEF but unfortunately it hasn't been forthcoming from a lot of other trade unions, and I think that's probably why we are in the position that we are today, along with the failure of a majority of miners in the Midlands to respond to the strike call.

We have had marvellous support from overseas trade unions, and the international movement as a whole, but unfortunately for us, it's not been met by support from the leadership of the British trade union movement.'

Danish workers' support for NUM

ANDY ALLEN, a young miner from Yorkshire and a member of Fitzwilliam LPYS and Frickley NUM talks about his visit to Denmark after the end of the strike to raise cash from support groups.

'I flew to Copenhagen to speak to a rally of young Danish apprentices, the equivalent of YTS in Britain These trainees earn about £80 per week but they have to pay half back in taxes, and the cost of living is extremely high.

They have currently been campaigning for a 35-hour week and guaranteed jobs after training.

On my first day I spoke to about 150 young workers about the miners' strike. I told them of my own personal experiences through the strike—with the picketing, the police and the courts.

I explained to them all the harsh lessons the young miners were having to learn—how to organise for the next Tory onslaught. I was given a standing ovation, even from the ultra-left factions who had previously heckled when I mentioned *Militant* and it's sister paper *Socialisten*.

Immediatley after the speech there was a collection to cover the air fare. They gave around £120 in three minutes! Later at a social I spoke to the same people who again gave another £80.

The next day we visited the Copenhagen Miners' Support group, who are still collecting for the NUM, to keep the union running and beat the sequestration order.

The previous week the support group had organised a meeting of dockers who gave £700 in one night. All the coal in Denmark is brought from Britain in boats handled by the dockers.'



Photo: Mediearbejdeme Foto og Arkiv

Sacked British miner Chris Herriot (foreground), Monktonhall NUM, visited Danish dockers to gain support and cash during the strike.

An MP on a worker's wage

THE RIGHT-wing of the Labour Party are now resorting to desperate measures in order to stop left-wing candidates being selected in the constituencies. Last week Michael Cocks, right-wing MP for Bristol South, launched an astonishing attack on MP's who donate money to the Labour Party.

Cocks accused these MPs of attempting to buy votes in the reselection process and invoked the 'Hastings agreement', which lays down rules to prevent corruption in the Labour Party, to support his attacks on MP's like Terry Fields, who donates £1,000 a year to Broadgreen CLP. Terry Fields, who was elected in 1983 on the biggest swing to Labour in the country, stood on the platform of 'a workers' MP on a worker's wage' and in his first year as an MP donated over a third of his wages to the labour movement.

On the other hand how much does Michael Cocks, who earns £33,590 a year as Chief Whip, donate to Bristol south CLP? He refuses even to recognise the officers of the CLP, as they are left wingers.

Terry Fields said: "Michael Cocks is feeling the hot breath of reselection on his neck. I have received enquiries from within Bristol South, asking for details of what it means to live on a worker's wage, so this issue is obviously being discussed within Michael Cocks' own constituency.

"I am privileged to represent the Labour Party and the ordinary people of Broadgreen and I don't see why I should receive more for doing this job than I did as a fireman.

"Insead of attacking MPs who donate money to the campaigning work of the Labour Party, Michael Cocks would be better employed investigating how many MP's have not given the £100 they were requested to donate to the Labour Party by Neil Kinnock.

"I have nothing to hide and I would welcome a debate with Michael Cocks on this issue, to let ordinary Party members decide which one of us is more committed to raising money for the Labour Party and in defending the democratic process of reselection".



Terry Fields canvassing in Broadgreen constituency in 1983 when he won the seat with a four per cent swing for Labour—the campaign's slogan was "a workers' MP on a worker's wage". Photo: Militant

Defend Labour's ties to unions

THE TORIES' changes to trade union law, forcing unions to ballot on the political fund is a direct attack on the funding of the Labour Party and the political rights of workers held over decades. But the TUC and Labour leaderships have maintained a low profile. A bold campaign is vital to defend political funds and to win millions of workers to actively supporting the Labour Party. We publish below, in a shortened form, an article which first appeared in the EETPU *Militant* supporters' journal, *Beacon*, which puts these arguments in their historical context.

IT WAS the bitter experience of the working class organised in the trade unions which led to the conclusion that political action was necessary to secure rights for the workers that industrial struggles, however successful, could not secure.

In creating an independent political voice for labour, workers were for the first time using their political rights through the Labour Party to challenge the employing class in the form of capital.

In 1927 following the defeat of the 1926 general strike, the Tories, under Baldwin's leadership, reversed the political levy for trade unionists from 'contracting out' to 'contracting in'.

However, Baldwin's 1926 act rebounded on the Tories when workers organised to collect the political levy. Not only did they collect from those originally paying but from those who had previously withheld the money from the Labour Party, demonstrating quite clearly that the hard won rights of the workers cannot be taken away by a lawyer's pen in Parliament!

Historic link

Once again in the '80s the Tories are attempting to break the historic link between the industrial and political wings of the working class.

In their period of 'new realism', the TUC agreed a voluntary code with the Tories on trade union political funds. Undoubtedly the criteria the Tories will apply to the code is how many trade unionists will 'contract out' of the political fund; ie. affiliation to the Labour Party.

It is likely that if the ballots fund, and affiliation to Labour, then the Tories will break the agreement with the TUC and change the law to make 'contracting in' the normal procedure.

The strategy of the TUC appears to be to try and placate the Tories and prevent these developments taking place. However, in agreeing the voluntary code they are preparing the way for 'contracting in', and in the process leading the movement up a political cul-de-sac. The rank and file of the movement must demand that the leadership of the TUC stand firm on affiliation to the Labour Party. Our political rights are not for sale.

The attempt by the Tories to chop off the political arm of the working class is dictated by the ever deepening crisis within the capitalist economy.

Against the background of attacks on jobs, wages, conditions, services and so on, workers are becoming more radicalised in looking for a solution to these problems. The ideas of socialism, the ideas of Marxism are daily becoming powerful arguments against the capitalist system.

It is to cut across this process that the Tories are attacking workers' political rights. This however will rebound on the Tories as it did with Baldwin in 1927. It will turn into the opposite of what the Tories intended as workers are being pushed into joining the Labour Party.

The Tories and the ruling class have always sought to neutralise the potential power of the Labour Party to change society resulting in a mixture of licence and restrictions on workers' political rights.

The Tories' idea of democracy also reveals their class interest. Having taken a democratic decision to have a political fund and affiliate to the Labour Party, those who voted against are then given the chance to defy this decision by 'contracting out'.

This is the same as saying that having democratically decided to go on strike the minority who voted against can remain at work. Not an argument many workers would support!

Trade unionists today must ensure that the Tories' latest plans backfire. The campaign to maintain the political levy must be taken to every member.



Photo: D Pearson

Picket by NUPE members at the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle, against privatisation plans. The Tories want the whole of the NHS to be run like Harley Street, where consultants charge big fees which most people could not afford.

Rich pickings from private clinics

NHS in crisis

THE CANCER of private medicine is one of the few growth areas of 'private enterprise' in Thatcher's Britain.

Tory plans to privatise parts of our NHS can be very lucrative for the consultants who work part-time for the NHS.

Aneurin Bevan, the Labour minister of Health who launched the NHS in 1947, wanted to stamp out private practice but was faced with an intransigent profession and ended up, as he put it, 'stuffing their mouths with gold'.

It meant that consultants could work for the NHS and continue with private practice as well, making for themselves a spectacular income.

An orthopaedic surgeon recently admitted what he earns as a consultant at a teaching hospital doing four and a half days work, leaving him half a day to see private patients in a Harley St room he rents to operate a clinic.

He earns £23,500 from the NHS, but his half day a week in Harley St, earns him £50,000 per year—twice as much. To 'earn' his £50,000 he sees perhaps a dozen patients at £40 or £50 a time and does a couple of hours in a private hospital operating on two or three cases.

The private health insurers pay up to £615 for an operation to the surgeon and anaesthatist; the surgeon's fee is two-thirds. Competition is cut-throat. An orthopaedic surgeon charges £500 for what he says is "one of the most straightforward operations you can do, much easier than a fracture. It's an hour—well, an hour and a half. Gradually one hopes to get more hip patients as one moves up the tree. A hip is money for jam."

A senior gynaecologist who earns £60,000 from his private practice, and another £25,000 or so for his work at a central London teaching hospital, said he supposed he spent two thirds of his time in the NHS.

Big 'tips'

Often rich Arab patients earn these consultants extras, trips to the Middle East, Concorde ticket supplied—one consultant said, "in the end you don't charge a fee, they just give you money. As a rule it's very much more than £500. Some times they give you a gold watch as well or a trip to New York to see a wealthy patient. After expenses I shall charge £500 at least."

Some doctors make no bones about charging foreign patients extra because they think that these patients are more demanding than the 'humble' British.

"If I am rung up by a patient twice a day, and get relatives asking all sorts of questions, I might add on a hundred pounds for the hassle. On the other hand foreign patients often pay in cash, which meant you didn't have to tell the tax man."

A physician says that even at £70 a consultation, his two afternoons in Harley St don't bring him more than about £20,000 a year; "it's the surgeons, with their operating fees who make the big money."

It is this exploitation of people's ill-health that the Tories would like to see throughout the Health Service with a small minority raking in the money.

What Aneurin Bevan failed to do in 1947 must be carried out by Labour now.

Private medicine must be abolished- there can be no price on ill-health. A completely free National Health Service with no charges on treatment, and without pay-beds must be set up.

Labour must fight the erosion of the NHS due to privatisation, and together with the trade unions, must ensure the NHS is democratically run with area health authorities which truly represent the people who use and work for the NHS.

By Ian Hughes
(CPSA)

Council jobs and services under attack

Stand firm with Liverpool

THE POSITION of Liverpool City Council is still firm. There will be no cuts in services, no redundancies, and no rate increases to compensate for Tory cuts.

We intend to inject that philosophy and that programme into the National Campaign Committee of Local Authorities. We recognise that some of the Labour councils have fallen by the wayside which was not entirely unexpected.

But those that remain are in the front line. We recognise the necessity to continue and develop the campaign, and—from Liverpool's point of view—to show by example that Liverpool is prepared to make a stand, and that they should stand with us.

To pursue this programme and this policy, a national conference has been called by the National Local Government Campaign Committee, based on our initiative, in Sheffield, on Sunday 21 April.

All Labour councils who are involved in the battle, representatives from the District Labour Parties in those areas, and representatives from the various Joint Shop Stewards Committee, have been invited to discuss and agree a strategy and tactics to defend those councils who are in the front line. We are confident that once the issues are clearly explained, that conference will



Cllr. Tony Mulhearn

endorse the position Liverpool is fighting on.

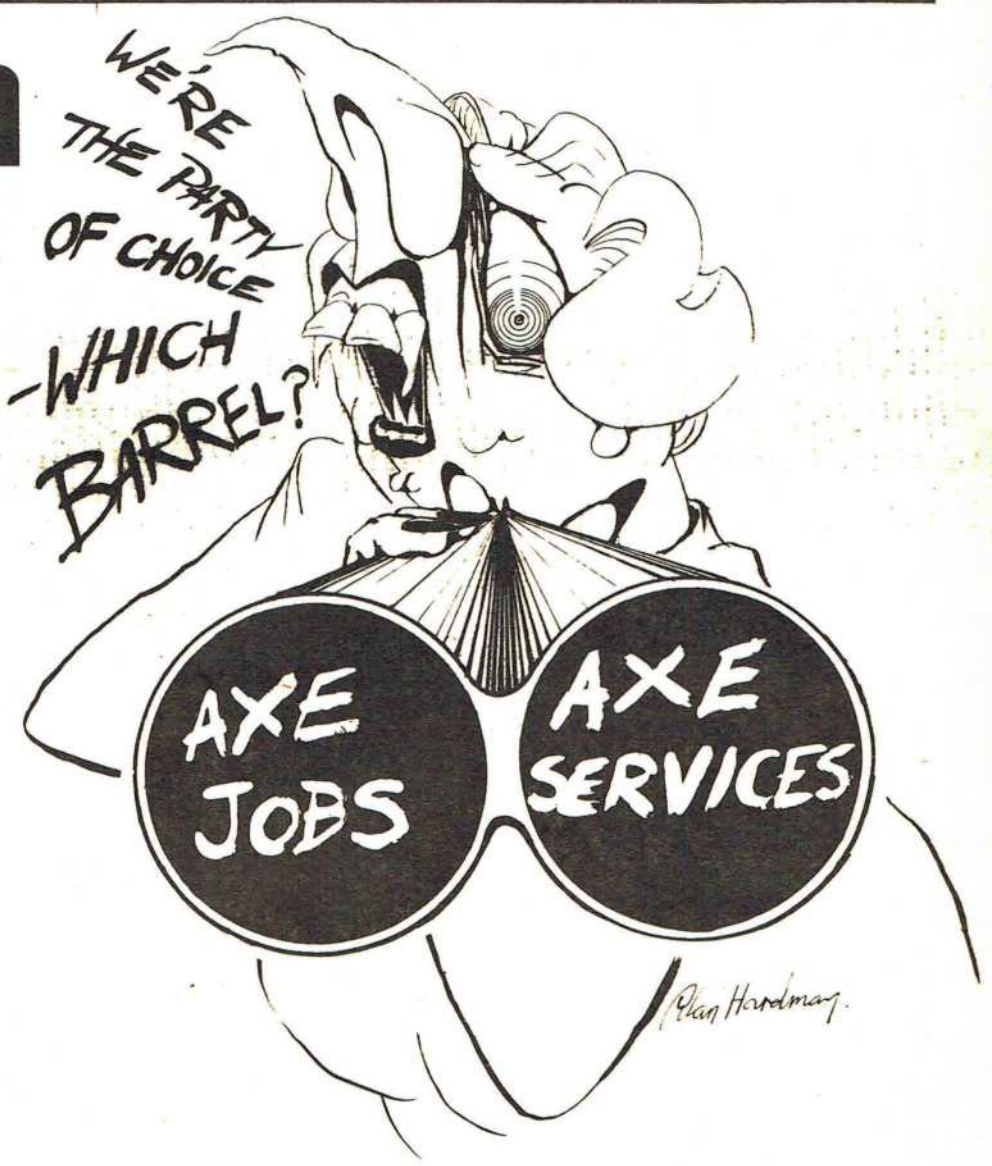
As can be seen in the situation in Hackney, it is clear that the Tories are prepared to use the courts to throw down some sort of ultimatum, to put pressure on individual councillors by threatening bankrupcy, surcharges and even imprisonment if they don't fall into line and carry out cuts.

This can only be resisted by a massive mobilisation of local authority workers and the wider labour and trade union movement.

The mood amongst local authority workers is to make a stand against the government. They are waiting to see how the action is going to develop, and which way the Tories will respond. Already many leading convenors have said that if any councillor is attacked they will recommend to their members all-out strike action.

That is the position in Liverpool. This can be developed in all the industrialised areas in the country, given the correct lead nationally and locally.

By Tony Mulhearn
(Liverpool councillor & President, Liverpool DLP.)



Council combine grows

THE DEVELOPMENT towards a national combine of local authority workers continues.

Last weekend saw the first meeting of the National Local Authority Co-ordinating Committee since its national conference in March.

established by local authority workers, mainly from London and Liverpool. It set the framework for national action and last weekend's meeting, attended by workers from 18 local authorities put organisational flesh on the bones.

It established a six-person Executive Committee, targeted areas of growth and divided the country into different areas. Elected to the Executive were: Chair Jim O'Brien (Lambeth); Vice-chair; Austin Wrigglesworth (S Yorkshire); Secretary; Ian Lowes (Liverpool); Assistant Secretaries; Danny Purton (Harlow), K Freakley (Leicester); Treasurer; Jim Hollinshead (Liverpool).



Ian Lowes (Liverpool), newly elected secretary of NLACC executive

In a major breakthrough, the Local Government Information Unit, which links the financially-threatened Labour councils invited us to send observers with speaking rights to their meeting, on the initiative of Derek Hatton. In addition we are sending letters to all Labour Groups in Councils facing financial crisis urging them to stand firm and defy the government.

In the next few weeks one major priority is to get more affiliations to NLACC. We have divided the country into three: North of Liverpool, Central, (south of Liverpool and north of Birmingham) and South of Birmingham. We will hold a co-ordinated speaking tour and try and build up links in the regions.

We are also going to produce a mass broadsheet explaining the aims and objectives of NLACC and information on how Joint Stewards Committees have been built.

We have targeted certain areas, which are on the government's hit list for next year, notably the north east. Also we think it is crucial to build links with the large direct labour organisations in Birmingham and Manchester which the government plans to attack.

Send donations to Treasurer, and affiliations to Organising Secretary, NLACC, Grove Mount, Penny Lane, Liverpool 18.

By Jim Hollinshead
(Treasurer, NLACC, personal capacity)

Hit list council round up

THERE WERE patchy developments in the London rate-capping campaigns last week. A second borough, Haringey, fixed a rate. But moves to fix a rate in others, which had looked like succeeding, were defeated.

The most serious setback was in **Haringey**, where some Labour members voted with the Tories to set a 14% rate. The fourteen Labour renegades were led by George Meehan and Angela Greately, who resigned as Leader and Deputy Leader of the council to lead the alliance with the Tories in total defiance of Labour group policy. Their decision was greeted with fury by council workers in the public gallery.

It leaves a £4-5 million shortfall in the Council's budget, which will carry over the debt into next year. It just transfers capital receipts into current expenditure, a once-off exercise, which will not be able to be repeated, and stores up heavier cuts for working-class people in Haringey. By the time of going to press the Haringey council unions had not yet met to consider what action to take, but one option being advocated was not covering for any vacancies which were allowed to occur, thus highlighting where cuts would come.

In **Lewisham** the fallout from the Tories hijack of the council (see last week's *Militant*) continued. The left-wing leader of the council, Ron Stockbridge resigned as leader and seems likely to be replaced by a right-winger. The unions on the Joint Shop Stewards Committee in discussing industrial action against the Tory budget.

In **Southwark** this week the Labour Group threw out a proposal to fix a rate from a minority of waverers. The group's position remains one of non compliance with the Rates Act. The group decided to ask the LGIU to prepare a resolution which, in the event of the courts declaring Hackney illegal, would place Southwark and other hit list councils in the same position.

Tory councillors were furious when, at their requisitioned council meeting on 16 April, their budget was referred to Policy Committee for consideration and suitable amendment. The decision was overwhelmingly carried without discussion.

All the councillors received a letter this week from the council unions telling them not to comply with the government even if they could scrape by this year as it would leave a legacy of massive cuts.

A borough wide labour movement conference is to meet on Saturday 20 April to discuss stepping up the campaign.

One of the councils which to date seems to be standing firmest is **Islington**. At a meeting last week of the Labour Group, local Labour Party and council workforce, only eight people voted to set a rate. They agreed by a large majority not to set a rate, although it was clear that this position might change if any serious legal threat was made.

Greenwich council has not met since not fixing a rate on 7 March. A Labour Party questionaire to 43 Labour councillors found that 24 of them said they would be prepared to go illegal if it was necessary to defend jobs and services. Unfortunately in Greenwich the campaign itself, especially amongst the council workforce had quietened down since the first week of March, and it is not clear what will happen next week.

In **Camden** it seems probable that a rate will be set on 24 March. Like Haringey there will be no compulsory redundancies and no major cuts in services. It will get the Borough through until next year, although there will be no growth. It is on this basis that Camden councillors will hope to fight privatisation of council services and win next year's elections.

By *Militant* reporters

Liverpool minimum wage

LIVERPOOL LABOUR Council has voted to introduce a 35 hour week and a £100 minimum wage for its workforce.

The resolution stated: "This council resolves to introduce a low pay supplement to all council employees who are members of their appropriate trade unions. The supplement is to provide a guaranteed gross wage of £100 per week for all full time workers and pro-rata for part-time workers, plus a 35 hour week for all staff ".

This action will enormously benefit large sections of council workers who for years have received low pay and worked long hours, a problem never tackled by previous administrations. Many have to rely on FIS and rebates in order to exist.

Labour politicians have for a long time made such promises, but once they get into power, they often forget their promises. Liverpool City Council have campaigned on the basis of a £100 mimimum wage and a 35 hour week for its workforce and now it has taken the decision to implement it and to set the example to other Labour councils and in general.

This decision will aid women workers in particular. It can be compared with the Poplar Labour Council in the 1920's who raised the wages of its workforce in line with their socialist principles.

Java bad time?

FROM THE *Liverpool Daily Post*, April 15: "Dissident students taunted Mrs Thatcher with a defiant cry when she visited Bandung University in Indonesia yesterday. "Liverpool, Liverpool" they chanted in unison adding the only sour note in an otherwise rapturous welcome for the British Prime Minister. No one quite knew whether the chants had a football connection or if news of Liverpool City Council's defiant stand against Mrs Thatcher's government really had travelled half way round the world to dog her footsteps."

Workers lobby Jenkin

STEWARDS FROM Liverpool and London organised a national lobby outside the Department of the Enviroment this week in London. They were demanding Patrick Jenkin begins negotiations with Labour councils, to provide them with the extra resources they need—from the money that's been stolen by the Tories in the past.

Whitehall Nazi exposed

A FORMER leading Nazi has been discovered working for the government in Whitehall.

Denis Pirie, who works to contract as an advisor to Tory minister Norman Tebbit, is no middle-ranking, former National Front member of the kind discovered recently in the Tory party—he is a hard-line Nazi of 25 years standing.

According to the *Daily Mirror* he is involved in a new fascist grouping, currently being formed by former NF leader Martin Webster and French fascist Francoise Dior, a member of the millionaire Dior family.

Para-military

Pirie's Nazi career goes back to the early sixties when he was arrested in 1962. He and other leading Nazis like Colin Jordan and John Tyndall were gaoled for organising Spearhead, a fascist para-military group.

Spearhead held military manoeuvres and bomb-making classes. During this period bombs damaged Karl Marx's tomb and the offices of the *Jewish Chronical*.

In 1963 Pirie joined John Tyndall's Greater Britain Movement, and later followed him into the National Front. In 1976 Pirie was instrumental in a split off from the National Front, the National Party, whose leader John Kingsley Read made his infamous remark after the murder of an Asian youth in Southall: "One down a million to go."

Pirie has been working for the Department of Trade since December on a three year contract. But this is his second contract—he previously worked there between 1978 and 1981, **including the period the Labour government was in office.**

There is no doubt that Pirie should be sacked. Fascists stand for the destruction of democratic rights and genocide and cannot be allowed any position of influence.

But the labour movement must be on its guard. Why is it that Pirie—a well-known fascist with a criminal record—has only been discovered now? Could it be to set the climate for Thatcher's new 'vetting' procedures for the civil service announced earlier this month?


SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

RETURN MEETING

of the

GREATER BRITAIN MOVEMENT

CAPEL ROAD FOREST GATE LONDON E 7
SATURDAY SEPT 18th 2.30 p.m.

JOHN TYNDALL

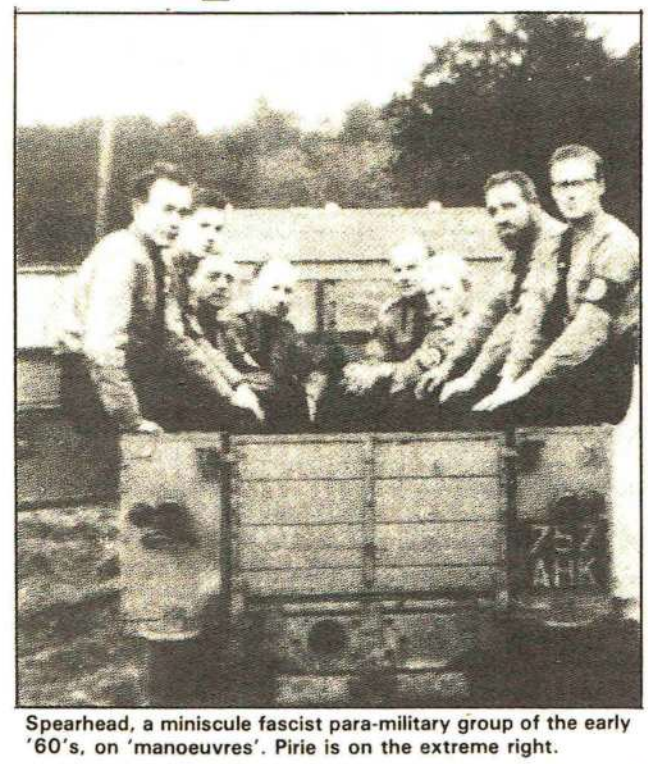
DENIS PIRIE
BARRINGTON SAUNDERS

A leaflet advertising a Greater Britain Movement meeting in the early '60's. Pirie spoke alongside John Tyndall.

Vetting in the past simply barred 'fascists and communists' from some civil service posts—weighed more towards 'communists' as the Pirie revelation shows.

Thatcher's new proposals are far more wide ranging—civil service unions fear that the targets will increasingly be trade union activists, heralded by the banning of trade unions at GCHQ. The Tories may use the Pirie incident to camouflage their new assault on ordinary trade unionists.

As it is, the Pirie incident speaks volumes about the Thatcher government's attitude towards the civil service. A former leading Nazi para-military is tolerated. Civil servants at GCHQ, many of them former Tory voters, are hounded and threatened with the sack for the 'crime' of belonging to a trade union.


Spearhead, a miniscule fascist para-military group of the early '60's, on 'manoeuvres'. Pirie is on the extreme right.

Black youth back the LPYS

BLACK YOUTH were prominent in the Labour Party Young Socialist conference debates, reflecting the important campaigning work done by the YS against racism over the past years.

Derek Richards, from Edmonton YS, moved the main resolution and rejected an amendment supporting black sections.

He said "We have heard a lot about black sections from people who claim they are needed to give black people a voice. But they attend this conference every year and ignore the voice of the vast majority of blacks in the LPYS and working class blacks in the Labour Party."

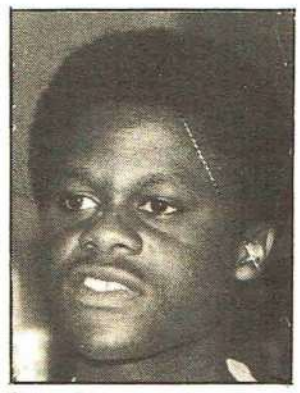
Black workers aren't interested in the gimmickry of positive discrimination like the American quota system which would turn the Labour Party into a massive Coca-cola commercial.

Black workers, he told conference, understand the lessons of the miners' strike—the need for workers' unity—and to avoid implementing the divisions within the labour movement which the bosses and Tories try to create between workers.

April Ashley, Wimbledon LPYS, emphasised the social conditions working class blacks face. Telling conference about the levels of racist attacks, she also emphasised that the police could provide no answers.

Because of widespread police racism most blacks wouldn't call the police anyway. The solution is, she told conference, to wage war against racism and carry it through to the end, to abolish the capitalist system which breeds racism.

Elaine Etim, from Liverpool, answered smears against the record of Liverpool city council and the appointment of its new race relations officer, Sam Bond, by those who opposed the emphasis of *Militant* supporters on the need for an orientation to building working class unity of black and white.


Derek Richards.


April Ashley.

The Black Caucus group, along with a number of other well known blacks in the labour movement, she argued, represent a black petit bourgeois who make a good living out of the race relations industry. They are conspicuously silent, she said, on how to deal with unemployment and bad housing because they have no socialist alternative.

Ninesh Mathiah, from Southgate LPYS in London, used the example of a strike of black and white workers in Longbridge Austin Rover in support of a black worker who hit a foreman in response to a racial insult.

He contrasted that example of instinctive workers' unity with the hypocrisy of the industrial tribunal which dismissed the case, ruling that it was not racialist abuse to call someone a "black bastard."



Asian youth demonstrate in support of the Newham 8 Campaign (the predecessor of the current campaign) in East London. Photo: Militant


Elaine Etim.


Ninesh Mathiah.


Unmesh Desai.

Nothing showed up more sharply, he told conference, that workers could only rely on their own strength and organisation in the struggle against racism.

Unmesh Desai, fraternal visitor from the Newham 7 Campaign thanked the YS for the help it had given the campaign since he spoke at the 1983 conference.

He outlined the background to the Newham 7 Campaign. He commented that whilst not wishing to get involved in internal debates he felt the racism debate had got too bogged down in arguments about black sections. The most urgent issue, he said, is the murderous attacks against black people all over the country. They will not be stopped by CRE or any other such body but by people organising to defend themselves.

It was that which halted the recent wave of racial attacks in Newham. It drives home, he said, the important political lesson that "self defence is no offence".

He urged support for the coming national Newham 7 Campaign demonstration on Saturday 27 April (details—see back page).

● THE NEWHAM 7 campaign have authorised Sam Bond, head of Liverpool City Council's Race Relations Unit to speak on their behalf. They said he can represent them officially at any meeting of black and labour movement organisations he addresses through his capacity as head of the unit.

Fascist meetings broken-up

Bradford

A FASCIST British National Party meeting ended in disarray in Bradford when it was confronted by angry anti-fascists.

The BNP meeting was planned for 13 April at Hutton School, Eccleshill in Bradford, supposedly as an 'election meeting'

Despite opposition from the Labour Group, Tory and Liberal councillors voted to allow the meeting to go ahead on council property in the interests of 'free speech' etc.

They have a flexible view of democracy—two weeks earlier they banned a *Militant* readers' meeting in the area!

At short notice 250 anti-fascists mobilised, including many Asian youth, members of the Bangladeshi Youth Organisation and 50 Labour Party Young Socialists. Surprisingly the police allowed some anti-fascists in. After 15 minutes fighting broke out.

The police stormed in, making a bee-line for the anti-fascists. Meanwhile BNP members threw chairs at the protestors (one chair thrown by a BNP member hit their fürher John Tyndall on the back of the head!).

The anti-fascists were ejected, and 13 people were arrested. They will appear in court in Bradford on 13 May.

Bexley

● YOUNG SOCIALISTS mobilised at 24 hours notice in Bexley, South East London, when it was discovered the British National Party were to hold a meeting.

90 people joined in the counter-demo outside the meeting, held in a council owned libary. Only 18 fascists turned up to hear their führer John Tyndall.

They could only get in after police cleared the steps of the counter demonstration. Two people were arrested, including a local *Militant* supporter.

The local labour movement must put pressure on Tory controlled Bexley council to stop letting facilities to fascists.

Newcastle

● In Newcastle, Young Socialists heard the NF were trying to sell their racist papers in Eldon Square on 15 April, and immediately confronted them, shouting down their slogans.

Fighting broke out and more fascists appeared armed with belts and chains. However the NF ran off when the police arrived, and one LPYS member was arrested.

The fascists have been trying to build support in the area. Earlier this year left wing paper sellers were beaten up in Sunderland. Two weeks ago they tried to hold a meeting in Newcastle but were stopped by a mass picket of anti-fascists.

The case for a

ON FRIDAY 19 April, Dave Nellist MP is to present to Parliament a National Minimum Wage and Conditions of Service Bill. Its stated aim is "to eliminate poverty and low pay by providing for statutory minimum wages to be paid to all workers and to all trainees on government schemes." (See details right)

Dave Nellist is all too aware that his bill will not be passed by a Parliament with a Tory majority. Because of the antiquated procedures of the House of Commons, it is not certain whether it will even be discussed.

That is not what matters most, however. It is not Parliamentary debate which will achieve a minimum wage, but the struggle of the trade union movement.

The bill provides the opportunity to launch a campaign to raise the issue at every union conference, this year and next, with the aim of committing the TUC and getting the Labour Party to include the statutory mimimum wage as a firm pledge in its manifesto for the next general election.

To succeed, resolutions need to be formulated now in the branches and workplaces and fought for at every level in the movement, so that a powerful base of support can be built now, to pressure the next Labour government to carry out this historic measure.

What the Bill provides: Programme to end low pay

★A basic rate of pay initially at £115 a week for a 35 hour week, with an annual percentage rise in line with the percentage rise in the retail price index or average earnings, whichever is the greater

★All part-time workers to receive a basic hourly rate of pay of £3.28 an hour, to be increased on the same basis as the minimum weekly wage

★Adult rates of pay for all men and women at 18

★Minimum rates of pay for trainees, £55 in the case of those employed by the Manpower Services Commission

★Five weeks paid holiday a year

★Trainees not to be allowed to work shifts, weekends or bank holidays

★Time and half for Saturday working, double time for Sundays, double time and a day off for bank holiday working.

Homeworkers are specifically included within the provision of the bill.

In order to dispel fears that its implementation could be linked to an incomes policy, the bill specifies that it will "not interfere with, or preclude the rights of trade unions affiliated to the TUC to enter into negotiated agreements with employers that provide for rates and conditions above the minimum specified."

Campaign for this policy, in your union branch workplace and labour movement organisations.

WITH FOUR million workers on the dole, it is inevitable that attention has been focused on the plight of the unemployed and their families.

By Dave Nellist MP



Dave Nellist MP—fighting low pay. Photo: Militant

This should not obscure the hardly less desperate plight of millions of the employed whose wages are little better that the dole.

In 1984, the TUC defined low pay as anything less than £101.80. The Council of Europe fixed the figure at £108.32. These were calculated as 66 percent and 68 percent respectively of average earnings.

Overtime

Using a slightly different formula, the Low Pay Unit concluded that £107 was a more accurate definition of low pay.

Using this figure, the Low Pay Unit estimates that 3.9 million adult workers (1.5 million men and 2.4 million women) are low paid, despite working a full week plus overtime. If overtime pay is excluded, the number rises to 4.7 million.

Over half the workers in hotels and catering earned less that £100 in 1984. In clothing, agriculture, forestry, fishing and retail, over a third were on less than £100.

Women

Women fare particularly badly, despite Equal Pay laws. 77 percent of women in shops get less than £100. In clothing the figure is 86 per cent, catering 88 per cent and in hairdressing 92 per cent.

Low pay affects ethnic minorities too. Although paid the same rates, they tend to be concentrated in industries which pay the least.

Over 60 per cent of all male workers of Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi background (compared to 40 per cent of all workers) are employed in distribution, hotels, catering, "other manufacturing" and repairs.

Poverty trap

Millions of these workers are also caught in the poverty trap. Their income is so low that they qualify for such benefits as Family Income Supplement and housing benefit. Small wage increases can disappear straightaway as a similar amount is forfeited in lost benefits and higher tax. For some a wage rise can actually lead to a cut in income.

The 1984 mimimum wage figures are now out of date because of inflation; they would not be enough to lift wage-earners out of the poverty trap. £115 is now the lowest level at which workers could be freed from poverty.

The provisions of the bill I am presenting are a focus around which to rally the labour movement in a campaign to revive the old workers' slogan of "a fair day's pay for a fair day's work!"

Tory cheap labour strategy

THE TORY government is doing everything it can to push wages down to even lower levels than at present.

This is based on their argument that unemployment can only be reduced if workers especially the youth, "price themselves into jobs".

They recognise that this will only be achieved, however, if social security benefits are cut, or scrapped altogether for young workers unwilling to go on YTS schemes. Otherwise they will have no 'incentive' to work, the government claims.

Since the Tories did away with earnings related supplementary benefit, anyone who loses their job quickly slips down into severe hardship.

After a year on the dole over half the unemployed get less than 50 per cent of their previous wages.

How do they explain that in the 1960s when the unemployed did not take such a cut compared with those in work, unemployment was only one tenth of the level of today?

People are unemployed because there are no jobs for them to find, not because they don't look hard enough.

The Tories hope to use YTS to force the young to work at poverty wages and destroy the level of wages and conditions of all workers.

No employer will pay £80—£100 a week when he can get cheap labour from YTS.

The Tories have tried to show that youth wages are higher in this country, and that youth unemployment is higher as a result. If, however, youth wages were cut it would only mean more unemployment for older workers.

In Germany there are generally higher wages and lower unemployment than here.

This is because German capitalists invested and prepared themselves for the world capitalist competitive struggle.

The real 'incentive' for lower wages goes not to the workers, whose chance of a job will be no better than before, but to the bosses.

A drop in wages means a rise in profits.

When young workers slave on YTS instead of getting proper apprenticeships, the bosses benefit. When benefits are cut to drive workers into looking for a job, any job at any price, the bosses gain.

What the Tories really want is a mob of desperate people after every job, no matter how low paid, so they can use them as a whip to crack down on wage levels and conditions for all workers.

By Mick Brooks

Council workers' support

AFTER THE latest £4 flat-rate increase, local authority manual workers are getting between £74.30 and £89.25 for a 39 hour week.

Most of those employed by the Rochester Borough council get a bonus on top, but very few employed by Kent County Council get any bonus.

Many of our members qualify for Family Income Supplement. It's probably fair to say that we have taken a cut in real terms every year since 1979.

The prices of basic necessities have been rising faster than inflation. One rent increase can wipe out an annual pay increase.

I support the national minimum wage, provided it is not linked to an incomes policy.

By Jack Osborne
(Secretary NUPE Medway Local Government Branch)

minimum wage

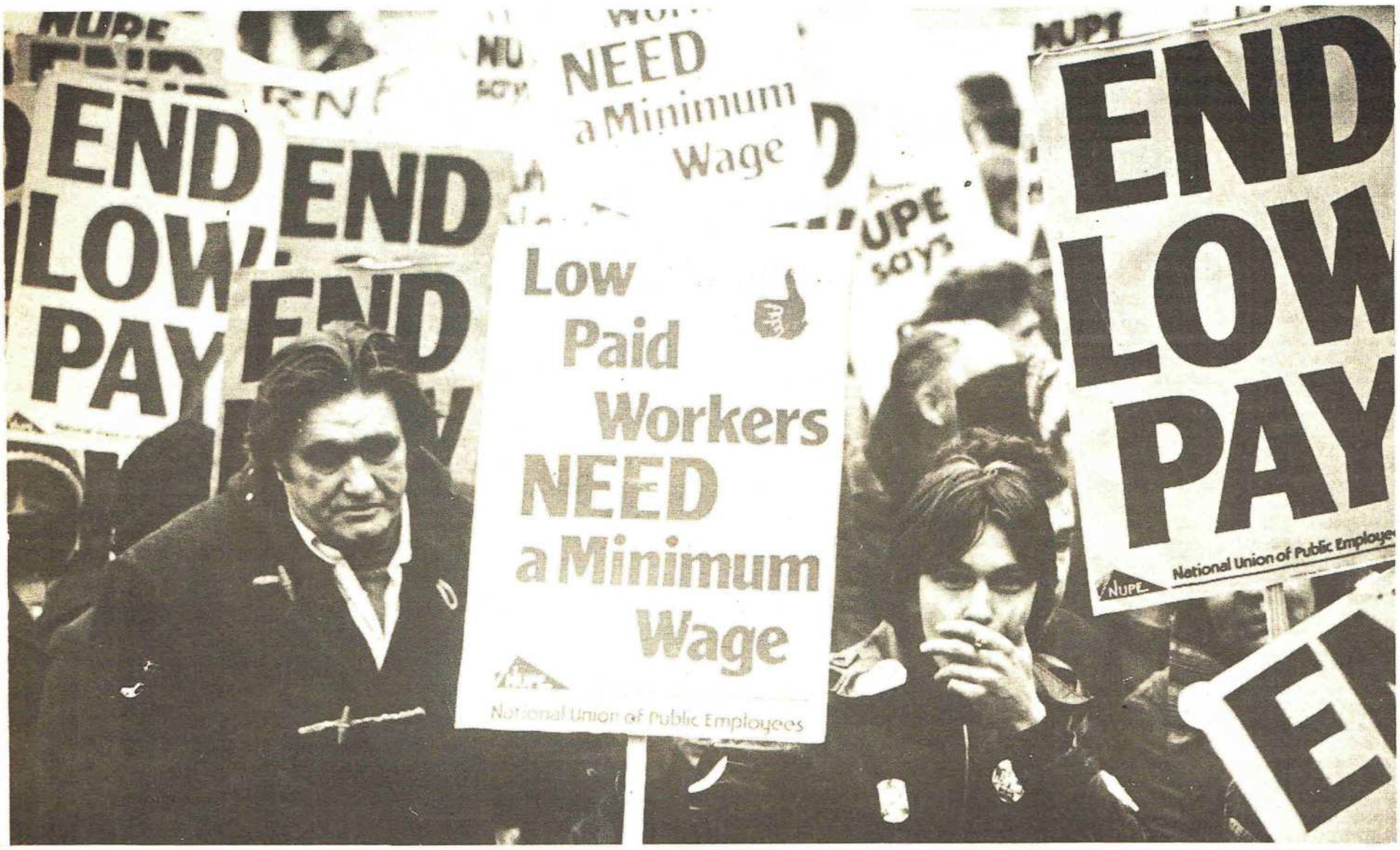


Photo: Militant

Many unions have been campaigning for a minimum wage for years (above NUPE members in 1979). The Tories' recovery strategy is based on Britain becoming a cheap labour economy. An important part of the campaign to replace the Tories with a Labour government will be to commit Labour to a minimum wage policy. Elminating poverty wages would gain the support of millions of workers.

Wage councils face Tory axe

THE TORY government's budget proposal to review the operation of wages councils is yet another blatant attack on low paid workers.

First set up between 1909 and 1914, wages councils fix minimum rates of pay in different industries. Today there are 26 councils covering 2,750,000 workers.

Their rates range between £47.50 for some hairdressing workers to £77.65 for bench hands in the boot and shoe repairing industry.

Young workers are entitled to even less, generally 65 per cent of the rate at 16 and 75 per cent at 17. In clothing for example, a 16 year old gets £41 a week. About five percent of wages council workers are under 18, about 20 per cent of all young people in employment.

Significantly, four fifths of those covered by wages councils are women, and two-thirds of the total numbers are part-time workers.

The Wages Council Act 1979 gives the authority for inspectors to enforce the current minimum rate of pay issued under Wages Council Orders. They can claim arrears of pay for up to two years for workers who have been underpaid by their employers.

There are 13 officers with the Wages Inspectorate, with a field staff of only 120 inspectors and 104 clerical staff.



Cleaners picket Hammersmith Hospital over privatisation proposals, June 1984. Privatisation is yet another side to the Tories assault on wages and conditions. Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report) II

In Wales there is a staff of five outdoor inspectors and five clerical staff with a senior wages inspector to cover 15,000 establishments, mostly in the retail and catering trades.

They are the only protection many unorganised workers have. Their abolition would mean employers paying even less than the pittance "enforced" by the Wages Inspectorate.

"Some employers argue" says the government's recent consultative paper, "that the councils no longer see their purpose as providing a basic wage floor for vulnerable individuals but rather as setting the "going rates" for large groups of employees regardless of particular circumstances."

Yet the paper itself reveals that "since 1974, increasing numbers of wages council employees have come to be paid the statutory minimum.

Around one million of the 2.7m workers in the scope of the councils are now paid little or no more than the relevant statutory minimum rate."

From this the paper draws the conclusion that wages councils are now keeping wages up "higher than would be necessary to recruit and retain workers."

The paper stops short of advocating total abolition though it does not rule it out.

It argues strongly however for removing young people entirely from the scope of the councils: "There is no obvious case for insisting on a minimum level of pay for young people seeking to enter the labour market for the first time."

If the government were to abolish the wages councils, it would have to denatify the International Labour Organisation's Convention No 26 (1938), which binds each member "to create or maintain machinery whereby minimum rates of wages can be fixed for the workers employed in certain trades or parts of trades (particularly home-working trades) in which no arrangements exist for the effective regulation of wages by collective agreement or otherwise and wages are exceptionally low."

The government has already abolished the Fair Wages Resolution, which kept wages on government contracts at a minimum level.

Now it is seriously considering a step which would isolate it even from other capitalist countries and allow it to bring wages down way below its definition of the poverty level.

By Ian Hughes
(CPSA, Cardiff)

Rich get richer

WHILE THE Tory government condemns the poor to wage cuts "as an incentive to work" the rich have been encouraged to take huge rises.

The pay of company directors and senior managers has been rising at 10 per cent a year. A growing number of companies now give out shares as well as mammoth salaries.

26 companies now pay at least one of their directors more than £150,000; they include Shell, ICI, Lonrho, Plessey and Tate and Lyle.

Still topping the list is the highest paid director of British Oxygen, whose salary now is £771,600 (nearly £15,000 a week!)

Even more than the directors, it is the major shareholders who prosper in Thatcher's Britain.

USDAW has pointed out that a food shop assistant on the legal mimimum rate of £71 a week earns £32 a week less than a couple with two children on supplementary benefit.

Yet three members of the Sainsbury family own between them shares in their company worth £800 million!

Sudan

Revolution in Sudan

SUDAN is going through a period of workers and peasants revolution.

By Roger Shrives

The worsening conditions caused by the world capitalist crisis set the scene for massive discontent. The corruption, repression and economic stupidity of the Numeiri regime led to its crumbling away (see *Militant* 15 February and 12 April) and now has led to his overthrow.

One group after another of the Sudanese people were rapidly drawn into a massive revolutionary movement.

After prices of petrol, food etc were raised yet again last month, riots, huge demonstrations and a general strike paralysed the city for ten days.

The mood of the population forced the Army to intervene to replace the hated Numeiri before the situation went out of their control

General Abdul Rahman Swar-al-Dahab made a radio announcement. "The armed forces unaminously decided to respond to the will of the people and take over power and hand it back to the people after a limited transitional period".

The *Times* reports on the wild jubilation which greeted this announcement. "Suddenly it seemed as though most of the inhabitants (of Khartoum) were on the streets, cheering, dancing and waving flowers and branches torn from bushes". People shouted to soldiers "the army and the people are one". The soldiers raised their rifles and grinned. Even the riot police were forgiven, but not the vicious secret police who had helped Numeiri to rule by fear.

100,000 workers and slum dwellers marched on the Kober prison which held 2,000 political prisoners, ripped off the outer gates and a barbed wire fence. The prison guards swung open the gates and cheered the crowd as they let them in, past the gallows where executions and amputations had recently taken place under Islamic law. The imprisoned oppositionists were released.

In the city, thousands attacked the identity card centre where the 30,000 strong secret police were based. Some of the crowd were shot as they broke down the gates until soldiers and riot police arrived and dragged away the secret policemen.

Striking workers started to return to work expecting changes from the new regime. The military leaders demanded that the strikers end their action. They hoped that the working class and the slum dwellers, having played their part, would now just fade into an admiring chorus of support for the military. But revolutions are not political soap operas where inconvenient characters and classes can be written out of a plot at will. The ruling class are worried. Not only Numeiri's rule but capitalism is threatened.

Observers from USA, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, capitalism's policemen in North Africa had previously been trying to discuss with Numeiri's opponents (those who were not in prison). They saw Numeiri was doomed and wanted a safe alternative.



Deposed president Numeiri

Every section of society except the rich had suffered. The drought in the Sahel area has led whole communities to move in search of food and water. New desert areas have been created, aided by government agricultural plans which uprooted trees over 5,000 square miles eroding the soil irreversibly. Roads and irrigation have been neglected.

The food price riots came after the effects of thirteen devaluations in just over six years. The leaders of the trade unions were imposed by Numeiri but such has been the pressure from below that even they had to ask for some concessions from the regime. But capitalism's room for manoeuvre and compromise is restricted.

Reagan's puppet

At the end, Numeiri's only friends were the noose and the amputating knife, using the "Islamic laws", the Sharia, he imposed in 1983 as a means of repression. Even amongst faithful Moslems Sharia has proved unpopular. Many welcomed it at first, hoping political life would be cured of the corruption found at all levels.

They hoped in vain. Islamic banks backed by Saudi Arabian capital make a huge profit even though they charge no interest. They have been stockpiling food regardless of the famine. A few rich Moslems and Numeiri's tottering dictatorship were the only beneficiaries.

In the south, a black christian area, the Ethiopian based Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army, a guerrilla movement, had been building support especially after 1983. The area had been given some autonomy in 1972 ending a long civil war but this concession was snatched back through Islamicisation and last year's state of emergency.

The guerrillas say they are not just a movement for regional autonomy, they demanded Numeiri's replacement throughout Sudan. Colonel John Garang, the SPLA leader must have echoed many fears when he says that Swar al Dahab "treacherously stole Sudan" from the workers, white collar workers, professionals and slum dwellers who had brought the dictator down. He called for the strikes to continue and even threatened to resume the war unless the general gave civilian power immediately.



Supporters of the coup lead a donkey representing Numeiri through the streets of Khartoum.



The United States may put pressure on to conciliate the south with its oil fields and US bases. Throughout the whole country they hope that the new regime will pre-empt a more radical overthrow later. Events though will not be totally under their control.

Sudan is vital to US plans. After Numeiri became an open agent of capitalism, he offered help in the Chad dispute against Libya and aided opponents of the Stalinist regimes in Ethopia and South Yemen.

Ethiopian revolution

US imperialism wants to protect its military bases and access to its oil interests. They recently negotiated another loan, on the conditions of even more austerity in this starving country and allowing America to install a nuclear waste dump in the Darfar desert.

But haunting the minds of the capitalists must be the memory of the Ethiopian revolution of 1974 when the reactionary landlord regime of Emperor Haile Selassie was brought down. The emperor's total indifference to the conditions of the 1974 famine together with the collosal backwardness of a state in pawn to western capitalism pushed comparatively junior officers to a coup.

At the start, this was fairly "moderate". But the spark of political change ignited mass movements, first in the small working class and middle class town dwellers in Addis Ababa. Then the peasantry moved to gain land reforms and overthrow their feudal oppressors.

The opening up of class divisions was mirrored within the armed forces and a section of them broke totally with capitalism and landlordism and took the revolution through to the formation of a stalinist regime modelled on present day Russia.

Capitalism could not develop Ethiopia nor can it develop any other African state. Despite the lack of a conscious working class leadership and despite the smallness of the proletariat, a regime based on nationalisation and land reform but with a military police dictatorship instead of a genuine workers democracy was installed in Ethiopia.

What happens in Sudan depends on the role which the working class plays. If the junta or the workers political leaders can make them abstain from active intervention in the struggles, a repeat of 1971 (see panel) is not ruled out.

The setting up of a workers democracy in Sudan, though, would transform the situation in this part of the world and lay the basis for a socialist federation of Africa and the Middle East.

The tragedy of 1971

THE NEW 15 man junta has been discussing with the alliance of unions, professional associations and political parties which organised the strikes.

The junta promised civilian power after twelve month's transition. But how can this be ensured? There can be no faith in the "democratic" words of the capitalists and landlords. They backed Numeiri.

The general secretary of the Sudanese Communist Party Ibrahim Nogoud told the magazine *AfricAsia* that the CP had for some time called for the end of the Numeiri regime, an improvement in the economy, a fight against famine and a just settlement in the south. Noble sentiments but nowhere did Nogoud spell out the policies they would fight for. There was no mention of socialism and no suggestion as to who would lead this movement towards democracy, no mention of the role of the working class in particular.

The CP leader says that individual parties are too weak on their own, so the Communists are ready to unite with other forces in Sudan. But what forces? What attitude will the CP take towards Swar al Dehab's junta or the capitalist groups in the alliance? Will they trust the junta's progressive credentials as they did, fatally, in 1969-1971?

Two stages theory

In May 1969 a bloodless coup against a reactionary government made Numeiri, an army colonel, defence minister and effective leader. There was a civilian figurehead with personal support from the Communist Party,which then had a million members and could mobilise far more in demonstrations.

It was the second largest Communist Party in Africa and the Middle East. The CP backed Numeiri for his "progressive" statements against imperialism. The regime had diplomatic relations with East Germany for instance.

Numeiri relied on this support as first of all he ditched the civilian figurehead, then sacked CP sympathisers from the government and armed forces. Finally in July 1971 Numeiri provoked an attempted coup which failed. Party leaders, trade unionists and other "dangerous" people were executed and the movement beheaded.

The Communist Party were strong enough for a relatively peaceful transformation of society if the working class organisations had taken the lead in the '60's. But as on many occasions before, the Stalinist theory of two stages, first of capitalist "democracy" then socialism, has led to tragedy.

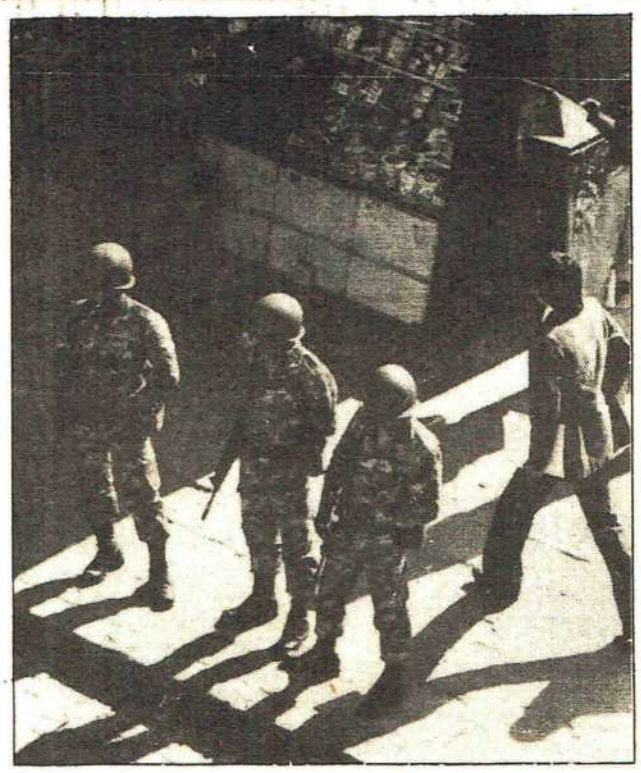
The strategists of capitalism despairing of resurrecting Numeiri probably hope they can trap the Communist Party and other representatives of the workers and peasantry into similar mistakes this time. After the coup, *The Times* suggested bringing the Communist Party into a coalition government.

Bolivia, Denmark

ON 24 March a 16-day general strike came to an end in Bolivia after the army was used in the capital La Paz. A compromise proposal from the government for a wage increase of 232 per cent to temporarily compensate for raging inflation was accepted.

The unions were reportedly demanding a 500 per cent rise, a Socialist workers' government, price controls, President Siles Zuazo's resignation and the nationalisation of the banks and mines. The following article by a Latin American correspondent was sent shortly before the strike started.

Military coup or workers power?



Soldiers in La Paz. The army has a history of intervention.



A market place in La Paz. Inflation of over 2000% has made the peso a meaningless currency.

JUAN LECHIN, general secretary of the COB the Bolivian TUC recently pointed out that Bolivia was on a knife-edge between elections and a coup. The country is going through the worst crisis in her chequered history.

A little over two years ago, Siles Zuazo took power. He has never managed to control the economic and political problems. Today, as a result of his ineptitude and the strong pressure of the working class, he has been forced to call elections for June (now postponed until July) instead of stretching his rule into 1986.

Bolivia's huge economic problems, particularly the massive inflation helps to explain the 34 days of paralysis through various general strikes last year. The government has lost control to such an extent that President Siles is accusing the COB of pushing the country towards civil war. The irony is that Siles has only remained in power thanks to the COB leaders.

What was Lechin's response?—"The subjective factors for taking power are present but we are not adventurers and will not throw the people against machine guns. The objective conditions are not present because the people remain unarmed. First we must put an end to the current government's means of oppression, which have a capitalist aim". Lechin's reply shows the confusion of the COB leaders. Apart from confusing "subjective" with "objective' , his statements only serve to demoralise workers. As his main call, he says, workers must achieve their aims through arriving at power "electorally".

The COB leadership are blind to the fact that electoral politics in Bolivia has always been a temporary phenomenon. All attempts to put the capitalist state machine at the service of the working class are doomed to failure.

Huge food price rises

Obviously the COB leaders cover themselves by saying that: "they cannot say if there will be a coup or not because in Bolivia a general could use any pretext to launch one." In fact, with 198 coups in 160 years since independence there is always the possibility of another.

The Bolivian army, like all in Latin America, has a great deal of autonomy from the capitalist class owing to the weakness of the bosses and their inability to develop the economy or offer decent conditions to the working class. The situation often becomes difficult for the ruling class and the army appears with its "firm hand" to bring order to the civilian chaos. Also, due to the governmental participation of the top officers, especially those closest to the centres of power, they have acquired a lot of economic clout and are more interested in political participation often through coups and criminal dictatorships.

At present there is a state of crisis all over the country. Basic foodstuffs are lacking, the unions have proposed the formation of supplies committees, and workers want a solution to the crisis. There have been clashes between students and police in La Paz. COB leaders are asking workers to keep calm so as not to endanger peace; and the government decreed a 455 per cent devaluation and a 450 per cent increase in the price of basic foods. The president is warning of the danger of civil war. This is the backcloth to the start of the electoral campaign which is by no means certain of running its course.

Workers are increasingly calling for the resignation of Siles Zuazo. The miners of Siglo Veinte, Catami and Viloco in the south decided to march on La Paz to demand machines and tools, while the women of the same area decided to do the same to protest at lack of food supplies.

The government continues to attack the workers' movement. It denounces an "ultra left plan" to replace the president and install a government of "national unity". It is warning that with miners marching on La Paz, and housewives mobilising, alongside the youth, that there could be street clashes and violence. What the government does not say is that the peaceful demonstrations of the workers are met by police repression.

But the government adds "if the police are overwhelmed by the climate of social convulsion, the armed forces will intervene to guarantee the safety of productive and strategic sectors". With these words Siles Zuazo unmasks not only himself but the whole corrupt Bolivian capitalism.

Union leaders and politicians continue to support Siles, raising workers' hopes and even collaborating in the government in the case of the Communist Party. Today when the crisis is paralysing society and leading to increased confrontations between workers and bosses, the bourgeois will not hesitate to carry the confrontation to its logical conclusion, including using the army.

"National unity"?

Attempts at class collaboration will lead nowhere. With wages of $6 a month, struggle is the only option. Nevertheless COB leaders are still at present insisting on a government of "national unity". Unity with whom? With the industrialists paying hunger wages? With the bourgeois parties who do not hesitate to throw the army and police against unarmed workers and their families?

The COB leaders should understand that they cannot put forward the idea of a government of "national unity" when inside Bolivia there are two nations locked in struggle, one to create a new society, and the other to maintain exploitation, corruption and terror.

The only way to pull Bolivia out of the crisis is a socialist plan to nationalise the main sectors of the economy under workers' control and management; to mobilise all resources in a plan based on the needs of the majority and not geared to the interests of that small handful of individuals who today dominate the country. No representative of the bosses in a government of national unity would accept such a plan. If such a government were formed because the election campaign could not run its course, it would soon collapse, having solved nothing.

There is a real possibility of a military coup but that does not rule out the election campaign running its course. The most reactionary wing of the bourgeois led by Paz Estensoro and Hugo Banzer have high hopes of winning the election in view of the disorientation of sectors of the population who have no confidence in the ability of the workers' leaders to solve the crisis in the short term. But a right-wing government would deepen the crisis and pave the way for a social explosion.

The truth is that whether before or after the elections, **if** the workers do not take effective control of the country, the military will launch a coup. The bourgeois cannot tolerate what is happening for long without trying to openly suppress the advance of the working class.

Bolivian workers have the power to transform society and they are constantly making this power felt, but the treacherous policies of their leaders are paving the way for a coup which could lead to civil war. But even a coup would not stabilise Bolivia in the longer term. The working-class would rise again in struggle to end exploitation.

The prerequisite for victory is to forge a bold political leadership ready to lead the working-class to the triumph of the socialist revolution and the end of constant coups, dictatorships and hunger.

Denmark—militant ranks, wavering leaders

DENMARK HAS stood on the brink of a general strike for over two weeks now. Three national mobilisations have been called for and on each occasion more and more workers have come out.

On 10 April over 300,000 workers were involved in local demonstrations and in some towns more than half the population participated. Many strikes went beyond the 24 hour call, with militant groups like the brewery workers and dockers staying out for over a week in some cases.

All shop stewards meetings have, without fail, had calls for a general strike clearly put to them, but the Danish TUC have done everything to keep the movement limited. The policies of individual negotiations have frustrated the strike, rather than winning it. But the workers have been just as consistently determined to continue the struggles and topple the Schlüter government.

The role of the Communist Party leadership particularly in Copenhagen has been nothing less than disgraceful. They have led the back-to-work movement, denying even in their own paper that calls were made at the Copenhagen Shop Stewards meeting for a general strike.

The chairman of all the brewery workers, representing 4,500 trade unionists, demanded a national shop stewards conference and a general strike. The Communist Party adopted a policy of postponement, recommending no fight. They put forward the view that "the mood was not there" "we cannot tell the workers what to do" "they must decide themselves".

General strike call

One CP leader at the Copenhagen meeting even said that the workers should wait until the next election to register their discontent. That has also been the policy of the Social Democratic leadership. Both will pay heavily for this mistake.

In towns like Aalborg workers have organised behind the trades council where a clear call for a general strike has been made. Schülter has been laughing at the working class, safe in the knowledge that our "leaders" would not take the initative to strike.

Schlüter has allowed some back pay above the 2% pay norm but still the frustration at the government exists. The mood is still positive and the movement has merely paused, it has not come to a halt.

In Aalborg many workers bought papers of the Marxist tendency *Socialisten*. Leaflets distributed at all the key factories were kept with many shop stewards producing them at meetings later on that day.

The apprentices' movement has been on the picket lines and directly involved in the demonstrations. In the schools a strike has been called for 18 April, the apprentices will support it.

PS. On 16 April a national shop stewards meeting was held to reorganise shop stewards at local level for future battles. Brewery workers have called a 48 hour strike for the reinstatement of a steward. Oil workers in Aarhus and home helps in Odense are also on strike.

By a Danish correspondent

LETTERS

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

Living from one bill to the next

Dear *Militant*,

Having just this minute heard Frank Bough on *Breakfast Time* telling a young lad that £40 for 65 hours when it includes board and keep is a good wage, then to tell all four young people from Merseyside who were being interviewed that Mrs Thatcher doesn't want unemployment and it's not her fault, my blood is boiling. I don't know how much he earns but one thing's for sure, he doesn't work for £40 per week, and he isn't living in a slum area of Liverpool with 30% unemployment.

The young kids however, were quite clear about the fact that their trip to see the Prime minister was a farce and a political gimmick. They had no illusions in life and had nothing to lose by change.

I'm a student nurse and although I'm better off than those kids, I live from one bill to the next and work shifts etc. for my rewards.

People like Frank Bough ought to get in a rocket with people like Thatcher and go to the planet they obviously imagine they are living on.

Yours fraternally
Ann Lomas
Leeds 8



Photo: Mick Carroll

Young people on the YTURC lobby of parliament. Youth must get organised to defend themselves against Tory attacks.

Cashing in

Dear Comrades,

When building up for the lobby of Parliament in Febuary, I went speaking at schemes to explain what YTURC was all about. One of them was called the 'Brothers of charity' scheme.

I asked the head supervisor could I speak to the trainees. He said it wouldn't be worth it, as many of the trainees were handicapped physically and some were slightly retarded.

I didn't think anything of it, until he went on to say "And the trainees are quite willing to work for us for no allowance whatsoever. They're happy and their parents are happy and agree with it, so we've got no real problems."

When he said this, I was furious, and started to argue with him. I see this situation as taking advantage of the disastrous circumstances of these youth and what is even worse is that the scheme comes under the banner of the church.

This completely exposes how this government operates within society and it exposes what schemes are really here for and that is to push the living standards of the youth down so big business can boost its profits. Many of the youth are now looking for a way of fighting back.

Yours Fraternally
Pete Grue
Liverpool Garston LPYS

Miners Amnesty

Dear Comrades,

At the last GMC of my constituency party I moved a resolution calling for total amnesty of all miners sacked following the miners strike. The resolution was passed unanimously along with a donation to the Miners Amnesty Campaign.

I was doubly pleased to move the resolution because the week before Christmas 1984, with 43 other people I was made redundant. The company I worked for blamed the redundancies on the miners strike. (They produced central heating boilers). The sackings were brought about according to management by:"A lack of confidence in the market due to the miners strike."

Consultations were held, what a joke, management had made a decision and would not listen to our case, so that was that.

Take the Amnesty resolution to your party or union branch, the case for the amnesty is solid, the arguments obvious. We must not allow these men to become martyrs, we must unite behind them in the fight to gain full amnesty.

Yours fraternally
Eldon Hanson
Hillsborough CLP
Sheffield
(personal capacity)

EETPU leadership finds new friends in China

Dear Comrades,

The EETPU leadership recently agreed to train students from China in electronics and computing. This will strike many EETPU members as rather contradictory given the leadership's right wing views. However, a report in the *Financial Times* (26 February) gives the answer: "Officials (EETPU) stress the difference between the Chinese brand of communism and that practiced in the Soviet Union."

EETPU workers and workers internationally will find this answer hard to swallow as the type of "communism" practiced in both these countries is based on a one party totalitarian dictatorship. Indeed, many EETPU workers will see the link between the undemocratic practices of Russia and China with those of the EETPU, ie. appointed full-time officials. To underline the point, I cannot sign my name as it is against EETPU rules to discuss union business outside. (Thankfully there's no rule preventing me speaking to members in the workplace!)

I'm sure workers who in Russia and China cannot openly criticise the leadership feel the same way. However, the mole of revolution will eventually sweep aside all these undemocratic practices.

Yours fraternally
EETPU member

Defend *Militant*

Dear *Militant*,

Having read an article on the resolution put forward by the T&G regional leadership at the Cardiff offices calling for the expulsion of *Militant* supporters from the Labour Party, my Joint Shop Stewards' Committee have already sent a letter of protest to Mr George Wright, questioning the origin of this resolution which appears on the agenda of Welsh Labour Party Conference.

In my view as an active member of the Transport union, these activities can only be divisive. At a time when most unions are starting the campaign to retain the political fund, it is plain to see once the press and media get hold of this resolution they will use it to persuade people to vote "No" in the ballot to retain the political fund.

I can assure you that I will do everything possible to have this resolution removed from the agenda of Welsh Labour Party Conference.

Yours fraternally
Brian Muller
Senior Steward
T&G branch 4/226
(personal capacity)

Tenants' power

Dear Sir,

The National Tenants Organisation has won its campaign against Hertsmere council which agreed to demolish and rebuild some 80 flats at a cost of £1.5 million. The National Tenants' Organisation's objective is to unite the country's six million council tenants into a capable force.

The Hertsmere campaign was organised by NTO and took 12 months to achieve, but previously the tenants had been ignored for 14 years. Joint action by NTO, Radlett Labour Party and the Battlers Green Community Association brought about complete success.

This proves that it is possible to have a positive victory for tenants, even today, by united action, detailed surveys and media coverage.

Yours
Bernie Wooder
(Press Officer, National Tenants' Organisation)

Local authority redundancies

Dear Comrades,

The bottling out by the GLC and other autorities over rate-capping is a major blow to workers struggling against Tory gangsterism. The situation is analogous to a protection racket where those who buckle get forced to pay more and more. Livingstone and Co should understand this. They should follow the lead Liverpool has shown in providing an honest leadership that has mobilised workers into mass action. This is the only answer to the Tory heavy mob.

The massive demonstration seen in London shows that if the GLC raised it's little finger the class would respond. Those councils who have backed down have no confidence in workers to struggle. Their actions condemn workers to the dole. I have some experience of this as I work for the Kent county council in the fire dept. Our budgets for expenditure are being cut. Closure of my workplace has been mentioned. In Kent redundancy and privatisation is a policy of the Liberal/Tory council. To see Labour councils going down the same road makes me wild. They were not elected by workers to shove them onto the dole.

But it's not only council workers who suffer. I had news last week that Hestair Dennis, who make fire engines and dustcarts, are shedding 450 jobs at their plant at Guildford. One of their managers told me rate-capping was a major factor in this. It makes the Tories 'budget for jobs' look a bit sick. Labour councils should be exposing the Tories not giving them an excuse. It is no good giving in, British capitalism isn't going to get better. What's needed is a clear socialist alternative like the *Militant* puts forward.

Yours Fraternally
Gary Nightingale
Kent County NALGO
(personal capacity)



Credit: Andrew Wiard (Report)

London Bridge banner on 'democracy day' demonstration.

LEFT and RIGHT

Wanna be a millionaire?

"THE *SUN* discovers the secrets of success". So the *Sun* (April 10) cited three cases of people who had "made a million under Maggie", just to prove if you work hard enough, anyone can be a millionaire. First was beer kit manufacturer Colin Sanders. Actually he began his business "10 years ago" under the Labour government, but no matter. It was a hard struggle to begin with, they had to rely on his wife's wage—she was a *solicitor*. Then there is Anita Roddicks, owner of the 'Body Shop' chain. Anita got the idea for her business "on a world trip", and then got the ball rolling with a £4,000 loan from a bank. Last 'rags' to riches millionaire was Nick Morgan who made his fortune selling a computer programme. It was sacrifice to begin with though—Mr Morgan had to take a year off his "£25,000 a year job as a computer consultant". You see, anyone can do it.

The 'right to redundancy'

REMEMBER THOSE 'back to work' heroes in the Kent coalfield, Mr and Mrs McGibbon? How they valiantly defended the 'right to work' etc etc? Guess who is the first miner in the whole of Kent to ask for redundancy pay—that's right, Mr McGibbon.

Economics of the madhouse

ON THE subject of the Kent coalfield, the *Daily Telegraph* (April 10) worked itself up into a lather over how 'uneconomic' it is; "...this unprofitable coalfield which last year alone lost £20 million". Yes, well there was a strike on for ten months of that year. But then the *Telegraph* discovers the real reason for Kent's economic problems (tucked away at the bottom of the article, of course): "To a great extent though, they (NCB) acknowledge that the financial losses have been brought about by loss of the steel industry's order for coking coal". MacGregor strikes again.

Just two weeks to go!

This week: £2,467

THE DONATIONS this week once again reflect the growing support for the ideas of *Militant* amongst workers. The trade union conferences show that activists are looking for a fighting alternative and are prepared to finance the paper that provides it.

£210 was raised at UCW Special conference. £149 at, NUT conference, and £85 from NUJ conference. In every union the left needs to be organised and the ideas of *Militant* are the ideas to get organised around. Workplace collections are being established in many areas. Bakers at 'Stantons' in Hednesford, South Staffordshire, collected £5.50, a collection at G W Kings, Stevenage raised £4.76 and £3.26 came from Walthamstow 'Dust'.

But with only two weeks to go to the end of the quarter our fund needs a massive boost to ensure we meet the target. Every area should organise at least one fund raising event before 30 April. It doesn't take much. Readers in West London raised £66 from a curry evening!

Area	Received	% of target achieved	Target
Eastern	1426		2900
East Midlands	1398		2800
Humberside	851		1850
London East	1274		3250
London West	948		2150
London South East	1083		2000
London South West	659		1600
Lancashire	549		1100
Manchester	882		2750
Merseyside	1600		6000
Northern	1007		4900
Scotland East	805		3000
Scotland West	1088		3800
Southern	1568		5000
South West	1103		2000
Wales East	217		2450
Wales West	410		2150
West Midlands	1549		4400
Yorkshire	1846		5900
Others	5693		10000
Total received	25,956		70000

Rattle those tins!

Whether it's a meal or a video night, a jumble sale or a party it will raise lots of money so make sure preparations are underway now. On top of the special events, every reader should be asked for a tenner or fiver. What better cause to finance?

YS branches that didn't manage to donate at the National Conference should consider contributing now. Hampstead and Highgate YS have just donated £20. Can your YS follow that? And don't forget those collecting tins. Take them with you wherever you go because they are the easiest way of raising cash. Anybody can do it.

In this way we can meet our target. Remember, in three weeks in January we raised over £30,000. This time we need £44,000! It's a lot of money and only our readers could ever hope to raise it. Let's do it.

DONATIONS THIS week from readers meetings in: Middlesbrough £60.28; Haringey £74.36; Nottingham £56.18; Burnley £47.83; Leeds £126.82; Mrs L Malone Longhorsley NUT £1; V & R Woods Chorlton £15; Mark Piper Uxbridge school student £0.40p; Jim Bell Nottingham NUT £10; Dominoe Winnings Falkirk £3; OAP Islington £10; Sean Longden Camden £20; A Jones Harlow AUEW £5.

A week's wages for socialism

"*Militant's* on the decline", is the chorus of the Tory newspapers. What do they base this ludicrous claim on? Only a spurious leaflet issued by the Labour Co-ordinating Committee at the LPYS conference last week which claimed that *Militant* had "severe financial problems".

Next time, the press should look at *Militant*'s real financial achievements.

The figures speak for themselves. In 1975, our "boom year" according to the *Sunday Times*, *Militant* supporters raised £27,378 for the fighting fund. In 1983, we raised £184,867 in fighting fund and building fund combined. Last year, even that tremendous achievement was surpassed to reach £281,192.

So far, since 1 January this year, we have raised £93,349, well on the way to matching last year's total. Now if the press still think *Militant* is on the decline, we would love to know how they define success.

Crucial weapon

There will never be a time when *Militant* doesn't need more money. The next few years will see more and more battles on pay and to save jobs. *Militant* will need the resources to report on and to help in these fights. The workers involved will want to see how determined we are to put our ideas into practice and one of the key tests we will face is whether we can produce a more regular paper. This is a crucial weapon in the fight against the bosses system.

That is why we are continuing with our campaign to ask each of our readers for a week's income towards the Marxist Daily Building Fund. Despite the expense of the LPYS Conference, we have had £1,316 in this week. Emma Philips, an unemployed supporter in Dorset has sent £40 and four comrades in Scarborough have pooled together to send £24. Two school students from West London gave £30 each at LPYS conference—their earnings from a Saturday job.

Many of our supporters pledged donations earlier in the year. Now is the time to honour them. Let's show the Tories and the press that we mean business and that we are here to stay.

Marxist Daily Building Fund 1985

	£		£
Eastern	2125	Scotland West	2029
East Midlands	2534	Southern	2561
Humberside	1535	South West	683
London East	2679	Wales East	1513
London West	3662	Wales West	1352
London South East	1708	West Midlands	1541
London South West	1614	Yorkshire	1058
Lancashire	382	National	1292
Manchester	1351		
Merseyside	3283	Total	37165
Northern	2295		
Scotland East	1968	This week: £1316	

Get Militant

***MILITANT* IS preparing to launch its May sales campaign, with sellers in every area planning to double the readership. By coincidence self-proclaimed friends of the labour movement are also planning new ventures, to let the working class read papers that say they speak for them.**

Right-wing Labour millionaire Robert Maxwell with the *Daily Mirror* already under his belt, is considering publishing a new London evening paper.

Clive Thornton one of Maxwell's *Mirror* predecessors has more definite plans, for a "left-wing version of the *Mail on Sunday*. He has already secured backing from the TGWU, NUPE, the GLC's Enterprise Board and the TUC's media working group.

Yet this friend of the left is demanding from the print unions that "any agreement will insist on non-disruption and that means not just no strikes". A paper sympathetic to the unions, produced with anti-union methods!

Workers cannot trust anyone, especially anyone in the press, except a paper written, produced , financed and sold by ordinary people, and that's *Militant*. The best answer to the Fleet Street moguls is to build for the very thing they are all afraid of, a mass circulation daily *Militant*.

"I JOINED the Labour Party in 1983. It was a real effort to stick out the meetings—I might have jacked it in if I hadn't come across the *Militant*. Now I sell four or five papers at each ward meeting," says John Daly, Bethnal Green and Stepney LPYS.

"I thought the press coverage of the Falklands war was really disgusting. We saw the same sort of thing during Peter Tatchell's election campaign and just recently over Aids. It makes me feel ashamed that working class people read this stuff, but it's up to us to give a real choice."

LPYS members in one of Kent's pit villages who sell the *Militant* regularly tell us: "Despite the end of the miners' strike, paper sales have continued to rise in the Kent pits. We begin on Thursday night with a sale at a Miners Wives Support Group, Friday morning we do a sale at the pit, followed by an estate sale in the afternoon. Last week we sold 62. We expect that to rise to an average of 75 over the next two weeks, and our aim is to top 100 in the May Sales Campaign."

Has your area ordered extra copies for the national sales campaign? The campaign, from 3rd to 10th May, will be covered by issues 747 and 748. For extra copies or to place a new order write to *Militant* Circulation department, 3-13 Hepscott Rd London E9 5HB or ring 01-533 3311.

ads Militant

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

Wales BLOC conference
Saturday 11 May
10.30am-4pm
AUEW House, Orchard St. Swansea.
Speakers include: John Tocher (AUEW Pres cand) Bill Connor (USDAW Gen Sec cand) & leading activists from the NUM, T&G, local authority workers.
Credentials from Phil Lloyd, c/o POEU office, Gors Road, Swansea. (£1 per delegate)

PUBLIC meeting 'The situation in Cyprus' Speaker: Andros Payatsos (Editor of Socialistiki Ekfrasi, Cypriot Marxist paper) Tuesday 30 April, 7.30pm at Tottenham Community Project, 628 High Road, London N17.

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

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

Meetings

COLCHESTER Marxist Discussion Group. Sunday, 21 April, 7.30pm. Whytock Room, Labour Halls, Chapel Street North, Colchester. Subject: "Is Russia Socialist?" Speaker: Bob Edwards, Harlow CLP.

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. For more details call at 25 Railway Terrace, Penrhiwceiber, or phone Ed Gullyford on Pontypridd 492915.

MILITANT address books, 60p, bookmarks 40p, Plastic paper sleeves 20p, Pens 20p, Sew on badges 50p. Plus postage to Mike King, 10 Rodney Ct Southampton SO2 8RU.

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.

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.

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From: WORLD SOCIALIST BOOKS,
3–13 Hepscott Road, London E9 5HB.

General amnesty NOW



Bristol: Tuesday 23 April. Speaker Keith Dickenson. Shepherds Hill, Old Market, Bristol. 7.30.
Plymouth: Wednesday 24 April. Speaker Keith Dickenson. Lecture Room 6, General Teaching Block, Plymouth Polytechnic. 7.30
Fife: Tuesday 1 May. Speakers: Bob Wylie and Tam Durie (sacked SCEBTA member, Monktonhall) Cross Keys Hotel, Dalkeith. 7.30pm. ***Note change of venue.***
Chatham: Monday 29 April. Speakers: Keith Dickenson and Jack Collins (Secretary Kent NUM)
Liverpool: Wednesday 1 May. Speaker: John Pickard. AUEW Buildings, Mount Pleasant. 7.30pm.
Wakefield: Friday 10 May. Speakers: Peter Taaffe and Nigel Pearce (NUM) Wakefield Labour Club, Vicarage Street, Wakefield. 7.30pm.
Welsh Labour Party Conference: Friday 17 May. Empire Hotel, Church Walks, Llandudno.

Education feature

Build teachers' Broad Left



THE SALARIES action meant that the Executive began NUT conference with the 'goodwill' of a sizeable section of delegates. It ended, as it often does, with substantial defeats and near misses for the platform.

By Anita Dickinson
(Conference delegate Ealing NUT)

The second most important issue for conference, local government finance, gave rise to a heated debate. The Executive's position, a vague formulation about alliances with local authorities "based on the provision of an education service in line with the 1944 Act"(!) was defeated.

A motion which called for the union to "support authorities which defend jobs, services and the interests of local people through non-compliance with government spending targets and the rates act" received 40% of the votes cast—80,000. Its defeat followed lobbying by the Executive and their 'supporters' in the Broad Alliance—an unprincipled grouping of Communist Party and right wing Labour Party members.

Conference once again only succeeded in discussing a small percentage of local authority motions—7 out of the 49 printed in the final agenda paper.

Nevertheless, on the final morning an important motion on the question of class size was passed against the wishes of the platform. One example given at the conference, of a class of 52 in Devon, helped persuade delegates to vote in favour of a motion which instructed the Executive to "sanction action in schools and Associations/Divisions where the necessary majority of members are in favour of refusing to teach oversized classes".

Conference also passed, unanimously, a motion condeming Devon Education Authority for its ban on teachers wearing CND and other badges with political significance. During the moving of the motion we were informed that the 2,000 signatories to a petition against the ban would be 'investigated'!

Although the end of conference was marked by a radical mood it would have been better expressed had there been a more clearly worked out and united left alternative presented. The task for the coming year is to create a Broad left organisation capable of bringing that about at conference next year.



Scottish teachers on the march.

Step up Scottish action

SCOTTISH SECONDARY teachers have been called out on April 24 as part of the campaign for an independant salaries review.

This is the day preceding the start of SCE exams and it will also see the temporary halt of targeted strike action in secondaries. Hundreds of teachers in Tory held constituencies have been involved in these three day per week strikes over the last few months, supported by national levies. The effectiveness of this particular action will be further limited, however, after the SCE exams have been completed.

With the dispute to continue into the 1985/86 school session, the EIS (Educational Institute of Scotland) Scotland's largest teaching union, will have to adopt more widespread action to maintain the campaign's momentum.

As a minimum all members should be involved in strike action every week, thereby affecting every school in every area. The curricula boycott should continue and if possible be intensified. The active support of other public sector unions should be sought.

Scottish teachers have found themselves in bitter conflict with Tory secretary of state for Scotland, George Younger. Amongst his many attacks has been the advice to education authorities to sack striking teachers.

The result has been the creation of a determined mood amongst teachers to win this campaign. A co-ordinated escalation of action will achieve this.

By Larry Flannigan
(Lanarkshire County Committee EIS)

Tory hypocrisy on special schools

"CRUEL, CRUEL, cruel"—that was the headline of the *Sun* when it reported Thatcher's attack on teachers from a school for the partially sighted who were said to have come out on strike.

Thatcher's information turned out to be wrong for that particular school but nevertheless teachers from special schools (those for handicapped pupils) **have** taken strike action during the current round of strikes for better pay.

I am a teacher at a special school in Edinburgh and a member of the EIS, the main teaching union in Scotland. Our union has been taking selective strike action, together with one-day regional strikes involving all teachers, and this time, an unprecedented number of special school teachers have taken part in the one-day strikes. So why is it that special school teachers have decided to take action this time—when previously they were understandably reluctant and were even given exemption by the union?

I think the situation is very similar to that of the nurses strike in 1982, in that the strike for better pay is part of a wider fight to defend the education system and to highlight the desperate state of special education.

As well as suffering cuts in maintainance, cleaning, heating etc, all of which hit the handicapped child very hard indeed, we are also bearing the brunt in a way that many teachers have only just fully realised.

In 1978 the Warnock Report on Special Education Needs was presented to Parliament, and local authorities started to carry out the recommendations in 1980.

Back door cuts

The Report says that the handicapped should be better integrated into the wider community by integrating them as children into the mainstream school where possible. And where they attend a special school, that they should not be labelled as mentally handicapped, hearing impaired, partially sighted etc. but simply "in need of special education".

I don't think anyone would argue against taking the stigma away from the handicapped and helping them to become accepted into the community so that they can lead the fullest possible life, but in reality the recommendations have led to a worsening of the conditions of the handicapped because this is being used as a back door method for cuts.

Our school and many others like it, used to be a school for the mildly mentally handicapped (ESN in England). This label has been taken away from the school and we now receive children with all kinds of handicaps. However the class sizes are still the same and the teachers have been given no special training to deal with these different problems, and no assistants such as nursery nurses who would be attached to a class in a school for the physically handicapped.

Also the stigma of mental handicap does not disappear by simply taking the name off the notice board. Many pupils who have been sent to the school because of behaviour difficulties, strongly resent being labelled "backward" or worse. Children who are very disturbed cannot be expected to cope with this, and will often attack other children in an effort to disassociate themselves from the more obviously handicapped.

The children can hardly be blamed—it is the fault of not having the extra staff and smaller classes necessary in such a school. But it is very handy for local authorities who now do not have to maintain all the different types of schools. They can merely fill up empty spaces when they appear in a school, with no consideration for the individual child and whether the class or the teacher can cope with that child's problems.

The same is also true in the mainsteam schools where integration is the policy. This often means that there is a special class attached to the school with children of many different needs, and with a single teacher who takes them for most of the day and arranges lessons.

But teachers in the main part of the school are finding it almost impossible to deal with those who needs virtually individual help when they already have a big enough class in any case. Many teachers have also never received any training in how to deal with the handicapped child.

Another problem that teachers have to try and cope with, is the fact that an increasing number of parents are asking that their children stay on an extra year or so—because of the lack of places at colleges and adult training centres.

Naturally it is better for the child to be at school than sitting at home. But handicapped or not, a 17 year or 18 year old has outgrown the usual type of lesson and needs a totally different kind of course. Schools cannot offer this without extra money and staff. So in reality integration is a sham, unless facilities, staff, and training are given—a lot of *extra* money must be spent. But instead the government is asking for more cuts from local authorities.

Breaking point

This is why special school teachers are going on strike. Many of us have reached breaking point and cannot take much more—the stress is so great that I know of several teachers who have been off sick long term or have given up teaching because they have had enough.

All the teaching unions must look carefully at integration where it is proposed or already exists, and refuse to co-operate unless the proper funding is given—the labour movement should also use these facts to expose Thatcher and the Tories for what they are—hypocrites.

By Theresa Donaghey
(EIS Edinburgh, personal capacity)



Order *Militant Teacher*, from WSB, 3/13 Hepscott Rd, London E9 5HB. 30p + 20p p&p.

Industrial Reports

AUEW right wing under pressure

NC member reviews conference agenda

JOCK McPHERSON-QUINN, AUEW National Committee member talked to Martin Elvin about the agenda for this year's NC meeting.

This year's AUEW national committee taking place in Eastbourne is the first since the full amalgamation of the engineering and foundry sections. The agenda shows growing dissatisfaction with the right wing leadership, even from some members who have previously supported them.



Jock McPherson—Quinn, Chairing 1985 Broad Left Organising Committee Conference.

The main issue on the agenda is unemployment and redundancies, with no fewer than fifteen out of twenty six divisions submitting resolutions on this problem.

Pay

Even some right wingers have become critical of the wage levels in engineering. Normally they attempt to get a demand for "a substantal pay rise" rather than a stated figure. But with a rise of just £4.70 last year, taking the Minimum Time Rate (MTR) to £96.70 per week for a skilled man, clearly "substantial" hasn't got the membership very far.

Six resolutions call for a £25 across the board increase in new money for all members. In other words the rise to be added to the rate of pay within the factory not on the MTR which many engineers are paid above already.

Eleven divisions are calling for a £35-hour week. A number of these are calling for liaison with the European metal workers' unions for a joint campaign on the issue.

The second largest number of resolutions are about the 'no strike deals' issue. Fourteen divisions have sent in resolutions. Every single one of them condemns the idea and insists the AUEW enters no such agreements.

The EC's conduct in calling a ballot over the taking of government money for postal ballots comes under attack from nine divisions including traditionally right wing ones. There is even a possibility that the EC will be ordered, even now, not to take the money or to return it if received already.

Significantly, nowhere on the agenda are there calls for the union to cooperate with or work with the government's anti trade union laws.



John Tocher, Broad Left candidate for AUEW presidency.

What future for engineers?

MARTIN ELVIN reports on the debates so far:

YTS was roundly condemned. It was generally seen as no substitute for a proper apprenticeship scheme and a threat to existing schemes. The government's proposals to extend YTS to two years were seen as proof that they intended to destroy existing apprenticeship schemes.

The meeting also rejected the idea of 'training to standard' or module training. There was an evident bitterness against other Confed unions for their acceptance of the government's training proposals. There was also some criticism that the EC was allowing 'trainig to standard' in by the backdoor, particularly in the Ministry of Defence experiemental scheme.

President Terry Duffy, in an empty speech about the problems facing the world but devoid of any policy for tackling them also backed the Labour Party right wing's attempts to witchhunt *Militant* supporters.

Leadership

The lack of any constructive lead from the right wing who control the AUEW in defence of the union and its members shows why they are frightened of the growing influence of Marxism.

The left in the AUEW must set about building an open and democratic Broad Left with fighting, socialist policies to fill that vacuum. The election of John Tocher in the Presidential elections must be the first step in that process.

Post Office engineers suspended



This new mechanical letter office means that operators can code up to 1,200 letters an hour.

POSTAL ENGINEERING members of the National Communications Union working in the Bournemouth Mechanical Letter Office (MLO) have been suspended by Post Office management for refusing to work as directed by a management scrutinies team whose objective is to prove that 50% of the staff are not required!

A confidential document leaked to the union showed that the Post Office wanted to arbitrarily cut 50% of its Postal Engineering staff over a three year period. The Post Office then produced an Engineering Scrutinies report in an attempt to justify its decisions.

The union exposed the report as completely unscientific and a sham. The Post Office refused to discuss the report with the union. Instead it attempted to put its report into practice in the Chelmsford MLO by reducing manning levels. The result of this experiment was a failure. The quality of service which the Post Office has been so vocal about recently dropped dramatically.

Like a punch drunk boxer the Post Office continues to accept defeat. The scrutineers (all of whom were promoted to do this hatchet job for the Post Office) were then sent into the Bournemouth MLO.

The union has now instructed the members not to co-operate with the scrutinies team. These members have now been suspended.

The union has mounted a picket and prepared for national industrial action against a hostile Post Office management and in defence of the jobs of NCU nembers.

The jobs of all workers in he Post Office, British Telecom and Girobank are under attack. This is why the NCU developed its Broad Strategy to deal with the problems caused by new technology, competition, privatisation and the reorganisation of the business under agressive management.

The NCU and the UCW must unite to defend jobs across the three businesses and achieve the shorter working week.

USDAW left election gains

THE USDAW Broad Left's hopes of victory in the forthcoming election for general secretary were given a boost last week with the announcement of union election results. In nearly every case, apart from the presidential election, the Broad Left candidates saw their votes increase, sometimes dramatically over the 1983 total.

The Broad Left presidential candidate, Jeff Price running for the second time maintained his percentage of the vote but dropped his total vote. Jeff polled 49,862 votes against the incumbent president Syd Tierney's 202,678. Whilst Jeff's vote went down by about 11,000 on the 1983 total, Tierney's declined by over 20,000 votes. This result was achieved in the face of an unprecedented campaign of vilification against Jeff.



Bil Connor, Broad Left candidate for USDAW general secretary.

In the executive and divisional council elections the Broad Left made excellent progress. In the union's North West division, hitherto a right wing stronghold, two Broad Left candidates narrowly missed election to the Executive Council. *Militant* supporter, Mick Wainwright of Blackpool Retail branch saw his vote incrase from 5,361 votes in 1983 to 11, 563, missing a place on the EC by only 448 votes.

Mick was re-elected to the divisional council. His vote increased from 8,239 votes last year in a by-election to 20,950, coming fifth in the poll.

In the union's Eastern Division, the Broad Left won a landslide victory. In 1983, we won only one seat on the Eastern Divisional Council out of a total of ten. This year the Broad Left took eight of the ten seats, giving the Broad Left its biggest ever victory in the Eastern Division.

Militant supporter George Williamson was re-elected coming third highest in the ballot with 12,484 votes, an increase from his his by-election vote last year of 9,731. In the EC elections the Broad Left candidate, BL treasurer Norman MacLeod missed winning a seat by 588 votes.

General Secretary election

The Broad Left held control in the union's Southern division, winning both EC seats and a majority on the divisional council.

In the Midlands division the Broad Left vote had a modest increase while the right wing vote sharply dropped.

It is interesting to note the absence of the 'crowing' from the right wing which usually follows the national election results. They too can see that the USDAW Broad Left is on the advance.

There is a real chance of victory for the BL's well-known candidate Bill Connor in the general secretary election. Branches are in the process of making nominations and the Broad Left aims to collect the most nominations of the three candidates. Attend your USDAW branch meeting before Friday 3 May and get it to nominate Bill Connor for general secretary

The USDAW Broad Left is appealing to all left activists to assist in its campaign. If you know of any USDAW member locally, ask them to support Bill Connor by attending their union branch meeting—either for nominations until 3 May or for the voting itself, from 13 May to 24 June.

It is vital that no opportunity for a Broad Left victory is lost. A Bill Connor victory will be a victory for the whole labour and trade union movement.

By Helen Gasking
(Booksellers and Stationers branch)

Defend dockyards

TORY DEFENCE minister Michael Heseltine is expected to announce on Wednesday 17 April his plans for the future of the HM Dockyards at Rosyth and Devenport.

He intends to propose 'agency mangement', which means a private contractor taking over the running of the yards, imposing the conditions of a privately owned shipyard. This would mean massive redundancies, 1,000 out of 8,000 workers at Rosyth and 3,000 out of the 12,000 at Devenport. And that's just for starters.

The remaining workers would lose their pension rights and any redundancy payments would also be under threat. The current productivity scheme would be abolished meaning a cut in weekly earnings of about £25. Flexibility would be introduced in work practices leading to further job losses.

Heseltine claims his measures will make the yards more efficient, however the opposite is the case. 'Agency management' would be purely a first step towards complete privatisation of the yards.

At present the MOD represents 80% of ship repair capacity, valued at £400 million. The Tories want to hand these assets over to big business to cream of profit off facilities built up at state expense while the private ship repair industry has been devastated.

By Jock Penman
(Chair, Joint Convenors Committee)

The immediate response to Heseltine should be a one day strike on Monday 22 April so that he gets the message that dockyard workers aren't scared of a fight. The convenors' committees should prepare for a protracted campaign of industrial action to defend our jobs. If the leadership is given the workers will rally to the fight.

- ★ No to 'Agency Management'
- ★ No to Privatisation
- ★ Keep HM Dockyards in the public sector

Militant

More news on rate-capping—Page 6

Council workers say stand firm

THE "PHONEY-WAR" stage in the rate-capping battle is coming to an end. The courts told Hackney Council this week that its decision to defer setting a rate was illegal and they must fix a rate by the end of May.

By Nigel Bloch
(Treasurer Hackney Joint Shop Stewards Committee, personal capacity)

Soon all Labour councils will have to face up to the choice—either to confront the government or buckle under. Some councils have already given in. But others, notably Liverpool, have stated they will stand firm.

That must be the position of all councils—Stand firm, do not fix a rate, defend jobs and services, demand the return of money taken in Rate Support Grant and penalties since 1979!

But whatever the councils do, for council workers there can be no choice. We have to stand and fight. Individual councillors, may be defending their property from seizure. For us it's our jobs.

The formation of the National Local Authorities Co-ordinating Committee (NLACC), the nucleus of a combine of local authority workers, shows that Council workers are serious and determined to fight.

Some Council leaderships are stating that they can make a budget this year without compulsory redundancies or dismantling local services. This is totally unacceptable.

Firstly it still means cuts. Most of the proposed legal budgets involve not filling vacant posts. Others use revenue from sales of Council property for day-to-day expenditure. You can't do that indefinitely and it means that future cuts will be even more savage.

Legacy of cuts

Southwark joint trade unions committee told Labour Councillors this week: "There is no doubt that the council could scrape through the coming year with little or no cuts, but the one-off measures used this year could not be repeated next year and the years after and would leave a legacy of massive cuts".

Secondly it means that the Councils have given up any hope of getting any more money back from the government to deal with the problems in the inner cities. They are going to let the working class continue to suffer massive deprivation.

Thirdly it destroys the campaign against rate-capping. In most London Boroughs that united campaign, between workforce, community and Labour councils has been built step by step, despite suspicion by Council workers. In the past we have struck against local councils rather than in support. It is far better to have a united campaign, and Councils have a responsibility now not to destroy it.

Privatisation

Fourthly the battle over rate-capping is not the only fight we face this year. In November the government's plans for wholesale privatisation of Council services come into operation. If implemented that will devastate local services. Council workers will fight them. But if Councils give up on rate-capping they will not be in a good positon to fight with us.

NLACC has a policy of not covering for vacancies. It has pledged its full support for any group of Council workers who take industrial action in defence of jobs and services. The government may think it can scare most Labour Councils into line. But the real fight has not yet begun. If tens of thousands of local authority workers stand firm and refuse to accept any cuts, wherever they come from, the government can be beaten. The real war is just beginning.

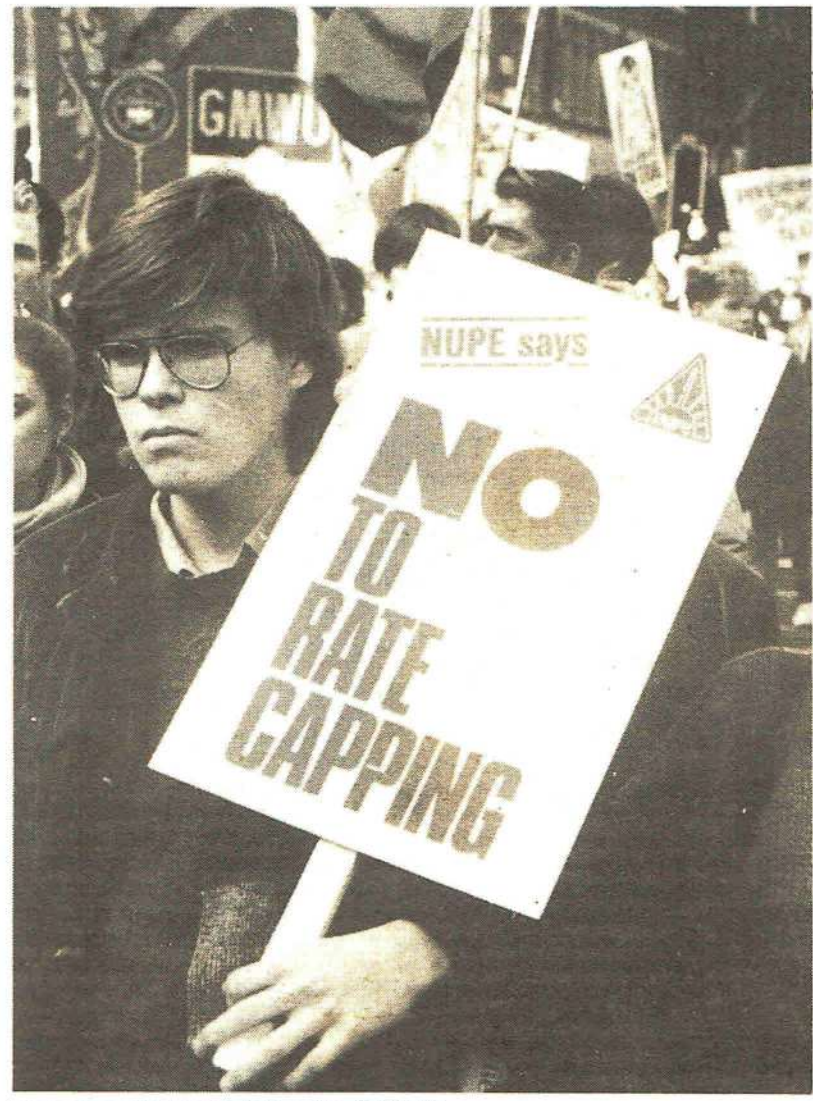


Photo: Paul Traynor.

Democracy day march in London, 6 March.

Newham Seven Campaign

"Self defence is no offence—fight racist attacks"

Demonstration on Saturday 27 April

The Newham Seven Campaign call on all Labour Party Young Socialists and anti-racists to join the protest against increasing racial attacks in the area.

Assemble: 1pm, Plashet Park, Plashet Grove, East Ham, London E6

Speakers include; Dave Nellist MP, Paul Boateng, a representative of Newham Seven Campaign, the Indian Workers Association and local speakers.

Scotrail strike solid

THE 24 hour strike by Scottish railworkers on 17 April got off to a solid start. Only one train, between Carlisle and Dumfries, broke the silence of Scotland's railway lines.

We are protesting at British Rail Engineering's decision to make more than 1,200 workers redundant at the Springburn engineering works in Glasgow. This is the latest of a series of savage blows against BREL workers in what used to be one of the most important rail works in the world.

BR have threatened legal action against the unions, but we are determined to keep up our fight. The board and the Tories will be far less keen on attacking us if we are in a confident and militant mood than if we just kowtow to their threats.

The unions in the rail federation are organising a recall conference throughout Scotland of all grades to plan a campaign of further action.

By John Herron
(Glasgow No 5 NUR, in personal capacity)

Scots TUC back sacked miners

AT THE Scottish TUC conference in Inverness this week an emergency resolution calling for full financial support to maintain victimised miners and their families was passed unaminously. The resolution also called for a "day of activity" to press for full amnesty for sacked mineworkers.

Large donations came in, notably £1,500 from workers at Scott Lithgow, £5,000 from the National Union of Seamen and £1,000 from the TGWU.

It must not, however, be a substitute for a campaign for total amnesty. This must be taken to every branch of the NUM, every other union branch, shop stewards committee, Labour Party and LPYS.

Get your labour movement organisation to back the Miners Amnesty Campaign. Donations, resolutions and sponsorship to Philip White, 10, Herman Road, Caerau, Maesteg, Mid Glamorgan.



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